

News

A Letter to the Girls Inc. Community

Posted by: Stephanie J. Hull, President and CEO at Girls Inc.

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To our Friends, Family, Supporters, and Partners:

Today I am heartbroken. I am heartbroken for George Floyd and his family. I am heartbroken for 17-year-old Darnella Frazier, who took the video of Mr. Floyd's murder and watched him die. I am heartbroken for the people of Minneapolis, and for people of color all across this country, and for all of us as Americans, scarred by racism. I am heartbroken and angry. I have been heartbroken every day of my life, even though that's only a half-century of pain out of the four centuries of pain of African Americans in this country.

But my parents taught me to believe that things could be better, and that I must not let fear, sadness, and grief derail me. They taught me that to be derailed is, actually, what the world expects of Black people, and that we cannot let ourselves be stopped. I grew up believing that this world could be fixed, and that we could fix it.

Right now so many of us—of all races, of all places, of all walks of life—are horrified, furious, numbed, even desperate over the state of our country. But we cannot let ourselves be derailed. We, especially at Girls Inc., cannot let ourselves be stopped. For the very girls of color most affected by racism and inequity in this country, we are fighting for Title IX; we are fighting for education; we are fighting for safety. We wake up every day looking for ways to help our girls find themselves as leaders.

For the sake of the girls and young women we serve, we cannot let current events derail us or slow us down. The girls we serve need to grow up to believe that the world can be fixed, and that they can fix it. They need us to keep on, so that they can keep on. This world can and will be made better. It will not wait another half-century. This moment needs to be the moment in which we join together and raise it up.

Girls Inc. is uniquely positioned to respond in some very specific ways. We are expert at supporting girls in difficult times and addressing their trauma; educating girls on race, racism, and social justice; giving them the tools to understand and debate a charged situation and to use critical thinking skills to make decisions; and finally, taking community action either at the affiliate level or as individuals. We believe girls are powerful. We have a vision of them as leaders essential to an equitable society. We stand together with them as a network, deploring the current state of affairs; demanding true justice and equity for our girls, their families, and their communities; and committed to the many changes that that will require. The future deserves and requires nothing less.

For these reasons and others, even in the middle of horror and heartbreak, we need to stay focused. We will not stop. It is our collective responsibility, not just to turn to the next generation to fix what is broken, but to make sure they have the tools and support, and even the optimism, that they will need to find the way forward.

Maybe we all need some time to cry, but then it's time to keep going. We have to—as a community—for the girls we serve.

Stephanie J. Hull, Ph.D.
President & CEO