

# Standing in Solidarity

## Support for Racial Equity and Black Lives Matter

The Federal City Council stands against racial injustice and in solidarity with peaceful protestors and the fight for racial equality.

We must work together to understand, learn, change and strengthen the fabric of our society. In their words, and those of their organizations, here is where the Federal City Council and its members stand on racial equity and Black Lives Matter.

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## **Neil Albert, President & CEO, DowntownDC BID**

The DowntownDC Business Improvement District (BID), since its founding in 1997, has been instrumental in supporting and transforming our community into a welcoming and inclusive economic, cultural and entertainment center for the region. We have done this while valuing and celebrating the contributions of all who made this transformation possible. This includes our property owners and managers, our retailers and small businesses, our museums and theaters, our entertainment venue owners and operators, our faith-based institutions, our government and law enforcement partners, the many companies that choose to establish offices in DowntownDC and the more than 180,000 employees that fill those offices, the leaders of our Convention Center, and especially our residents and the millions of visitors who come to DowntownDC every year, without whom our downtown's success would not have been possible.

Equally valued are the contributions of our Safety/Hospitality and Maintenance (SAM) ambassadors, many of whom joined the BID for their first job or reentered the workforce with us after experiencing homelessness or incarceration.

The past three months have been difficult for DowntownDC and the rest of the District, as businesses were forced to shut their doors to help stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). The DowntownDC economy is now functioning at less than 10 percent of capacity. Every sector has been affected.

Since Saturday, as we were gearing up to restart the DowntownDC economy, many of our establishments suffered damage, imposing additional financial burdens on already struggling businesses.

We strongly condemn the actions that led to the death of George Floyd in Minnesota. Our hearts grieve with the Floyd family and we share the country's frustration with centuries of marginalization of black and brown people. We support the First Amendment demonstrations that have been occurring in DowntownDC and across the world. We also strongly oppose violence, vandalism and looting and are working each day to help our properties and businesses maintain their safety and mitigate further destruction to their property.

Our focus during the past five years has been on building an inclusive downtown by investing in homeless services, programs for at-risk youth, employment and professional development opportunities for our local community and improving public spaces for the enjoyment of all.

While the recent incidents have forced us all to reexamine the role we have played in bridging the racial and economic divides in our country, DowntownDC is committed to working with its partners and community to grow our inclusive programs and activities to better support all who live, work, play and visit our BID. We are DowntownDC Resilient.

## **Kristen Barden, Executive Director, Adams Morgan Partnership Business Improvement District**

Our thoughts today are with the friends and family of George Floyd as he is remembered by those who knew and loved him.

We are in solidarity with those who speak out against injustice in our community and in our country.

We are moved to reexamine ourselves and are committed to the continued learning and practice of anti-racism in our work.

We can be better. We must.

## **Rahsaan G. Bernard, President, Building Bridges Across the River**

Let me begin here: Building Bridges Across the River mourns the death of George Floyd and condemns the injustice that led to his death. It has been a tough few days, weeks, months for us all. I know I do not need to go into details because if you are alive and breathing in this country, you know the enduring pain the black community has suffered and how palpable it still is. The present dystopia is chilling. As a father of three young children, all I desire to do is to wrap them in my arms for protection, but I am painfully aware how little shelter this actually provides. Friends, our children should not grow up in an America where the color of their skin fatalistically determine their future.

This is exacerbated by the decimation of our communities due to the alarming disproportionate rates of COVID 19 deaths, a clear sign of the structural health inequities that have plagued communities of color. Even if you had not had a chance to process the events that have happened, when you do, trauma is inevitable. And, suppressing the visceral emotion, by all clinical standards, is unhealthy. We have chosen to acknowledge it, embrace it, channel those emotions responsibly, and allow it to fuel our fervor for peace, justice, and equity.

Friends, even in the midst of an epidemic of fatal racist acts and a pandemic of novel coronavirus we have opportunity. We stand with peaceful protest and apart from those who incite violence and discord. For the weapons of our warfare are not violence, harm or destruction to fellow Americans and cities, but peace, love, a deep conviction about the value of humanity, and deliberate action that works tirelessly to dismantle racism and racial disparities. I believe we have an opportunity to harness the power of our shared values and convictions, leverage what is true and endemic for all humanity - a deep desire for trusting relationships - to bring us all together in solidarity for a better America.

My refrain remains the same: we are always better together, always stronger together, always more formidable together, to bring about the change we need in this generation and the next.

## **Josh Bernstein, CEO, Bernstein Management Corporation**

“Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.” That 1962 quote, from American novelist James Baldwin, is unfortunately as true today as it was when he said it 58 years ago. I take it as a call to action.

I have been deeply troubled by the events of the past week and torn over the rioting and destruction taking place in DC and cities across the country. Normally I keep these thoughts to myself, my family and close friends, but I feel compelled by recent events to share them with each of you. The America I have experienced is a land of freedom, opportunity and justice. I also know, that for too many of its citizens, particularly those of color, these words ring hollow. That is wrong.

The injustices that killed George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor are only the most recent examples of a long history of racial inequality in our country. The outrage and violent reaction is upsetting, but it is also understandable. These events have not been experienced by all of us equally. Some of us have experienced this pain personally and others, like me, from a distance. I hope it leads away from destruction and further loss of life and towards a deeper understanding of critical issues we must all come to grips with, and ultimately to real change. To our Black colleagues: I stand with you against racial injustice and in demanding true and lasting change.

My parents taught my sisters and me to treat everyone we come across with respect, kindness and dignity, and to try to leave this world a little better than we found it. I fall short of these aspirations often, but I will never stop trying. Each of us impact others in our roles at BMC and as partners, parents, relatives and friends. I hope each of us will reflect on what we can do individually to be agents for positive change and to act on those thoughts. I also encourage you to let us know what we as a company can do better. This is a scary moment, but it can also be a hopeful one. If we face our challenges together and act with determination, I believe we have the collective power to bend the arc of the universe towards justice.

## **Buwa Binitie, Principal, Dantes Partners**

So like most folks I've been troubled by the incidents of the last few days. First there was Amy Cooper weaponizing racism against a black man in New York. Such an interesting term for something that happens with mundane frequency, white people calling the police on black people secure in the knowledge that they will be presumed to be "right" when the cops arrive, including here in our very own Washington DC. Then, we had to deal with the devastating murder of another black life in the hands of those that are supposed to serve and protect us. So as an African American leader in my community my proposal on how we can best move on is this: view me no different than you view your white peers. Sometimes "white privilege" may sound fancy, like your life is all champagne and caviar. But what we mean is the privilege of the assumption of capability, the benefit of the doubt, to be given a chance and treated equally. Treat your black peers as you would treat your white peers - admit them into your schools,

select them for honors, hire them, promote them, applying the same standards as you do white counterparts and don't manufacture excuses as to why you are treating them differently. Demand the same level of dignity and protection shown to Dylan Roof as you would any other "black" criminal - even though Dylan deliberately assassinated black people. Demand that Serena Williams be treated the same way as John McEnroe. And don't treat me differently because I attained the same status as LeBron James or Michael Jordan. I don't want to be viewed as a "token" and/or equal just because I attained untenable heights. I just want to be treated equally and fairly as my white peers. It would be hard as a community to come together as equals if I am not accepted as an equal. - Buwa Binitie

I CAN'T BREATHE

## **Katherine Bradley, Founder and Chair, CityBridge Education**

"Birmingham became the moment of truth. The struggle from now on will be fought in a different context... The black people now reject token, limited or gradual approaches. The package deal is the new demand." - Bayard Rustin, 1963

In many ways, 2020 looks like 1963. The violence against the participants in the Children's Crusade sent shockwaves through the nation, as did the wrenching, filmed murder of George Floyd. In May of 1963, The New York Times published more stories about civil rights in the course of two weeks than it had in the previous two years. Similarly, we are now hearing voices that have for too long remained silent on these issues speak out in condemnation of police brutality as protesters across our city and nation sound a clarion call for racial justice. We are also seeing the enraged responses of individuals and institutions working to maintain the status quo. We have our own modern-day George Wallaces and Thomas Edwin Blantons using state-sanctioned violence and random acts of terror to silence and oppress. As Mayor Bowser said over the weekend, "What used to be heard from dog whistles, we now hear from a bullhorn."

In such a context, we are "impatient of oppression," as the poet Phillis Wheatley wrote, and recognize that we can and must do more - with tangible action in the near-term as well as longer-term stances and programs that support the empowerment of Black and Brown families across the city. We know that all members of a society lose a part of their humanity whenever the humanity of a single member is questioned.

So... where do we go from here?

