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**Los Altos for Racial Equity Newsletter - Issue #16**

1 message

**LARE via ActionNetwork.org** <info@sg.actionnetwork.org>

Tue, Apr 25, 2023 at 6:14 PM

Reply-To: losaltosracialequity@gmail.com

To: thochem@gmail.com

Hi Tanya!



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**April 2023    Issue 16**

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**Los Altos for Racial Equity's (LARE)** mission is to advocate for all people, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) who live, work, and play in Los Altos and surrounding communities, to be treated equitably in all aspects of their lives. We are a group of Los Altos residents who share a commitment to the work of social justice.

**LARE** has several Working Groups focused on the following areas: Policing & School Resource Officers (SROs), Racial Identity and Profiling Act (RIPA) data analysis, Membership, Local Government. If one or more of these Working Groups resonate with you and you would like to participate in making change happen in our community, reach out to us and let us know how you can help! We are looking forward to hearing from you!

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## Issue Highlights

## Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)

Acquiring 25 Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) for a pilot program was proposed to the Los Altos City Council at the [February 28th meeting](#) by Los Altos Police Department (LAPD) Chief Averiette. The conversation around ALPRs continues. Our Steering Committee President, Renee Rashid, offers an update from LARE:

"LARE is really proud of the fact that we have had good conversations with the community about ALPRs and have been able to get more people aware of the costs and benefits to this technology. At its core, **this issue is about good governance and ensuring that our city has the most effective tools to keep our city safe and operating smoothly.** Are the touted benefits of ALPR's worth their cost? We want to enable each of you to answer this for yourselves. This cost-benefit analysis is the same analysis that we as the public ask for any of our other issues - whether we talk about preserving Halsey House or implementing Reach Codes.

So when we hear discussion about "We should trust the police!" or "Don't you trust the police?" that is truly disappointing. This discussion is NOT about trust. If we as the public or our elected bodies can't ask questions about policing for fear of being labeled "Anti-police", people will stop discussing and asking questions, and then everyone loses. 47% of our budget goes to policing. Imagine being the CEO of a company where 47% of your budget is going to a department but you're not allowed to ask that department about their ROI, growth, metrics, goals, or progress. That company will tank pretty fast.

That is what can happen to public safety in our city. If we blindly keep throwing money at ineffective solutions for public safety, we can not expect to be a safe city for much longer. We are always happy and willing to debate and differ with others on which solutions we think are effective. But that debate should be civil and informed and leave out rhetoric that has been used at the national level to quell opposing views."

Renee recently participated in a discussion with Hector Soliman-Valdez, Senior Community Affairs Manager of Flock Safety, sponsored by LACC on April 7th. You may view the recording [here](#). Renee gave a strong evidence-based argument against the implementation of ALPRs in Los Altos.

At the February 28th City Council Meeting three City Council members requested further data and analysis about the efficacy of Flock's ALPR system before taking a Council vote. ALPRs are not on the agenda for this evening so watch for the May 9th agenda [here](#) and prepare your comments to speak out against ALPRs in our city!

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## Military Equipment Usage Policy

Make sure to mark your calendars for a Public Safety Update on MEUP provided by the Los Altos Police Department online, on Wednesday, April 26th at 5pm. If you have questions or would like to submit feedback in advance use this [email](#). Here is the [link](#) for the meeting, passcode is 685273.

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## **Ethnic Studies**

The MVLA School Board of Trustees last met on April 3, 2023 ([recording](#)) to further discuss the Ethnic Studies curriculum after an attack by a national group citing antisemitic lessons. Amid the public outcry, MVLA opted to terminate its \$45,000 contract with Acosta Educational Partnership (AEP) because of its affiliation with Samia Shoman, a co-founder of Teach Palestine, who has spoken out about the erasure of the Palestinian people in the Ethnic Studies curriculum. This position is thought to be anti-semitic by many Jewish people and organizations.

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## **Community News**

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This beautiful mural on the wall of [Tal Palo's](#) cafe patio was made possible by donations to [Arts Los Altos](#). Rocca Luis César, an artist from Guadalajara, Mexico, was commissioned by Tal Palo owners, Adriana Dominguez and Aaron Porter. Once César created the design, muralist Nigel Sussman painted the mural.

César is known for abstract human forms and flowing lines. This design was inspired by old Talavera style pottery, which you will also see examples of inside the cafe. César envisioned a whole of integrated references of life emerging from the mouth of a vase with the plant symbolizing fertility and abundance.

These lines from a poem by César captures the mission of Tal Palo: "We sow and reap the fruits, we water them and fill them with sun, moonlight, we see them grow, flourish, we take care of them. We share and enjoy the abundance of love, the earth and nature."

If you have not yet visited Tal Palo, drop in for a most welcoming and delicious experience. Tal Palo is located at 149 Main Street, Downtown Los Altos.

*Adapted from Arts Los Altos*

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

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Observed in the United States since 1949, Mental Health Awareness Month has enabled the topic of mental health to evolve from one not discussed or well understood to what it is today with vocabulary for symptoms, options for treatment, and safe spaces to disclose thoughts and feelings.

This year National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is observing the month with their [#morethanenough](#) campaign. No matter one's diagnosis, appearance, socioeconomic status, background or ability everyone holds an inherent value. Visit [NAMI's](#) website for graphics, events, and resources.

### 988 is the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

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Through education and conversation about future trends, policy proposals, and best practices, the **Los Altos Community Coalition (LACC)** promotes good city planning, good government, and civil discourse in our community. Every other Friday morning at 8:30am LACC features an interview with a community leader or a representative from a local organization. You can view these events on their [You Tube](#) channel.

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## Important Dates

- Tuesday, 4/25, 7pm: City Council Meeting, [Agenda](#)
  - Wednesday, 4/26, 5pm: Online Public Safety Update by LAPD, [Link](#)
  - Thursday, 4/27, 4pm - 8pm, State Street Market, 'Spring Market', support local artisanal food makers, crafters, and artists
  - Saturday, 5/6, 10am - 1pm, Community Center: Parks and Rec family event
  - Monday, 5/8, Youth Commission applications due
  - Tuesday, 5/16, 4:30pm: Youth Commission interviews
  - Thursday, 5/25, 6:45pm, [Justice Vanguard](#) Free Movie Night, 'Soul', Los Altos Community Center
  - Saturday, 6/17, 12pm-5pm: Justice Vanguard's [4th Annual Juneteenth Celebration](#), Hillview Field
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## Ongoing Meetings

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- Every Other Friday, 8:30am: LACC Interview on [YouTube](#)

## How Can You Help?

Read more about LARE on our [website](#) and follow us on social media (Instagram, Facebook), [@losaltosforracialequity](#).

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