



changing lives • changing families • changing futures

A Statement from Our CEO

To Our Family Center Friends,

Every day through our work with families, our staff see the consequences of trauma on children, and there are few things that generate multigenerational trauma more than racism. Ask any mother of Black children. Their reality includes the importance of incorporating lessons about “being Black,” and if they have sons, teaching them to hold their hands high above their heads should they be stopped by law enforcement. Unless you’re a person of color, these conversations simply don’t take place.

During the month of May we watched as videos were shared demonstrating horrific violence against George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery... and we learned about the death of Breonna Taylor. Just one month in 400 years of injustices simply because fellow humans have different skin color.

Our hearts hurt as we watched those videos and the unnecessary loss of life, knowing the impact on their families today as well as future generations. Our heads reel because the statistics demonstrate how racial inequalities lead to poorer health outcomes, increased death rates due to COVID-19, a greater likelihood to be incarcerated for minor crimes, fewer job opportunities and growth potential, and the list goes on and on and on. I think back to 1990 and an undergraduate research project replicating the 1940s “doll tests” of Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark. 50 years after their findings demonstrated the negative effects of segregation on self-perception for children of color, the children of all races included in our project continued to view the darker skinned dolls as “bad,” and the black children “wished” their skin looked more like the lighter skinned dolls. As researchers our hypothesis of hope was not confirmed. Fast forward another 30 years... we are where we are today because not much has changed in our willingness to own the perpetuated differences needing our collective attention. Bottom line? Systemic racism affects our children and our communities.

The key to making real change is understanding the history, learning the lessons it taught us, and committing to not repeat the mistakes of the past. The Family Center stands tall, hand in hand with our Black sisters and brothers and with their children and grandchildren. We commit to the hard conversations that will help bring about positive change. We encourage a peaceful approach in our community as we hold public forums around these difficult topics.

Racism has no place in our community or our country.

Respectfully,
Susan Galeas, MSW, MPH
President & CEO
The Family Center

...breaking multigenerational cycles of childhood trauma.