We do not pretend to have the full answer to that question at CityBridge, but we commit to following the lead of our Black community leaders and using the power and resources at our disposal to catalyze change in this critical moment. In the coming days, we will be sharing more concrete information on specific ways that you can engage with us in this work through programmatic offerings and convenings centered on racial justice and reconciliation in our city.

Additionally, we commit to:

- Strengthening our commitment to our own internal race equity work. We cannot dismantle white supremacy in the world if we allow it to exist in our own culture and policies. We will identify areas of weakness in our organization and prioritize the learning, conversations, and practices required to embody the “beloved community” described in our values and the “culture of belonging” described in our equity statement.
- Amplifying leaders of color with our platforms and our capital. We have the ability to convene business, philanthropic, and civic leaders across the city for powerful conversations on education, race, and poverty. We will use our platform and our investments to amplify the voices and impact of Black and Brown leaders engaged in this work.
- Holding space for equity-driven innovation and the work of reimagining schools. The racial inequities that persist in our schools were baked into their original blueprint. We will continue to center anti-racist practices and design for the needs of our most marginalized students in the CityBridge Incubator.

1963 was a traumatic year in our nation's history - but it was also a transformative one. As we collectively grieve the violence and destruction all around us, may we work in solidarity with our students, families, and communities to reimagine and build a more just and beautiful future.

## **Chris Bruch, President & CEO, The Donohoe Companies, Inc.**

I, like many of you, am deeply troubled by the racial injustice that continues to plague our Nation and create undue stress for our African American colleagues, neighbors, friends, and family members. In addition to COVID-19 disproportionately impacting the African American community, the image of the police officer's knee on the neck of George Floyd was unbearable.

While the current unrest has come on the heels of the killing of Mr. Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, the response represents the simmering pain from countless other unarmed African Americans who have been killed. These injustices re-opened the wounds of inequality in the United States that have never healed.

Donohoe is a family workplace comprised of employees of different races, ethnicities, genders, ages, religions, and sexual orientations. We collectively strive to understand, respect, and value the diversity of our people. Our culture of integrity, trust, and accountability demands that we examine our humanity and channel our anger to oppose racism, injustice, and oppression in our communities.

As we acknowledge the hurt and lift our voices towards justice, I am encouraged by some of the extraordinary examples of ordinary Americans coming together to support one another.

In Louisville, Kentucky, a group of black men stood together and locked arms to protect a white police officer from an angry crowd after he was separated from his fellow officers. Additionally, white women formed a human chain to act as a partition between the Louisville police and black and brown protestors. These ordinary Americans remind us of the important role we can play in bringing about change.



Now is the time for our voices to be heard. As we emerge from COVID-19, we can shift paradigms as we all re-enter society. Moving forward, we must come together to support peaceful protest, advocate for justice, and provide words of comfort to our colleagues.

Together, we have weathered some difficult times. Today, we stand in solidarity against racism, hate, and bigotry of any kind to bring about lasting change.

Unite Against Injustice. Stand Against Racism. Stand Against Bigotry. Stand in the Gap.

### **Letter from Thomas Penny, President of Donohoe Hospitality**

Over the past several weeks, we have witnessed the horrific 8 minute and 46 second video of Officer Chauvin kneeling on the neck and defiantly taking the life of George Floyd. Although the video was extraordinarily painful for me as an African-American, and father of two sons, I am grateful Darnella Frazier shared the video of George Floyd's murder as it was a searing reminder of police brutality, racism and the challenges still present within our society.

This killing, and the more recent killings of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky and Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia, confirm the urgent need for structural change in police departments, organizations and institutions, a recommitment to economic opportunities and diversity at the highest levels of government and business and a greater understanding within our communities.

At Donohoe Hospitality Services, "Black Lives Matter" and we are unequivocally committed to social justice, economic justice, access to education, fairness, equity and systematic reforms at every level.

Understanding the trauma this is having on us all, especially members of the African American community, I encourage the highest level of sensitivity and invite you to check in with your colleagues who are trying to balance the complexity of work against a backdrop of personal frustration and pain. In addition, I challenge us all to lean forward and talk with our millennial and Gen-Z team members who might need someone to listen to their thoughts and help make sense out of this challenging time.

One of the wonders of the hotel business is we are able to travel the world without leaving the work place. In addition to spending countless hours in service to guests and each other, we experience world events as one family. We celebrate together, mourn together, grieve together, work together and we must make our communities stronger and more just together!

In efforts to respond to the unique challenges confronting our minority colleagues, we will launch the Donohoe Minorities in Leadership Diversity Resource Group. This group will help to remove barriers, share resources and ensure every team member in our company is valued and appreciated.

Additionally, my wife, Denise, and I will commit to awarding the "DHS Social Justice Scholarship" in the amount of \$5K for the next five years to a graduating senior from one of DC's Academies of Hospitality and Tourism. This scholarship will be given to a student who has



demonstrated a commitment to social justice and is working to strengthen relationships with students of diverse cultural backgrounds.

While there is much work to do to create a more equitable and just world, my faith in you is river deep and mountain high. Ella Baker said, “Remember, we are not fighting for the freedom of the Negro (African Americans) alone, but for the freedom of the human spirit and a larger freedom that encompasses all mankind.”

## **Sean C. Cahill, President, SCahill LLC**

Since Saturday, as many of our citizens were preparing to restart the City's economy, many of the District's establishments suffered damage, compounding the significant financial burdens on already struggling businesses.

I strongly condemn the actions that led to the death of George Floyd in Minnesota almost two weeks ago. I with many Americans and citizens of the world grieve with the Floyd family. The images are devastating. I personally share in the global frustration and continued disappointment with centuries of abuse and discrimination. As Barrack Obama stated earlier this week, this is a time for inflection and must be turned around as a dramatic turning point that we must use positively.

I strongly support and believe in the First Amendment demonstrations that have been occurring across the world. I also strongly oppose violence, vandalism and looting. It stains the hard work done by the many strong leaders before us.

## **Ryan Croft, Co-founder, TransitScreen**

As a company based in Washington, DC — a historically black city and the center of our government — we have been deeply saddened by the events of the past two weeks. More importantly, we are upset by the centuries of injustice that have directly led to them.

It's time to pause and reflect on what we know: Systemic racism is real in our society. Police brutality towards people of color is real and has no place in our society. As a white man, I have never experienced racism first hand. I sympathize with the anguish and trauma so many others have experienced just from the color of their skin. The black community is hurting and I want to be clear: we hear you, we see you, we grieve for you. This has got to stop. Racism and hate must end.

Words are meaningless without action behind them. As a company, we have been matching all donations from our employees to the organizations of their choice, and are looking for local groups to help in their existing work fighting for justice.

We all have a responsibility to speak out against institutionalized racism and systemic police brutality. At our core, we must do more to be actively anti-racist in our thoughts and actions.

That work belongs to all of us, and TransitScreen intends to do the most we can for our employees and our community.

## **Lia Dean, Head of Bank Retail/Cafes & Marketing, Capital One**

*A Message from Rich Fairbank, Chairman and CEO*

Recent events in America are a sobering reminder of our country's long and troubled history of racial inequality and injustice. And how these issues can linger, simmer, and boil over—into our hearts and onto our streets. The images and stories that fill our phones and TV screens are heartbreaking, leaving us sad, frustrated, or angry. We know that many in our community, including many of our Black associates, are hurting deeply.

It is often easier and more convenient to avoid uncomfortable conversations on race, justice, and equality. Thank you to those who have shared with me personally your emotions and your struggles over the past few days. And I am grateful to all of you who have stepped up to have difficult conversations or share your feelings with each other. We must seek to walk in the shoes of others. Acknowledging the pain being felt today by our colleagues and fellow citizens is vital. And creating the space and grace to listen, and to live our values actively and without judgment, is more important now than ever.

At Capital One, we reject racism in all its forms. From our founding days, we have been committed to the dignity, respect, and inclusion of every associate. And to unleashing every person's talents and potential—no matter their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual identity, age, disability, or background. We have built a company that endeavors to be a welcoming and inspiring place for all. We seek and embrace diversity. We are committed to having a workforce that is representative of America. And I am hopeful that together we can harness the sadness, anger, and energy of these difficult times to elevate the discussion, drive positive change, and create a greater sense of shared purpose and understanding.

I wish you and your loved ones health and strength in these challenging times. And thank you for making Capital One a special place for each of us to work, to be ourselves, and to succeed.

**Capital One's Pledge to Social Justice for Black Communities: Committing \$10 million and establishing a dollar-for-dollar associate gift matching program**

Black lives matter.

