

As the leaders of non-profit organizations serving in Milwaukee, we stand in solidarity with our Black community and our neighbors of color – they deserve equity and justice.

With the murder of George Floyd many of our organizations have made our own statements regarding structural racism and the need for change. However, it is past time to say more and do more. It is time to acknowledge that there will be no change if we ignore structural racism and do not work to dismantle white supremacy.

Dismantling such structures requires the power of a collective effort. Alone, we cannot wholly address the powerful and pervasive issues of systemic racism. Today, we commit to work together.

Every day our leaders, staff, and volunteers work to impact lives and build our community. The individuals and communities we serve are coping with generations of inequity and historical trauma.

We refuse to accept the status quo, and we acknowledge our role in this system – both as helpers and hinderers. We acknowledge the current expression of pain, anger and sadness of people in our community and pledge to both listen and take action to become anti-racist organizations.

This is why we each have made a conscious decision to work together – collaboratively and purposefully – to be a part of the drive for change. As leaders of our organizations and as human beings dedicated to racial equity, we hereby commit to long-term, sustained actions and will start with the following:

- Learn from our region’s Black community and our neighbors of color about their needs and desires so that we can genuinely address racism and historical trauma and the harm it inflicts on communities and individuals.
- Prevail on community leaders and the philanthropic community to address systemic racism and support them when they do.
- Support public policy reforms and civic engagement, beginning with:
  - The use of force by police and related criminal justice reforms
  - Discriminatory housing policies that perpetuate segregation
  - Efforts to achieve a minimum living wage
  - Racial equity in public education – funding, administration, educators & curriculum
  - Voter registration and participation with our staff and clients
- Commit to inclusion throughout our organizations and the non-profit sector, including working with existing initiatives led by Black, Indigenous and people of color to:
  - Diversify our Board of Directors’ membership
  - Identify and mentor team members for leadership roles who are racially and ethnically representative of the clients our organizations serve
  - Recruit, develop and retain a racially diverse workforce at all levels of our organization
- Support and align our efforts with grass-roots organizations working to eliminate racism, amplifying their voices.

We know that completing a checklist of items will not, alone, achieve our goal, so we commit to developing shared benchmarks and being transparent about our progress. These efforts must be deeply rooted in our mission, our values and in our daily work.

We are united in our vision to create a better community for everyone who lives here.

Sincerely,

Andi Elliott, Community Advocates

Joyce Felker, The Parenting Network

Colleen Foley, Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee

Teri Zywick, Milwaukee Center for Independence

Anthony McHenry, Milwaukee Academy of Science

Joe-Mar Hooper, Safe and Sound

Ann Leinfelder Grove, SaintA

Cindy Krahenbuhl, Guest House Milwaukee

Keith Stanley, Avenues West

Carrie Wall, YMCA of Southeastern Wisconsin  
*Tony A Kearney, Sr.*

Jeff Martinka, Neighborhood House

Karen Higgins, Milwaukee Christian Center

Dan Schiller, Peak Initiative

Tracey Sparrow, Next Door

Christine Holmes, Penfield Children's Center

Mara Duckens, St. Francis Children's Center

Carmen Pitre, Sojourner Family Peace Center

Tom Schneider, COA

Amy Chionchio, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee

Eve Hall, Milwaukee Urban League

Tony Kearney, Northcott Neighborhood House