

Arcata sanctuary garden vandalized in hate crime; community rallies to support immigrants

July 21, 2022



ARCATA, CA (July 21, 2022) – The Jardin Santuario (Sanctuary Garden) at the corner of 11th and F Streets in Arcata is the latest target in a wave of increasing hate speech and hate crimes in our community. Sometime during the night of Wednesday, July 20th, vandals defaced the Jardin's welcome sign, spray painting it black with the words 'AMERICA USA' in red.

The defacement of the Jardin's welcome sign is not only a crime, it also sends a threatening message to valued members of our community. Centro del Pueblo, Cooperation Humboldt, and the Eureka NAACP stand united in staunch defense of our Indigenous immigrant neighbors and demand that the perpetrator of this crime be brought to light to face the consequences of their actions. We urge anyone with knowledge of this crime to contact the Arcata Police Department, which is investigating this vandalism as a hate crime.

A vigil to support immigrants – and oppose hate in all its forms – will begin this evening at 6:00 and continue through tomorrow (Friday, July 22). Community members are invited to visit the garden and bring

flowers and notes of support and to share in the peace that the garden provides. The defaced sign will be left up during this time so that all can witness this act firsthand.

Latinx community members shared their emotions upon seeing the defaced sign. “We are in hope of your support, join us to end the racist violence that aims to install the culture of fear and intimidation in a Sanctuary peaceful space,” stated Alma an Arcata neighbor originally from Mexico. Others shared - “It’s time to take concrete actions, to be in permanent campaign against racial violence, to gather strength as individuals and organizations;” “We need the support of the community in the middle of this violent attack. This is racism, I feel it personally as a Latinx community member and volunteer of the garden;” “This is an open sign of racism, in a garden where we gathered as equals, those who hate need to know us and know more of our culture, to respect our spaces.”

It bears mentioning that last night the Arcata City Council passed a ‘Statement of Unity Against Anti-Semitic Messages and all Forms of Hate Speech,’ in which they state that “the Arcata City Council and our community soundly reject and condemn ANY hate filled messages and any inference to discrimination of any kind to any person or group... The Arcata City Council stands united in our zero-tolerance position against all forms of hate speech in our city...The Arcata Police Department and Humboldt County Sheriff recognize the impact of hate incidents and stands with the council and the community united against hate.”

The Jardin was established in early 2021 as a sanctuary garden and a safe space for immigrants. Since that time Centro del Pueblo staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to transform a neglected and under-utilized space to a vibrant, beautiful and productive garden that provides food and connection to nature and community to dozens of local families. The love and care they have poured into this space is evident in every corner of the garden and it serves as an inspiration to others for how to care for one another in community. Those who wish to demonstrate meaningful solidarity over the longer term are invited to volunteer at the Jardin on Wednesdays from 3:00-6:00 and Saturdays from 10:00-noon. All are welcome.