

I've waited to make a statement because I feel strongly that while this is a time to be urgent, it is also a time to connect, clearly and authentically, our outrage to a response that is intentional, thoughtful, and geared towards sustainable action. So, I have taken time to reflect, on me, our organization, and our roles and responsibilities to our community.

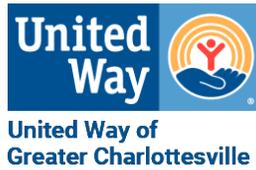
My conclusion is that we're wasting our time with feigned digital outrage, hashtags, and performative activism. Without an unambiguous commitment to action, we – established institutions, white Americans, and anyone who doesn't speak out against racism - are in danger of doing our black and brown neighbors another disservice, **by rushing to be part of the moment without being committed to the movement.**

This isn't just about the murders of George Floyd, Tamir Rice, and Mike Brown. Of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Botham Jean, Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin, and countless others. Their deaths are the insidious symptoms, the all too predictable manifestations, of hundreds of years of building and adapting systems and structures designed to benefit white people at the expense of black and brown people. This is the ongoing result of centuries of structural racism.

This is about a bigger picture, and a longer story. Real and lasting equity in our country will only come when individuals and organizations clearly and unequivocally recognize, name, and commit to dismantling structural racism in our communities through their advocacy and their work, day in and day out. It's about understanding that our nation was founded and built on the economics and labor of slavery, and that our present is influenced by generations of racist practices in housing, monetary policy, law enforcement, and healthcare. It's about using this context to inform the words we use, the partnerships we make, and the work that we do to impact the root causes of these systems.

Racism isn't new. Police brutality isn't new. It's just being filmed. Awareness is the result, but not the solution.

We're not claiming to have the right answers, and in fact we have much room for improvement to inject equity more fully into our own work. As the leader of this organization and as a white person, I don't have all of the answers. I have never had to face the real fear that I may lose my life because the color of my skin, and I can't know what it means to carry that trauma. But what I can do, with the platform I have, is to stand steadfastly and unquestionably with our black community and be committed to name and fight systemic racism and inequity through our programming, our initiatives, our partnerships, and our organizational culture. We are devoted to listening, learning, identifying, and helping to dismantle the systems and structures that have led to severe racial and ethnic disparities in our community and our country. We will partner and lead



in the areas where we have the most expertise and can affect the greatest positive change.

To that end, we are committed each and every day to helping black and brown families build strong economic foundations to break the cycle of generational poverty and to provide their children with early education opportunities that result in lasting academic achievement and long-term prosperity. **And we will hold ourselves, our colleagues, and our community accountable for doing the uncomfortable and hard work of creating positive lasting change that supports the movement of dismantling structural racism.**

Ravi Respeto

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ravi Respeto". The signature is fluid and cursive.

President & CEO
United Way of Greater Charlottesville