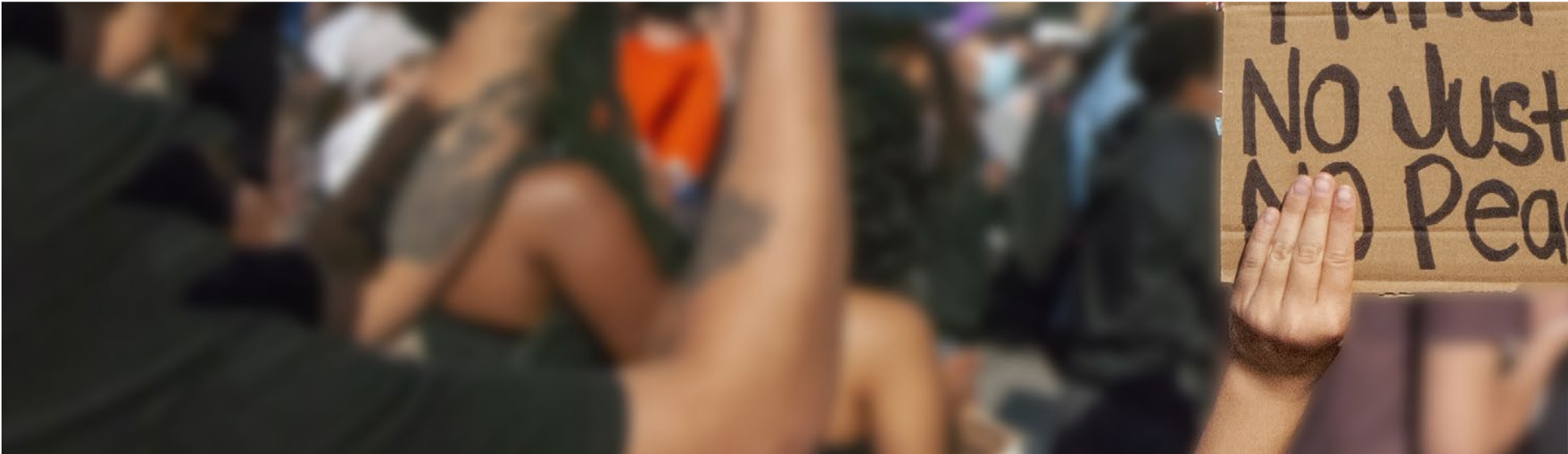


# Three Black Lives Matter protests



Sunny Fleming  
Reporter

On Wednesday June 3, protesters in the tens of thousands gathered at Kitchener’s old bus station to show support for Black Lives Matter.

George Floyd, an unarmed Black man who died at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer and Regis Korchinski-Paquet, a Black Toronto woman whose death is the subject of a Special Investigations Unit case sparked a Canada-wide wave of demonstrations.

Organized by activists local to KW, including Selam Debs, Carla Beharry, and Aaron Francis, the march was a peaceful protest that included chanting, signage, moments of silence, and impassioned speeches from members of the community.

Not only were there approximately 20,000 people in attendance in person, but about 4,000

people watched virtually via Facebook Live.

The organizers of the protest released a statement on June 2 that outlined their aims and goals for the protest.

They began with a statement of why they were protesting, which was to respond to the “extrajudicial executions of and police violence against Black people in the United States, Canada, and around the world.”

The organizers’ principles for the march included their arguments that policing cannot be reformed, that they acknowledge the presence of police brutality towards Black women and trans people, that systemic racism does exist in Canada, and that Black and Indigenous peoples’ solidarity is essential for the work they hope to do.

The list of the protest’s calls to



action included the defunding of the Waterloo Region Police Services, to reallocate resources to other important community initiatives:

- The removal of the Community Outreach Program (COPs) and School Resource Officer (SRO) from communities and schools.

- And the defunding of campus police, to reallocate resources to Black and Indigenous students.

Organizers say these police programs are part of the school-to-prison pipeline.

The Waterloo Region released a statement saying that they would walk alongside and support the protesters virtually.

In their press release, the region said they “support and acknowledge their right to peacefully protest to raise awareness of the lives lost to violence rooted in systemic racism, and to encourage our community to support efforts to confront anti-Black racism close to home.”

Though the statement encouraged the protesters to participate virtually, the region acknowledged that for some people “the pain and trauma of recent events can only be healed through community grieving; and for that, we appreciate and thank event organizers for their diligence in advising those planning to attend in-person on the need to utilize masks, maintain physical distancing, and stay away if experiencing any COVID-19 like symptoms.”

The Waterloo Region Police Service (WRPS) Chief of Police, Bryan Larkin released a statement as well to express his support for the protestors and to encourage safety in times of quarantine as well.

