Honoring George Floyd

The Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce (CBCC) Board of Directors and Executive Director would like to express our sincere condolences to the George Floyd Family and show our support of the Black Community taking historic steps to highlight the many injustices we have faced throughout Colorado. This moment of national heartbreak and outrage makes it painfully clear that many of the most egregious injustices that have plagued this country for so long are still with us.

So we write out of grief, but also out of frustration and anger, that some of the most deeply rooted evils of our society — white supremacy, systematic racial injustice, racially-biased policing, and historic oppression — have led again to murder. We mourn George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Philando Castile, Laquan McDonald, Walter Scott, Eric Garner, Amadou Diallo, Timar Rice, and countless other, all-too-often unnamed members of our community.

We at the CBCC also stand in awe of the inspiring solidarity that has emerged in recent days. In the midst of a pandemic, people bravely stand together against the multi-generational and structural inequality that continuously diminishes the value of Black and Brown lives. People stand together to decry police violence against the many throughout the country who courageously demand justice. This moment makes crystal clear the urgency of investing in Black, Brown and indigenous communities. The time is long overdue to take seriously, the urgent need to nurture and support Black business ownership, wealth building, housing, education, healthcare, and other essentials to recover from centuries of oppression.

For decades, the CBCC has stood and advocated for business equality and increased economic opportunity for Colorado’s Black community. From this work, we understand that generations of slavery followed by years of continued oppression and discrimination (through Jim Crow, race riots and redlining laws to mass incarceration to the killings of unarmed Black men) have all contributed to severely limiting this equality and opportunity.

Although this is a moment of profound sadness, it is also a moment for real action that starts by affirming that the CBCC stands in solidarity with our community. We call on our corporate members to partner with us by taking the following actions:

- Establish Diversity and Inclusion “practices” and aggressive, sustainable goals not just policies. Until a policy becomes a practice, it’s little more than words. Diversity and Inclusion practices and policies should include, where possible, programs to increase supplier diversity in an effort to support Black-owned businesses.
- Increase board diversity, specifically recruiting members from the Black community.
- Creative avenues in your company for safe and open conversations on systemic racism and the impact on employees, customers, and partners.
- Continue to support the CBCC’s efforts to grow and support Colorado’s African American business community with your financial support of the Black Chamber, volunteering to provide training and mentorship directly to our members, loaning executives to support CBCC staff, etc.

We believe these action items will be meaningful initial steps toward addressing systematic racial injustices we continue to witness today. We also believe that these actions are prudent business practices and will ultimately lead to the
potential for higher corporate profit and increased shareholder value. If you have questions on how to proceed, the CBCC is available to discuss these and other options with you.

The United States of America is the world’s leading country in terms of economic strength (as measured by a $22 Trillion GDP). Although the buying power of this nation’s diverse communities has always been a significant part of this nation’s success. The wealth created from the country’s success has not extended into Black and Brown households and many remain oppressed while systemic racism fosters an environment to keep them there.

Together, let us bring to life the words of George Floyd’s daughter Gigi “DADDY CHANGED THE WORLD!”

--CBCC Board of Directors & Executive Director, June 5, 2020