Today, Capital One is announcing an initial pledge of \$10 million to organizations advancing the cause of social justice for Black communities. This pledge builds on our recent commitment of \$50 million to support long-standing non-profit partners struggling to pursue their core missions

in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, including many organizations dedicated to meeting the most pressing needs of the Black community.

As a company, we have been inspired by the outpouring of passion, interest and ideas from associates to contribute, collectively and substantively, to efforts to make a difference. To support these goals, we are establishing a new associate gift matching program. From now until June 30, Capital One will match, dollar-for-dollar, donations made by associates to the organizations below:

- Campaign Zero
- Equal Justice Initiative
- National Urban League
- Race Forward
- Black Health Alliance – Canada
- Runnymede Trust – UK

In addition to this matching program, we are making new investments in two national organizations dedicated to the fight for racial equity and justice, including building on our successful partnership with the National Urban League and establishing a new relationship with the Obama Foundation. We continue to explore additional opportunities for meaningful partnerships on this critical issue.

Capital One has long committed to creating and fostering a safe, diverse, and inclusive workplace. Our community and philanthropic endeavors are closely integrated with our core business activities: advancing socioeconomic mobility through support of financial well-being; developing the diverse workforce of the future; financing affordable housing and small business creation; and expanding digital access. These efforts include:

- Our five-year commitment of over \$250 million to support our Future Edge and other community giving initiatives, which includes vital national and local partners like LIFT, Year Up, Dressed for Success, and Robin Hood
- Over the past decade, becoming the largest Community Development lender in the country, with over \$40 billion in loans to consumers and small businesses in Black and LMI communities, and \$13.2 billion in financing for over 140,000 affordable housing units across our branch and Cafe footprint

Serving our communities through more than 400,000 hours of associate volunteerism each year, including innovative skills-based pro bono programs like Black Girls Code that leverage the exceptional talents of our associates

Recent events in America are a sobering reminder of our country's long and troubled history of racial inequality and injustice. Through these commitments, we hope to harness the sadness, anger, and energy of these difficult times to elevate the discussion, drive positive change, and create a sense of shared purpose and understanding.

## John J. DeGioia, President, Georgetown University

In recent weeks my communication with you has focused on the global pandemic and how we—as a Georgetown University community—are working our way through the challenges generated by a virus that has created a degree of dislocation and disequilibrium unlike any we have experienced in our lifetimes. In just three horrific months, one in four Americans has become unemployed and is looking for work. More than a hundred thousand people in our country have lost their lives to COVID-19. Our individual and collective routines and rhythms have all been disrupted. Although we are now beginning our tentative first steps toward a re-opening (under conditions of great uncertainty), we know we have much to do to rebuild our nation.

In the midst of this devastating experience, the original fault line of our republic has been exposed once again for the nation. We grieve the killing of George Floyd in Minnesota, Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, and Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia as unconscionable acts of violence. Their deaths, and subsequent nationwide protests, once again present our country—and each one of us—with the imperative to confront the enduring legacy of slavery and segregation in America.

On too many occasions over the years, there has been cause for me to share reflections with our community, as we grapple with the devastating impact of racism and hatred in our nation. In August 2014, following the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; in December 2015, following the grand jury decision in the killing of Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York; in August 2017, following the march of white supremacists and neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, Virginia. In these moments, which encompass far from the full extent of experiences of racism and racist violence, I have tried to frame the work in which we must engage within the mission and purpose of the Academy. Our role in society—to pursue the truth—through the methodologies and disciplines through which we establish knowledge in our world, demands our engagement. In our response, we have sought to accelerate our academic commitment to addressing racial justice, and to address our own connection to the institution of slavery and the enduring legacy of racism and to undo the structural elements that sustain this legacy.

We know this legacy is sustained by two elements: first, it is sustained by our own interiority—our beliefs and attitudes, our biases and prejudices, our ways of interpreting and making meaning in our world. Perhaps this element is unconscious, implicit, and unintentional, but it is nevertheless omnipresent and fundamentally influential. We also know that the very ideas of race and subsequently of racism are social constructs, the product of early American scholarship, developed and nurtured in order to justify the institution of slavery.

The second element consists of institutional structures that perpetuate inequity and inequality. Consider what we have seen since mid-March with the pandemic caused by COVID-19: African Americans in our country have been hit disproportionately hard by COVID-19.

A study by amfAR—the Foundation for AIDS Research, done in collaboration with colleagues at our O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law, indicates that 22% of U.S. counties are “disproportionately black” and that these counties “account for 52% [of COVID-19 cases] and 58% [of COVID-19 deaths].” In a recent column, Michele L. Norris of the Washington Post indicated:

- “Blacks comprise 32 percent of Chicago’s population but nearly 70 percent of covid-19 deaths.”
- “Blacks comprise 26 percent of Milwaukee’s population but account for 73 percent of covid-19 deaths.”
- “Blacks account for 40 percent of covid-19 deaths in Michigan even though they represent just 14 percent of the state’s population.”
- “In Louisiana blacks make up 32 percent of the state’s population but 70 percent of those who have died because of the virus.”

For the members of the Georgetown University community, this evidence of structural injustice in healthcare has animated the work of many of our colleagues for decades. Recently, through the work of our colleague, Professor Christopher King, PhD, we have a deeper grasp of the health disparities here in our nation’s capital. His 2016 report, *The Health of the African American Community in the District of Columbia: Disparities and Recommendations* provided a comprehensive presentation of the realities here in the District. In the coming days, a second report, *Health Disparities in the Black Community: An Imperative for Racial Equity in the District of Columbia*, will be released. Professor King calls us to the work of achieving the day “when race is no longer a predictor of a health outcome.”

There are other structures—economic, educational, housing, criminal justice—that sustain inequity and inequality that are the enduring legacy of our American history. Coming out of these past three months, we know we have a nation to rebuild. We need to find ways to put forty million Americans back into the workforce and we must still contain a virus that remains a lethal threat to all of us. At the same time, we cannot return to a status quo that leaves inequity and inequality in place. As part of that determination, we must address the conditions that lead to the senseless and indefensible loss of life of our fellow citizens. We need to confront the violence that shapes the daily experiences of far too many, who expect so much more of us, as a people. We need to listen to the anger, the pain, the trauma that accompanies our failure to meet these expectations.

This requires the work of each of us and of all of us. Individually, in each of our own interiority, we must determine how we contribute to perpetuating injustice and sustaining structures that cannot continue and that now must be reimaged. And, for us in our shared membership in this Georgetown University community, it remains for us in the Academy to contribute to this work of reimagining the social, political, economic and moral structures to ensure justice for all—and especially for those for whom it has been too long denied.

## **John P. Drew, President & CEO, Drew Company and TCMA**

It’s a historic time in our nation, as we’re seeing people come together after the tragic deaths of George Floyd and the many others that have come before him, to rise up against systemic racism and injustices that have persisted for far too long. On behalf of Drew Company and TCMA I want to extend our heartfelt condolences to Mr. Floyd’s family and friends. We stand in

solidarity with the millions affected daily by racial inequities and support those participating in peaceful demonstrations from city to city. Our organization, unequivocally believes in racial equality. Supporting equal opportunity, diversity and inclusivity are part of our core values and we commit to continuing to learn, grow and take action to be part of the solution.

## **Margaret Dunning, Managing Partner, Finn Partners**

*Statement by Peter Finn, Founding Managing Partner*

The world has become a disturbing place during the past months. First, we have the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed many people, and has caused widespread unemployment. People have lost loved ones, and struggle to feed their families. Now once again, a Black man has been killed by a police officer in the US, this despite the fact that the man was unarmed, handcuffed and was saying he could not breathe as the officer knelt on his neck. The video footage that has transfixed us all bears witness to this appalling event. It is intolerable. No life should be at risk because of the color of one's skin, and there has been incident after incident recently violating this basic principle. It is hard to know what to say during such trying times. At first I was not sure that it was appropriate for me to speak out on the death of George Floyd or on the racism that continues to poison our world. But as I have witnessed the events of the last few days, it has become clear that I need to share my thoughts with you, my colleagues. Initially, I was going to send this only to our US staff, but then decided to share it worldwide.

One of our core values is a commitment to diversity and inclusion. This is important to us at Finn Partners. It is the right thing to do to treat everyone equally. It is the right thing to do to actively overcome discrimination, make a concerted effort to negate its effects and support those who have suffered its impact.

