June 4, 2020

Dear CASA-NYC Community,

CASA-NYC exists to advocate for the rights of children and youth in NYC foster care, who are disproportionately Black. In order to do this we must stand firmly with advocates in NYC and across the nation who are demanding justice for the Black lives lost to police brutality - including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Garner and too many others.

Today we are especially ashamed by the actions of police officers in our own city, who we have watched on video night after night committing acts of unprovoked violence against peaceful protesters, including children. We are speaking up to demand accountability for those officers, the New York City Police Department and the elected officials who are complicit.

Black children make up about a quarter of the children in New York City but nearly 60% of those in foster care. This is a direct result of structural racism in every aspect of our society, which puts Black families at disproportionate risk of trauma, poverty, homelessness, and every form of family instability, at the same time as they are over-policed and over-monitored by social service systems.

As an organization, we have a responsibility to examine and dismantle the ways in which our organizational structure contributes to inequity, starting with the lack of Black and other people of color in positions of leadership. As white leaders, we are humbled by and grateful to the many people of color who as members of our community - including staff, volunteers, youth council members, donors and community partners - have worked to hold us accountable and help us develop an explicit focus on anti-racism in our work over the past two years. We acknowledge that we have much work to do in the pursuit of equity, as individuals, in our organization and in our society.

CASA-NYC commits today to stepping up our efforts to dismantle systems of oppression and structural racism that result in the separation of Black families, the traumatization of Black children, the mass incarceration of Black people, and the killing of Black people by the police officers we hire to serve and protect. We will strive to do this with humility and sustained action.

Join us - especially those of you who like us, benefit from white privilege in so many forms that we don't even recognize - in speaking out against anti-Black racism. We can not allow our silence to make us complicit.

Thank you for standing with Black children and Black communities. Thank you for making our work possible.

Kerry Moles
Jessica Aaron