June 29. 2020

PRESS RELEASE

Statement of solidarity with Shauna M. Sias

There is much unrest in America as well as other parts of the world because of the unfair treatment and murdering of people of color. We are in the midst of a movement to call out racial injustices, and our Community is no exception. We have witnessed the unfair treatment police officers display against people of color resulting in the extreme outcome to the point of murder. Our Community is now witnessing bullying hiding behind the screen.

The NAACP branch of St. Landry is releasing a statement of solidarity with Shauna M. Sias who is experiencing harassment, cyberbullying and death threats as retaliation over Jamie Bergeron being terminated from his job after mounting criticism over offensive ‘All Lives Splatter’ and other posts depicting violent and racist memes on social media exposed by different people including Shauna M. Sias.

Acadiana Ambulance, the Company who employed Jamie Bergeron said, “Derogatory actions by any employee who blatantly violates that (public) trust will not be tolerated.

“*This is the time for the leaders of our Community, black leaders, white leaders to get involved to stop the systemic racism, to stop the white supremacism, it happens to African American, to black and brown people every single day*.” Marja Broussard, NAACP Louisiana State Vice-President and NAACP Lafayette Branch President responded to former Acadian Ambulance paramedic Jamie Bergeron’s Facebook video addressing why he was fired from the company, *“For him to be so comfortable that tells you what’s going on in our city, in our parts of the country”.*

When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior they send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time.

In a cyber world, Shauna is a Leader that help kids to become upstanders. In our Opelousas community, Shauna helps kids prevent bullying by talking about it, building a safe school environment, and creating a community-wide bullying prevention strategy. Kids are our future, Shauna plays a very important role as a leader in our Community.

The Bullybox Club was founded in October 2019 by Shauna M. Sias, LPN following the death by suicide of a 13 year old student from Baton Rouge, LA. Bullybox Passion Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization registered in Louisiana, their mission is to give a voice back to the child who suffers in silence. The Bullybox Club’s mission is to encourage and display community involvement and volunteerism among the children and parents. The members meet once a month and have an eager attitude in becoming fruitful and contributing members of their community, “their VILLAGE”. Their purpose is:

1. To help at least one child from suicidal thoughts and ideations that result from bullying, especially cyber bullying,

2. To be an ear to those in need and a voice to those who cannot or will not speak,

3. To eradicate bullying and offer an alternative to suicidal thoughts and ideations, and

4. To encourage a child’s feeling of safety by allowing him/her to communicate their feelings without reprise or shame in the form of written and artistic expression.

The website is thebullyboxpassion.org

Cyberbullying and intimidation online are prohibited by state law and Louisiana is no exception.

Electronic / Cyberbullying uses electronic devices, the Internet, mobile phone, or other social media platforms to intimidate, threaten or humiliate another individual or group of individuals.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for adolescents, behind only accidents (unintentional injuries), according to the CDC.

Reasons cyberbullies said they engaged in cyberbullying: ⁄ To show off to friends (11%); To be mean (14%); To embarrass (21%); For fun/entertainment (28%); Person deserved it (58%); To get back at someone (58%); Something else (16%)

Bullying is one of the most harmful behaviors regularly occurring among teens. Add an electronic format into the mix and you have cyberbullying, which is possibly the most serious form of this behavior to date.

Below are the reasons to take Bullying seriously.

* Over 7 million children are bullied and 1.5 million children are cyberbullied each year (Devoe & Murphy, 2011).
* 3 out 10 children in grades 6 through 12 are involved in bullying, as perpetrators, targets, or both (DeVoe & Bauer, 2011).
* 16,000 students miss school every day due to fear of bullies (Schoen & Schoen, 2010).
* 14% of 8-12th-graders surveyed reported that “bullying diminished their ability to learn in school” (Hoover & Oliver, 1996, p. 10).
* 75% of students are victimized by bullies during their school career (National Crime Prevention Council, 2007).
* In more than 2/3 of the school shootings, the attackers felt “persecuted, bullied, threatened, or attacked (National Crime Prevention Council, 2007).

How you conduct yourself and what values you live by not only define you and your culture but play a part in defining the people around you.

We must do better in America. Our young men and women especially deserve a future in a vibrant, safe community in which we all strive to, interact through honest, respectful and open communication, acknowledge and celebrate our differences and encourage empathy, compassion, understanding and respect for human dignity.

Individuals of color deserve a future, to be given an opportunity to fulfill their purpose. Not to have life threaten and subject to abusive and humiliating posts especially on social media websites, where often anyone with Internet access can see messages and other information.

Cyberbullying is using digital technology to hurt others that can have both short- and long-term effects.

We, The NAACP branch of St. Landry are concerned with the underlying issues of this case. We aim to build a vibrant, safe community in which we all strive to, interact through honest, respectful and open communication, acknowledge and celebrate our differences and encourage empathy, compassion, understanding, respect for human dignity and live our lives positively, joyfully and ethically, without threats.

In service,

The St Landry Parish Branch # 6088 of the NAACP

*President Rev. Frank Ford*