We all need to understand the anxiety and frustration being experienced by people of color on our staff, in our communities, and of course throughout the country and the world. Our hearts and thoughts need to be with them. For those of us who look to a better future, let us work toward more understanding among all people. Let us work to ensure that all people in America and around the world will be treated with dignity and as equals. Finally, when the elections come around later this year in the US, and elsewhere around the world, be sure to vote. We need our elected officials to focus on healing the divide, and to advocate for the inherent equality and natural rights for all people as well as equal protection under the law. We are all created equal and should be treated equally by our government and by everyone whose job it is to defend our citizens.

Hopefully we can all contribute to the progress that is so sorely needed.

## Jay Epstein, Partner, DLA Piper

Statement by Higher Achievement that Jay proudly signed as a member of its National Board.

This moment demands action. The killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and too many more highlight the trauma and long history of institutionalized racism in our country. Our hearts ache for the families of the victims and for all Black people who have endured this trauma for generations. Enough is enough.  
Black Lives Matter.

The work of racial justice is Higher Achievement's work. Working with scholars and their families to close achievement and opportunity gaps that create barriers for students of color is our work. Confronting the insidious racism of low expectations is our work.

But, if our scholars grow up into the world as it is now, our work will be undone. This is a world where:

- they are 2.5x more likely to be killed by police than their white peers<sup>1</sup>
- they are more than 5x more likely to be incarcerated than their white peers<sup>2</sup>
- they earn 27.5% less than their white peers<sup>3</sup>

This is appalling. This is unacceptable. And yet it is true – and in this country we HAVE accepted it for far too long.

We will not be silent. We will act.

**We commit to an immediate examination of our internal policies and practices** – from our staff and board development, to our volunteer training and fundraising strategy, to our curriculum and scholar and family engagement strategies – to develop a long-term racial justice and equity plan. We recognize our blind spots with many white staff leaders and board members at Higher Achievement, and thus, it is even more important that we deeply engage our broader community. Our staff, our scholars and families, our volunteers, our donors and board will all have an important voice in this plan. We begin this journey with the unanimous and financial support from our board of directors.

As an organization that benefits from senior leaders, board members, and donors who represent our country's most privileged communities, we commit to be humble and vulnerable in this process, and to use our institutional power to act as agents of change as we serve marginalized communities.

**We will listen to and love our scholars.** Being cautious not to traumatize, we will try to help them process what is happening in our country, and encourage them to find and share their voices. As always, we will continue to advance scholars' academic, social, and emotional learning – to build long-term racial equity and justice.

These steps alone are insufficient. But they are steps forward. We are committed to being part of the solution and creating lasting change.



## **Kim R. Ford, President & CEO, Martha's Table**

Like so many across our country, we are hurting. The traumatic events of the COVID-19 outbreak, the economic collapse, and the murder of African American citizens at the hands of those sworn to protect them make it difficult to see a clear path forward.

Forty years ago, Martha's Table was founded to address inequities in our nation's capital; recent events only reinforce the continued importance of that mission. Every day, we work towards our vision of a city in which every Washingtonian can thrive. Yet painfully, we continue to see that a person's race, ethnicity, and zip code affect their ability to not only to achieve their dreams but to even live in peace and comfort.

Martha's Table stands firmly against the racism and oppression that persist in disrupting and devaluing the lives of children and families in our community. We will continue to step up when our community needs us most, keeping our doors open and using all the tools available to us to bring equitable access to the educational, health & wellness, and family resources needed to live and thrive in our nation's capital. Together, through our efforts at Martha's Table, we will continue to strive to dismantle systems of institutionalized racism in our community.

## **Thomas M. Fulcher Jr., Vice Chairman, Co-Regional Manager, Savills**

Statement by Mitch Rudin, President, Savills North America.

Stand together for unity, diversity, equity and inclusion

We are witnessing a palpable frustration with the consistent condition of racial inequality and injustice in America. The demonstrations across the country reflect the pain from a historic pattern of systemic practices that adversely affect people of color. At Savills, over the course of the pandemic, we've developed a reoccurring mantra of "Stronger Together." Now, it is essential we bring these words to life, demonstrating a togetherness that stands for unity, diversity, equity and inclusion.

Thoughts and prayers are not enough. It is our collective responsibility to be allies and advocates, to acknowledge the racial and opportunity gaps and to commit to addressing and fixing these disparities. This is how we can honor the memories of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery. This is how we protect those affected by bias and inequality on a daily basis.

## **Tim Gillis, the Office Managing Partner for the Washington Metro Area, KPMG**

The tragic deaths of George Floyd and other Black citizens over the past several months are reminders that we must all speak up and stand together to advance justice and equality. At KPMG, we are focusing even more intensely on fostering diversity and inclusion within our organization while denouncing hate and racism in the broader community. Leadership is critical during these times when people are feeling grief, anxiety, anger, and sadness—with some suffering more than others due to racism, the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on underrepresented groups, xenophobia, and exacerbated mental health issues, among other burdens. As business leaders, we must continue to reach out and to empathize, and to join with other organizations that serve our communities to enable a positive collective impact.

## **Nicky Goren, President & CEO, Meyer Foundation**

*Originally published on medium.com*

The protests now happening in DC and across the country are not only about the murder of George Floyd. They are about Breonna Taylor, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Ezell Ford, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile, Botham Jean. They're also about Ahmaud Arbery, Trayvon Martin, and the 400 years of oppression Black people have endured.

They're also about me and the myriad ways I, and other white people, contribute to and sustain the culture, practices, and systems that maintain white supremacy and have made the killing of and indifference to Black people a too-regular occurrence in this country. All of this against a backdrop of a pandemic that has taken the lives and the livelihoods of so many Black and Brown people in our region and across the country.

I recognize the privilege I have of never experiencing the fear and depth of pain that Black people feel every day. I also recognize that my privilege calls upon me to speak truth to power within my spheres of influence.

As white people, we must not only listen to what people of color have been telling us forever — that we need a new social contract that centers the voices and needs of those we have systematically oppressed to achieve a new and better society for us all — we must also act.

White people, we have work to do. I have work to do. No more thinking that this is about other people. It's about every one of us, and we need to seek to understand how our actions, attitudes, and decisions have directly and indirectly led us to where we are today and commit to becoming actively anti-racist. This work is not easy, but it's also not optional. I have fumbled over and over — and will most certainly fumble again — but I remain committed to unlearning the patterns of racism and white supremacy that we are all taught from day one. We must speak up and call out racism — and in particular, institutional and structural racism, and hold people

accountable for their words and their actions or inaction — be it our family, our friends, our co-workers, or our elected leaders.

In philanthropy, the time is long past for us to ground our understanding of race and racism in history. We need to acknowledge that the building of wealth in this country and racism are inextricably intertwined, and that the system of philanthropy that resulted from this wealth-building was never designed to dismantle the status quo. We have to change how we share financial resources and we need to support the work of organizations that are building power and movements, support change through organizing and advocacy, support the leadership of people of color, and support work that will change the systems that continue to keep people of color from thriving.

If we are truly committed to anti-racism, we must activate ourselves and our communities to stand in solidarity with the movement for Black lives. Follow the People's Demands that emerge from One DC's open survey and others like it across the region. Racism is as urgent a public health crisis as a pandemic. We must address it with the same sense of urgency.

I stand in solidarity with Black communities who are, again, feeling deep pain and experiencing trauma. I stand in solidarity with my Black friends and colleagues who are hurting deeply and are constantly called upon to relegate that pain to the sidelines. I am here for you and I love you. I will do better. We MUST do better. People's lives depend on it. The future of our nation depends on it.

## **Jeff Keitelman, Co-Managing Partner, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP**

In recognition of the memorial services for George Floyd, the NAACP declared yesterday, June 4th, a National Day of Mourning. Let's not forget the 35 other black men, women and children whose deaths were the result of systemic racism and helped fuel the Black Lives Matter movement.

Trayvon Martin · Yvette Smith · Eric Garner · Michael Brown · Laquan McDonald · Tanisha Anderson · Akai Gurley · Tamir Rice · Jerame Reid · Natasha McKenna · Eric Harris · Walter Scott · Freddie Gray · William Chapman · Sandra Bland · Darrius Stewart · Samuel DuBose · Janet Wilson · Calin Roquemore · Alton Sterling · Philando Castile · Joseph Mann · Terence Crutcher · Chad Robertson · Jordan Edwards · Aaron Bailey · Stephon Clark · Danny Ray Thomas · Antwon Rose · Botham Jean · Atatiana Jefferson · Michael Dean · Ahmaud Arbery · Breonna Taylor · George Floyd

When we encourage our people to “bring their authentic selves to work” we must remember that this includes acknowledging how their lives are impacted outside the office. Black and brown people have not only watched their friends and family members die at higher rates from the coronavirus, they have also watched people who look like them gunned down while going for a jog, murdered in their homes, threatened while birdwatching in Central Park, and ruthlessly choked on camera. It is not enough to acknowledge these horrific events; we must do the work to understand the damage of generations of racism that led up to them.

