

574 Wines
Fine Wines, Liquor & Craft Beer, Curbside pickup available by phone or visiting 574wines.com
Visit us on Facebook and Instagram!
574 Monroe Tpke., Monroe 203.590.3578

Need Siding? 75 years of quality
203-334-5521 Labarnaby.com
L.A. BARNABY
75 years of quality
BBB A+ Rating
Angie's List

FIND A LOCATION NEAR YOU Your CBD Store

574 Wines Blackened Whiskey
203.590.3578

Blackeden Whiskey

Search Go

Heating Oil • Propane • Heating & Cooling
Serving Monroe For Over 100 Years
Propane Delivery & Service
Generator Installation & Service
23 Licensed Technicians
New Customer Incentives
1-800-994-FUEL (3835) www.sippin.com

a wellness life
20% OFF FOR NEW CLIENTS THROUGH JANUARY!
Call Tammy Kershaw 203-470-9809
Corrective exercise, Pilates, Functional Fitness, Yoga, Small group classes, Wellness Coaching...

a wellness life
20% OFF THROUGH JANUARY FOR NEW CLIENTS!
Call Tammy Kershaw 203-470-9809
A One Chair Full Service Hair Salon
COVID Safe

NEWSLETTER SIGNUP
Sign up for our newsletter and get the latest news delivered right to your email in-box.
First Name
Last Name
Email Address
Submit

574 Wines
203.590.3578
574 WINES AND SPIRITS
Fine Wines, Liquor & Craft Beer, Curbside pickup available by phone or visiting 574wines.com
Clean, 6 ft aisles for your safety. Visit us on Facebook and Instagram!

VALERIE'S GALLERY
CUSTOM ART BY VALERIE GIBBY
www.valeriegibby.com

ARCHIVES
Select Month

Pony Parts Plus
The perfect gift for the car buff in your life!
Auto Floor Mats and Carpets
Click here to visit our website or call us at 800-242-2334

Advertise Here
CLICK FOR DETAILS

The Center for Family Justice
Hope Starts Here
We're here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Domestic Violence Hotline (Safe Connect) (203) 384-9559
Sexual Violence Hotline (203) 333-2233

A Peaceful Gathering on the Green sparks conversations on racism

By Alison Cross | June 7, 2020

LIKE TWEET EMAIL PRINT MORE



Making their voices heard at Saturday's gathering on the green were, from left, Matt Pelletier, Dylan Pelletier, Caitlin Pelletier, Anthony Palma, Ethan, Palma and Erin Wielk.

MONROE, CT — Community leaders rallied on the Monroe Green Saturday to spread an anti-racist message of solidarity, and emphasize the need for educating society on discrimination and injustice in the wake of George Floyd's death.

The event, called A Peaceful Gathering on the Monroe Green, lasted over two hours and featured 19 speeches, chants, music, and a moment of silence. Approximately 500 people filled the green carrying signs, sporting T-shirts supporting #BlackLivesMatter, wearing masks, and maintaining a level of social distance.

"I think the event went great. It was a demonstration of how a community can come together as one and address the issues that are taking place currently right now in our nation," said Carlos Reinoso Jr, the lead organizer for the event and a member of the Monroe Youth Commission. "It was beautiful to see that. It brought tears to my eyes because this is what Monroe is about."

Halfway through the demonstration, attendants knelt or laid face-down for four minutes and 23 seconds signifying half the amount of time former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on George Floyd's neck. At times, Reinoso and demonstrators shouted out Floyd's final words. Sporadic cries of "I Can't Breathe," and "Mama," pierced the silence in a powerful moment that left some in tears.



Attendees kneel or lay face-down for four minutes and 23 seconds signifying half the amount of time former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on George Floyd's neck.

The diverse lineup of speakers included First Selectman Ken Kellogg, State Rep. J.P. Sredzinski, Police Chief John L. Salvatore, members from the Black, Latino and Indian communities, representatives from the Town Council, Board of Education and law enforcement, as well Christian and Muslims faith leaders.

Speakers from the black community shared personal stories of discrimination, harassment, and having to teach their children about racism and how to act around law enforcement.

