



YMCA OF METROPOLITAN LOS ANGELES

Our hearts and prayers reach out to our national communities in crisis, especially the family and loved ones of George Floyd. Like you, we have been profoundly affected by the horrifying images of Mr. Floyd's death. Like you, we cannot tolerate the cycles of racism and inequity that have resulted in violence to people of color in our communities. On behalf of the YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles, and the twenty-six branches and three camps we serve, let us say: we have heard you. Our teams stand in solidarity with you to share your pain, sadness, frustration, and disappointment over this avoidable tragedy.

Our LA Y has always maintained a steadfast commitment to social justice and equality for all people, and that commitment permeates our work and mission. In this time of tragedy and upheaval, let us renew our commitment with a heightened sense of urgency.

In doing so, we are guided by the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose life our Y has celebrated in a citywide brotherhood breakfast every year for the past forty-seven years. In his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, he spoke of the "fierce urgency of Now" and cautioned that it would be "fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment." We face just such an urgent moment again today.

As Dr. King also said: "A riot is the language of the unheard. What is it that America has failed to hear?" In advancing our mission to promote social justice, we must listen, we must hear, and we must learn.

But we must also remember and heed Dr. King's message of nonviolence. "Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love." He also famously said: "Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline."

The Y's core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility are the elements that guide us in these challenging times, as always. We must remain optimistic. We must be honest about this crisis and be willing to take positive steps forward.

Please be safe and join our call to strengthen communities by taking a collective pledge with us:

- We will not allow the hurt of our community to go unnoticed.
- We will take action by working to promote equity in our communities.
- We will heed the Y's core values to be caring, honest, respectful, and responsible during this time of crisis.
- We will be better in our daily lives with all those we encounter.

With respect and gratitude,

Mark Helm, Chairman of the Board
Alan Hostrup, President & CEO

