



June 4, 2020

Dear Pathlight Community:

In our country we continue to see the tragic results of our country's legacy of racism and oppression of African Americans and people of color. The savage imagery of George Floyd's death is a not an isolated event. There is also Ahmaud Arbery being gunned down while jogging, Breonna Taylor shot by police in her own home and many others – Antwon Rose, Philando Castile, Michael Brown, the list is long and unnerving. This is not something that we can witness and be silent about.

As an organization that got its start in fighting for civil rights of people with disabilities, using our voices to speak out against injustice is at the core of our mission.

I fully believe that Pathlight's staff and care provider diversity is one of our strengths, but also an area where we as an organization need to do significant work to get to where we want to be: an organization where people feel empowered and listened to and can flourish personally and professionally.

I can't tell you that I know exactly how to do that. But I do know that the first step is to reach out to our leaders of color and other staff who are passionate about working for racial equality and justice to inform our next steps. We have talented and committed people to help us move forward.

One of the priorities in our strategic plan is to be the premier employer in our industry. And a primary focus of accomplishing that is to work on our organizational diversity and cultural competency. I am making three commitments to you, personally and on behalf of the Pathlight Leadership to fight racism and support diversity:

- 1) We will listen
- 2) We will educate
- 3) We will act

Bishop Desmond Tutu said, "If you are neutral in the situation of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." We are not neutral. I want you to know that I and your Pathlight colleagues stand with you against oppression.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth Banta".

Ruth Banta
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Pathlight Programs
Adult Family Care
Autism Connections
Down Syndrome Resource Group
of Western Massachusetts
Family Empowerment

Intensive Foster Care
Milestones
Residential Supports
Shared Living
Valley Tees
Whole Children

Pathlight Mission
Pathlight partners with
people with disabilities
to create opportunities
and build relationships
throughout their lives.