



## **From the Desk of Dr. Joseph E. Woods**

Tuesday, June 30, 2020

Dear Community Partner,

I hope this letter finds you well amid all going on in our world. I reach out to you during these perilous times as we all are praying for hope and healing to our land. Despite the growing Hispanic & Black populations in Hamilton, there is a lack of diversity in many areas of our beloved township and county. Therefore, this letter is being sent to candidates for elected offices, current elected officials, community leaders, businesses, and community organizations that should be on the frontline promoting diversity, unity, equality, and equity in Hamilton Township and Mercer County.

In addition to my decade of service to the Saint Phillips Baptist Church, also known as “A Bridge to Cross You Over”, I am privileged to be the Founder & President of The Bridge CDC, which is a non-profit entity whose vision is achievement, access, and advancement for all, as we seek to uplift marginalized communities in Hamilton and Mercer County in order to empower them through a holistic approach of leadership advocacy. Our core values are: Education, Environmental Stability, Employment, Economic Development, Entrepreneurship Opportunities, Encouragement to Youth and Seniors, Empowerment of the Family, and Engagement of a Diverse Community.

On this past Saturday, I led “A Call to Action Unity March & Rally” in Hamilton; this call to action comes with a purpose beyond protesting to racism and the social injustices that we are seeing both locally and nationally. I am a firm believer that on the issue of equity and equality for all, a person and/or organization is either on the side of justice by offering and working on solutions that promote diversity, or remaining as a part of the problem by addressing nothing and ignoring much.

**“The Call to Action” centers on the following:**

- 1. Affirmation of the significance, beauty, importance, and value of Black life**
- 2. Promotion of unity amid diversity as we love all our neighbors**
- 3. Engagement in prayer and peaceful protest**
- 4. Casting a “Five Point Call to Action Strategy” with a challenge to engage in purpose beyond protesting**
- 5. Establishment of a “Call to Action Task Force” to provide oversight in the implementation of the “Five Point Call to Action Strategy”**

This week we are organizing our “**Call to Action Task Force**” and many members of the community have already signed up and desire to work together toward the “**Five Point Call to Action Strategy**”, which is:

1. **Equitable Law Enforcement Policies**
2. **Eradication of racism in the Judicial System**
3. **Empowerment of practices and procedures that promote diversity**
4. **Engagement in Civic Responsibilities**
5. **Enlightenment of the Black Community in the areas of Education, Economics, and Health Care**

We are now moving to hold healthy conversations to confront these issues as we seek correction where reformation and reconciliation is needed as we chart the course toward progress. As you can imagine, the issues above are of utmost concern to my community and me. It is my prayer that they are also of concern to you. Your position on these matters is also important to helping us know your commitment to diversity and abolishing racism, as we seek equality and equity for everyone so that we truly become one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**Frankly, we want to know how Black and Brown people are represented in your organization.** As we seek to partner with those committed to the causes that we find dear to our hearts, we ask that you provide us with a statement and/or proclamation that expresses your position on the unrest our nation is experiencing due to recent acts of police brutality, as witnessed through the incident with George Floyd in Minnesota, and to the declaration that, “Black Lives Matter”. We would also like to know the current composition and makeup of your organization as it relates to diversity. Namely, what is the current number of minorities that serve in your organization on all levels, including your senior administration and/or key staffing areas. We want to know how you have been and are currently promoting diversity through the inclusion of qualified minorities. **We would like to receive your response by Wednesday, July 8, 2020.** We are compiling a list of responses that will be publicly shared, which will include a statement of non-response, if one is not given. We will then proactively inform our community and constitutes of the collective responses gathered. It is important to know where we all stand as we search for answers and partners as we seek to navigate through the climate, culture, and challenges that we face today in our continued struggle for diversity, equality, and equity.

Thank you in advance for your response. If you have any further questions, please contact me through the office of our community development corporation, The Bridge CDC, at 609.393.4440 or BridgeCDC2020@gmail.com. Thank you.

Honored to serve,

  
Dr. Joseph E. Woods, President - The Bridge CDC