

Say Their Names

Posted by David Hepinstall on Thursday, June 4, 2020

The recent tragic and unnecessary deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of law enforcement officers, and the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, point to a wound that cuts deeply into the hearts and souls of communities throughout the nation. This is particularly true for communities of color – communities in which encounters with the men and women empowered to protect and serve is much too often to be feared rather than welcomed.

In the past few years, and especially in recent months, our country has had to face some ugly truths about racial disparities, and human and civil rights violations that lay bare how much work we still have to do in order for black people to feel safe and secure in their own country. All persons of good will recoil when the behavior of police mirrors acts of violence against African Americans in their own homes and communities. We are distressed at repressive tactics by law enforcement, and unnecessary injuries to peaceful protestors. We are alarmed by damage inflicted on local businesses, and even more alarmed by divisive rhetoric and threats of military force against U.S. citizens exercising their First Amendment rights.

AEA unequivocally condemns all racist violence and systemic racial injustices that communities of color face across our nation, and we pledge to do our part to advocate for change. We denounce the violence against people making their voices heard and stand in solidarity with those working to dismantle the structural inequity and injustices of our society.

AEA is a membership organization of the downstate NY Weatherization Assistance Program subgrantees, a workforce training, technical assistance, and energy efficiency program implementer. We take great pride in the diversity of our member agencies, our employees, and the customers and communities we serve. We know this diversity makes us a stronger organization. This is embodied in our mission to deliver the benefits of energy efficiency and housing affordability to all New Yorkers – regardless of race, ethnicity, age, income, or disability status. We are only able to thrive in the important work we do – predominantly in communities of color – because of the myriad voices and perspectives all our stakeholders bring to the table.

Our member agencies have pioneered the green movement and served on the front line in the struggle for racial equity, many for forty years or longer. We reaffirm our commitment to the struggle, and pledge to continue the fight with renewed vigor and focus.

We will continue to embrace and better understand each other through productive and thoughtful conversations, and combat ignorance, divisiveness, hate and racism.

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