For those who don't have friends, family or close members of your networks who are black, you may not know how difficult this time is for the community. The anguish associated with racism, we understand is real, and seeing pictures and video of black people being killed is even more traumatic and cumulative. For many, the current events in the United States are experienced as clinical-level trauma. Research shows that when people of color see these images, they internalize them – they see themselves, their friends, their family.

We understand that some may not know what to say during this time of collective mourning. Acknowledging that this is happening, and telling someone you want to stand beside them, we believe will go a long way. And your silence will be felt in ways that you could not imagine. If you find yourself unable to find the words, below are two statements which can help.

- “I won't pretend to know what you're experiencing during this time of racial injustice, but I want to let you know that I stand beside you – I am here to talk if it would help.”
- “I want you to know that I care about issues of racial injustice and how they impact you, and our community. Please know that I am here if you need me.”

For those looking to learn more, a great place to start is the National Museum of African American History and Culture's Talking about Race – <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race>. This web-based initiative uses videos, role-playing exercises and question-based activities to explore the origins and definitions of race and identity. Built on the museum's long-standing educational work, the project was released Sunday to respond to the current crisis.

For our black colleagues, it's critical to take the time to care for yourself – <https://in.mashable.com/social-good/14508/13-mental-health-resources-for-black-people-trying-to-cope-right-now>.

This is not the end of the conversation, but the start of our journey toward a more just, accepting and equitable existence for people of color.

## **Matt Kelly, CEO, JBG SMITH**

I am disheartened and saddened by the recent events that have taken place in Minneapolis. The death of George Floyd, while handcuffed and in the custody of police officers, is tragic and senseless.

On behalf of myself and the rest of our JBG SMITH Executive Committee, I want you to know that we are here for you, we stand with you, and most importantly, we care. While I know these tragic incidents generate feelings of fear, anger, frustration and grief, particularly among the African American community, I also know that it reinforces our need to come together as a community and to support one another.

Realizing that these events can be extremely unsettling for all of us and our families, I encourage you to take advantage of our Employee Assistance Program or reach out to Human

Resources, should you need additional support. Times like these are unfortunate reminders of why our focus on diversity and inclusion is so critical; and clearly there is still much more work to be done. I hope that you will take time to connect with others in these times of need, as you never know who has been impacted or in what way. Sometimes, a simple act of kindness or empathy can make a huge difference.

**We all have a responsibility to keep the “human” in humanity. I hope that each of you will do your part. I know I certainly will.**

## **Creighton R. Magid, Partner-in-Charge, Washington, Dorsey & Whitney**

Dorsey & Whitney shares the sadness and the outrage expressed throughout Minnesota and the world over George Floyd’s murder at the hands of Minneapolis police, as well as over the long history of such injustice. Healing can only occur by addressing the systemic racism that plagues us.

Law firms have long focused on diversity and inclusion efforts and progress has been made. It has not been enough. Law firms, including ours, need to reevaluate their approach and not rest on the status quo.

Black lives matter. We stand in solidarity in the fight for racial equality, and we are taking action in that fight.

## **Anne Segrest McCulloch, President & CEO, Housing Partnership Equity Trust**

Housing Partnership Equity Trust is a real estate investment trust that is in the business of building community. Today our community is hurting as we grieve the repeated loss of life, the loss of dignity, and the loss of our people’s potential, as the result of racial inequality, hatred and division. As we go forward, we can and we must turn our rightful grief and our rage into winning, once and for all, the fight for racial equality.

As Americans, one of the most powerful weapons we have to use in this fight is our right, recognized in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, to peaceably assemble and to petition our government for a redress of grievances. The First Amendment acknowledges our power as citizens and helps define who we are as a people. We honor and support those who are engaging in peaceful protest and call on our government leaders to protect those exercising this Constitutional right.

## Patricia McGuire, President, Trinity University

Last night, sleep was hard to come by with the images of so much anger and outrage filling every screen. We keep watching the same horror movie over and over again. What can we do to make the social nightmare of racism and its consequences end? Yes, a rhetorical question, but still urgent and necessary to ask ourselves each day.

The angry protests on the streets of D.C. --- were some of you there? Please send me stories and photos if you are willing to share them --- these protests like those across the nation, are a clear and understandable response to the brutal murder of George Floyd under the knee of a police officer in Minneapolis. It's hard to watch that video, and equally hard to turn away. Mr. Floyd's name now is enrolled in the terrible and tragic litany of other Black victims of police violence --- Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray, too many others to list here. The inability of this nation to come to terms with the racism that has coursed through its bones across the centuries means that we keep reliving these tragedies in each generation. Perhaps those of us who remember the 1960's grew complacent over the years; perhaps we have allowed all racial outrages to be reduced to a few minutes of screen time before we move on to the next new thing.

Now we see the bitter consequences of inaction and deceiving ourselves into thinking that we had reached some kind of "post-racial" society. Remember that? 2008 is more than a decade ago, and we only deluded ourselves. Today we have national leadership that seems incapable of any expression of empathy, that uses rhetoric that encourages white supremacy and authoritarian law enforcement. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the hideous consequences of racial inequity and poverty in this country, and yet, our leadership has said nothing about that, and instead, ignores the death toll while counting the money lost at golf courses. Photo after photo of our national leadership and judicial appointments reveals an abysmal lack of representation of people of color; excluding Black and Brown people from government positions of influence ensures the creation and enforcement of policies that work against more diverse, more just and peaceful communities. At the same time, we are in a terrible struggle for justice for immigrants at all levels, and we are particularly worried for our undocumented brothers and sisters right now as the Supreme Court DACA decision looms --- another consequence of an administration that pursues the politics of racial and ethnic injustice each day.

Trinity's entire mission is grounded in the Catholic faith teachings of social justice, teachings shared across many different faiths. Social Justice demands that we uphold the dignity and worth of every human life; that we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need; that we exercise our responsibilities as citizens and people of this earth to call out the injustice and oppression that afflicts too many, stunting the potential of many and snuffing out entirely too many lives. Racism, white supremacy, bigotry, prejudice --- by whatever name we label them, these are grave moral sins not just bad social behaviors, and we must redouble, indeed, triple and quadruple our efforts to confront and root them out of our communities.

All of us in the Trinity community have been captive in a strange landscape these last few months, unable to be present physically to each other, hanging out on Google or zoom which is not really a good substitute for being present, enjoying the company of families at home while

longing for the days when we can venture out again to have something resembling a more “normal” life. Tomorrow, I’m going to be sharing with you the draft of our plan for “reopening” later in the summer and fall, and I will invite your feedback on our plans.

But the more I think about it, “reopening” is just not enough. We cannot simply “go back” to some time before all was interrupted, rewind the movie and start over again. The rage and violence of this era, spawned by police brutality but fed by deeper wells of pain and suffering and oppression and hatred, demand more intelligent and courageous responses than what we thought we were doing in that time before the pandemic changed everything.

Trinity will not merely “reopen,” we will have a true renaissance of spirit and purpose. It will take time, none of what we are planning will occur all at once. You’ll see the details and timetable in the plan tomorrow.

But what’s most important is that we think together about a renaissance of spirit and purpose, that we consider our roles and responsibilities in the larger social context. Our educational plans cannot be simply about keeping ourselves safe if the world is burning down around us. We must continue to advance Trinity’s mission by whatever means are possible, and we cannot allow the pandemic crisis to throw us off course, to force us to relent in our commitment to make a real difference for justice and peace in this world. Our methods may be different --- tech tools for teaching and learning are with us forever, they are not going away ---- but our purpose must be clear, resilient and insistent.

We must and will do every more in our teaching and learning activities at Trinity to address the racism and hatred that afflict our nation, that present barriers for too many of our students and families, that debilitate even the best of intentions to succeed. I want every person here at Trinity to know that our lessons in solidarity start with the ways in which we stand together here to support each other in times of need. We don’t always get it right, but we need to keep learning how to make progress.

To everyone who is suffering in the Trinity family: we are here for you, please let us know if there are ways we can help.

To all those who see the suffering around us: what can we do to create real change?

To our great Trinity family: please know of my care and concern for you; for those on the “front lines” of healthcare or family care or advocacy or teaching, know of our pride in your work and hope for your safety. For those who decide to join in protests and marches and physical expressions of advocacy against racism and police violence, good for you, please be careful, and know that we are here for you.



