

Dear ComMUSICation Community,

We hope this letter finds you as safe and well as one can be in these tragic times.

This past week has been unlike any other and of course the police brutality has been even more tangible happening in a neighborhood I called home for five years. But as Governor Walz said yesterday, "the anxiety, grief, pain that we may have felt this past week [as white people] is a lifetime for our black and brown residents." I'd like to add "generations" to this quote-this racism is systemic and sadly institutionalized. And these are ComMUSICation children, family, and other community members who live this racism daily. Children who have dreams, have families, and SHOULD matter. Did you know Minnesota has one of the largest racial inequities in the state criminally, academically, and in health? While CMC strives to ensure our black and brown youth have the same opportunities as more privileged white children, for whom the system benefits, we need everyone's help to ensure these systemic injustices cease and we lift up the voices of our CMC youth and families.

A large part of CMC's mission is community. I know I'm not alone when I say the community I have witnessed the past week is stronger than ever, whether it be ensuring our neighbors are safe, those of us who don't have transportation have our basic needs met, or helping clean up our communities. Our children need us right now, especially those who have institutionalized racism against them, and whose voices sadly aren't and have never been heard by our police officers and government. CMC's mission is to empower all young people, but how can one feel empowered when they fear for their lives in a state that has historically let them down?

CMC is actively trying to help change this institutionalized racism and say NO MORE. CMC's Board has made a racial equity task force that involves our young people and their families to decide what proactive steps we will take so that we don't just react, but ultimately change and incorporate this into our strategic plan for years to come. While our full response is still in the works, our core values will certainly be upheld: intentional, inclusive, community-based, and collaborative. Rest assured, it will be a response that shows CMC is not just reacting to current events in a non-racist way, but rather in an actively and unabashedly anti-racist way at an organizational level.

CMC is working on putting together a list of resources to share with you, our community, to ensure we are actively showing our solidarity with victims of police brutality. We will follow-up next week with this and our next steps. Included later in this email are a few resources that we've found helpful.

I'd like to share the timeless work, "Ella's Song" written by one of my favorite groups, Sweet Honey in the Rock. The lyrics read: "until the killing of black men, black mother's sons, is as important as the killing of white men, white mother's sons..we who believe in freedom shall not rest until it comes."

This fight is beyond uncovering the past ten years of the Minneapolis Police Department, and beyond any one of us. But we must fight for justice so that one day a generation can see this song realized.

Let us march on 'til victory is won!

In solidarity,

Sara

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