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We Must Teach Our Children to Stand Up Against Injustice

Dear Merced County Community,

For several months, our county has come together and focused on health and safety in response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. However, the sad and troubling events of recent days also demand our attention and thoughtful response as a community. While thousands of people engaged in peaceful protests calling for justice and equality after the killing of George Floyd, there is widespread violence in communities across America. We each have a role to play to combat the tragedies that have unfolded in Minnesota and throughout our country. This is a call to action to educate friends, neighbors, colleagues and children, to voice our outrage regarding injustice, and to demand respect for every human being regardless of race, ethnicity and economic status.

Leaders must take responsibility for the health and safety of their community, including the right to peacefully assemble to protest injustice. It is only through personal action that we can ever hope to live up to the standards that have been passed on to us by our forebearers. It is only with the collaboration of education, health and human services, law enforcement, the court system and our communities that we can hope to preserve the ideals of our democracy.

Now is the time that we should all join together to do our part. Peaceful protests showing solidarity in our commitment to be the change are critical. There is no room for violent and destructive behavior like what we are seeing across the United States.

Our children will seek to understand these events. As adults and educators, we must listen and respond with honesty and empathy. We must also teach them to stand up against racism, injustice and inequity through non-violent means. It is our job to model what a unified America must embody and teach our children to embrace the task of making equity a human right.

As educators, we have a responsibility to teach future generations about the ideals on which our country was founded, and that even today, there are people who face injustices. We need to ensure our children have the knowledge, skills and confidence to build a more just world; and that we ourselves, as well as our children, take up the task that Abraham Lincoln identified in his address at Gettysburg: "It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work

which they who fought here so nobly advanced.” We, along with our children and grandchildren, must be the change that is so needed in our country and our world.



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How can you make a difference to curtail racism and injustice?

1. Talk to your children with compassion about the pent-up frustration of the protesters so they know and understand the actions they are witnessing are a direct result of historical injustices.
 - [Teaching Tolerance provides resources for talking to kids about race and racism](#)
 - [HealthyChildren.org – Talking to Children about Racial Bias](#)
 - [Know your rights: Protester’s Rights](#)
2. Read books together as a family to support conversations on race, racism, and resistance.
 - [Embrace Race: Read-aloud books for raising a brave generation](#)
 - [27 Books to help you talk to your kids about racism](#)
3. Speak up when you are witness to an injustice or some form of racism. Silence only serves to support and promote deplorable acts.
 - [Six Steps to Speak Up](#)
4. Volunteering in diverse settings can help build a cultural competency and build a more inclusive society. Consider local opportunities that can build relationships and support people in need.
5. Educate yourself through the eyes of those most impacted:
 - [Black parents describe “The Talk” they give to their children about police](#)
 - [Black Parents Know about “The Talk” – White Parents, It’s Your Turn](#)
 - [Raising Race Conscious Children](#)
 - [A Conversation on Race](#) - A series of short films about identity in America