



Now is the time for every one of us in this community of Seven Oaks to renew our commitment to a world free of racism and hate. We can't be bystanders. We can't be silent. We must act as individuals and as a community to confront injustice and right wrongs.

I'm black. I grew up in Seven Oaks, live in Seven Oaks and I'm raising my children here in Seven Oaks. I've personally been a victim of targeted racism and prejudice my whole life. This has deeply impacted my life, my reactions and my viewpoint. I have had hateful words spewed at me, cover anti-black racist actions

directed at me and I have seen people's reactions when they see me - a black man - enter a space occupied solely by white people. I have also experienced kindness and understanding from my community that has helped me when dealing with individuals who see only the colour of my skin.

Throughout my life, my career, I have known that I have to work harder to be seen more than a black man. My father taught me the truths of how to react when approached by police and how to avoid situations where a bystander would feel threatened by my mere presence. Now I am having to teach my son these horrifying truths. I am having to teach him not to play basketball after dark, to act and dress beyond respectable as to not be seen as a 'thug' and how to remain calm in the face of racism, hatred and the misuse of authority.

This HAS to change. Everyone - has to purposely create this change within their lives. Whether your skin is black, brown or white - we need to stand as one to create a world in which black peoples are not systematically targeted. We, as black people, have to use our voices and allies have to stand up and use their white privilege to give us our space.

In Seven Oaks we live by "Community Begins Here". We all need to pledge that hate and racism stops here.