"Most black men won't be killed at the hands of a police gun, hand or knee, but the fear of and the threat of that is always there. That's our reality," Brian Lampley said in his speech. "It would be nice to see some diversity on the police force and diversity in our schools, because it's hard to teach my children how to be a successful black person if they don't see any."



Sana Sarr addresses the crowd on the Monroe Green Saturday.

Rev. Dr. Michael Christie said that one morning, his family woke up to see a racial slur written on their mailbox. In his speech, he spoke about the need for white people to use their privilege to take action and stand up for people of color.

"There is something real called white privilege, and you have it, and it's not necessarily bad. But you have the power to make the difference in this moment. I can yell and scream all I want, but when you want to shout, they listen," Christie said.

First Selectman Ken Kellogg's words focused on unity. He said that although many have not personally experienced injustice, anyone can listen and show that they want to understand.

"We're all here today because we share in the sadness and the outrage over the death of George Floyd. We're also here today because we share in feeling the anger of witnessing such unbelievable horror in how someone was treated in this country where we pledge liberty and justice for all," Kellogg said. "I feel we are all here today because we want to understand, we want to listen, we want to unite, and we want the injustice to end."

Police Chief John L. Salvatore said George Floyd's death was a tragedy to the nation and law enforcement and that he hopes Monroe and Connecticut police forces do better.



Monroe Police Chief John L. Salvatore talks to the crowd during A Peaceful Gathering on the Green.

"Not one person can justify the action that that officer took, and we don't support that, nor do we support some of the recent abuses of police authority we've seen on the news," Salvatore said. "Our mission is to protect the lives, the safety of all people that work, live and visit this community, regardless of their race, regardless of their religion, sexual preference or orientation, etcetera. We protect everyone."

Speakers encouraged the community to educate themselves and their children through literature, film and conversation. They also stressed the importance of voting. Many hope increased awareness will usher change.

"For the future, I would hope that we are not living history repeatedly. We have fought for civil rights for decades, and frankly, I'm tired. I don't want to be having this conversation with my kids in the future and their kids, and so I would hope that in the future where all lives, black lives, are equal," said Fola Agunloye who came to the event with her two sons Temi and Tife Agunloye.

Recent Masuk High School graduate Myriam Desruisseaux said she hopes events like this lead to greater understanding.

"The event was very powerful," she said. "I would have liked to see more black youth speaking out, but I was very moved and touched by the entire thing. I came here to voice my opinion and show Monroe that the black community is here, and we are here to stay."



Janyce Prendergast-Carroll holds Raelyn Carroll at Saturday's event on the Monroe Green.

Arnita Christie, whose husband spoke at the event, said to create change, the Monroe community must engage in difficult conversations about race.

"This was a start. Let's see where we go from here," Christie said. "What is the commitment from the police chief, from the board of education, from the town selectman? What is their commitment? What do we do after today?"

Images from the gathering

This photo gallery shares scenes from A Peaceful Gathering on the Green. Click on one picture to enlarge the image, then scroll through:



READ NEXT

Monroe schools to start mask optional policy Monday
MONROE, CT — Board of Education members voted unanimously to suspend three policies requiring students to wear masks in school from Feb. 28 through June 30, though some remain divided over how effective cloth masks are in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

One thought on "A Peaceful Gathering on the Green sparks conversations on racism"

Sean O'Rourke on June 7, 2020 at 7:18 pm said:
Well done Monroe. You showed what the model for expressing grief, outrage, and healing can look like at a public event. To the speaker at the event, thank you for your tenor and tone, I'm sure it was not easy given the circumstances. I believe you have sowed the seeds for serious and difficult conversations on this important topic to take place.

Reply ↓

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Comment

Name

Email

Website

Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.

Post Comment

SOCIAL MEDIA
Follow us on Twitter
Follow us on Facebook

WE LIKE
New Canaanite
Valley Independent Sentinel
New Haven Independent
CT News Junkie
Greenwich Free Press

SEARCH THIS SITE
Search Go

BROWSE ARCHIVES
Select Month

The Monroe Sun covers all of the news of Monroe, CT.

Facebook Twitter RSS