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Dear California 4-H Community,

The recent killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Sean Reed, and Breonna Taylor have left our community and nation shaken. Witnessing the ongoing discrimination, bigotry, violence, racism, and injustice inflicted on people of color across our country has filled us with pain, despair, anguish, and hopelessness.

As a community that *engages youth in reaching their fullest potential*, I urge all of you to contemplate the role 4-H plays in helping create a more just and equitable society for **all youth**, and to create space within your 4-H meetings for youth and families to discuss their feelings about these tragic deaths and the anger they may be feeling. To incorporate moments of silence in remembrance of Tony McDade and Sean Reed, and acknowledge the ongoing trauma that is a reality for people of color like George Floyd who have died by violence from people in positions of power.

Now more than ever, the 4-H program must intentionally act to continue our efforts around eliminating barriers to participation, expanding the relevance of our program, and creating safe and welcoming environments for all youth and their families. We must also show unity and acknowledge the racism, racial profiling, brutality, and injustice taking place in our world.

But how? As a starter, I recommend the following:

Resources for adults to help youth:

1. Read this article published June 2, 2020 in the New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/parenting/kids-books-racism-protest.html> which outlines how to have these conversations with young people and provides recommended readings to help youth navigate their feelings and questions about racism and protest.
2. Visit the following on racial equity resources for youth:
  - a. Central Racial Justice: <https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/resources-for-talking-about-race-racism-and-racialized-violence-with-kids/>
  - b. NPR: <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/24/716700866/talking-race-with-young-children>
  - c. Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/05/22/we-need-more-white-parents-talk-their-kids-about-race-especially-now/>
  - d. Time: <https://time.com/5362786/talking-racism-with-white-kids-not-enough/>
3. Devote time in your club and project meetings to help youth cope with what they are feeling and witnessing in the media. Reach out to members of your community to assist youth and families with grief counseling, stress mitigation and exploring their feelings.
4. Offer the 4-H Mindful Me project: <https://shop4-h.org/collections/mindful-me-collection> a curriculum for youth ages 5 – 8 with a focus on developing skills for stress management and mindful eating, as well as and improved physical, emotional, and social health.
5. Incorporate 4-H Yoga <http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/242850.pdf> into your project meetings as a way of reducing stress and anxiety.

Resources for adults:

1. 4-H Access, Equity and Belonging Resources: <https://access-equity-belonging.extension.org/>
2. Coping with a Traumatic Event – Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/masstrauma/factsheets/public/coping.pdf>
3. Trauma Informed Care: <https://www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org/trauma-informed-care-basics/>
4. Diversity, Equity and Belonging Resources from the University of Maryland: <https://extension.umd.edu/4-h/resources>
5. Books to build your understanding of anti-racism: <https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/books/g32733124/best-books-on-anti-racism/>

While the challenge before us is daunting, we have the capacity, resources, and responsibility to change the future. By ensuring the 4-H Youth Development Program promotes:

**Competence** to work collaboratively with others for the larger good.

**Confidence** to develop self-efficacy for meaningful contributions.

**Character** for one's conduct and obligations.

**Caring** and a sense of sympathy and empathy for others.

**Connection** through safety and structure, including protection from injury and loss.

**Contribution** by being involved as active participants and decision our communities,

we can be an example for inclusive, welcoming and safe programming for youth and families.

The California 4-H Youth Development Program strongly supports the statement released by UC ANR Vice President Glenda Humiston stating *“California's strength is its diversity; our UC ANR mission has always been to serve all segments of the state's population. I ask that everyone think proactively about how we can help our communities move forward. Whether you are helping homeowners plant their first vegetable garden, preparing our youth to participate in civic engagement, helping limited-resource families access resources, or working on any of our many other [wide-ranging programs](#), you truly make a difference in the lives of all Californians. “*

Be safe. Be a beacon of hope.



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