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HOPE, COURAGE, AND HUMANITY'S ROLE: ANNE FRANK'S VOICE STILL SPEAKS TO CURRENT TRAGEDY

The Anne Frank Center responds to the Pittsburgh massacre

(New York, NY, October 29, 2018) – The rhetoric since Saturday's massacre has been unsurprising, as people naturally seek an explanation for the inexplicable violence that erupted in Pittsburgh. For example, the president's son, Eric Trump, lamented that "somebody has to point a political finger to absolutely everything," with others calling for a softening of tone and divisiveness "on both sides." There are not two sides to this. There is only one. And it is hate.

The Anne Frank Center responds that it's hard to identify a human act that doesn't have political import, and in this case an American citizen blamed an entire ethnic group for a perceived – yet unfounded – political threat, fearing that Jewish people were committing genocide and that he must stop them.

Seventy-four years ago, Anne Frank observed that "there's a destructive urge in people, the urge to rage, murder and kill." That a 14-year-old witnessed such tragedy is heartbreaking. The massacre of 11 innocent people at the Tree of Life Synagogue is a devastating reminder of much we share with past generations.

Hatred still pits neighbor against neighbor; elected officials still speak of unity in one breath yet inspire aggression moments later; parents still struggle to shield our children from the horrors of evil and to teach them to maintain peace and respect for their fellow humans.

"I don't believe that the war is simply the work of politicians and capitalists. Oh no, the common man is every bit as guilty," Anne said. She called on individuals to recognize their role in either promoting or preventing hostility. Today, the Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect calls on every individual to recognize their role and to see that we're in the midst of a battle for our own humanity.

Condemning anti-Semitism is not enough, when the government codifies discrimination and fights for the right to deny protection from harm. Condemning violence is not enough, when we encourage it with criticisms of colleagues and opponents as "enemies." Occasional words are not enough. We need consistency in leadership and a commitment to civility in every town, every classroom and every capitol building throughout the country.

If Anne Frank's words have taught us anything it is that actions and language matter.

Volunteers and educators with the Anne Frank Center teach children and community members how to respect our differences, understand cultures, and resolve our conflicts peacefully. We must conquer



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intolerance through conversation and compassion. As Anne Frank said, "The final forming of a person's character lies in their hands."

How we respond to this hate lies in our hands.

We teach the dangers of intolerance through Anne Frank's diary, educational workshops, performances, and exhibits, including outreach responding to the massacre in Pittsburgh. Visit <https://www.annefrank.com/> for more information.