

VIGIL: Sisters activists commemorated killing of George Floyd

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people to be aware that not everything is as perfect as it seems in Sisters. Things still need to be fixed. We all need to take that responsibility, especially in Sisters where we're not as exposed as other places to what different kids experience around the world and our nation. We have to be more sensitive to those who are different, and may need something more."

As a person of Asian descent, Hougham gave an example of an Asian person in the Sisters schools, and how Chinese, or students of Asian descent, have been treated since the coronavirus hit the U.S.

"It's people who don't respect Chinese culture," Hougham told *The Nugget*.

"Kids make fun of the language at my school and I have to say it's not OK. It makes us both feel awkward, and even though I'm doing the right thing it brings a tension between us, especially since I'm the minority. People associate the coronavirus with China and take out their anger on Chinese or Asian people in general. Students don't realize it's not a joke and it needs to be taken seriously. It's a very real problem and more dangerous for a person who's Asian American. It can be scary."

A member of the steering committee for Indivisible Sisters Oregon, Joshua Berger said he hopes events like the George Floyd vigil will help people learn, and encourage them to take time to listen and dig deeper into racism in the U.S.

"This kind of violence has been going on for hundreds of years. There just wasn't

cell phone videos to capture it. We wanted to have an evening of contemplation. I don't have black skin, so I'll never know truly what it's like," said Berger. "We hope awareness is increased and people think about what they can do to improve things. But the journey is inward as well. We can all do better."

Hougham hopes her efforts and those of many Sisters residents will improve conditions for Black people.

"We all have privilege if we're not Black," she said. "I wanted to tell others that if they're not doing anything, then they're on the wrong side. They need to take a stand against racism even if they don't experience it themselves. They need to take time to educate themselves and make themselves available for allyship whenever possible. If you're different or not the typical person who lives in Sisters, some people think it's wrong to have a grievance or address a problem when we should be grateful for what we have. It can be toxic to be positive all the time. We need to take responsibility for the things that still need improvement. Just because you ignore something doesn't make it any less real. If you choose to not



PHOTO BY KATY YODER

Olivia Hougham offered opening remarks at a vigil in Village Green Park on Saturday.



PHOTO BY MARY CHAFFIN

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum (orange baseball cap) joined Saturday's Black Lives Matter demonstration as she was visiting Sisters.



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