Open Letter to Orange County: A Call for Unity & Collective Response

Orange County Grantmakers (OCG) and its members join with the National Asian American Community Foundation (NAAC) and Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) in a call for unity and solidarity in response to the increased xenophobia and discrimination faced by the Asian American community in Orange County during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a threat to our physical health and overall community wellbeing. The dramatic increase in racial bigotry expressed towards Chinese American and Asian American communities in the U.S. is fueled by fear and racism. So far this year, 59% of hate incidents reported to the Orange County Human Relations Council are COVID-19 related, most targeting Asian Americans. In the last published report from 2018, 3% of reported hate incidents targeted Asian Americans.

We must not let these interactions define us. Only through our collective response can we continue to support our community through this time of crisis. We call on the Orange County community to unify in speaking out against all forms of prejudice, discrimination and racism. Together, we can demonstrate that xenophobic responses do not reflect our values. We invite our community to:

- Issue public statements or include in COVID-19 responses language that denounces hate related to COVID-19
- Connect with Chinese American & Asian American staff, colleagues, grantees or constituents you serve to see how they are doing and offer support
- Practice responses to xenophobia. Commit to interrupting, questioning, educating and echoing to fight hate rhetoric. If safely able, ask questions to better understand why the person said or did what they did. Follow guidelines suggested by the Orange County Human Relations Council.
- Consider equity when making funding decisions. Ensure those smaller organizations that serve the Asian American community is supported during this time of crisis
- Include efforts that address viral racism as part of rapid response fund guidelines

In the recent weeks, the Orange County philanthropic community came together in an unprecedented way, raising over $3M for the OC Community Resilience Fund and $1.2M for the United Way Pandemic Relief Fund in just three weeks. This outpouring of support is the true example of who we are – a place that responds in a time of crisis to ensure the health and success of all who live here. We remind Orange County residents that while some have responded to the current crisis with hate, so many others have responded with inclusion and positivity. We invite all residents to focus on our collective strength and not allow xenophobia to win. Together, we will come through this crisis a stronger, more unified community.

If you witnessed, or have been a target of, a hate crime or racist incident tied to the outbreak of COVID-19, we urge you to report it to the OC Human Relations at www.ochumanrelations.org/hatecrime/report/ or the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council’s Stop AAPI Hate website here.
About the National Asian American Community Foundation
The National Asian American Community Foundation (NAACF) is a new initiative led by Asian American philanthropists, non-profit, and academic leaders in Orange County. The mission of NAACF is to cultivate a culture of giving among Asian Americans, to bring visibility to Asian American needs and causes, and to create connections that strengthen Asian American communities.

About the Orange County Community Foundation
Founded in 1989, the Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) works with donors, strengthens the local nonprofit sector and works to find solutions to community needs. Since its inception, OCCF has awarded $690 million in grants and scholarships and ranks in the top one percent in grantmaking activity among more than 780 U.S. community foundations. For more information, visit oc-cf.org or call 949-553-4202. Be a part of our conversation on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. View OCCF’s 2019 annual report here.

About Orange County Grantmakers
Orange County Grantmakers is a community of philanthropists committed to improving outcomes for Orange County and beyond. Our mission is to advance social impact by supporting, strengthening and building adaptive leadership across our nonprofit and philanthropic community.