

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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SUFFOLK COUNTY INTERFAITH ANTIBIAS TASK FORCE

June 1, 2020

JOINT STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE DEATH OF GEORGE FLOYD

The horrific death of George Floyd has heartbroken and outraged us all. One can only recoil at the brutality of it. Thousands of our fellow citizens across the country, led by our African American sisters and brothers, have risen up to say NO!; and are willing to put themselves in harm's way to claim their rightful humanity in a world that repeatedly sees and treats them as less than human. We decry the racism within individuals, institutions, and social structures that perpetuate this, and we will raise our voices and act to demand that the world we live in change.

Our hearts go out to the families and friends of Mr. Floyd, to all who have experienced racialized violence and injustice, and to all who live in fear that they or their loved ones may be next. We stand with them at this time.

These words from One Spirit Seminary call us to a higher aspiration through personal introspection. When members of the African American community and people of color more broadly defined, are subjected to the kind of systemic racism that permeates every aspect of our society, we must understand that it literally runs through every institution and has from the inception of our nation. Thus, it runs through each and every one of us who is afforded privilege as a result. Only when we have done the difficult, painful, and searing work of acknowledging and dismantling our own internalized racism, can we truly stand together in solidarity with those who have lived every day of their lives within this oppressive system. It has always been our work to alleviate the pain of discrimination. We should and must know that NO ONE should ever have to feel those things and that we bear the responsibility to do what is necessary to dismantle the systems of inequality and oppression.

The Suffolk County Inter-faith Anti-Bias Task Force and the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission stand in solidarity with Black and Brown communities across the country and is determined to address the deep, pervasive, systemic issues that fueled this tragedy.

Peace & Blessings,

Rev. JoAnn Barrett
Co-Chair, Suffolk County Inter-Faith
Anti-Bias Task Force

Lynda Perdomo-Ayala
Chair, Suffolk County Human Rights Commission