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Margaret Jacobsen brings people together in safe spaces to achieve deep-level understanding of racial issues.

# Racial Progress

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ting internal prejudices, which may go unnoticed.

“I want us to build a campaign together, a campaign that is for our city, but is also something that can include people from all over,” Jacobson told the Portland Observer. “I want to encourage people to commit to showing up, making changes and standing up for the people around them. Let’s continue to be uncomfortable together. Remember, we are a community. We have a lot of work to do.”

Growing up in Southern California, Jacobson describes a bubble of ignorance personally experienced on racial issues.

“In random points in my life, where I had encountered racism, I didn’t know it, because I didn’t have a context. My context was ‘Oh, they used to lynch people and they were slaves. Then Martin Luther King Jr. came and all was better. Malcolm X led people to be violent.’ It was a weird narrative,” Jacobson said.

Today the race discussion facilitator has learned how bias and prejudice still exists on so many levels, “People don’t even know that they’re being racist. They think they are genuinely not, because we were all taught the same story in school.”

Starting a family as a young millennial, Jacobson began to think of how racism would impact the children and what kind of culture and community would give future generations of African Americans strength and a healthy sense of identity.

Jacobson began writing for national publications to explore

the narrative of black history and what realities young parents and their kids face.

“I love my friends in Portland, but I work really hard to surround myself with women of color,” Jacobson said. “I think that’s really important for them (my children) to see. They’ve (women of color) have carried so much. They’ve always laid their bodies down. They use their bodies to carry other bodies. I’m so proud of all of the black women I come from. The ancestry, the resilience, the power, but also the softness.”

In a recent writing, Jacobson gives a voice to the struggles of young parents and a diverse community of color and gender, “As a Black nonbinary person who is female bodied, I have raised two brown children in an America that has always been Trump America to me and my Black family. This isn’t to play down the pain that so many are feeling right now. That is valid, it is real. But it’s not a pain that resonates with people of color and queer folks. We were already existing in a continuous loop of pain and frustration. We were already on the defense, gasping for air.”

The same sense of honest dialogue is the foundation of Let’s Talk.

As our history books are rewritten to amplify the voices of important civil rights figures such as Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer and Audre Lord, Jacobson takes a new place at the table. With Let’s Talk, its clear more voices in the struggle for equality and civil rights are being heard. Jacobson’s activism is resonating with a large number of people.

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