Response to the George Floyd Murder and Other Atrocities

This Memorial Day, with the rest of America and the world, we were dumbstruck for nearly 9 minutes when we witnessed the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police whose job is to protect and serve all people. It was not unheard of in the black community; however, the quarantine ensured that millions heard George Floyd’s agonizing cries to stop as well as the disinterested and callous behaviors of the perpetrators. Following the senseless murders of unarmed Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, and Christian Cooper being falsely accused of attacking a woman in Central Park, George Floyd’s murder ignited a spark across the globe.

Young people mobilized a protest like none seen before and quickly were joined by people of all ages, races, ethnicities, and countries. We are proud and humbled by these protests while inconsolable at the need for them. And we condemn in the strongest terms the systematic oppression of black Americans from 1619 to now.

Fund II Foundation has unapologetically expressed its commitment to the liberation of the human spirit. As founding president Robert Smith says, “This mission is as urgent today as it was 401 years ago.” We have granted millions of dollars to fight disparity and despair on many fronts—health, education, incarceration, historical preservation, art, history, small
businesses, and the like. Of particular note is our support of the NY Times’ 1619 Project, which provided evidence of the extent of slavery on African Americans, so compelling and courageous, its lead author, Nikole Hannah-Jones won a Pulitzer Prize.

We are most recently committed to relieving student debt through our latest grant to the Student Freedom Initiative; not only do we intend to remove the soul-crushing debt of tuition but also the opportunity to follow their true calling without settling for a numbing career.

We will continue to fight the good fight. We will work with the thousands of students we serve, many of whom have asked not why this happened (they know the everyday effects of racism), but what can they do now.

We are proud of what many of our grantees are doing and share the following:

**Echoing Green**

It’s not enough to desire equity and sustainability in our recovery. It is time to act, to make it so, and that leadership must be rooted in racial equity; anything else will be far too incremental, far too hollow, and far too idle to meet this moment. Invest now and significantly in Black leaders and Black-led organizations, particularly those who are proximate to the communities they serve.

**Saving Places**

We believe that historic preservation can play a critical role in acknowledging and healing the divisions in our nation, by telling the full story of our often-difficult history, by elevating and preserving the enormous and important contributions African Americans have made to our nation, and by carrying that powerful legacy forward through places of truth and reconciliation.

**StreetWise**

StreetWise was built on the principle of equity. We know that talent is distributed equally but opportunity is not. And this is because of the structural racism that has been ingrained in the fabric of this nation for decades. Racial and social justice is a responsibility that we all share, and we must be committed to now, next week, next month, next year - until we can ensure human dignity for all.

**Rock Creek Park Conservancy**

Today, our city and our country are on edge. This is a byproduct of centuries of inequity, systemic racism, and inherent bias. Last week’s confrontation in Central Park shows that what feels like a natural, easy trip for many of us, might be fraught with concern or danger for others. That incident was quickly followed by George Floyd’s murder; it is terrifying to think that this could have been the outcome of that 911 call in Central Park. And we remember others like Ahmaud Arbery, who died while out for a run—something so many do without a second thought in Rock Creek.
Alvin Ailey Summer Camps

Mr. Ailey once said, "One of the worst things about racism is what it does to young people." Yet we see that it is these young people who are leading the force for change. We stand with those who are on the front lines and those who put themselves at risk combatting hate and injustice. In unison with our community, we rise to fight racism and demand equal justice. For our entire Ailey family, we are here to provide you the space, the hope, the example, the balm, the strength, and the revelations you need through this struggle as we move forward together in answering the call.

RFK Center

We condemn the trafficking, rape, torture, and enslavement of Africans that reached American soil 401 years ago, that engrained anti-black racism still manifesting today in the structures of our society.

UNCF

Today, we at UNCF mourn the deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd. They are now among a long list of martyrs. All are victims of virulent anti-Black violence committed by uniformed police and self-appointed civilian vigilantes alike, who have systemically and systematically devalued Black humanity and destroyed Black lives, too often with impunity and without legal consequence. At UNCF, we stand shoulder to shoulder with those who affirm that “Black lives matter.” We, too, demand justice and accountability.

OppNet

Every day, black lives are brutally extinguished, families are heartlessly severed, and communities are traumatically shattered. Our young people continue to push through systemic barriers and give everything they have to hold on to their right to be the makers of their destinies. At the same time, they are constantly contending with the persistent threat of deeply rooted racism and brutality—the type that can take it all away, in an instant, for simply living while black.

SPLC

We are outraged that a policing system built on white supremacy and fueled by structural racism continues to take the lives of Black and brown people. Policing, with origins designed to control people of color in this nation, must be reimagined. Today we acknowledge that crimes by police against Black people are deeply rooted in our racist history and systems of oppression.
Black people—are tired of being dehumanized, brutalized, profiled, stereotyped, denied, excluded, underestimated, and so on. These experiences and feelings are now compounded by the epidemiological reality that COVID-19 and the incidence of death have hit communities of color harder disproportionately. Higher unemployment rates, housing and food insecurity will add fuel to the fire of individual and collective misery.

