The Jewish Federation of New Mexico

June 4, 2020

"Our Response to Racism and Violence in America"

On behalf of the entire Jewish community of Southern Colorado and New Mexico, the Jewish Federation of New Mexico expresses our sorrow for the death of George Floyd and extends our deepest condolences to his family and friends. We register our utter disgust at his public, cruel and senseless murder at the hands of police.

We forcefully condemn the past and ongoing acts of racist violence perpetrated against Black people and other people of color by unbridled law enforcement personnel across our nation, and the systemic racism and intolerance that plague our society. We stand together with the Black community and all minorities who are the victims of hate. We firmly stand against all manifestations of White supremacist racism, ideology and the systemic marginalization all non-White citizens. We feel empathy for all of your suffering, as we know from our own history the tragic impact of systemic hatred, racism and violence. However, we humbly respect and want to understand the unique and existential gravity of your plight and experience.

We celebrate the non-violent expression of resistance through free speech, free assembly, and the exercising of our First Amendment rights across our country; and we decry all acts of violence and destruction by those that have malevolently infiltrated the gatherings of hundreds of thousands of citizens across our land who are peacefully demanding a more just society.

These words are important; however, we aspire to more than just words.

We are ready to learn, listen, reflect, discuss, and act together to create a society where every citizen of our country - no matter their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, ability, or political point of view - is guaranteed equal rights before the law. And most importantly, we will work to create a social and economic culture in which we overcome unconscious bias, habitual "othering" behavior, fear, overt racism and violence.

We will not be bystanders! Specifically, we will listen to the voices and experiences of the Black community and other people of color. We will support organizations that work to help the Black community and all people of color fight racism. We will encourage people to exercise their freedom of speech and assembly to bring about change. We will educate ourselves and share what we learn with others, even if it means having hard conversations. We will explore and confront our own biases. We will call out racism when we see it online, in public, at home and in our social circles.

We will extend our empathy to all victims of hate.

We acknowledge that this is a complex problem that requires hard conversations and an earnest commitment to act together. We realize the urgency demanded of us, and we will not allow the usual public amnesia in the face of these atrocities to blur our resolve to grow and act.

We will do this in the spirit expressed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel who walked side by side as friends and allies at the march in Selma, Alabama in 1964.



Dr. King said: “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

In these times of challenge and controversy, we in the Jewish community stand with our hearts, souls and might ready to help repair the breach, to defend the oppressed and to commit our lives to ending injustice.

Rabbi Heschel taught: “How many disasters do we have to go through in order to realize that all of humanity has a stake in the liberty of one person; whenever one person is offended, we are all hurt. What begins as inequality of some inevitably ends as inequality of all.”

It is to this necessity, the end of inequality that we commit ourselves as a Jewish community and offer to work with all people to achieve this ethereal hope and turn it into reality.

Sabra Minkus
President

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Executive Director