

Firefly

I have been in Wauwatosa with my family for as long as I can remember. I love the feeling of it. With every single trouble going on in Wauwatosa, and all of the world, Tosa is the only place I can feel at home. I grew up in this community and I have learned to love for the people, for the world, and the Tosa family. Wauwatosa is a place where people show so much spiritedness, sympathy, and compassion to me, that I am obliged to give it back. I have never once felt unwelcome here.

My parents migrated from India to the U.S. more than fifteen years ago. We came to Wauwatosa when my twin sister and I were just three years old. It has been ten years since then, and I cannot even think of leaving. When I go to school, I am one of the only Asian Americans there, but that does not matter to me, or anyone in my school. This is because Tosa is so different from other communities.

Tosa teaches me to shine like a firefly, Tosa teaches me to light the hearts of every other person here. Here in Tosa, it does not matter where I come from, because I am now part of the Tosa family. Wauwatosa was named after the Potawatomi word "firefly". And that is so true. The city of Tosa glows like one big firefly, glowing brighter and brighter. But when you look closer, Tosa is not just one firefly, there are thousands of them. Every single one of us has a heart that sparks like a firefly. When we give and get kindness, we glow, but when we hate, our shine dims, along with others. Giving kindness is so special because when we give kindness, we cannot stop spreading more. And when we get kindness, the same thing happens.

Racism is a big problem in Wauwatosa, and in the whole country, and it has been for a long time. Hate only comes when one's spark of affection is gone. And the killing of Alvin Cole proved that Wauwatosa was not perfect. Maybe not everyone's hearts were shining, maybe not everyone wanted peace. Maybe not everyone cared to love.

But after every darkness, comes light. When so many had dimmed their light of hope, so many let it shine brighter and brighter. So many people showed that they cared. They were reminded that they were part of our Wauwatosa family. They showed us that it is not about the disgusting hate that was given to us, it is about the concern, affection, and care that we give to others. These people showed us that we were someone. They showed us that we were each a distinct and unique person. They showed us that we were special only because of who we are. And that if who we are is something that is to be changed, then we are not at all significant anymore. I have learned that we people need to acknowledge and appreciate that we are all discrete and unlike from one another because that is what truly makes us ourselves. We cannot be utterly ourselves if we are trying to act like another.

When lights everywhere were going dark, Wauwatosa chose to glow, like it always does, with kindness, hope, and peace. And today, I have seen my family grow with me. I value and cherish every part of this incomplete journey against hate because although it's not over, it's not going to be for a long time. There will always be people filled with rage and hate in this world.

They will always be unaware of the true beauty of kindness, regard, and sympathy. Sometimes even we cannot change that. We cannot let that get us down because even now, that firefly glows brighter and brighter, stronger and stronger, because there is a spark of light in each and every one of us, and soon, it will be even brighter than it is today and there is nothing that can dim this community, this family, this firefly.