



Dear New Horizon School Community,

"I can't breathe." These were some of the last words spoken by George Floyd, and they expressed his reality in that tragic moment, and they reflect the symbolic sentiments of the effects of persistent anti-Black racism and injustice in our nation.

I watched the video of George Floyd in disbelief and shock. I watched the video of Ahmaud Arbery several weeks earlier also in disbelief and shock. I am affected personally by what I have seen, but I have not personally experienced such violence or racism in my life. As a Muslim woman wearing hijab, I know about Islamophobia and what it's like to be invisible, ignored, and insulted, but my experience does not compare to the deep-seated racism and brutality experienced over centuries by African-Americans perpetrated by systematic injustices, authorities and fellow citizens.

Whatever our own experience, we are all being asked to raise our consciousness and to call on our consciences to reflect upon our own attitudes and actions and to stand against injustice, wherever and whenever it is found.

We know that our faith calls us to this with God's words and the example of the Prophet.

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your relatives, and whether (it be against) rich or poor..." (Qur'an 4:135)

We are also reminded, "God Almighty has said, 'O my servants! I have forbidden injustice for myself and I have forbidden it among you, so do not oppress one another.'"

The Qur'an also points to our diversity as one of the beautiful Signs of God's existence: "And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variations in your languages and colors. Verily in that is a Sign for those who know." (Qur'an 30:22)

In Prophet Muhammad's last sermon, he clearly stated the equality of all human beings when he said, "All of humanity comes from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black; nor black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action."

The tendency toward superiority is an injustice we all need to guard against as it can manifest in racial, gender, religious, and ethnic discrimination and inequality within ourselves, our Muslim community, and society at large.



So, it is easy to quote the Qur’anic verses and the Prophet’s sayings, but the difficult part is really to examine our personal and collective beliefs and actions to ensure we are upholding justice and fairness in how we treat and perceive one another.

At New Horizon, we have always believed that our diversity has been one of our strengths. However, it is not enough to simply “be” diverse; we must evaluate all of our practices to ensure we are not guilty of transferring implicit biases whether related to race, gender, ethnicity, or even intrareligious affiliations.

At the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, the NHSP administration began a new focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) with special weekly meetings to research and explore a new direction to take our faculty, staff, students, and parents. We met with an organization, [MuslimARC \(Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative\)](#), about building in professional development opportunities and authentic anti-bias and anti-racism practices. While this is a step in the right direction, we need to take many more steps to ensure that our actions and practices truly reflect our beliefs and values.

We encourage you to take advantage of the following events and resources as you hold discussions within your family:

Friday Khutba - June 5

Mr. Siler, Islamic Studies teacher, will be delivering a khutba related to the issues of justice and injustice in our world. I will plan to send you the link before noon on Friday.

Day of Outrage - June 5 @ 3 pm

Our friend, former NHSP parent, and colleague, at ISLAH LA, Imam Jihad Saafir, is calling for a Day of Outrage and providing a program through Facebook: [facebook.com/islahla](https://www.facebook.com/islahla). Please see the Day of Outrage flyer above to learn more about the speakers for this virtual event.

ICSC Muslim Family Night - June 5 @ 8:15 pm

Join Umar Hakim for an opportunity to learn what the next steps are during these trying times. **#BlackLiveMatters #GeorgeFloyd** Register here: <https://buff.ly/2MhF1rb>

CNN/Sesame Street Event - June 6 @ 7 am PST on CNN

“Coming Together: Standing Up to Racism.”

A CNN/Sesame Street Town Hall for Kids and Families

Also, please see this [List of Anti-Racism Resources](#) for families.

We are committed to standing with the call for justice and condemn anti-Blackness, police brutality, and racism against marginalized communities. I hope you will all join as well in our efforts to support a more just and equitable world.

In Peace,

Amira Al-Sarraf
Head of School



STAY CONNECTED

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