



June 1, 2020

Dear Friends,

I find myself compelled to write to you this evening regarding the current events facing our country. We mourn the death of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and the many people of color who have lost their lives due to police brutality, racist policies, and a casual or intentional disregard for the value of human life.

The Washington Waldorf School opposes every expression of racism, and stands in support of those who seek justice for the horrific events of recent days. It is not enough in times like these to stand by and watch. In the words of Elie Wiesel, "We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

What does taking sides look like in an educational institution? In our school, it means being committed to anti-racist education. In a society where racism is still active, education which fosters an active, anti-racist commitment and practice is essential. It means looking underneath the surface of current events to expose the roots, the underlying causes. Then, change is possible, hope is kindled, and healing can occur.

How else does taking sides look in our school? Students who use their critical thinking and independent judgment to assess the world in which they live. Students who learn and practice respect, compassion, and empathy for all human beings. Students who are upstanders for other human beings in the face of injustice. Students who know that love is the antidote to hate.

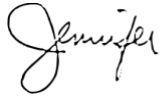
The questions facing us then, are: What can we do? What can I do? What can you do? We can assemble our own toolboxes and help our children assemble theirs. We need to understand racism and commit to being anti-racist. As Ijeoma Oluo said in her book, *So You Want to Talk About Race*, "The beauty of anti-racism is that you don't have to be free of racism to be anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself. It's the only way forward."

In the spirit of "doing", I invite you to join me this summer in reading the books, *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo, and *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, and gathering with me to discuss them. I encourage you to talk to your children, read to your young children, and help your older children get involved. I and our

Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice Committee will provide resources to support you at home.

I welcome your partnership in working for change.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer".

Jennifer Page
Faculty Chair and Head of School