Reaffirming Our Values

To the Lifting Up Westchester Community:

As thousands of Americans are taking to the streets to protest against the tragic history of police brutality against black men and women, we know that racism also exists in every other aspect of American life and deeply impacts our clients and our staff.

Our segregated cities, suburbs, neighborhoods, and school districts are the result of decades of government and private sector decisions which were made either with racist intent or with indifference to their racist impact. The cumulative effect of those decisions is a systemic racism that creates unequal opportunity for brown and black communities. Lifting Up Westchester serves thousands of people from diverse backgrounds each year but we see firsthand that black and brown communities are disproportionately impacted by extreme poverty, homelessness and hunger.

The recent Covid-19 pandemic has made the racial divide devastatingly clear. Black and brown communities are dying at rates 2 and 3 times higher than their white counterparts. Access to quality healthcare is one cause of this disparity. Another is that the vast majority of “essential workers” – including Lifting Up Westchester staff working in our shelters, soup kitchen, supportive housing, and home health programs – are from communities of color. They have been on the front lines of this pandemic putting their lives at risk to serve others.

It is therefore particularly painful that at a time when black and brown communities are serving as the backbone of our nation’s support network they continue to be the subject of such vicious, targeted and unprovoked attacks – even by those bound to protect and serve all Americans.

Our mission statement reads: Lifting Up Westchester respects the dignity and full potential of every individual.

We look forward to building a future with you in which this mission is realized – one in which black and brown lives are treated with the dignity, respect, and humanity they deserve.

Anahaita N. Kotval, Chief Executive Officer

For additional resources:

https://blacklivesmatter.com/resources

https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights