

Councilwoman Cartright Denounces Hate, Supports Peace at Community Vigils

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Farmingville, NY – Councilwoman Cartright and her staff spent the week in the First Council District attending various community peace gatherings. In the wake of recent physical and verbal aggression against residents, community organizations and individuals convened at several locations across the Town to discuss support services and identify safe spaces and resources available to everyone. The Councilwoman listened to community discussions and embraced the movement of concerned constituents.

An uptick in incidents identified as "hate crimes" have taken place and the local community is no exception. In New York these incidents have reportedly increased by 31%. Recent incidents in Brookhaven include a report of physical abuse against a same-sex couple and documented reports of the KKK disseminating propaganda material to build their anti-minority organization membership.

The Council District 1 greater community convened in several places, including a Peace Vigil in Port Jefferson Village and a Suffolk County Town Hall Meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (UUFBS) on Nicolls Road in Stony Brook on Sunday, and an Interfaith Service on Tuesday evening. The Interfaith Service, held this year at Temple Isaiah in Stony Brook, featured participants from all walks of life and religions in the community. Members of the Three Village Clergy Association worked together to create a program with a theme of "Building Bridges" and represented over 14 different local congregations.

"The reported increase in hate crimes is deeply disturbing and I unequivocally support Governor Cuomo's call for elected officials to denounce recent hate crimes. In New York and on Long Island we will not tolerate discrimination or bigotry against anyone nor will we support inciting hate-fueled acts in any form," stated Councilwoman Cartright. "I appreciate the many community organizations that worked together to provide resources and a safe place for residents to come together, find help, and promote peace in the community."

Port Jefferson Village Mayor Margot Garant, who spoke at the Peace Vigil in Port Jefferson, was among those concerned for the well-being of the people in her community. "I was honored to provide an opportunity for the organizers to hold their 'rally for humanity' in the Village of Port Jefferson, as I felt this was an important step to help heal, and promote unity in our local north shore communities," said the Mayor. "We embrace all people, regardless of their views or political stance when it comes to the 'best interest of our village.' The event was inspirational."

At these events, residents convened with a message of togetherness, sharing resources, focusing on ideas for regaining a sense of safety, and suggesting action to re-establish security for marginalized residents, such as women, LGBTQ, and immigrants. Some of the Long Island organizations involved were the New York Civil Liberties Union, the Long Island Progressive Coalition, SepaMujer, and Make the Road New York.

"At the Town Hall Meeting I felt like the real world had just walked in our doors. Such a sense of anguish, hope and solidarity," said Rev. Margie Allen, whose congregation hosted the Town Hall Meeting. Rev. Allen also spoke at the Interfaith Service, stating "in our faith we use what we learn to strengthen our relationships, calibrate our moral compass, reach out to those who are suffering around us, and address injustice within and outside our congregations."

The New York State Attorney General's Office defines "hate crimes" (also known as bias-related crimes) as offenses that target particular individuals, groups of individuals and property because of a bias or prejudice regarding race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or some other protected characteristic as defined by law. These criminal acts include violence, threats and intimidation directed at individuals and groups as well as the destruction of public and private property.

The Governor's Office created a toll-free hotline to report bias and discrimination incidents and victims are encouraged to contact 888-392-3644 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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