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'Let's Talk' for Racial Progress

Activist gathers voices to promote understanding

BY CHRISTA MCINTYRE
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland author and photographer Margaret Jacobsen is the founder of a discussion and education group that connects people and focuses on community building to address racial justice issues. The group is called Let's Talk.

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. once told a crowd of students at Cornell University, "I am convinced that men hate each other because they fear each other. They fear each other because they don't know each other, and they don't know each other because they don't communicate with each other, and they don't communicate with each other because they are separated from each other."

Let's Talk tackles the challenges Rev. King spoke to head on. It began in the summer of 2014 when Jacobsen invited people from across the city to Laurelhurst Park to share their fears, an-

ger, and sadness, and pave a path forward after the police shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo.

A dozen or so meet ups later, Let's Talk has grown to over 700 members in Portland and is expanding nationally. In January, 17 new chapters will open in Austin, Chicago, Cincinnati, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Long Beach, New York city, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Reno, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle and Calgary, Canada.

Let's Talk meetings are safe spaces where people can work together on deep-level understanding. Through conversations, members learn from one another how to be supportive of people of color, of different genders and backgrounds, while facing uncomfortable truths and disman-

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"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

At OHSU, we believe – as Dr. King did – in tolerance, equality and justice. Today more than ever, we must embrace and protect his legacy. We must take this opportunity to change the narrative, to promote healing in a time of fear, trepidation, confusion and uncertainty. In our hospitals and clinics, laboratories, classrooms and with the communities we serve, OHSU is committed to an inclusive culture that creates a safe, respectful and healthy environment. This is a critical moment to redouble our commitment and raise our voices so that others may hear:

All are welcome at OHSU.

