



Together We Can

The Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund Response to Ongoing Racism and Injustice

Our hearts are heavy with our nation's tragic history of violence and racism that continues to target the Black community. We are grieving the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery among the many others who have lost their lives, their loved ones, their innocence, and their opportunity to live a full and abundant life as a result of prejudice and discrimination.

As an organization, we will use our voice to help drive change and support the path to healing. The crisis of systemic racism in our country is something that demands action and attention from **all** of us. It is our responsibility as philanthropists to work to end systemic racism. The Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund stands in solidarity, actively affirming that Black lives always have and always will matter.

"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word." -
Martin Luther King, Jr.

How do we collectively move forward to create change and continue to seek out ways to be part of the progress, as an organization and community? It starts with us, as individuals, and our willingness to be vulnerable and open to having the difficult conversations about the racial and ethnic disparities in our community and holding those in power accountable for any actions, laws, or speech that contribute to injustices and inequities that have disproportionately affected Black people.

At the leadership level, SOS is in the process of strategic planning. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) are the cornerstones of our planning as we further integrate DEI into the culture of our organization.

If you would like to join us in our efforts to learn more about diversity, equity and inclusion, here are some ways you can educate yourself and collectively empower change with fellow SOS members:

1. **Read one or all of these suggested books this summer.**

-The Person You Mean to Be - How Good People Fight Bias by Dolly Chugh

-Waking up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race by Debby Irving

-White Fragility Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin DiAngelo

-So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo

2. **Learn** more about the [Ferguson Commission and their recommendations](https://forwardthroughferguson.org/report/executive-summary/overview/?blm_aid=6349825) https://forwardthroughferguson.org/report/executive-summary/overview/?blm_aid=6349825 for the St. Louis region
3. **Vote for support and change.** Vote in your local, state, and national elections. While Americans look to the Oval Office for leadership and guidance, as President Obama stated, “The elected officials who matter most in reforming police departments and the criminal justice system work at the state and local levels.” – Clifford, C. (2020, June 2). *Barack Obama: This is what you can do to reform the system that leads to police brutality*. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/02/barack-obama-what-you-can-do-to-reform-the-system.html>
4. **Donate.** There are many organizations that can benefit from donations. We encourage you to do your own research before deciding where to donate your money. Another way to help locally is to visit Arch City Defenders - <https://www.archcitydefenders.org/get-involved/donate/>

Together, we can build a more perfect union, one in which all American citizens are valued and respected.

Sincerely,

The Spirit of St. Louis Women’s Fund 2019-2021 Board of Directors

Signed in support to end systemic racism and to affirm that Black Lives Matter.

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