

Riverside Rally Against Hate, 24 October 2009

Updated on Thursday, October 22, 2009

By 10 am on Saturday, hundreds of people from Riverside and neighboring areas will hold signs along Indiana Avenue and Madison Street to signal their rejection of the Nazis of the "National Socialist Movement" and their racist ideas. A Nazi rally across the street will probably have more than the eight who showed up in September, but they will hardly have a mass presence. Organizers of the Rally Against Hate say their peaceful rally should have hundreds, for a massive rejection of racism and violence.

"I am very pleased, and even a little surprised, by the massive outpouring of support," says Kevin Akin, chair of the organizing committee for the community rally. "We have 62 organizations as sponsors as of Thursday morning, and expect more during the day. The breadth of support is unprecedented: four political parties on the California ballot and several other political groups, religious organizations including Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims - and even an organization of atheists and agnostics. Groups that conduct their business in formal and informal meetings, in English and Spanish, who operate on multimillion-dollar budgets or by passing the hat. But above all, groups who really represent the vast majority of decent people in the inland area."

Participants in the community rally are asked to park their cars at the south end of Villegas Park or in the small streets of the Casa Blanca neighborhood south of the park, not in the lots of the businesses at the corner of Indiana and Madison. Starting at 9 am, a picnic with games and activities for children will begin in the bandstand area at Villegas Park, and families are asked to leave an adult with the children in the park while the other adults attend the rally. Big boxes will be set up at the park to accept donations of cans and boxes of food for local food banks. When the Nazis leave the area, the community rally will become a march to Villegas Park, where the adults and children together will enjoy a "victory rally" with lots of music.

"The police have assured us that the Nazis will be kept on the other side of the street from the Rally Against Hate," reports Akin. "No one will be allowed to cross the street between the two sides, and we welcome this, as it will help keep things peaceful. Our rally rules forbid signs, gestures or chants that threaten or incite violence, and we will exclude people from our rally who insist on doing this. This rally will peacefully demonstrate our community's overwhelming rejection of the Nazis by our presence, our chants and songs, and the words on our signs."

400 signs have been printed with such slogans as "Inland Area rejects Nazi hate" and "Tolerance Yes, Hatred No" in English and Spanish. There will be 40 monitors, with ten monitor captains, and a five-person Liaison Committee to handle anything that comes up during the rally. "We are not looking for trouble, and we don't expect to find any," says Akin. "With the width of the street between ourselves and the Nazis, and the large promised police presence, we think it will be an exciting but peaceful day. The Nazis came here because they really want people to attack them, so they can use a twisted account of the event for recruiting. We are not inclined to make Nazis happy. No physical confrontations are scheduled Saturday, but a confrontation of ideas and moral values, which we are sure to win."

Updated list of sponsors of community rally on Saturday 24 October 2009

Riverside County Peace and Freedom Party Central Committee
Riverside County Democratic Party Central Committee
Riverside County Libertarian Party Central Committee
Riverside County Green Party Council
San Bernardino County Peace and Freedom Party Central Committee
Democrats of Greater Riverside
Moreno Valley Democratic Club
United Democrats of Moreno Valley
California Peace and Freedom Party State Central Committee
Socialist Party USA, California Chapter
Party for Socialism and Liberation
Inland Valley Friends Meeting
Social Justice Committee of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Riverside
Unity Fellowship Church, Riverside
St. Andrews Newman Center Social Justice Committee
First Congregational Church of Riverside
Temple Beth El, Riverside
Islamic Center of Riverside
Council on American-Islamic Relations LA
Inland Congregations United for Change
Inland Empire Atheists and Agnostics
Western Inland Empire Coalition Against Hate
Inland Communities Fellowship of Reconciliation
Inland Empire Rapid Response Network
Citizens Action 4 Peace, Redlands
Mensch Foundation International
Redlands PFLAG
Riverside Latino Voter Project
People for Immigrant Rights
San Bernardino Community Services Center
Pomona Economic Opportunity Center
Mexican Political Association
Moreno Valley Parents Association
Mount San Antonio College Students for Immigrant Rights
Mount San Antonio College I.S.O.
Mount San Antonio College IDEAS
MEChA de U.C.R.
MEChA de R.C.C. - Moreno Valley
Laborers International Union of North America Local 777
ANSWER Coalition, Los Angeles
Aztlan Brown Berets
Colectivo Tonantzin
Hijos Ausentes Zacapu Michoacan
Comite Pro-Democracia en Mexico
Fernando Pedraza Day Laborer Coalition
CODEPINK Redlands

Inland Empire Do Peace & Nonviolence Alliance (IEDOPN), US Dept. of Peace Campaign
Riverside Community College Student Alliance for Education
Save Our Chinatown Committee
National Day Laborer Organizing Network (Southern California)
Institute of Popular Education of Southern California
Latina Roundtable of the San Gabriel and Pomona Valley
Riverside Area Peace and Justice Action
Friends Across the Line
Center for Islamic and Middle East Studies at California State University San Bernardino
Riverside Community Arts Association
Students Fight Back
March Forward!
March 25 Coalition of Los Angeles
Inland Agency
Riverside City Human Relations Commission
[Current number of sponsoring organizations: 62]
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