

Dear Partners and Friends,

The Whole Child Connection at Children’s Institute stands with the Black community and the call to dismantle systemic racism in our society.

Starting with our own organization and area of expertise, we resolutely commit to doing our part to deconstruct the racist systems created over the past 400 years which have taken countless lives and have recently been laid bare by the disparate impact of COVID-19 on people of color, and in the killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery. To each we say your name.



ILLUSTRATION, USED WITH PERMISSION, BY SACRÉE FRANGINE

Systemic racism does not only speak to the destructive and intentional power imbalance in our society; it speaks to the reality that our systems and ways of life perpetuate racist modalities that purposefully harm the Black community and any community that displays degrees of difference from society’s standard of whiteness. Racism can and does exist without intentional racists.

To that extent, we would like to first acknowledge and take ownership for Whole Child Connection’s failures to intentionally create inclusive and anti-racist content in our social and emotional learning training and consultation. We also want to acknowledge any harm we have caused in our community by the ways we have unknowingly preserved racialized frameworks in our approaches and community engagements. We understand that our intent does not reduce the impact of our harm.

Right now may very well be the most important time in our children’s history. Right now we have a chance to reframe the dialogue and our content around SEL. We do not have the answers but we at Whole Child Connection are committed to asking questions, listening, unlearning, and relearning so we can act.

Moreover, along with our colleagues at Children’s Institute, we acknowledge that racism is a public health crisis and whole heartedly endorse the Rochester Black Agenda Group’s declaration.

We are late in so many ways, but we stand in solidarity with all those committed to the creation of an anti-racist society that is equitable to all.

Respectfully Signed,

Elizabeth Devaney, *Director, Whole Child Connection*
Marjorie Allan, *Director, Center for Continuous Improvement*

Andrea Bertucci	Chiamaka Ikpeze
Ashli Bifulco	Ellen Leopold
Sarah Boorsma	Lynn Lubecki, Ed.D
Dawn Breitung	Caitlin Orbanek
Sierra Fisher	James Ross, J.D., Ph.D
	Renee Whittington

