

?People should stop screaming and do something?



By Brock Weir

Screaming, yelling and writing letters only go so far to effect change ? it's time to stop screaming and do something.

That is the view of Greg King, whose exhibition 'Come Together' is now in its final days at the Aurora Public Library's Colleen Abbott Gallery.

'Come Together' is an exhibition of images taken during the Toronto Women's March, a march in solidarity with the Women's March on Washington, which took place the day after the 2017 Presidential Inauguration.

Billed as 'a personal show of support, rooted in his belief that women's rights are human rights,' it is the first of a series of projects Mr. King has in the works that put this belief into action.

'This is not the first time I've shown here and they always are asking me for my photos of musicians, but this time I was the one who approached the Library because I felt like this was an issue we all need more education on,' says Mr. King, who says his second project in this series is in the works with a local high school and, once that is completed, the 'Big One' can soon take shape. 'I call it 'Faces of Diversity.' People often say Canadians aren't racist. Wrong. You talk to any person of colour and we have all encountered some form of racism. It may not be overt, but there is still systemic racism.'

But, there is also systemic sexism across the board, a point which was driven home for Mr. King when he was assigned to cover the Toronto Women's March for a Toronto-based union, who gave him a shot list on what they wanted him to cover.

Once on the ground, however, it soon became clear that this shot list just wasn't going to happen. Crowds were such that Mr. King was wedged into a certain position among the throng unable to move.

Eventually, despite his best efforts, he decided to throw away the shot list and just go with the flow.

'Once I gave up trying to fulfill the shot list and just went with it, it actually felt really good,' Mr. King recalls. 'I went to university in the 1980s training as a chemist and a third of my class was women. Fast forward to the 2000s and there aren't enough women in science and technology? What's going on? As a guy, one thing that really made me feel good were the number of men in their 20s and 30s who brought their daughters to be a part of this.'

'I think the younger generation of millennials get it, but there is a generation that didn't get it and went back.'

Among the images Mr. King captured that day are photographs of women, men and children carrying signs with the simple message 'Women's Rights are Human Rights,' a slogan he says is 'kinda of my mantra.'

'If you take one away, you're taking others away,' he says.

Considering the array of photos he's selected for the Aurora Public Library's exhibition, Mr. King points out that as these photos were taken well over a year ago, they capture a mood when the #metoo movement was not quite on the horizon. Yet, the messages carried by participants in the Women's March transcend a response to what President Trump characterized as 'locker room talk' on the campaign trail to something much larger.

'Women should have equal rights and we should all have equal rights,' says Mr. King. 'We shouldn't let bullies win. Not all of the

Trump images in 'Come Together' were in the original concept, but since December I thought, why not take advantage of it? There are kids holding rainbows saying 'you should respect everyone, Feminism is my Favourite F Word' and the images show this was a very peaceful demonstration.

He's so angry, so instead of yelling, screaming and writing letters, I actually do something. People should stop screaming and do something.

'Come Together' runs at the Aurora Public Library through Sunday.

For more on Greg King and his work, visit www.gregking.ca.