



A Message from Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania President/CEO Michael Smith and Board of Directors Chairperson Shawn Hanlon about Racism and Injustice

Our Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania family is troubled and deeply saddened by the senseless death of George Floyd and other African Americans before him and by the turmoil that has gripped our region and our nation over the past few weeks.

Since our founding in 1919, the core of our mission is the belief in the potential that lies within each and every human being. The work that we do seeks to eliminate barriers that prevents any individual from the opportunities before them in reaching their fullest potential, regardless of their race, gender, creed, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or economic standing.

Our organization is committed to speaking up and calling out injustices to all marginalized people, but due to the recent events, our attention has been drawn to African Americans and other people of color. Not only must we recognize the racism and injustice that led to the tragic loss of life which we speak of today, but also the deeply rooted, every day human inequalities bred by hatred and intolerance which prevent those among us from having the same opportunities in life.

Goodwill cannot and will not tolerate racism in any form. Because of this, we stand firmly with those recognizing the devastating impact of systemic racism and violent injustice, and all that it does to destroy the lives of individuals, families and the greater good of our communities.

We support the peaceful protestors who have banded together in wanting to create positive change. But we must ensure that this time their voices are not disregarded once again, and their message is heard loud and clear. In the words of Winston Churchill "Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it."

As an important community institution, Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania will work to be a vital part of accelerating needed change:

- We will stand with others in the community to promote healing.
- We will play a lead role in stronger advocacy.
- We will institute programs, policies and practices focused on creating a community that is fair and equal for all.

Racism and other social injustices should have no place in our nation's present and cannot be part of our future. We must put our perceived differences aside and join forces to affect change. We can be much stronger together!