



DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER
Every Women Housed

Dear DWC Community,

We write to you in this moment of unspeakable grief and anger to demand justice and to stand, unequivocally, in solidarity with all Black lives.

Our communities, our cities, and our nation have been rocked in recent weeks by a series of tragic and senseless murders. They took place on the street and inside of homes, at the hands of neighbors and of police officers – and what they have made so painfully clear to all of us, is that none of us can bear silent witness any longer.

To remain silent in the face of such stark brutality is to be complicit. It is to be complicit in the structures of racism that put Black Americans at disproportionate risk of violence, illness, unemployment, incarceration, and homelessness.

Black people make up 9% of the population of LA County, but represent 40% of the population experiencing homelessness,—an overrepresentation that is demographically consistent across other jurisdictions in the United States. As a service provider to many Black women experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles, we cannot afford to be silent. Daily we are confronted in our work by the structural forces that dispossess so many of our neighbors of color. Daily we are reminded of how racism, discrimination, and unconscious bias in housing, employment, criminal justice, and child welfare policies have led to overrepresentation of Black people experiencing homelessness. And though we may say these recent victims' names aloud in remembrance – George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, David McAtee – we also know they are only the most recent in a centuries-long history of the enslavement, oppression, and murder of Black people in the United States.

We have seen many of our friends and community members take to the streets in the fight to end police brutality and bring the perpetrators to justice. DWC is working diligently to continue providing essential services to the Skid Row community. We believe that Black Lives Matter yesterday, today, and every day, and there is great work to be done yet.

Today, we recommit to practicing active anti-racism in all our work. We recommit to finding new and creative ways to empower Black Americans and other marginalized communities with our programming; to amplifying their voices and experiences; and to advocating for substantive policy change for racial and gender equity in housing, healthcare, and employment. As our supporters, we ask that you hold us accountable in this work, support us in this work, and inspire us to do more and to do it better.

The historic structures of racism and oppression can only be overcome when we all recognize the gross inequities embedded in the very fabric of our society. We recognize we

cannot do this alone. It's going to take community organizations, police, government, and citizens to speak up and empower each other to create change in big and small ways alike.

We welcome you to our next community meeting on June 24 at 6 p.m. where we will deepen the dialogue to bring about racial justice. Only together will we arrive at a just and equitable future.

Let's do this together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Turk".

Amy Turk, LCSW
CEO

Resources

- [2019 Los Angeles City Women's Needs Assessment, Downtown Women's Center](#)
- [Report and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness](#), Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
December 2018
- [Report and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Women Experiencing Homelessness](#), Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
August 2017

June 4, 2020