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## ACLU AT THE STATE FAIR

Every year of my conscious memory - well over 60 years now - I have attended the Minnesota State Fair at least once, sometimes twice, and this year three times. It is one of my favorite things to do. This year, as I have for the past several years, I worked a shift at the ACLU-MN's booth in the Education Building. And for the first time, I was joined in doing so by my wife and my 12-year-old daughter.

Working the ACLU-MN booth at the fair is a fun and enlightening experience. In our three hour shift we handed out more than 200 Constitutions, a handful of voter registration applications, several hundred "Get a Warrant" stickers for cell phones, and dozens of instructions for how to download ACLU-MN's Mobile Justice App (available for free in your app store). My daughter proved to be our secret weapon: She handed every kid she saw a flyer explaining their rights to privacy on the internet, and engaged many of them in conversation. By the time she was done, she had exhausted the entire supply. We were very proud of her!

While it is a joy to talk to the many ACLU-MN supporters who stop by the booth, it is an enlightening experience to talk to people who, to put it mildly, have a low opinion of the ACLU. One gentleman approached me and said, "I disagree with everything you stand for." I said to him "You disagree with the Constitution of the United States?" He said, "Of

course not, but I know what you people think and I disagree with it." My response: "The ACLU stands for the Constitution of the United States and the civil liberties and civil rights it grants to all of us. I don't see how you can disagree with that." When I asked him to be more specific about what he disagreed with, he walked away.

My wife engaged in a conversation with a couple from Greater Minnesota for the better part of an hour. They, too, disagreed with what the ACLU stands for. It was their perception that the ACLU was "anti-Christian" and "anti-white." Neither of those perceptions is true of course: The ACLU supports everyone's freedom of religion, but consistent with the First Amendment's Establishment Clause, we oppose any effort by government to impose religion on anyone. Nor is the ACLU "anti-white." We defend all Minnesotan's Bill of Rights. But racism is a real and persistent problem in America, and racial injustice is pervasive. It is one of our core missions to make sure the Constitutional rights of people of all races are protected, without regard to the religion they adhere to or the color of their skin.

In order to do the important work we do, we need you - our members - to help us. How? By becoming more involved through donating your time and money and by telling people you know about our work. ■