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Groomer. Pedophile. Evil. These were a handful of names shouted at myself and countless others who stood in solitary for 11-year-old Vanellope Macpherson Dupont at Old Nick's Pub during Drag Queen Storytime on Sunday, October 23.

What started as a peaceful protest, full of rainbows, smiles, and a determination to protect our youth, our trans youth, was soon clouded by hate speech and violence by right-wing extremists, who were armed with smoke canisters, paint ball guns, pistols, and AR-15s.

After the first assaults, the police watched, perched on roof tops with drones buzzing overhead, and did nothing.

What would it have taken for them to intervene? An unarmed individual being shot? A child being shot?

We've witnessed violence from right-wing fascist militia over the last several years, and tolerated them while they pushed false information, bigotry, and hate onto our communities. This isn't new and it shouldn't be shocking. It's unacceptable for Ward 7, for Eugene, for the nation.

We must fight for our youth, for our right to exist, for our humanity. James Baldwin once stated, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

We will not let bigotry and hate diminish our spirit, and will continue to face those who challenge our fight for a better future.

Kyle Rodriguez-Hudson
Executive Director

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