Rippling Hope Response to Black Lives Matter

From the beginning we want to be clear: Black Lives Matter. Not just in words, but in deeds. These are turbulent, trying and challenging days for us as a nation. There seem to be more walls dividing us, than bridges between us. Hate, fear and anger are being expressed and spread by individuals, and even by our elected leaders. We have been shaken to the core once again by the reverberations and painful reminders of our nation’s troubling history of racial injustice. We are soon to recognize Independence Day, and yet we know that even today, we live in a land where all are not free. We begin by acknowledging that racism and injustice are woven into the fabric of daily life for too many of our neighbors, and we confess our complicity in these realities.

In fact, we would likely not exist as an organization if these were not realities of our collective lives.

As a faith-based, non-profit organization, Rippling Hope often talks about our neighbors, about serving and serving with our neighbors in need. We also affirm that in all faith traditions there is a call to love neighbor as we love ourselves. We are one human family. We ALL come from one Creator Spirit. And as the words from the Lakota language, “Mitakuye Oyasin” says “we are all related.” We are interconnected with all of life. When one part of the created order, when one neighbor suffers, we all suffer.

Too many of our neighbors are suffering and we have forgotten that we are all related to each other. Not just to those who look like us, believe like us, and have the same socio-economic status as us.

I don’t know what it’s like to live as part of the minority culture in our country. I have benefitted all of my life from white privilege. Even today, as I live and serve in a part of Detroit which is predominantly African-American, I benefit from this privilege. When I go into my local grocery store the owner asks me if I’d like to check out at the closed register to expedite my process when there are long lines. When I’m out in my front yard and the police drive by they stop to see how I’m doing, and then I watch them drive down the street and not stop to check in with anyone else in their yards.

Rippling Hope recognizes that America has a long way to go in the fight against systemic racism and injustice. From our inception, we have been committed to these core values: “Connecting Communities…Channeling Hope…Changing Lives.” We are blessed with donors, neighborhood partners, and other partners here in Detroit and across the country who believe in and join us in this mission. The focus of our work and service is primarily related to helping people maintain and repair their homes so that they can continue to live in their neighborhoods. However, I say to our volunteers that the service they provide is not the most important aspect of what they will do, but it is the relationships they will form while doing it.

It is through relationships that Communities are Connected. Hope is Channeled. Lives are Changed. Through relationships, we recognize that we are more alike than different; there is more that unites us than separates us; that in knowing the other, fear fades away; that love will overcome hate; and that we are all related. Through relationships, together we make a difference, we change the world, and, “We Shall Overcome.”

Rev. Carl E. Zerweck, III
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