



Statement in Support of Black Lives Matter June 8, 2020

Last week, we were heartened and inspired as we witnessed protestors from all walks of life, around the United States and the world, stand up against police brutality and racial injustice. This movement presents all of us with an opportunity to reflect on our work, our goals, and it challenges us to do more. We are engaging in conversations now about what this might mean for us.

The Reading League stands against racism, including the systemic racism that tolerates the abuse and murder of Black Americans at the hands of police in the United States. We mourn George Floyd and we lift up the shortened lives of Black Americans who have suffered similar fates, like Breonna Taylor, and untold others whose stories may never be heard. We stand with the peaceful protesters who demand justice and we add our voices to amplify their declaration that Black Lives Matter.

Throughout history and around the globe, numerous oppressive groups have withheld reading and writing instruction as a weapon for social control. In the United States, teaching enslaved Africans to read and write was a crime. Today, a disproportionate number of Black children are not being afforded the reading and writing skills necessary to attain the promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness- a promise that has been denied to Black Americans for too long.

Literacy is power. While many may associate The Reading League with science and research, to us, the connection between literacy, equity, and racial justice has always been there. We renew our commitment to our mission of leveraging the scientific evidence base to empower all learners to read and write, as literacy has long been the key to social justice, equity, and a higher quality of life. We stand with the many educators, administrators, and parents in our network who have been long-time champions of racial and social justice in our schools and communities. We honor your work and outlook for creating a more just society.