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Dear friends of Spooner House,

Injustice and inequity have tragically been woven into the very fabric of American society. Recent events – the killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor – have highlighted some of the most heinous examples of racism, but we cannot console ourselves with a false narrative that these were isolated incidents, or a few bad apples (remember, the full adage is “a few bad apples *spoil the bunch*”). Racism is real, and not just in the actions of individuals, but in the way our systems and institutions have been designed and operate.

When there are healthcare disparities for black, indigenous, and people of color, that is racism at work. When there are impoverished, low-opportunity communities of predominantly people of color, that is racism at work. When black and brown people are disproportionately represented in the homeless services system, that is racism at work. When less than 77% of the US population is white, but 84% of Fortune 500 corporate board seats are held by whites, 90% of elected officials are white, 83% of college and university presidents are white, and 90% of nonprofit CEOs are white, that is racism at work.

Spooner House is committed to serving people in need regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, age, differing abilities, or other identity or trait. We need to examine why those seeking our services are disproportionately people of color when looking at the overall population in our service area. We need to understand the larger policies and practices in our community, state, and nation that have contributed to this disparate impact, and then take a closer look at our own organizational policies and practices to identify ways we can ensure more equitable systems.

This work will not be easy, and it will not be as fast as we want, but it is critical, and it is urgent. We know that many of our friends and supporters are active in the community through volunteerism, business initiatives, civic organizations, and houses of worship. I implore you to join together to fight not just the overt racism, but the insidious racism that exists in your spheres of influence, in your networks, in your neighborhoods. Listen to the messages being shared by people of color and have the courageous conversations with your families, friends, colleagues, parishioners. Speak up and speak out. Act. Write. Volunteer. Donate. Support.

It is far past time to weave a new fabric of American society, one in which equality, equity, and justice are afforded to all, and it is our individual and collective responsibility to do so.

Susan Compton Agamy
Executive Director

Spooner House is operated by Area Congregations Together, Inc.
Providing food, shelter and support services to rebuild lives.