

SWASTIKAS & ANTI-IMMIGRATION SLOGANS PAINTED IN EUGENE

Toys "R" Us and the University of Oregon are targets of racist graffiti



GRAFFITI ON TOYS "R" US

PHOTO: SARAH BUCK

Two reports of swastikas on the Toys "R" Us building on Valley River Drive in Eugene were made to the Human Rights and Neighborhood Commission last week. On Thursday, Jan. 4, a driver on Delta Highway saw a swastika on the side of the building.

Meanwhile, Eugene resident Sarah Buck was shopping at the toy store when she noticed that no store employees were present at the checkout lines.

"The manager informed us that everyone was outside because they just found someone had come and graffitied the store with swastikas and anti-Semitic stuff on the outside walls and the truck," Buck says.

The Toys "R" Us building was spray-painted with a red swastika, the word "Tygarclan" and a five-pointed star. A second swastika was spray painted on an empty semi-truck trailer in the parking lot of the Toys "R" Us.

Jessica Offerjost, a spokeswoman with Toys "R" Us corporate office in Wayne, New Jersey, initially spoke on the phone with *Eugene Weekly*, saying the company was looking into the incident and requesting copies of photographs taken of the graffiti.

In a later email, Offerjost writes, "Early morning on Thursday, January 4, the Toys "R" Us in Eugene, OR, was

vandalized. We have zero tolerance for these actions and are working with authorities to identify anyone involved."

On Jan. 8 reports of graffiti targeting immigrants and DREAMers were made on the University of Oregon Campus. Early Monday morning, the Trump administration had announced its plans to end temporary protection status for citizens of El Salvador.

Kelly McIver, public information officer with the UO Police Department, says the chalked graffiti was found early on Jan. 8, and campus planning and facilities management was still compiling a comprehensive list of what they found.

McIver sent *EW* a story slated to be published on UO's Around the O news website that says, "Among the slogans found on campus sidewalks were 'Deport them all' and 'End white guilt.' The graffiti is a reminder of the recent increase in bias incidents nationally as well as in Oregon and Eugene."

McIver says he saw a photo of graffiti including the "Make America Great Again" slogan and Trump 2020.

The Eugene Police Department received a report of the swastika on the Toys "R" Us building, according to Public Information Coordinator John Hankemeier. He says people should definitely report graffiti to the police if they see it.

These incidents took place in the weeks after an *Oregon*

nian story, which was picked up internationally, spotlighted Eugene as a hotbed of emboldened white nationalism. Many of the incidents depicted in the story took place in Springfield and Creswell in addition to Eugene, and some were originally reported by *EW*.

Eugene's Human Rights Commission Hate and Bias Crimes report found that hate and bias crimes were up during the third quarter of 2017. Compared to the third quarter in 2016, with 29 reported hate and bias crimes, 2017 saw 57 reports of hate and bias crimes.

According to the report, "A man witnessed a racial slur and a threat on his locker and two nooses hanging from the ceiling at his place of work."

Another example in the report stated, "a church employee found racial slurs in graffiti on his place of work."

Compared to data from 2016, hate and bias crimes were on track to more than double in 2017.

Sarah Buck says the swastikas make her feel unsafe.

"It was really bizarre because it's just something you don't expect will happen," Buck says. "Eugene has this whole narrative of being such an open and accommodating community and normally it is — but clearly we have the other end of the spectrum as well — and it's also clear that they are making their presence known." ■

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