

Miramonte (Equi) Teams Up to Combat Hate

The intercom system crackled and chemistry teacher Jennifer Moore told her students to listen up. Students sat in a stunned silence as principal Julie Parks announced that a hate crime had been committed on campus the week before.

During the week of May 28, a Miramonte student wrote the n-word inside an African American student's PE locker. In a public statement, Parks explained that it had been done to intentionally make the student feel threatened and unwelcome, deeming the incident a hate crime. Parks also offered an award for any information about the incident.

Students murmured in bewilderment after Parks' announcement. Moments before, the majority of students were unaware of the incident. In disbelief that such a thing could happen at what most consider to be a very liberal, privileged school in the Bay Area, the announcement of the crime shocked the student body. "Miramonte prides itself on being an accepting community, but with a predominantly white student population, there's no doubt that racism often rears its ugly head. We like to idealize the Bay Area as a mini utopia where prejudice is nonexistent, but when something like this disrupts our vision, we're quickly reminded that hate isn't confined to certain states, borders, or areas," junior and EquiTeam president Zahra Hasanain said in a Facebook post. The incident has shaken Miramonte and provoked a response by the students, lead primarily by EquiTeam.

On Tuesday, June 6, students arrived at school to find the hallway lockers lined with colorful post-it notes and the ground covered with messages written in chalk. The quotes conveyed messages about lack of tolerance for racism and hate. Scripted in chalk on the concrete of the hallway ground,

phrases such as “choose love, not hate”, “diversity is cool, hate is not”, and other positive messages encouraging inclusiveness, pride, and respect for one another guide the students forward.

In the wake of the crime, Miramonte EquiTeam and the student body has come together to support one another and “make the victim of the hate crime feel a little more welcome and accepted for who they are,” Hasanain said. Hasanain explained that by decorating the school with positive messages in chalk and on post-its, EquiTeam hopes to “promote love and celebrate our differences.” The club has since developed and publicized #NotMyLockerRoomTalk to continue the response.

While the rain may wash away the chalk on the ground and the wind may blow away the post-its on the lockers, the message will remain strong: racism, hate, and bullying are not tolerated in the Miramonte community.