

We All Must Speak — and Act

The murder of George Floyd shows with unforgettable horror the scourge of racism and the inequity and injustice it has wrought.

We at Park Foundation are called by the moment to reaffirm our commitment to the values embedded in our grantmaking, and to add our voice to the rising chorus crying out for justice and equity. We applaud and support peaceful demonstrations and the work that must be done for meaningful and measurable change to end systemic racism.

Inaction equals indifference. Indifference enables injustice. And silence, as the signs borne aloft by many a marcher in recent weeks say, is violence. We all must speak up and do our share.

Eighty-five years ago, Langston Hughes wrote about the difficulty for black people, immigrants, the poor, Native Americans, and others in reconciling their low and oppressed lot with the lofty ideals on which the nation was founded. In words as relevant today, he wrote:

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

George Floyd was murdered by one above, but in his death the righteous are standing for him for justice. The chorus demanding change grows louder and more unified, and the Park Foundation will not stand on the sidelines. May the words become action. May the action move us closer to living the “dream the dreamers dreamed.”

To that end, we support, and urge others to support, organizations that are on the front lines of the fight for racial justice and equity. Below are examples of those to whom we have recently awarded grants.

Nationally:

Color Of Change (colorofchange.org), for increased organizational capacity to harness its surging membership into a potent force advocating wholesale reform of policing and criminal justice;

Movement for Black Lives (m4bl.org), for its five-year program to boost black leadership in communities and advance agendas shaped by those communities;

PushBlack (pushblack.org), for its buildout of a huge digital community of black Americans that it can mobilize for criminal justice reform, voting, and other forms of civic engagement.

Locally:

Ultimate Re-Entry Opportunity, for systemic changes to reduce barriers for those reentering our community after incarceration;

Community Unity Music Education Program, for meaningful social justice and music education programming that helps close achievement gaps;

Alternatives Federal Credit Union, for its efforts to support economic opportunities for all people in our community.

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