



Elwyn

To: All Elwyn Employees
From: Chuck McLister, Rex Carney, Chas Fedorco, Len Kirby, Meg Kraftson, Dominic Marfisi, Regina MacKenzie, Kurt Miceli, Charles Naus, Mike Pacheco, Tom Papa, Debra Paul, Jennifer Stryker, and Jeremy Sunkett
Date: June 5, 2020

We are writing today to express our collective commitment to racial equality and our rejection of any violence against or unfair treatment of people based on the color of their skin. The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota provided a long overdue wake up call to our nation. His pleading cries are a haunting and unforgettable call to action.

It is difficult to know what to say during times like these. However, as leaders of a human services agency, we cannot remain silent knowing that the recent calls for change are powerfully relevant for our organization and all the people that we support and employ. It is our responsibility to ensure that every individual, family member, and employee is equally valued and free from mistreatment of any kind, for any reason.

Elwyn is not unfamiliar with rectifying injustice and mistreatment. Throughout history, men, women, and children with disabilities have been neglected, marginalized, and harmed. Elwyn's employees come to work every day knowing that it is our mission to protect the rights and dignity of our members. We can and must use these same skills to treat all Elwyn's members, including employees, with the same dignity, equality, and respect.

Since the beginning, our nation has aspired to achieve a "more perfect union." The events of this past week, among many others and for far too long, prove that we have yet to overcome our imperfections.

Elwyn is no different. This note is meant to express our growing awareness of our own organization's imperfections. Rather than make an external statement that adds to the list of well-meaning declarations, we have decided to turn inward and evaluate the role that Elwyn plays in advancing or allowing oppression and injustice. We realize that we have work to do, and so WE commit to looking at, and improving, the diversity of our Board and our leadership team; to creating a robust Diversity and Inclusion policy; to focusing our recruitment and retention efforts to ensure that we hire, retain and promote people of color; to embrace supplier diversity and any other measures that will make and sustain change.

Earlier this week, the leadership of our early intervention services provided this note to that program's employees. We think it is important to include it here as well.



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Below please find resources designed to support you, your team and the community-at-large in educating young children about racial differences and racial injustice.

1. This google site offers a tremendous amount of resources, teaching tools and outlets of support for families, professionals and children.
<https://sites.google.com/view/resources-on-injustice/families>
2. Many of you are likely aware of the 60-minute Sesame Street & CNN Town Hall occurring this Saturday, June 6th at 10 AM. “Coming Together: Standing Up to Racism” will talk to kids about racism, the recent nationwide protests, embracing diversity and being more empathetic and understanding. You can find more information here:
<https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/02/us/cnn-sesame-street-standing-up-to-racism/index.html>.
3. LoveEvery offers a multitude of websites that address talking to children about race, preventing and responding to prejudice, and an age-by-age guideline to use when talking to children about these subjects. <https://loveevery.com/a/blog/resources-for-addressing-race-and-racism-with-young-children/>
4. EmbraceRace.org offers a stunning book list designed to support families in having conversations with their children, as young as 3 years old, about race and racial injustice. <https://www.embracerace.org/resources/26-childrens-books-to-support-conversations-on-race-racism-resistance>

“Do the best you can, until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”
--Maya Angelou

The need for education is not limited to our children. We must all work to better understand our history and how it influences our present and use that knowledge to inform our future.

On behalf of the organization’s leadership, we know better and we will do better.