COMMITMENT TO ADDRESS DIGITAL, SOCIAL & RACIAL INJUSTICE

June 2020

The confluence of events this year – the COVID-19 pandemic, murder of George Floyd, an unarmed African American man in Minneapolis by police officers, a serious recession – underscore the digital and societal divides and institutional racism in our country. We cannot address these injustices by passing laws and regulations alone. Unless we collectively change the root causes of these divides, we will not change the fact that America is a country in which the top 1% of the population controls how this country operates. This is not a democracy.

Who will lead the way to address these inequities so that we may one day call our country a democracy again?

Today’s generation of youth will be responsible for determining our future. Will the designers of that future be representative of the breadth and diversity of our city, state and nation or will they reflect the views and values of the elite few? Currently, members of our communities of color are not at the table where these discussions are taking place and decisions made.

The Harlem Gallery of Science is part of an action plan to meet the growing demand for skilled talent in the STEM fields and to address the issues of social injustice confronting our underserved communities of color by joining the growing number of voices calling for universal access to broadband and by providing its youth pathways to jobs in our growing economy and empowering them to participate in designing and shaping our future.

Partnering with The City College of New York, the Harlem Gallery of Science will be a focal point for collaborating with local schools and community organizations to inspire and engage middle and high school students to experience possibilities for a broader and more exciting future than they are currently aware of.

One step we can take immediately is to reframe the message to underrepresented youth of color from “you can’t do and don’t belong” to “you can do and you do belong” and provide educational experiences that reinforce this message by helping them develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to tackle new problems and trust their instincts and intuition to develop innovative approaches to solving problems.

We have an opportunity to address two divides at once – let’s not squander this chance to close or at least reduce the digital and racial divides.

Stephon Alexander, Executive Director
Harlem Gallery of Science

Brian Schwartz, Board Chair,
Science and Arts Engagement New York, Inc

Stan Altman, President
Science and Arts Engagement New York, Inc