

YWCA Southeast Wisconsin on the Murder of George Floyd

May 29, 2020

With heavy hearts, we offer our deepest sympathies to the loved ones of George Floyd and grieve with our sister YWCAs in Minneapolis and St. Paul whose communities are in disbelief and shock. We join YWCA USA in its outrage at the continued violence against and inconceivable deaths of people of color in America due to police brutality.

Our sister YWCAs in St. Paul and Minneapolis have spoken out regarding Mr. Floyd's murder with the following statements:

"George Floyd was one of ours. He took advantage of a training program offered by YWCA St. Paul and, like many of those we partner with, he was taking steps to build a brighter future. The anger, anguish, and grief we are feeling in this community is real. And yet, we must channel those emotions into positive action that demands justice, drives change, and most importantly honors his memory," said **Gaye Adams Massey, CEO, YWCA St. Paul.**

"We condemn the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police Department officers. We have seen this tragedy before. Unfortunately, George Floyd is just one of countless other black lives lost to police violence, including that of Jamar Clark and Philando Castile, said **Michelle Basham, MPA/ESQ, CEO/President, YWCA Minneapolis.** "We must work toward racial justice. And we must work in partnership with others to hold our elected officials and law enforcement accountable."

We understand that the officer who knelt on Mr. Floyd's neck, causing his death, is in custody and has been charged with murder. The investigation regarding the conduct of the other officers present continues and, we stand with all those who call for an independent, thorough and transparent investigation so that true justice is served.

It is an understatement to say that the brutal murder of Mr. Floyd, at the hands of a white police officer, has left many people outraged. This is not an isolated incident nor is it limited to situations involving officers of the law. How many Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) must be killed every day in situations that are unwarranted, indefensible, and unjustified before we as united communities demand that it stop?

YWCA Southeast Wisconsin stands in solidarity with individuals, families, organizations and communities fighting for humane treatment for all. We as a nation cannot sit idly and silently while our beloved brothers, sisters and neighbors are murdered.

Closer to home, Joel Acevedo, 25, was strangled following a gathering in mid-April. He died six days later from his injuries. Mr. Acevedo's death came at the hands and in the home of Milwaukee Police Department officer, Michael Mattioli, who has been charged with first degree reckless homicide. Officer Mattioli is out on bail, continuing to collect a paycheck, while Mr. Acevedo's loved ones are left to grieve. The Acevedo Family is holding a protest today, May 29, near West Cleveland and South 45th Street at 5pm.

While overt acts of violence are vicious, institutionalized white supremacy reigns insidious in all of our lives. There are countless moments every day where we fail to act against oppression. These covert actions (calling police on black people for every day activity, being silent in the face of racist statements, operating as if colorblind, failing to

reflect on implicit bias, etc.) collude with a narrative that perpetuates BIPOC as less than human.

It is a lie that All Lives Matter unless we, as a people, live as if Black Lives Matter. Our BIPOC sisters and brothers are deserving of respect, dignity, and kindness. We share a responsibility for remembering, for acting with integrity, and coming together to change racist systems.

Southeastern Wisconsin. We must think better, so we can do better, so we can build a more just and equitable community.

About YWCA Southeast Wisconsin

Now in its 127th year of service, YWCA Southeast Wisconsin (SEW) was incorporated in 1893 (formerly YWCA Greater Milwaukee) and today serves more than 10,000 individuals each year through its **mission of eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.** YWCA SEW fulfills this mission through the complementary approaches of direct individual economic empowerment services and community-focused racial justice programming. This combination of economic empowerment and racial justice work is YWCA SEW's formula for building a more just and equitable Southeast Wisconsin.

