

Family "overwhelmed" by community outpouring following incident

A family in Aurora's northeast has been left feeling 'overwhelmed' by the community's support following a neighbour dispute which York Regional Police is now investigating for potential 'hate-motivated' elements.

The family of four, which planted roots in Canada after emigrating from India more than 20 years ago, say issues recently arose when their neighbour found roofing nails in their driveway and claimed the family was the source.

Tensions only escalated from there, they claim, and included garbage and bags of bugs being strewn on their property, feces thrown into their backyard, signs being put in a clearly visible neighbouring window 'mocking' their gods, and the yelling of racial statements, which their children captured on video.

These videos were subsequently posted to TikTok by their daughter and onto local community groups on Facebook, including the Aurora Black Community.

'This incident began as a neighbour dispute with potentially hate-motivated elements,' said Constable Laura Nicolle of the York Regional Police. 'It has been reported to us and the investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to come forward.'

But this response was not always the case from the police, according to the couple.

'We had already called police two times by then and they said it was a neighbourhood dispute,' says the mother of their attempts to find a resolution before the video was posted to social media. 'We told them they were mocking our gods, we told them all these things, but still police weren't helping us at all.'

A further police visit followed the video and, after they took statements from the family, the couple was asked to submit their evidence directly.

'The Aurora Community people are providing our family with a lot of support,' she continues. 'The Mayor called and said we had his full support and he was disappointed by this behaviour. On top of that, Councillor John [Gallo] and Councillor Sandra [Humfries] both also called and said it seems like bad behaviour and totally condemned it. At the same time, I feel so much love from the community. A lot of people came by to offer their support and they are all sending flowers.'

Adds her husband: 'A lot of people have dropped by to show their love and support for us. I didn't even expect people would be so supportive and I am overwhelmed by their support ' and we're glad the community has been supportive of us.'

Sharing their story with The Auroran, the couple says they want to encourage anyone living in these types of situations to speak up. What might appear to be a neighbour dispute on the surface could be something more.

'We want to say Aurora is a very safe community and there are no fears or anything,' says the mother. 'We are like a family. When everyone showed that much love and affection, even though I'm from India and I migrated 20 years back, I never felt like I am not a part of this country. After seeing [what happened], my daughter was so fearful and said, 'Dad, should we leave this house?' But this type of love and affection we had in this community shows that this is our home.'

Adds her husband: 'Everybody should stand up so this rage and hate stops where it starts. We need something from the leadership of Aurora. They need to start some kind of education to these kinds of people on how to behave because this is not acceptable ' some indication that racism is not tolerated in Aurora. That is our main message.'

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter