

Cultivate Charlottesville Statement Regarding Black Lives – June 19, 2020

In the wake of a season marked by COVID-19, we have been forced to mourn the unjust loss of Black lives because of the centuries-old traditions of police brutality and hate crimes. We say the names of those recently killed by current or former police officers: Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Rayshard Brooks, as well as those targeted and killed as Black, transgender folx, including Nina Pop, Tony McDade, Riah Milton, and Dominique Fells. We know there are more.

*At **Cultivate Charlottesville**, we recognize the role racial discrimination has played and continues to play in agriculture, education, and housing in Charlottesville and the nation. Because we manage garden spaces and work with public school students and community members affected by racial inequities, we commit to building racial equity in all our work.*

That is our racial equity statement, which lives in our strategic frame alongside our vision, mission, and values. It is embedded in our actions, practices, and policies. It explains how we feel about and approach the work we do, but it does not say it all.

At Cultivate Charlottesville, we are unafraid to see and speak the truth. As Charlottesville community members—as friends, as family, as human beings—we demand change. We are fighting to protect our Black students, coworkers, mothers, fathers, sons, sisters, peers, and neighbors.

The “American Dream” has been a double standard from the very beginning; life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were not meant for all. The hard truth our nation is grappling with is that Black lives were never meant to matter. Ours is a democracy built with white supremacy woven in our systems, making it a democracy doomed to fail Black people and doomed to fail us all.

As an organization, we know that hundreds of years of discriminatory policies have made it so that food choice is a privilege—not a right—and we challenge the Charlottesville community to reimagine our local food system as one that is healthy and equitable for people of color. We challenge ourselves, a multi-racial team, to continually deepen our analysis, compassion, and activism as we lean into each other and work together.

Fannie Lou Hammer once said, “Nobody is free, until everybody is free.” This has been a fight for decades in the context of centuries of oppression, abuse, and inequity. If you are starting now, you’re joining fierce, determined, and wise advocates from whom we are learning. This isn’t the start of anything. This isn’t the end of anything. This is one moment in the long fight for justice and freedom for Black lives in the US.

This isn’t done. This isn’t almost done. We are committed to this work. We are committed to this fight and transformation. Say Their Names. Black Lives Matter.

Jeanette Abi-Nader | Yolonda Adams | Wendy Baucom | Crystal Beasley | Shantell Bingham | Aleen Carey | Rachael Boston | Kimberlee Daniels | Matt Darring | Peter Davis | Megan Donovan | Dan Fellows | Paul Freedman | Shannon Gaffey | Margie Gilbert | Neal Halvorson-Taylor | Rick Harden | Michael James | Jordan Johnson | Gabby Levet | Jenifer Minor | Mackenzie Morgan | Richard Morris | Mike Murphy | Leon Nunez | Audrey Oliver | Daisa Pascall | Sober Pierre | Elza Thomas | Andrea Trimble | Juan Wade | Sarah Wayne | Tamara Wright

www.cultivatecharlottesville.org

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