CEO Update

February 16, 2021

Reflection on Black History Month

Black History Month was inspired by historian Carter G. Woodson who wanted to recognize and celebrate the countless Black men and women who had contributed to the advance of human civilization and incorporate the teaching of Black history into the schools. In 1976, President Ford officially recognized Black History Month during the Bicentennial.

Today Black History Month is not only a time to celebrate and reflect but to reignite our dedication to dismantling systemic barriers that prevent us from achieving justice for all.

As a faith-based community, we are committed to enabling everyone to achieve their full potential regardless of their race, ethnicity, income, or faith and yet we see how systemic racism directly affects the well-being of so many from children to older adults. We know that Black and Brown communities are disproportionately affected by health disparities and COVID-19 and that Black children are removed more often from their homes, stay longer in foster care and have poorer outcomes. And we are committed to changing the status quo.

At Lutheran Services in America, we have responded to renewed calls for race equity by launching a new Race Equity Network, providing workshops through our Strength & Service Series, incorporating race equity work in our Mission Leaders Group and advocacy, providing member resources including a newsletter, and expanding our Results Innovation Lab for children, youth and family providers that has race equity at the center of the work. As I mentioned in last week’s CEO Update, we have also created two new awards for our member organizations, one of which is The Micah Award which recognizes a member organization that is leading the way in its work in addressing mercy, equity, and justice. The winners will be announced at our Annual Membership Meeting and Awards Ceremony on March 24th.

We’d like to hear from you—including what diversity, equity and inclusion activities you are conducting and the ways that Lutheran Services in America can support and strengthen this work. A key value of the network is the willingness of people to openly share both their challenges and their successes in the trusted one-of-a-kind network that is Lutheran Services in America and to work together to strengthen each other.

Please complete our short survey here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KKLXPXBN. All responses are confidential and will not be shared on an individual basis.

In gratitude for all that you do,

Charlotte Haberaecker
President and CEO