



To: AVANCE-Houston Community
From: Luz Flores, Executive Director
Saul Valentin, Chairman, Board of Directors

Date: June 16, 2020

Subject: AVANCE-Houston Stands Firm in Support of Racial Equality

Dear AVANCE Houston Community,

AVANCE-Houston stands unequivocally in support of the fight against racial injustice and inequality in our community. Our agency is a force for good. We believe that every member of our community, regardless of their ethnicity, is deserving of respect, dignity, equal access to economic opportunities, and justice. As we continue striving to engage with the community in ways that reflect our foundation and values of inclusion and fairness, we certainly believe there is more we can do to live up to our mission of *Unlocking America's Potential*. The tragic death of Mr. George Floyd and events following it, has led our agency to more in-depth discussions on how we can continue to be part of the solution.

We believe that we all have a role to play in correcting racial inequalities in our communities. Last week, we began the important work of listening, learning, and self-reflecting as an agency with our leadership team and program directors to see what else we can do to promote and embrace cultural diversity within our agency.

In the discussion, several issues were brought up along with the difficulties around addressing them. These include:

- Explaining current events to children and addressing their lack of confidence in law enforcement, while emphasizing that there are also fair and ethical officers who are committed to the well-being of citizens
- Educating children of color about how they should respond during interactions with law enforcement
- Reflecting on how we sustain or form more multi-cultural meaningful and supportive relationships
- How we support the emotional health of children and families during this difficult period

Difficult topics like these enlighten us to develop more empathy and create paths of support, and take action.

Listening and learning has been the first step for us. As a result of this initial conversation about the current climate we are facing, AVANCE-Houston commits to the following immediate actions:

- To launch a task force composed of staff from various backgrounds to establish a platform for conversation, education and training for our staff and families.
- To be more intentional about celebrating and honoring cultural diversity in our educational curricula and within our agency as a whole.

We will proactively engage in difficult conversations, act when necessary, and utilize our resources to the best of our abilities to help combat racial inequalities every day. Our commitment to unlocking the potential of our families and communities will only become stronger moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Luz Flores".

Luz Flores

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Saul Valentin".

Saul Valentin