

Christians Wage Successful Warfare to Shut Down 'Demonic' Attraction

Knott's Berry Farm closed a "demonic" Halloween-themed attraction after Christians, including Rick Warren's wife Kay, waged warfare.

"Knots Berry Farm has a psychiatric ward with a demonic patient in their Halloween set. This is NOT entertainment. I'm infuriated that they use the pain & suffering of millions of people for laughs or thrills. Take it down!" Kay posted to Facebook.

The park initially marketed the attraction as "FearVR: 5150," centered around a "demonic patient" in a mental institution. The numbers refer to California's welfare code, which authorizes a peace officer or clinician to involuntarily confine a person suspected of having a mental disorder that makes them a danger to themselves or others, according to the *OC Register*.

The Warrens' son Matthew, who committed suicide in 2013, had been hospitalized under the 5150 code.

The park shut down the attraction at the Knott's Berry Farm location, as well as two other parks.

"Over the past week, we have heard from a number of people expressing concern that one of our temporary, Halloween attractions—Fear VR—is hurtful to those who suffer from mental illnesses," according to the *Register*. "Contrary to some traditional and social media accounts, the attraction's story and presentation were never intended to portray mental illness."

Though Kay's initial lobby was a success, some took offense to her initial statement, claiming she implied all mental ill patients were demonic.

In a clarifying Facebook post, she wrote:

There are a few distortions of my thoughts about mental illness that are circulating here – thought maybe it would be helpful if I speak in my own words so you can hear directly from me. It might not help at all, but hopefully it will.

My original statement about the ride at Knotts' included the words "demonic patient" and some of you have interpreted that to mean that I approved that language and characterization of people living with mental illness. That is 100% untrue. As a passionate advocate FOR people living with mental illness, I want to end stigma by making sure folks know mental illness is an ILLNESS. My use of the words "demonic patient" were quoting the words of others who described the content of the ride to me – and i was protesting the usage of such a decription, not supporting it! As I take a step back, though, and look with non-defensive eyes, I can totally see how someone might think those were my descriptive words rather than know I was quoting someone else. the post was orignially a Tweet rather than a FB post, and as you all know, tweets have to be condensed into 140 characters. I should have expanded the FB post to make sure all understood I was quoting someone else's description of the ride content and that i was upset at that description.

For anyone who felt I was equating mental illness and demonization, please forgive me – that was not my intent AT ALL. It is a passion of my heart to do what i can to reduce stigma around mental illness, not perpetuate or participate in it. My desire is that anyone living with a mental illness feels acceptance and compassion from others and therefore feels comfortable asking for help, not feeling like others will recoil in horror or fear based on unkind, untrue and unhelpful stigmatization.