## Kelly Sweeney McShane, President and CEO, Community of Hope

### In This Together, Fighting Racial Injustice

Community of Hope is outraged and sick with sorrow about the murder of George Floyd last week, along with other continued attacks on people of color – especially African-Americans – by police and white people. We mourn the loss of Mr. Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and many, many others – some known to us through the news but so many more deaths and attacks that don't even make the news, including in the communities where we work and live.

We have watched the response in Minneapolis, St. Louis, Atlanta, and in our own city, Washington, DC. We understand that fears of interaction with the police and the trauma of micro- and macro-aggressions and racism are daily realities for people of color and make this time of heightened anxiety even harder. We share the heartbreak of people of color. Our team is comprised of 82% people of color and the people we serve are almost all people of color.

These senseless deaths and systemic injustices weigh on us heavily, on top of the data showing people of color are having higher rates of infection and death from COVID-19 – a reality that is far too familiar among the patients we serve in Ward 8. Our healthcare services work to improve those health outcomes and provide critical testing and follow up.

Simply understanding these realities falls short. Our organizational values and approach, culture statement, and strategic plan name that we, as a staff and a patient majority board of directors:

- Care for families by providing direct services with a focus on prevention, healing, and wellness.
- Improve lives by building on families' strengths, honoring their choices, and taking a whole-family, multi-generational approach.
- Lead and advocate for system change to address the effects of historical and current racial inequities on health outcomes and housing opportunities. We strive to be equitable and anti-racist, operating with the understanding that structural racism and implicit biases exist in the environment where we work.
- Embrace the diversity of our community, welcome all voices and perspectives, and treat everyone with respect, compassion, and integrity.
- Respect and care for everyone with whom we work. We work to combat our own implicit biases and refrain from engaging in microaggressions.
- Listen actively and are continuous learners. We are inclusive, approachable, respectful, and we are always seeking to learn from each other and our community.

In all of these statements, we advance our mission to improve health and end family homelessness to make Washington, DC more equitable. We envision a hope-filled future for everyone in Washington, DC, with a special focus on under-resourced communities – Bellevue, Carver Terrace, Adams Morgan, Anacostia, Stanton Square, Washington Highlands, Columbia Heights, and Congress Heights.

Your continued support of our work is a critical element of our success in the vision we have for the future. Achieving this vision requires all of us and all of our intentionality. We ask you to join

us in standing up, speaking out, and rejecting all forms of racism and hatred. We need you to be allies for people of color.

We hope you will continue to be a part of this Community of Hope. We need to unite to make this city equitable – especially for those who face racism and injustice every day.

## **Catherine Meloy, President & CEO, Goodwill of Greater Washington**

Goodwill of Greater Washington stands with individuals and organizations across the country and the world in grieving not only George Floyd, but for all of those who have fallen before him due to racial injustice.

What happened to these individuals could have easily been experienced by a Goodwill associate, an Excel Center student, a job training participant, or someone from our administrative team. Every day our teams across our retail stores, our government contracts, the Goodwill Excel Center and the administration staff, strive to remove barriers to underserved and under-represented populations in the workforce.

Goodwill of Greater Washington was founded 85 years ago to transform lives and communities through the power of education and employment, which addresses some of the systemic inequities faced in the greater Washington region. And 85 years later we stand firmly against the injustices that are so frequently experienced by people of color. Not just today, but every day moving forward, Goodwill of Greater Washington will bring focus and intention to the actions we take, and ensure they are aligned with and promote what we so truly believe at Goodwill, that black lives matter and that systemic racism exists and **MUST** be eliminated. Our doors, both physically and virtually, will always be open to help those in our community. We will continue to bring equitable access to employment and educational services through our resources and partnerships.

As an organization, we strongly condemn racism and bigotry in all of its forms. We remain an agency that works to support the most vulnerable in our communities. We commit to taking a series of sustainable measures to help further our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- We will assess the current state of equity and inclusion within our own Goodwill. We have engaged a third party (Hudson Mann) to review our policies and practices and to conduct an in house survey of our leadership team in order to identify a baseline for growth in our understanding of, and commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion and eradicating racial injustice and inequality.
- We will hire a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion professional to lead the organization forward with discipline and a committed approach to preventing racism and inequity in our Goodwill. This Senior Leadership position will help us to become leaders in our community to stand up against racism and for equity.

- We will seek to partner with organizations that align with our core values and commitment to justice and equity.
- We will aggressively recruit minority candidates for our Board of Directors and Senior Leadership positions to reflect racial equity.
- We will both facilitate and engage our community in an effort to create a coalition of change against inequity in all its forms.

We will work together at our Goodwill to create an environment that is a model of equity and inclusion, while being diverse in color, background, religious beliefs sexual orientation, and gender identity. I personally long to lead an organization where this is paramount, never taken for granted and always practiced. This will be our Goodwill.

### **Greg Meyer, DC Region EVP, Brookfield Properties**

Our business is to build places that improve the communities in which we live. Across our country, systemic racism and discrimination has enabled the murder of George Floyd and too many other black Americans. We will take action against these injustices and stand with peaceful protesters fighting for change. We share the pain felt across the world.

### **Dr. Laura Meyers, President & CEO, Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC**

George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and too many others should be alive today. As our nation confronts the COVID-19 pandemic, which is disproportionately ravaging Black communities, we must address the public health crisis that racism presents.

The over-policing of Black bodies is a public health crisis. From the use of tear gas during the COVID-19 pandemic to the excessive force being used on pregnant protestors, it is undeniable that the state has become a threat to Black lives.

Now is not just the time to call out violent racism gone viral, it is also a time to look inward. White supremacy and systemic racism permeate every American institution; medical and feminist spaces are not exempt. We can do better and we will. In this moment, we commit to supporting and making space for the Black organizations and leaders already at the forefront of this fight. We will follow their lead. Please join us as we do.

## **Steve Moore, Executive Director, Southwest Business Improvement District**

Our thoughts today are with the friends and family of George Floyd as he is remembered by those who knew and loved him.

We are in solidarity with those who speak out against injustice in our community and in our country.

We are moved to reexamine ourselves and are committed to the continued learning and practice of anti-racism in our work.

We can be better. We must.

## **Dennis Perkins, President, CIVITAS Commercial Real Estate Services**

CIVITAS stands in solidarity with those demanding JUSTICE. Judicial, economic, educational, and health JUSTICE will not occur through thoughts and prayers but through ACTION and POLICY that affirm the value of Black lives.

CIVITAS was built to correct the systematic and institutional devaluation of Black lives and Black communities by advising municipalities, corporations and nonprofits to harness their economic and real estate currency to drive transformative value, wellness, employment, quality education, culture and wealth creation in Black communities.

Research by Andre Perry of the Brookings Institution found that "in the average US metropolitan area, homes in neighborhoods where the share of the population is at least 50% black are valued at roughly half the price as homes in neighborhoods with little to no black residents". This dire economic cost of racism is one of the countless disparities that undermine the lives of Black Americans, diminishing our intergenerational economic mobility and our communities' capacity to fund high-quality schools, amenities, and public health and safety that most envision as benefits of the American dream.

CIVITAS believes in the inherent worth of Black communities, as well as the compounded value of Black Americans' historical contribution to the foundational asset value of our nation through the blood, sweat, tears and life savings invested in this country's buildings, homes, farms, universities, hospitals, factories, places of worship and government facilities. We will continue our CIVIC obligation to drive the regeneration of Black cities and neighborhoods to deliver their well-deserved return on Black Americans' investment.

We will continue to:

- SECURE INVESTMENT in Black communities from municipalities, universities, healthcare providers, non-profits and corporations best positioned to improve health and wealth outcomes

- ADVOCATE for policy initiatives designed to institutionalize equity in real estate, capital markets and social justice
- RECRUIT AND EDUCATE ALLIES from other backgrounds to use their diverse talents and resources in a wide range of industries to help eliminate racial disparities
- IMPLEMENT best in-class commercial real estate advice and transaction execution to deliver Black owners and organizations the value they deserve
- PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY in site selection, green building technology, and community wellness resources for Black communities and real estate projects
- VOLUNTEER our time, talent and treasure to organizations promoting Black health, wealth and social justice.

CIVITAS is ANTI-racist and stands in solidarity with those transforming Black communities with civic engagement and vision for an equitable future.

## **Marty Rodgers, Market Unit Lead— US South, and Metro Washington DC Office Managing Director, Accenture**

I am devastated by the recent tragic events across our nation. As a leader, on behalf of Accenture, as a member of the African American community and an ally of communities of color everywhere, I shall continue advocating for equality for all people. Racism is a human issue, not a people of color issue, and we must demonstrate respect, understanding and compassion to make a measurable difference. Companies must take a leading role; leaders across the public and private sector must join forces, and each and every one of us must do what we can. It will take all of us working together to achieve essential change.

