

June 3, 2020

Like many of you, we watched the video of the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis with profound horror and sadness.

From Trayvon Martin to Michael Brown to Freddie Gray to Ahmaud Arbery to Breonna Taylor to Eric Garner to now George Floyd -- the senseless and unjust killings of these and other now-familiar black men and women are the ones we at least know about. There are so many more that we don't.

The cameras in our pockets may have made these killings more visible, but they have not eradicated their frequency or their root causes. So many have suffered these same tragic consequences when there were no cameras on, devastating their families and their communities. Then there are the incessant acts of discrimination, bigotry, and intimidation that black Americans must all-too-frequently endure, as Amy Cooper recently reminded us.

This is the time for organizations like ours to observe, to examine, to listen, to learn, to act, and to work alongside others to overcome these deep-seated inequities. Our work to support each student's education can only be but so successful without broader efforts aimed at achieving more widespread social justice.

We know there is real pain in this moment -- pain that has been accumulating for 400 years and is again being laid bare, though now in the midst of national pandemic and economic crisis. At the same time, during these hard and troubling times, we also find hope and inspiration that the mission for social justice has taken to the streets with an increasingly diverse coalition.

In the strongest possible terms, we unequivocally encourage, endorse, and support the lawful and peaceful protests that are springing up all over this country. We collectively must find ways to do better -- not only with our policies as a nation, or our inclusiveness as a community, but through our day to day actions as individuals. No one can do this for us. It is incumbent upon each and every one of us to be the change that is so desperately needed.

Black Americans have endured this pain far too long, and now we must all be committed to joining in the struggle to end it.

Yours in grief and determination,
Chris, Joel, and the New Classrooms Team

