

June 4, 2020

Dear Beatitudes Community of Residents, Staff, Families and Friends,

Today, instead of writing to you about mitigating the spread of the coronavirus in Beatitudes Campus, I want to talk to you about the deplorable practice of racism that is gripping our country and dividing us. We have witnessed painful and heartbreaking racist incidents – Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and recently George Floyd, among too many others. I am pained and deeply appalled by their deaths. These events are tragic and have shaken our community to our very core.

The events in Minneapolis last week and the COVID-19 crisis highlight the inequities that Black, elderly and other diverse communities have and continue to face every day. COVID-19 robs people of their health, instills fear and in many cases ends lives. Racism, bigotry and hatred do the same, robbing lives while instilling fear and anger. These unspeakable tragedies that have occurred have strengthened our determination to do more, as individuals, as an organization and as a community. It is imperative that all of us do away with the legacy of bias, prejudice and racism.

As a white female, I cannot begin to imagine what the Black community is experiencing. While I can empathize with what it must be like to be a Black person in America, I have not walked in those shoes. But I can commit that Beatitudes Campus will do all we can to support our diverse communities and foster a culture within our organization that deeply values and respects diversity and inclusion.

We have already started strengthening our culture. Earlier last year, we revisited the Promise Statement for the campus. This Promise Statement is not just a paragraph full of words. It is a reflection of what we, as a campus, promise all who work and live here and all who are part of our community. It is our deep commitment that we welcome and value *all* people, no matter their background, their skin color, their ethnicity, their philosophical beliefs or non-beliefs or their gender or gender identity. Last year, we started an intentional and thoughtful effort to strengthen our community to be a place where diverse perspectives and experiences are welcomed and respected and where our community of staff and residents are encouraged to discuss diversity and inclusion. We stated our commitment that Beatitudes Campus be a beacon of light in valuing all our similarities, differences and complexities of experiences. The leadership team and I stand firm on that pledge.

As an organization, we are pledging to act. We will intensify our ongoing efforts to improve relations between all members of our communities where we live and where we work. We pledge to do more, as individuals and as an organization, in our community.

Everywhere we go and in everything we do, we define the character of Beatitudes Campus. We will lead by our actions. Our core values and promise statement guide not only our behavior in our community, but they also extend to every area of our lives. As an organization and as individuals, we have a responsibility to help find solutions to make our communities better for every citizen.



As I said in Friday's letter, the silver lining of the coronavirus pandemic is that we are all working together as a community. We have experienced people coming together and reigniting the meaning of community throughout the past three months. Sadly, this most recent tragedy in Minneapolis reminds us of the ugly reality that we are still experiencing humanity's worst. I challenge each of you, in your own way, to lead by example and to use your voice to condemn racism and the systemic inequality. The time is now for us to come together, to support one another and through our partnership, begin to heal and make change.

I'd like to close with a prayer chosen by Chaplain Andrew Moore (from *The Book of Common Prayer*) as he spoke to our team on Monday:

*Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, that we may work together for justice and peace.  
May it be so.*

May God bless you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle L. Just". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Just, President and CEO

And the Beatitudes Campus Leadership Team: Rod Bailey, Allen Bloch, Mitch Bradshaw, Valerie Cantrell, Cheryl Knupp, Rev. David Ragan, Rev. Peggy Roberts, Barbara Wood