



## Statement of Response to the Murder of George Floyd

LEAP recognizes the dire importance of transparency during this deeply challenging time in our nation. The following Statement of Response reflects our courageous desire to effectuate change and spark a dialogue centering peace and justice while at the same time holding a mirror to the gross inequities being experienced by people of color in cities across the country. This Statement of Response contains accounts of graphic violence. Please read only if you are in the emotional space to do so at this time.

In Glynn County, Georgia, a black man went for a jog, was ambushed by two white men, beaten, shot, and then killed. Ahmaud Arbery was only 25 years old.

In Louisville, Kentucky, a 26-year-old African-American emergency room technician was at home sleeping, when police, under the protection of a "no knock" warrant, used a battering ram to crash through her door, subsequently murdering her as they riddled her body with bullets. Breonna Taylor had aspirations of becoming a nurse.

A white woman in Central Park called the police and lied about being threatened because she was outraged that a black man asked her to follow the park rules. Christian Cooper is an avid bird watcher who frequents Central Park.

The police killing you probably didn't hear about this week involved a black transmasculine person. Tony McDade lost his life in Florida, also known as the "epicenter of anti-transgender violence."

And a black man, 46-years-old, died a barbaric death, handcuffed and face pressed down on the asphalt, because a white Minneapolis police officer thought his duty to "serve and protect" warranted the suffocation of a shackled black man. George Floyd leaves behind a 6-year-old daughter.

This recent string of state-sanctioned violence exacted on black bodies bears witness to this country's inherited, centuries-long systemized practice of intentional displacement and dispossession of Black humanity at the hands of white supremacy. Cornel West could not have been more poignant in his profound analysis of this disturbing and heart-wrenching era of America's inescapable vicious racial reality when he wrote "A boot is crushing the neck of American Democracy."

**LEAP will not remain silent.** As an arts organization, whose very mission is to dismantle the barriers to access and equity for New York City's youth, and largely brown and black children, we join the unprecedented wave of multiracial resisters who have taken on the moral courage and spiritual sensitivity to say with their bodies, words, and deeds, "**Black Lives Matter.**" LEAP's mission presents a moral imperative to elevate our commitment to transforming the deeply-rooted racism in America, and the insistence of equality and dignity for all people.

To LEAP youth and families, and especially black and brown children at this very difficult time; LEAP is here. We stand by you, and are more determined than ever to dismantle the systems of oppression



that serve to both endanger you, and deny you the access and equity to opportunities you deserve, irrespective of race, ethnicity, or gender.

To our larger community, LEAP recognizes that the current systemic tragic violations of basic human rights and liberties institutionally and structurally perpetuated by factions of our country, is undesirable, unsustainable, and can no longer be tolerated.

**Therefore, at LEAP:**

- We position ourselves as upstanders dedicated to amplifying voices of color and addressing injustice head on while making space for our black and brown employees as they navigate the horrific and torturous harm brought against their collective community. You do not have to “bite your tongue,” “swallow your rage,” or “fight back your tears” — we are committed to holding space for you at this difficult time in our country.
- We strongly object to the needless and tragic loss of life grounded in inhumane racist ideologies.
- Within our own work, we will earnestly engage and promote opportunities to systemically weed out, disrupt, and dismantle white supremacy, inequity, prejudice, bias, and racism toward people of color, LGBTQIA+, women, and all marginalized and vulnerable communities.
- We hold white people within our community, and all of our respective circles, accountable for being an integral part of the intentional disruption of all aspects of implicit and explicit white privilege.
- We encourage every single one of us, without exception, to be the protagonist that demands our Nation become a society of beauty and unity, dedicated to peace and justice.
- We resolve to be a powerful source of hope that’s needed now, more than ever in our families, friendships, and communities of color.
- We stand by the belief that artists play one of the most important roles in our society and have the power to transform humanity and therefore reaffirm our commitment to actualize our mission of providing equity and access to the arts for underserved communities.
- We call on our elected officials to be a driving force in ensuring justice is afforded to people of color swiftly, particularly those who have become casualties of the war against their humanity.

**We invite you to take action now:**

- Support George Floyd's family through their GoFundMe [here](#) and [here](#).
- Donate to Bail Funds for front line protestors [here](#).
- Donate to Black Visions Collective, for Black and collective liberation [here](#).
- Sign Change.org Petition for Justice for George Floyd [here](#).
- Support Campaign Zero: Urgent policy solutions informed by data, research and human rights principles to change the way police serve our communities. Donate [here](#).
- [NAACP Legal Defense Fund](#)
- [75 Things Allies Can Do for Racial Justice](#)
- [5 Ways Allies Can Address State Sanctioned Violence](#)
- [Resources: Teaching for Black Lives](#)