

February 15, 2018

Parkland, Florida: Seeing the Signs

Dear Friends,

It's intolerable that I am writing to you, yet again, in mourning for **lives lost** at the hands of a mass shooter, this time in a Parkland, Florida high school. Seventeen students and educators taken too soon, again leaving families torn apart. Others hospitalized and a community left in shambles. Of course, I am sad. But I am also among those who are furious. How many times do we have to bear witness to a preventable massacre?

There is a lot of talk now about seeing the **signs**. Let's face it. The signs were there. But the one I am not hearing enough about right now is hate speech and those who promote it—a mention or two in passing, and then back to other signs.

Today we **learned** that the shooter, 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz, may have been associated with the white supremacy group Republic of Florida. He flagrantly published insults against Muslims, Black individuals, and law enforcement on social media. And then he killed. It is clear that hate and hate speech correlate to hate crimes. A disturbed young man, inflamed by bigotry. What do we expect?

We must not underestimate the danger of hate. It lays the foundation for mass killings and atrocities. And yesterday's murderous rampage was no less than that—an atrocity. A criminal act that needs to be named: White Supremacist Terrorism.

Hate is more than graffiti on a wall or words on a social media post. It's a sign. One of the gravest. And we need to talk about it.

In mourning,



Joyce S. Dubensky
CEO

P.S. Tanenbaum works to prevent marginalization and bullying that can lead to hate and extremism. Multiple news outlets report that Cruz likely was bullied in school. This reminds us that he suffered even as he has inflicted so much suffering. But it also shows that inclusivity matters. Your support for Tanenbaum matters.