



February 7, 2018

To Our Beloved Community:

For those who have yet to hear the news: on February 5th, the Fresno Police Department announced that they had a suspect in custody for the murder of Casey Haggard. She was a newly out and becoming a part of the community, slowly beginning to open up. She had waited all her life to finally be her real self, and that opportunity was stolen in the most vicious and cruel way.

For others who see representatives of Trans-E-Motion as splitting hairs for focusing on pronouns and the dignity of the deceased, we feel compelled to respond.

We are very disappointed that some of our supposed allies have missed the entire point of our movement and the work we do.

Being grateful for an arrest in a three year long case should not give way to complacency or failing to appreciate the progress that we still have to make. This doesn't mean we should ignore how trans people are consistently marginalized in everyday language and conversation.

It's interesting that most of those who praise the Fresno Police Department or claim that this was not a hate crime have not attended a Trans-E-Motion event in the last two years, if at all. We would like the community to know that ever since Trans-E-Motion became aware of her death and misgendering by the police and media, we have done everything in our power to educate and enlighten the authorities involved in her case. There is a LGBTQ liaison to the police department, we have asked to help in cultural competency training, and we have given endless free workshops on transvocabulary, medical issues, and cultural impact. We are therefore appalled at these responses and how they imply



that transgender people have no right to their own identities; that we should be grateful for every scrap of superficial acceptance that we get.

It's great that the alleged murderer was caught but our work is not done. From the sounds of it, there's much work to be done within our own community. We challenge you all to not downplay the pain of the transgender community, especially those who take on the mantle as "ally". Give transgender people a right to their feelings and dignity (and please note that most of these conversations are NOT being had by transgender people and therefore have very little claim to reference).

To suggest that the larger LGB part of the community just needs time, or that the wishes of the family are somehow more valid than the truth of Casey's authentic self is a thinly veiled attempt at policing the oppressed. Martin Luther King Jr. said in his letter from Birmingham jail that they (the oppressors) will never be ready for progressive change, so there is no point in appeasing those who are offended by our requests for understanding and respect. We understand the family has wishes of their own, yet we find that to be no excuse to not honor Casey as she would have wanted to be honored – because we in the trans community knew her no other way than as herself.

Sincerely,

Zoyer Zyndel

Jess Fitzpatrick

Jordan Fitzpatrick

Chair

Co-Chair

Secretary