Spokane's United We Stand organized the March 20 rally and vigil to Stop the Hate. Planners included Charity Bagatsing, Tia Moua, Rosie Zhou, Pascal Bostic, Ping Ping.

The Spokane's United We Stand is a facebook group formed after a Vietnamese American young adult, Vina Cathcart, was called “Chinese virus” in local grocery store, said Ping Ping a commissioner for Asian and Pacific American Affairs of Washington State (CAPAA) and member of the sociology faculty at Spokane Falls Community College.

“In addition,  ‘Chinese Communist Party Virus’ label was applied to Asian Pacific Islander (API) people by a local Vietnamese American in a speech condemning the Governor Jay Inslee’s lockdown order in May 2020.

“This is not acceptable behavior. So Charity (Filipino), Vina (Vietnamese), Cisco (Palao), and I (Chinese), established this group,” she said.

“We stand for anti-racism and unite Asian and Pacific Islanders, and all people in Spokane,” Ping Ping said.

Good afternoon my fellow rally participants!

Today we are gathering to mourn the senseless deaths of eight individuals on March 16, six of whom were Asian women, at the hands of a spree shooter in Atlanta, Georgia, and we are here to mourn 84 year old Thai American Richa Ratanapakdee, who was attacked in a beautiful morning in SanFrancisco on Jan. 28, he died two days later in a hospital.

I am here to speak up as a daughter, a mother, an immigrant from China. When I saw the video of 84 year old Richa Ratanapakdee was slammed on ground, my heart was frozen. I suddenly imagined that could be my father. I couldn’t sleep well since Feb. 8.

As an immigrant from China, I clearly know I speak English with a heavy accent. This makes me have inferiority complex. My Ph.D. degree in sociology was from Hong Kong. I felt I started from nowhere, so I tend to be quiet. Until one day, when I was showing the film “Who Killed Vincent Chin?” to my students at Spokane Falls Community College, Vincent was a victim of hate crime, the two murders ---white auto workers in Detroit only had to pay $3,000 fines and didn’t have to spend one day in jail! When I saw Vincent’s mother Lily said: even though our skin color is different, our blood is in same colors.

Tears rushed out of my eyes! It was at that moment I saw myself as an Asian American. As a mother I need to fight like a mother. As an immigrant, I still have a voice, I want to stand up for people who cannot speak for themselves out of fear, feelings of subservience or simply due to a language barrier.

It is Vincent Chin’s death and Lily Chin’s fight makes me become a warrior for equity and justice. For this I am grateful for Pam Prager, my college’s President at the time. For you introduced this film to me and my students, this film changed the way I understand how America perceived Asian Americans. We are perceived and expected to be “model minority”, overly achieve academically but don’t stir the pot when facing discriminations. It is a trap for all of us. Especially it creates a divisive toxic relationship between Asian and African Americans. I will urge my fellow Chinese Americans, wake up from this myth! This label does not give you “face”, it kills your spirit as a human from inside!

Today, I am here to speak up also as a commissioner of Washington state on Asian and Pacific American Affairs. I joined the commission in last July, I want to see a more cohesive and united Asian and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander community in Spokane. I really like CAPPA’s statement on March 18: “We stand proudly as Asian Americans, whose communities have enriched this state's history, economy, and culture for generations. Even as grief weighs heavy on our backs, we will not bend. Our fight for social justice continues.”

My fellow rally participants, my heart has been broken many times: When my daughter’s eyes were made fun of in third grade, but she only told me six years later. When Vincent’s mother said: I want justice for my son! When I saw Vicha Ratanapakdee slammed. Now when I saw six Asian women were killed in Atlanta, honestly, I don’t have tears. I am extremely angry. What is ahead of us is a system, a culture that treats us as foreigners, as a “virus.”

Fellow Americans! We need to unite for justice, justice for ALL marginalized groups and individuals. As Asians, we need to unite together with all people who are willing to fight for justice. Let’s fight against the systemic racism and prejudice against women! STOP Asian Hate!

Please reach to me if you are treated negatively. For information, call 869-3857.