



June 10, 2020

Dear Founders, Lifetime Members, Fellows and Alumni,

We write to you today to denounce the recent killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor - the latest in an all too-long line of tragic events that point to a common root-cause and brokenness in our country: centuries-old structural racism.

For Leadership Illinois, this is a time more than ever to express our concern and support for all of our members. We especially want to call out the pain being felt by many of our Black and Brown members. Not only may you be more directly feeling the impact of these senseless deaths, but your communities may have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. To our members in pain we simply say: **We are here to support you.**

As an organization that stands for education, energy and connection, there is arguably no better time than now to take our mission to heart: **to be catalysts for positive change in our communities.** There is no better time than now to educate ourselves, especially those who may feel at a loss or inadequate to truly understand the many deep-rooted, societal inequities surrounding us. No better time than now to connect with one another in whatever state we may find ourselves – vulnerable, outraged, paralyzed, confused – to lean into the inspiration of our Leadership Illinois network. We are strong because of our experiences, empowered by our stories, and we are women who do not stand still in times like these. **We strongly encourage you to take one bold action in your community in support of a positive change.** Listen. Empathize. Engage. But don't let that be the end of it. Donate time or money to a charity, support local businesses, and/or speak out about issues you are passionate about.

Additionally, if you would be interested in participating in a more organized discussion around issues such as racism and privilege, members of the Class of 2019 are starting a book club. (First book yet to be determined.) They are inviting any interested Leadership Illinois sister to join them. Please send an email to LIExecDirector@leadershipillinois.org, and we will get you connected. No better time than now to answer the call from one of your LI sisters to connect.

With sincere care and concern,

Krupal Swami
Class of 2014
Leadership Illinois Board President, 2020

Kathleen Lorenz
Class of 2014
Leadership Illinois Executive Director



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