

Black Lives Matter sign maker: Some customer signs are being stolen

The following was submitted to New Bedford Guide by Ian McGonnigal:

“A couple of months ago, Nick and I decided to start an organization called Southcoast Helps.

We’re both small business owners who wanted to do something to give back to our beloved Southcoast community. The idea is to create several small initiatives that support Human Rights & Social Justice, Education, Health & Wellness, Arts & Culture, Conservation, and other areas where we see there is a need. We keep it small and nimble, with no bureaucracy, fund our efforts with personal investments, and volunteer our time. 100% of any proceeds we get go directly to the local organizations we choose to support.

Black Lives Matter:

For our first project, we decided to support local black organizations. To do so, we invested in printing Black Lives Matter lawn signs for community members to show their support and solidarity against the racial injustice we see every day.

We sell these signs for \$20 each, and hand-deliver them to community members in a safe, socially distanced manner. To date: residents in Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Marion, Mattapoisett, and New Bedford have ordered signs and we’ve installed them in their front yards. We even have one community member who purchased several of these signs to distribute to other people who cannot afford them. We’ve promoted this on Facebook, and keep all recipients confidential.

We've had reports from some supporters that their signs were stolen. In some cases the supporters simply ordered a new sign giving more support to our cause, in other cases, they decide not to replace the sign for fears it will only be stolen again. And while we are disappointed that people would commit larceny to show their disdain for a human rights issue, we're also grateful it has helped us raise more money via replacement signs.

It's a challenging time for our society for sure. There is misinformation everywhere, and people are taking up sides when there should be none. Human rights have been politicized. The fact of the matter is most people have more complex views than choosing either side of a coin. I find we're all so busy yelling at one another, we're not hearing what is being said. If we could all take a moment to listen to understand, rather than listen to respond, we'd be in a better place.

The First Amendment provides every one of us freedom of speech, and we need to respect that."

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