## **David Roodberg, CEO and President, Horning Brothers**

I am saddened by the lack of progress in our country. When I learned earlier today that there were protestors coming to Columbia Heights to condemn the killing of George Floyd and the systemic racism in our country, it brought to mind the protests in front of Tivoli that I had seen in photos from 1968. It is painful that our country has not come further in the last 52 years in confronting racial injustice. I understand and support the need to demonstrate against the continued unjust treatment of the Black community made so starkly evident by the murder of George Floyd and the long history of other racist acts.

Horning Brothers stands with all our employees and communities regardless of Race. We acknowledge the systemic racism in our society. Equity and inclusion are key tenets of the Horning Family Fund and Horning Brothers. We will continue to move forward Company-wide initiatives at both the Foundation and Horning Brothers on diversity, equity and inclusion.

At Horning Brothers, we all stand together.

## **Deborah F. Rutter, President of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

Beginning Tuesday, June 2, the lights that normally illuminate the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts will be dimmed for nine nights in honor of George Floyd, marking the final nine minutes of his life. We take a stand for George Floyd and for so many others who have lost their lives as a result of racial violence and bigotry. Dimming the lights is a symbol. It is not the solution. Ours is an expression of America's grief and our solidarity with our Black audiences, artists, colleagues, and community.

Black lives matter. Black voices matter. Black culture matters. Black stories matter. We pledge that more of them will be heard on the stages of the nation's cultural center, as we continue in our ongoing effort to reflect the entire nation through the performing arts and within our organization. We know we can do better—through the art we present on our stages and by ensuring that the Center is always a home for critical conversations about race and discrimination. We are preparing strategies to be in greater service of Black artists, audiences, and communities. We will be sharing those initiatives in the coming weeks and hold ourselves accountable to all of you.

## **Judith Sandalow, Executive Director, Children's Law Center**

I want to start this letter with one simple message – Black Lives Matter.

The pandemic, the number of Black lives lost at the hands of police and the protests of the last few days highlight how far away we are from our civic and political structures embracing these same ideals.

I am a mother of two Black sons. I worry every night about their safety and whether they will make it home or be stopped by police. And as the executive director of an organization that works with thousands of DC's Black residents, I see how our laws and government policies regularly advantage white residents.

The pain and rage expressed in cities and towns across the country over the last week have been building for 400 years. Systemic racism is built into the fabric of our country. It makes what Children's Law Center fights for every day on behalf of DC's children and families even harder to achieve.

It was racism in action that led Breonna Taylor to be shot in her home; two white men to kill Ahmaud Arbery while he was jogging; a white woman to call police on Chris Cooper while he was birdwatching; a police officer to take the life of George Floyd. These are the very experiences that far too many Black people experience day after day after day after day.

This is trauma. Racism is trauma. It is why the American Academy of Pediatrics named racism a public health emergency. Yet even after 400 years, the death and destruction it has caused has never received the focus and attention that COVID-19 has. It should.

Over the years, I've penned many statements, letters, op-eds and emails. In each and every one I've shared stories of the Black children and families we work with. Their resilience. Their fight. The hurdles and obstacles they have overcome.

Today, I'm here with a different message. It's one I've tailored for my white peers – especially white parents. If you are Black – feel free to read on or share this with your white friends and neighbors.

At Children's Law Center, our mission is the wellbeing of children. And we know the powerful role that parents play in their children's future.

That is why I ask you to talk to your children about racism. I know it is hard and I know it's only one piece of the complex puzzle that we need to stay focused on in order to truly combat these injustices.

I recall the many conversations I had with my sons about race when they were younger, but I also know those conversations were vastly different than the ones Black moms and dads are having with their kids right now. It is so critically important for white parents to talk with their children about anti-racism starting at a young age. It can't fall on Black parents alone.

I'd like to invite you to join me in sharing books, videos and other resources to help white parents speak with their children about racism. Below are some we have collected and shared within our organization:

- This systemic racism video by ACT.TV is a good primer for everyone and can be useful for older children who are trying to understand the current state of our nation.
- Anti-racism for white people is a comprehensive site with numerous resources – for both adults and children. We pulled out some specific children's resources below as well.
- 31 Children's books to support conversations on race, racism and resistance which includes books from the Conscious Kid Library and American Indians in Children's Literature
- PBS Kids has a great resource with a focus on teaching children about Black History Month but one that can be used all year long.
- Common Sense Media compiled all Coretta Scott King Book Award winners which are given to outstanding African American authors and illustrators of books for children that demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture and universal human values.
- Many white parents have Black children. Embrace Race is a good resource to help guide conversations on race at any age.
- Through June 19, Dottir Press and author Anastasia Higginbotham are offering a free download of NOT MY IDEA: A Book about Whiteness where a white child sees TV coverage of a police shooting—and has some questions.
- Yesterday, organizations in Philadelphia and Boston hosted Wee Chalk the Walk. However, there is no one single day for discussions on race. Use some of the ideas shared on their Facebook page with kids – especially as you look for safe activities to do outside during the pandemic.



What else have you seen and read? Share with us or post on social media using the hashtag: #RaisingAntiRacistKids.

Racism is embedded in all our institutions, not just the police.

- The long history of housing segregation leaves Black families at greater risk of eviction after the pandemic. It is why we are fighting for more rental assistance in DC's FY21 budget.
- The legacy of racism in education is well known. It is why we fought to reform school discipline — and are fighting today to ensure schools have critical mental health resources to support children who are experiencing trauma.
- Black and Brown people are dying at disproportionate rates from COVID-19. These are deaths that have resulted from longstanding disparities. It's why our medical-legal partnership focuses on the non-medical issues that harm a child's health.

The pandemic has disrupted almost every facet of society. Let's commit to using it as an opportunity to disrupt racism as well.

The time has come to create a new normal — one where our institutional systems no longer treat Black lives as less important than mine or yours.

We need to be more than just allies — we must actively be anti-racist. I know I have much to learn. Join me as we collectively turn that learning into action: fighting against racism and fighting for children every day of the year.

## **Lewis F. Shrensky, Executive Vice President of Fort Myer Construction Corporation**

If our Country has learned anything over the past week, it is that we must stand united in the face of injustice. Fort Myer Construction Corporation joins with others, particularly businesses of the DMV, to support the essential task of mending the ripped and tattered fragments that endanger our society.

During this global pandemic, we are tragically — again — reminded of an even more pervasive threat which continues to afflict the US and societies around the world — racism and social injustice. History has brutally repeated itself with the death of George Floyd, yet another unarmed African American man killed while in police custody in Minneapolis, MN. It is not the first time this Nation has witnessed the murder of a black person by a police officer. We are repulsed at seeing the video of George Floyd, pleading simply to breathe, and are alarmed that anyone would be treated with such callousness, especially at the hands of those who are sworn to serve and protect us.

History has shown that people of color have not experienced the same sense of protection and fairness under the law. Unfortunately, those experiences have led to distrust of law enforcement, of the legal system, and generally of the social order. The outcomes of the coronavirus pandemic have shown that many communities of color disproportionately endure, and have long endured great disparities.

Trust is a delicate commodity; it can be lost in a moment, but to gain trust takes dedicated and protracted effort. Such endeavor must start with stating our position:

We cannot tolerate in our community, nor in our Company, any form of discrimination. Injustice and inequality cannot and must not be tolerated.

We also state our commitments:

We cannot just return to "business as usual", as the status quo is simply unacceptable. We must first come together to acknowledge a history rooted in institutional racism, discrimination, and biases based on color, if we ever hope to end this cycle of senseless violence and hate. This moment begs us all to find ways to live together.

To that end, Fort Myer is committed to identifying and discussing actions each of us can take to help make a difference. We look forward in the coming days to listening to and working with every member of the Fort Myer Family, as well as like-minded persons and entities in the DMV. We will join with others who also help to develop and retain trust of humanity in our culture.

We cannot succeed if we are not in this together.

## **David Skorton, MD American Association of Medical Colleges**

### **AAMC Statement on Police Brutality and Racism in America and Their Impact on Health**

*David J. Skorton, MD, president and CEO of the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) and David A. Acosta, MD, AAMC chief diversity and inclusion officer, released the following statement:*

"For too long, racism has been an ugly, destructive mark on America's soul. Throughout our country's history, racism has affected every aspect of our collective national life—from education to opportunity, personal safety to community stability, to the health of people in our cities large and small, and in rural America.

