

LETTERS

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essentials. I wear a mask. My kids wear masks. Local people who I run into while out wear masks. The clerks and cashiers at the local businesses wear masks.

As summer rolls into full swing our little community is being visited by people from all over the country. I have seen California, Idaho, Utah, Arizona and Washington license plates to name a few. Unfortunately, many of these vacationers don't feel they need to show us respect by wearing a mask.

I am writing this letter to urge our local government to require masks be worn inside our local establishments. This practice has been scientifically proven to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 significantly!

Many shop owners and workers have expressed frustration and fear concerning this matter. One worker told me from behind a mask "I take their money but am pretty angry at their disregard for my health." This is not right and since we cannot count on visitors to protect our town we must mandate it.

Mayor Ryan and city council members, make this happen. We as a community have worked hard these last three months, to stay apart to protect our neighbors. We have not had this virus cripple our town. Take action to protect your citizens and require facemasks in our community.

Debra Lajko



To the Editor:

As a nation, we are all hurting from the death of Mr. George Floyd, similar tragic incidents, and other inexcusable acts of bias. As I have been processing this tragedy and considering my own implicit biases and privileges, I discovered not a need for another generalized organization blanket statement acknowledging the vast amount of work to be done, but rather the need for a firm commitment to fully listening to and internalizing the conversations taking place; as well as an assurance of my own personal stake in those conversations.

I am the mother of 10 children. All 10 of my children are of color. The discussion of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging is very personal to me. Daily I am reminded that while my children and

I live in the same house, we live in vastly different worlds. It reminds me that I must speak up when I hear or see something that I know is not right. Remaining silent or looking the other way is only perpetuating the status quo. And it reminds me that a return to "normal" should not be desirable. Normal is not good enough. We must strive for institutional change; taking a systematic approach to creating permanent systemic change.

At Circle of Friends, we love, respect, and value all our children, mentors, and staff. We believe that diversity is a strength, and all individuals have worth. We cannot be silent and leave our children feeling doubt about our love for each of them. Nor can we fail to champion for all members of our community. And as members of our community our children need to see us take leading roles against racism, anti-blackness, anti-religious groups, anti-immigrants, bullying, disparity, evil and hate. As stakeholders you can count on one actionable item from us — we will not remain silent.

No parent should have to fear for their child's physical or mental safety because of the color of their skin. Nor should any parent fear for their child for any number of reasons that make us different, whether it be national origin, sexual orientation, economic status, religion, physical or mental disability.

As the mother of 10 children, I want them growing up in a community where they are loved, celebrated, and valued. As the Executive Director of Circle of Friends, I want the same for all the children and families we serve, as well as for all those in our community. As a community we must intensify our efforts to make sure that our parents, spouses, children and neighbors live in a country that does not tolerate racism, bigotry, or violence.

We must assure we are not only creating an inclusive community, but one in which all members know they belong.

I ask you all to join us at Circle of Friends to help unite as a community to provide every child with an environment where they feel loved, encouraged and included.

Together we can make a difference.
Nicole Swisher Woodson
Executive Director
Circle of Friends



A rare sight...



PHOTO BY BRENDA JAROS

This rare and beautiful fire rainbow was seen June 14 near Sisters from the Whychus Rim Trail.

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Portraits OF SISTERS



PHOTO AND STORY BY *Cody Rheault*

Three-year Sisters resident and professional audio engineer *Ray Shelley* is moved by what he hears. Growing up in a musical home and finding inspiration from his mother, a pianist, Ray took to the drums 20 years ago and pursued music. He found his way over tedious hours of observing and experimenting with established professionals, never having to pursue a degree to learn the business. Those years of shadowing recently led Ray to launch his own business, Sisters Sound Studio, where his dream is to make a full-time career out of his passion and talent for sound.

This week's "Portraits of Sisters" presented by The Nugget Newspaper.

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