



January 28, 2010

**Dear Friends,**

We hope this finds you well. **Many of you have already heard that the infamous Westboro Baptist Church is coming to San Francisco.** WBC was founded in 1995 by Fred Phelps in Topeka, Kansas, and has since made a name for itself by staging public protests against various religious institutions, community organizations, businesses, and funerals across the country over the past decade. They have been deemed a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center and are regularly monitored by the Anti-Defamation League. Their inflammatory racist, homophobic, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, and xenophobic rhetoric is widely recognized as a provocative ploy to gain attention and fan the flames of bigotry. **We are writing to make sure you are aware of their presence, and to support your safety if you encounter them.**

**Below are some the San Francisco institutions WBC is scheduled to protest this Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>:**

- San Francisco Jewish Community Center (1:50-2:20pm)
- Lowell High School (3:20-3:50pm)
- Twitter, Inc. (4:30-5:00pm)
- Golden Gate Theatre (7:20-8:00pm)

We are proud to live and work in San Francisco, a city with a vibrant history of faith-based, LGBTQ, and anti-racist organizing for justice and safety. The tactics of the WBC and Fred Phelps are meant to instill fear in our communities, and create false divisions among us. **The way we live our lives, build our communities, and work for justice sends a clear message that those tactics cannot work on us, and will not divert our attention or resources away from what is important.**

We recognize that the WBC images and presence can be scary, particularly for young people who are not familiar with their tactics. **We encourage institutions that will be protested as well as community members who plan on counter-protesting to follow basic safety agreements to avoid escalation or violence.** We also encourage all of our communities to use CUAV as a resource for emotional support or to report hate incidences—**call our Safety Line at (415) 333-HELP (4357) or come in during walk-in hours Fridays, 11am-5pm.** While you may not feel that you need emotional support during or immediately after the protests, sometimes hours or days later you may feel unexpected emotions.

Below are suggested safety tips:

- **Do not engage protestors if possible, and do not use escalating language. Keep a safe distance from protestors.**
- **Trust your intuition, if you feel unsafe ask for help.**
- **Have a buddy with you. Accompany young people if possible.**

- Talk to young people to explain the WBC and hate groups, make space to answer questions and validate feelings.
- Talk to friends, family, counselors, and other supportive people about the impact of WBC's protests. Make space for your own feelings.

We have proven time and again that LGBTQQ communities will not be bullied into silence or division, and that we are resilient people with a profound capacity to survive and thrive. **With all that is going on in the world, remember that all of us are precious.**

In community,  
Carolina, Morgan, Pablo, Stacy, and Tamara