Over the past three months, the coronavirus pandemic has laid bare the racial health inequities harming our black communities, exposing the structures, systems, and policies that create social and economic conditions that lead to health disparities, poor health outcomes, and lower life expectancy.

Now, the brutal and shocking deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery have shaken our nation to its core and once again tragically demonstrated the everyday danger

of being black in America. Police brutality is a striking demonstration of the legacy racism has had in our society over decades. This violence has eroded trust of the police within black and other communities of color who are consistently victims of marginalization, focused oppression, racial profiling, and egregious acts of discrimination.

Our country must unite to combat and dismantle racism and discrimination in all its forms and denounce race-related violence, including police brutality. Enough is enough.

As healers and educators of the next generation of physicians and scientists, the people of America's medical schools and teaching hospitals bear the responsibility to ameliorate factors that negatively affect the health of our patients and communities: poverty, education, access to transportation, healthy food, and health care.

Racism is antithetical to the oaths and moral responsibilities we accepted as health professionals who have dedicated our lives to advancing the health of all, especially those who live in vulnerable communities.

As leaders of anchor institutions in our communities, academic medicine's physicians, educators, hospital leaders, faculty, researchers, learners, and staff must lead by example and take bold action in partnership with the communities we serve:

- We must acknowledge and speak out against all forms of racism, discrimination, and bias in our environments in our institutions, communities, and society.
- We must stand in solidarity with the black community and speak out against unjust and inhumane incidents of violence.
- We must demonstrate empathy and compassion and acknowledge the pain and grief that the families and the communities of these victims are experiencing.
- We must take the lead in educating ourselves and others to address these issues head-on.
- We must be deliberate and partner with local communities, public health agencies, and municipal governments to dismantle structural racism and end police brutality.
- We must employ anti-racist and unconscious bias training and engage in interracial dialogues that will dispel the misrepresentations that dehumanize our black community members and other marginalized groups.
- We must move from rhetoric to action to eliminate the inequities in our care, research, and education of tomorrow's doctors.

The AAMC stands against racism and hate in all its forms, and we call on academic medicine to stand together on this issue. We are committed to harnessing all of our resources to catalyze meaningful and lasting solutions. We can no longer be bystanders. We must not be silent. But while our solidarity is necessary, it is not sufficient. Together, and in partnership with the communities we serve, we must work together to heal our nation."

## **Susan Stevenson, Executive Director, D.C. Region, College Track**

Yet again, we have seen injustice up close, and we are shaken to our core.

The murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor were driven by a legacy of racial injustice and white supremacy. At College Track, our work directly addresses systemic inequality. Our country's political leadership is inconsistent with our collective value of shared humanity, and we continue to wrestle as a nation with racism that feeds the flames of injustice. Our staff, students, and families are the first to bear the weight of this trauma.

Our mission states that we equip students confronting systemic barriers to earn a bachelor's degree, in pursuit of a life of opportunity, choice, and power. Racial injustice is one of the most pervasive systemic barriers our students will face, and we are actively processing the contradictions that exist in our country in order to collectively heal.

Every day that we work towards our mission is a step closer to a more just and equitable world. We will continue to support our students and families and to remind them that they are loved, valued, and that their lives MATTER. Today and every day, we stand with Black communities to dismantle oppression.

As we move forward, it cannot be business as usual. I invite you to join us in that commitment by examining the ways in which we all individually contribute to upholding racial injustice. Please make time to reflect on the history that brought us here, examine implicit bias, and join us as we equip the next generation of leaders to create a more equitable world.

## **Carol Thompson Cole, President and CEO, Venture Philanthropy Partners**

At VPP, we stand against racism. We stand in solidarity with the Black community and with communities of color to fulfill the American ideal of "liberty and justice for all."

June is usually a time when many young people are thinking about graduation celebrations and summer plans. This year, however, there is more weighing on their hearts and minds. Now in our 12th week of quarantine, students and families are grappling with the sickness and death caused by COVID-19 as well as economic uncertainties, isolation, new ways of learning and the emotional stress that comes with these conditions.

Yet, that is not all. The heinous murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor by the police is an all too familiar reminder of the structural racism that black and brown Americans experience every day of their lives. We are angry and scared about the hatred we are experiencing. These are feelings that many students in the Greater Washington region, one of the most diverse in the U.S., share and must grapple with as they mature and learn about the social complexities of our country.

As I consider how unsettling things may seem to young people in our community right now, I reflect on my own youth. I remember vividly the fear and insecurity I felt when the riots of 1968 broke out in cities across the country after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Until April 4, 1968, I was focused on getting a summer job, graduating from high school the next year and going to the college of my choice. But on that day, the world looked very different and was never the same.

Getting home from Theodore Roosevelt High School that day was a harrowing experience. I had to cross Georgia Avenue where looting started almost immediately. Once the announcement was made and school was closed, everyone was confused, angry and concerned about their safety.

For the days and weeks afterward, I was afraid for myself, family, friends and neighbors as the looting continued, our city was under curfew, police patrolled our streets and the National Guard occupied my high school gym and football field.

At that time in my life, I had to face the social complexities of our country. I had to understand and learn how to live my life in this context. In the past week, these feelings have intensified. I keep telling myself we can never stop working to protect the civil rights and positive gains made in America over my lifetime.

The stressors on our young people today continue to be much heavier and the uncertainties of life are much greater than those I encountered growing up in Petworth, or imagined just 12 weeks ago.

At VPP, we cannot stop thinking about how the young people in our community are absorbing the information and feeling the stress, whether they are directly affected or experiencing the broader anxiety of our current climate. We know that the students VPP and our partners work with are, and will be, more vulnerable as these events and issues inflict added trauma to their lives.

At this time, VPP and our partners remain committed to ensuring that the young people in our region have the tools and support they need to be safe, succeed and thrive.

We will continue to invest in dismantling the structural racism and implicit biases that enforce the status quo. Every young person should have the opportunity to get a good education, health care and career training, allowing them to learn, graduate, and become healthy, successful adults.

I ask you to reflect, as I have, on the words of President Kennedy in a major speech on civil rights on June 11, 1963. "I hope that every American, regardless of where he lives, will stop and examine his conscience about this and other related incidents . . . The heart of the question is whether all Americans are afforded equal rights and equal opportunities. Whether we treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated."

This is a daunting time and there will be more trying days to come, but this work is critical to ensure a better life for today's young people and it cannot be done alone. We need collective

action. We will continue to work hard every day to ensure that every young person believes they can realize their dreams and that their community will protect and support them in becoming thriving adults. Together, we will continue our fight for children, youth and families—and we will succeed. We all have contributions to make in helping America fulfill its ideal of “liberty and justice for ALL”.

### **David Varner, Office Director, SmithGroup**

Our nation is grieving from the most recent acts of violence and systemic racism that are the continuation of a history of injustice against members of our black communities. We denounce the continual dehumanization and compromised safety of communities of color who have been disproportionately targeted because of their physical appearance. We stand in solidarity with those who live with this trauma as a daily circumstance by identifying and calling out the unjust systems that perpetuate harm. Our firm is committed to a promise to Design a Better Future ... and that future is now.

### **Ed Walter, Global CEO, Urban Land Institute**

#### **Time for Change**

The past several months have been challenging and disorienting for all of us due to COVID-19. And now, with the senseless killing of George Floyd, we are witnessing protests across many cities, at times violent, as frustrated citizens seek to be heard. In the midst of this turmoil, ULI recognizes the importance of our mission now more than ever: to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. At the heart of this mission is a belief that our communities can only truly thrive if they are built on the foundations of diversity, inclusivity, and social equity. In short, our communities must work for everyone.

Times of crisis demand great leadership. ULI's 45,000 members are at the forefront of shaping the built environment and have an important role to play in designing and building places in ways that help tackle, rather than perpetuate, the inequalities in our society. We will continue to support our members to share best practices, learn from each other's mistakes, and partner with our cities in a sincere and coordinated effort to make progress on this critical objective. Our members, often industry leaders in each of their communities across our nation, can and should play a significant role in bringing about the change needed in our cities. We recognize the scale of inequality in our country and how great a task stands before us. We remain firmly committed to working across the real estate industry to help bring about the change needed in our communities.

## **Sandy Wilkes, Chairman, The Wilkes Company**

The Wilkes Company stands (and kneels) in solidarity with all women and men of conscience who are heartsick and in mourning for George Floyd's family – and the families of so many others. Economic inequality and social injustice have to end. We simply must figure this out and must do so with unwavering kindness and determination while treating this as the central, overriding concern of our country.