

Community Rights a Wrong

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turned into a beautiful moment. The community came out in ways I don't think would have happened years ago."

As a resident of northeast Portland for more than 40-years, Daniels said he has seen vandalism of this nature come around every now again. "The thing that was odd was the scale of it," Daniels said. "It was outrageous."

He added, however, the community support he has witnessed over the past few days has almost moved him to tears.

According to Daniels, neighborhood Re-building Center employees and other members of the community showed up to help remove the paint before it even had time to dry. "That very day it was all cleaned off and painted over," he said. "It was like the community righted the wrong."

Individuals also created a face book page, which invited residents and supporters to come out to the block last Saturday night for a vigil of support, said Daniels. "It was so beautiful. More than 100 people arrived. People gathered and we had a night of community fellowship."

Although the paint has come down, the crime is a reminder for many there is a long way to go for justice and acceptance. "It is a shame that we can't all live in harmony and help one another. That is probably the hardest part about this," said Holmes.

Dr. Randy Blazak, professor of sociology at Portland State University, is a member of Portland's Coalition against Hate Crimes, which was founded in 1997 in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing to increase communication between law enforcement and community and civil rights groups.

In addition to preventative work, the coalition aims to help victims also find resources, as well as guide the community to know how to respond to hate crimes.

According to Blazak, the coalition receives approximately five reported hate crimes each month within Portland, some which may or may not be determined to be hate crimes after investigation.

But the recent incidents on Thursday, he said, "definitely fit the definition."

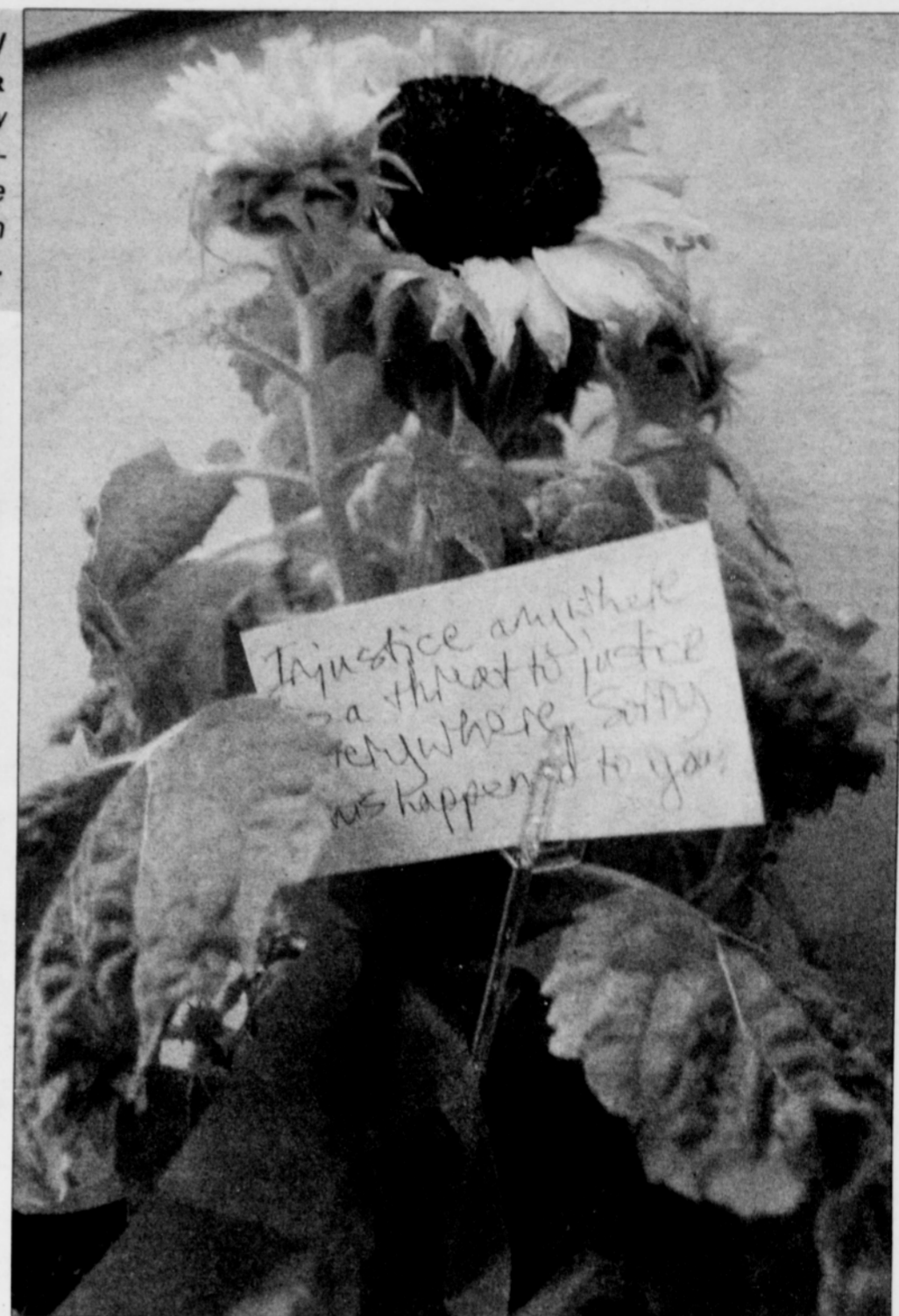
"Hate crimes are message crimes that target more than the immediate victim," he said. "They target large communities, and in that sense, they are a form of terrorism."

One of the most negative effects that come from such a



Randy Daniels, a resident of northeast Portland for more than 40-years, was one of many local residents who came to show support for members of the African-American Masonic Lodge and a nearby food cart operator that were the target of racist graffiti. "It was like the community righted the wrong," he said.

PHOTOS BY MINDY COOPER/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Flowers and a card show support for the African-American victims of a hate crime directed at a North Portland Masonic Lodge.



A sign thanks neighbors for reaching out in support after racist vandalism targeted an African-American operated food cart and the Sons of Haiti Masonic Lodge on North Mississippi Avenue.

crime, said Blazak, is the affect the incident has on the community. "Hate crime often causes division in the community because the victims don't know who is on their side or who is on the side of the people who committed the act," he said. "Hate crimes can destroy whole communities because of this."

The work we have to do is to

make sure the community is on the victim's side and not the side of the hate mongers, said Blazak.

For Ellie Bradley, whose food cart Grass Roots Café was painted with swastikas and the "N"- word, the incident has catalyzed him to re-evaluate whether or not he wants to keep his business open. On his cart, he wrote a message to the community that said thank you for all of the

support, although he currently is only open for catering and special events.

Still, the neighborhood voiced their desire to help keep Bradley's business on the block. Next to his message, a large heart was constructed and hung by anonymous neighbors that read: 'Roots Café, Please stay, Love people'.

"It (the hate crime) breaks my

heart, but it shows how good the community can be," said Holmes. "I really believe the world is changing."

Anyone with information that could lead to an arrest on this case should contact Detective Kevin Warren at 503-823-3761. CrimeStoppers is offering a reward of \$1,000 for information that leads to an arrest in this case.