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Metro State at the Women’s March

In light of President Trump’s election, many Americans feel the need to fight for what they believe. Such an event took place in Washington D.C. on January 21st. The Women’s March was a way for hundreds of thousands to show their support, speak their minds and to fight for what they believe in. Protesting was a way to create waves regarding many political issues, including the rights of women, LGBTQ, immigration and racial equality. Those who were in attendance felt strongly about supporting legislation regarding human rights and opposed the offensive actions and positions of President Trump. This protest, one of the largest peaceful protest demonstration in U.S. history, involved supporters from around the world.

If the hordes of people weren’t enough of a shock, many women in the crowd wore a pink, knitted hat that made an enormous visual impact. Knitted from pink yarn and styled to have cat-like ears, it became what is now called the Pussyhat Project. The idea started off as a way to visually turn a derogatory word for women into a positive and empowering message. These hats where made by crafters around the world to take back the word. It was a way for women around the nation to show support and make a stance even if they couldn’t make it to the march. However, the hats became so popular that they were a fundamental accessory for the Women’s March. This small project grew immensely and united the crowd, making a visually impactful statement.

After the March, many speakers shared their stories and ideas, including political leaders and celebrities. Many felt the importance of demonstrating concern and the significance of being a part of something you believe in. At the march, strangers from different backgrounds united and huddled together.

Members of Metro State’s Student Senate also attended the march. Senate member Heather Moenck said that being in the crowd “felt amazing,” adding, “There were so many people surrounding us that we couldn’t move. There was a quiet awe around everyone… even strangers were sharing stories and commenting on signs they liked. I was so happy to be there.”

Some from Metro State felt compelled to advocate for their own reasons. Metro State librarian Jennifer DeJonghe sat through a 22-hour bus ride to Washington D.C. with some colleagues, friends and family members to attend the march. Even on the ride there DeJonghe thought, “It was truly inspiring… an experience that I will never forget, and it still gives me chills to think about it… because the people seated around me turned out to be some of the nicest, most interesting people I have met, and we learned a lot about each other on that trip.”

In D.C., DeJonghe engaged in the march, protests and rallies and feels that this sort of event is a fundamental part of our democracy. For DeJonghe, protecting free speech is something she strives for as a librarian, believing that speech in any form should be protected and preserved. To her this is a way to stand in the face of adversity much like the people in history before her. These marches were much harder and the risks where tremendous, but she feels that participating is just as important so we can also change our country for the better.

Four women from Student Senate attended the March. For Dhibo Hussein and Heather Moenck, marching was a way for them to fight for the rights of women and against racial inequality. Something that they had faced just getting out of the car before they started to march, their fight for these issues represented a small fraction of a bigger picture. Hussein explained that marching “was a surreal experience and one that I felt would stay with me for the rest of my life.”

Both Hussein and Moenck feel that representing oneself and making a difference matters. This includes being able to have uncomfortable conversations, understanding the importance of politics and how to have an effect on politics to make positive gains—all attributes they learned from being on the senate. Now back at school, these women are feeling a new sense of empowerment, determination and motivation to make a difference.