

*Message to City of Bellevue Staff from City Manager Brad Miyake, March 19, 2021*

Dear Staff,

Despite the hope of 2021 – and tangible progress in our return to normalcy – we continue to face unprecedented challenges. I'll be direct with you, the recent surge in violence against Asian-Americans has really hit home for me. As a member of this community myself, I'm deeply saddened and concerned by what I see on the news every day, including Tuesday's targeted murders in the Atlanta area.

On Monday the City Council issued a proclamation reinforcing Bellevue's stance against hate, bias or violence based on race, nationality, gender, disability or religion. I'm very proud of our city government's [continued commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) and our collective leadership on these issues. On Thursday I attended a demonstration in support of the AAPI community Downtown with my wife along with other Bellevue elected officials and staff. It was a wonderful community gathering with a strong message of solidarity and speaking out against hate.



The ongoing barrage of hate incidents toward many groups in this country, primarily people of color, can feel overwhelming. Especially during a time where we should be coming together – to help each other – not fragmenting further.

To our Asian-American staff, I want you to know that I understand how hard this has been to witness and internalize. Please make sure you are taking the time to take care of yourselves and to check in with friends and loved ones. To all other staff, I know you may feel unsure about checking in with colleagues or taking the time to acknowledge these charged and painful topics, but I encourage you to do so in support of your colleagues and friends. Our EmBRACE employee resource group will hold a drop-in session next Thursday from 10-11:30 a.m. for any employees, especially Asian-American staff members, to give and receive support, share experiences if desired, and connect with other colleagues. A meeting link will be provided on InsideVue next week.

Many of us can feel helpless in these situations. But that doesn't have to be the case. Many incidents of hate or bias go unreported. If you see something, say something. Please report this kind of hostility, even verbal harassment, if you see or experience it. All community members are encouraged to do the same. If you feel you or someone else is in danger, don't hesitate to call 9-1-1. You can also report incidents that happen through organizations such as the [Washington State Commission on Asian-Pacific American Affairs](#) or Bellevue's online [crime reporting tool](#).

I believe that as public service leaders, as parents, as teachers, and as community role models, we have a role in teaching our children early the value and worth of every person. The foundations of dignity we espouse here at the city and in our community include the belief that no one is superior or inferior to you. It is also important that everyone feels safe physically and psychologically, and that people have a sense of belonging as a member of our organization and community.

We must acknowledge our interdependence with each other and the commonalities among us if we are to move forward as a strong community. I have confidence that we, individually and collectively, can make a difference as we work together on the necessary actions to build awareness, create prevention strategies and support each other. In response to the recent incidents, the Diversity Advantage team and other staff who provide direct services to our community are working on community-based strategies to address the recent hate incidents. More to come on how staff can help in the following weeks . . .

Thank you for your dedication. Only working together, can we build an even better, thriving and more accepting community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad".