

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Coming to the Table Condemns Recent Racist Incidents in Harrisonburg, Virginia**

*Monday, September 26, 2016*

This past June, Coming to the Table, an organization working to help heal the wounds of racism, held its 10th Anniversary National Gathering at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg; the community in which CTTT was founded. Harrisonburg has always been a welcoming place for CTTT members from around the country, so we were deeply disturbed to learn about the [recent incident](#) in which a racist “n---r survey” was left on the windshield of an interracial couple's car while they shopped at Walmart in Harrisonburg. Several weeks earlier [another racist incident](#) received national attention when customers at a Harrisonburg restaurant refused to tip a server, writing on their bill that they only tipped citizens.

While both incidents were disturbing, the incident at Walmart was particularly chilling because rather than being a spur of the moment act, the “survey” was type-written and included a phone number. It was designed to incite fear and as such it was similar to the actions of organized hate groups. Coming to the Table condemns such acts of terror and we urge Harrisonburg law enforcement officials to quickly identify and hold those responsible accountable for their actions.

After the first incident many Harrisonburg residents and community leaders spoke up to condemn the racist actions of the non-tipping restaurant customers and expressed support for the server. By doing so, they made it clear that the incident in no way reflected the majority attitudes in Harrisonburg. We are confident the Harrisonburg community will raise our voices once again in opposition to racism and hate, and will give support to the targeted couple.

Receiving such support from neighbors, strangers, and the community at large, will go a long way toward quelling the couple's understandable fears. CTTT joins all people of good will in Harrisonburg in speaking out and in expressing our support for the couple that was targeted. Racist incidents like these are painful reminders of just how much work remains to be done to solve racial problems in our community and our nation.

*Coming to the Table was formed in 2006 in partnership with the Center for Justice & Peacebuilding at EMU. There are currently 12 local chapters working in 7 states and Washington, DC. The Shenandoah Valley chapter is co-chaired by Will Hairston and Judith James. Steven Thomas is a CTTT member in close contact with the family targeted at Walmart. More information at: [www.comingtothetable.org](http://www.comingtothetable.org).*



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