

Dear friends,

All of us have been following the tragic news of the unjustifiable deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor and the traumatic repercussions these events have wrought. As a diverse community that includes hundreds of Black and Brown youth, families, staff and board members, no words can adequately capture the heartbreak and angst we have felt over the last few weeks. The scale of injustices experienced by the Black community in America serves as a painful reminder of the truth that this land is still only free for some and not yet all.

Our community is in pain. Our systems have failed to protect its Black members, bring justice to those who transgress unspeakably against them, or to heal deep wounds of historical trauma. Even though Boston as a city has made significant progress in bringing healing and reconciliation to its Black citizens, systemic racism continues to permeate our local community, denying equitable access to opportunities and resources. We see the manifestations of this in the achievement gap that leaves many of our youth behind, in the manner the COVID-19 pandemic and other health issues disproportionately impact our communities, and in that, even in an economic boom, an affordable housing crisis threatens this most fundamental pillar of stability that our families need to thrive.

But even in the face of overwhelming challenges, **the contributions, resilience and strength of our Black community are foundational to the vibrancy and vitality of our city.** We must acknowledge and affirm that the fate and the future of our society, our city, and all of us who comprise it are intimately locked with the fate and future of our Black community. Black lives matter.

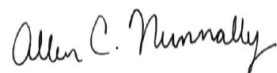
One of Friends of the Children's core values is Demand Equity. At the center of this value is the recognition that **our Achievers and their families are immensely powerful, and their dreams are big.** Over the last 15 years, we have walked a path, our arms linked with our youth and their families as they work to realize their ambitions and create the changes they wish to see in their own lives and in our world. We know the way forward is to stand firmly in our commitment to support our youth and their families, to celebrate them and to amplify their voices as they write their own narratives of hope, resilience, power, determination and fulfillment. We must also continue to challenge the status quo because our Achievers' safety and ability to thrive depend on it.

Healing requires intention, effort, perseverance, and time. The love we have for our community will give us the strength and courage to show up for each other today, tomorrow, and every day after. Your support has meant so much to our Achievers, their families, our staff and board. Together with you, we will work to ensure that every child and every family has the access and opportunity to succeed, no matter what.

In solidarity,



Yi-Chin Chen
Executive Director



Allen C. Nunnally
Board Chair