Community Commitment & Guidance for Safe Youth
Summer 2020

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

Given the current conditions of our community – the pandemic of 2019 and the ongoing racial injustices against our Black and Brown people – community residents, organizations, and local businesses are being challenged to adopt the following Community Commitment & Guidance for Safe Youth for Summer 2020.

COVID-19 has dramatically shifted the way we all do business. And for many families and their children, the closures of social spaces, parks, and facilitated enrichment programs throughout our city have forced many children, youth, and young adults to find alternative ways to fill their time. This summer alone, the Foundation for Tacoma Students is estimating nearly 4,000* summer program slots will be lost.

*Note: The near 4,000 is based on self-report data and historically collected data from service providers. Data is not collected by the same provider consistently year after year, therefore, this number cannot speak to the definite summer learning slots lost.

CONNECTION TO COMPASSIONATE TACOMA

The Mayor of Tacoma proclaimed in March 2020 a new way forward for the City of Tacoma, calling for a more Compassionate Tacoma.

Compassionate Tacoma is a new initiative launched by Mayor Victoria Woodards. Situated in the belief that each of us have the ability to make Tacoma a more welcoming, connected, resilient, and vibrant community by listening and serving others with love. Children, youth, and young adults are in need of such a community.

Contributors & Supporters to the Community Commitment & Guidance for Safe Youth

- City of Tacoma, Mayor’s Office
- City of Tacoma, City Managers Offices
- Foundation for Tacoma Students
- Tacoma Public Schools
- Tacoma Urban League
- Greater Tacoma Community Foundation
- Chamber of Commerce
- Greentrike
- Boys and Girls Club of South Puget Sound
- YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap Counties
COMMITMENT AND COMMUNITY GUIDANCE

On behalf of the children, youth, and young adults of Tacoma, WA, especially the Black and Brown youth of our community, we seek your commitment to share, engage, practice, and hold each other accountable to keep our children safe this summer.

Our Community Guidance is Simple:

1. Create and Nurture a Welcoming Environment
2. Stop, Listen, and Engage with Youth
3. Check Your Emotions
4. Give Grace

GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY

1. Create and Nurture a Welcoming Environment
   a. Consider how you can be a helper to the families and children in your neighborhood.
   b. Consider setting out new items that children will find playful like chalk, balls, water toys, bubbles, books, and more.
   c. Consider putting your Compassionate Tacoma signage in your yard, window, or another visible space so children, youth, and young adults know you care.

2. Stop, Listen, and Engage with Youth
   a. Consider showing kindness, care, and compassion to the children you see throughout our city.
   b. Consider asking children how they are doing, really. And, giving time to listen to their stories.
   c. Consider offering a helping hand or a word of encouragement as you can.
   d. Consider demonstrating what it means to give respect by modeling the behavior.
   e. Consider talking about race, social inequality, and ways to support change.
3. **Check Your Emotions**
   a. Consider the mental models, or implicit biases you hold.
   b. Consider checking those before engaging with children, youth, and young adults.
   c. Consider why discomfort is setting in before reacting.
   d. Consider your tone, body language, implicit bias and other forms of discrimination and oppression.

4. **Give Grace**
   a. Understand children, youth, and young adults are still developing. Allow them the space to learn and grow into civic leaders of tomorrow.

**GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESSES**

1. **Create and Nurture a Welcoming Environment**
   a. Consider offering times/days dedicated to young people with no expectation of purchase.
   b. Consider gifting to youth water, snacks, air conditioning, seating in your establishment or other resources with no expectation of purchase.
   c. Consider youth harmless when gathered together and assume positive intent.

2. **Stop, Listen, and Engage with Youth**
   a. Consider engaging with youth this summer beyond employment.
   b. Consider seeking their advice on creating a more welcoming environment.
   c. Consider and value the contributions of children, youth, and young adult voice when engaging with them.

3. **Check Your Emotions**
   a. Consider offering a helping hand or a word of encouragement as you can.
   b. Consider demonstrating what it means to give respect by modeling the behavior.
   c. Consider your tone, body language, implicit bias and other forms of discrimination and oppression.

4. **Give Grace**
   a. Understand children, youth, and young adults are still developing. Allow them the space to learn and grow into civic leaders of tomorrow.

**GUIDANCE FOR ORGANIZATIONS**

Many community organizations in Tacoma already do many of these foundation principles when engaging with children, youth, and young adults. Therefore, we encourage you to share, practice, and reinforce all of the guidance listed above and consider ways to deepen your racial equity and social justice efforts. Resource the time and training needed to institutionalize anti-racist practices, behaviors, and systems change and realize a more Compassionate Tacoma.
YOUTH VOICE QUOTES

- “Don’t call the cops on us. We’re just playing.”
- “Karen, stop abusing your privilege, everything isn’t about you.”
- “Set an example for safe spaces.”

PARENT VOICE QUOTES

- “See our babies from Black and Brown communities as babies. Look at them how a mother or father would see their own baby, no matter how big, old, or grown they get or appear.”
- “Police Officers should engage with our communities, not just police.”
- “Businesses, schools, and community should come together with families and youth to support our children in non-traditional ways.”