This week has been really hard. As a Black man and father to a Black son, I see the disregard for our lives, and sometimes it makes me feel powerless to keep him safe. I know I am not the only person who feels this way, and we need a safe place to have this conversation.

The extraordinary times in which we are living are shining a spotlight on so many issues of equity, and the lack of it: on the ways that rights and opportunity are unevenly distributed across our society, and the worth of our labor and our lives unequally valued. As an academic community built on the bedrock values of diversity, inclusion, and openness, we have an obligation to ensure that the forces of these events and our feelings drive us not backward, but forward.

NAF’s mission to improve the lives of young people centers on a core value of equity and partnership. This cannot occur when the lives of our Black network members and colleagues are at risk. The recent killings of Black men and women, followed by the widespread outrage...
of injustice and systemic racism, further demonstrates how much work is needed, particularly in education and the workplace, if we are to meet the promise of a bright future for our children.

National Park Foundation
And how do you ever come to terms with the senseless and awful death of George Floyd at the hands of a uniformed police officer. The images haunt me, the cries for help are hard to get out of my head. Mr. Floyd’s death was stunning in its brutality and stark in its utter lack of humanity. I am left overwhelmingly saddened for both Mr. Floyd’s family and for our nation as a whole. We all have lost something profound.

Ron Brown Scholars
There are many of us struggling with the emotions and realizations that recent events have brought to light. Each day seems like 2020 just could not get any worse. Many have expressed frustration, sadness, despair, and fear. In this time, we would like to instead offer an opportunity to explore actionable behavior, positive outcomes, and institutional change. With the hope of leadership and direction that is needed.

Sphinx Music
Long before the modern essayists and scholars wrote of racial identity as a problem for a multiracial world, musicians were returning to their roots to affirm that which was stirring within their souls. Much of the power of our Freedom Movement in the United States has come from music. It has strengthened us with its sweet rhythms when courage began to fail. It has calmed us with its rich harmonies when spirits were down.” These are the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, which ring true today. As we mourn the loss of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and too many others, we bow our heads in solidarity and pain, reflecting on the deep injustices that have been dividing our world. We must do all that we can to not permit another story to become a statistic. Indifference has run its course to give way to initiative, accountability, solidarity: each of us must now find our humanity and courage to take action.

NPower
We at NPower acknowledge the pain and heartbreak, the frustration and exhaustion overwhelming so many of our staff members, students, alumni, and more broadly, communities of color across America. The inequities exposed by the coronavirus and the recent, tragic deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and many others,
are symptomatic of underlying racism and injustice that run counter to every value we stand for at NPower.

Together We Rise
The death of George Floyd is a devastating reminder we as a society we have a long way to go in listening, learning, and changing. We stand with Black families, communities, and our team members and are committed to ongoing resources that advance social justice. Racial disparities in foster care include: Black children are removed from their homes at twice the rate of white children; more than half of children entering foster care are young people of color; and 26% of children in foster care are Black children in the U.S.

Roots ‘n’ Shoots
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “In the end, we will not remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.” We cannot be silent about racial injustice. Roots & Shoots is committed to making the world a better place for people, animals, and the environment. To support all people, we must acknowledge race and how it impacts people by providing unearned privileges to some and oppression to others. Confronting society’s structural racism is uncomfortable but allowing discomfort to prevent addressing inequality is worse. We urge members of the R&S community to take action: organize projects and fundraisers, educate ourselves, empathize, and listen to oppressed voices. We stand with the Black community and those fighting for Black lives to be protected and respected. Black Lives Matter!

Squash Drive
SquashDrive stands with the black community, and with every person who faces injustice and oppression due to the systemic racism that prevails in this country. Our hearts mourn for the families of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and Breonna Taylor, and for every family that has lost a loved one due to senseless violence and insidious bias. We condemn the racial violence at the hands of police officers, and we will not be silent.
Cathedral Spires HS
A prayer sent out to their parishioners and students/parents:

Dear God,

In our efforts to dismantle racism, we understand that we struggle not merely against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities - those institutions and systems that keep racism alive by perpetuating the lie that some members of the family are inferior and others superior.

Create in us a new mind and heart that will enable us to see brothers and sisters in the faces of those divided by racial categories.

Give us the grace and strength to rid ourselves of racial stereotypes that oppress some of us while providing entitlements to others.

Help us to create a church and a nation that embraces the hopes and fears of oppressed people of color where we live, as well as those around the world.

Heal your family, God, and make us one with you, in union with our brother Jesus, and empowered by your Holy Spirit.

Courtesy of US News & World Report