

Lea's Personal Reflection

June 18, 2020

My Three Reasons.

Since the last time that I wrote an update to the board, the world has turned upside down. I hope you will allow me to deviate from providing an update on my workplan and to-do lists, and provide a quick synopsis of my life from my heart. Words truly cannot capture the wave of emotions that I have experienced over the past few weeks. When George Floyd was murdered and the ensuing events that have unfolded, I have been triggered to my core. The amount of pain, sadness, anger, and outrage that was unleashed in my heart brought me to my knees. I know that everyone's emotions are raw, but as a black woman, the depth of trauma and healing that I am struggling with is real. As the mother of three young black women, it has been heart wrenching to see my girls try to "make sense" of what was happening 8.9 miles from our backyard. And just like George Floyd called for his mom with his final breath, my girls called out to me and grabbed me like a security blanket so that I could wrap them up and tell them that it would be alright. But in that moment, I wasn't sure if we would be alright. Our city was literally burning before our eyes. So, we just tried to take action one day at a time. We swept up broken glass near the burnt police precinct, we cried at George Floyd's memorial site (which was also just 3 blocks from where I raised my oldest daughter), we donated diapers and toothpaste to students' families at Lyndale Community School, and we marched and protested at the State Capitol. And we cried. And cried some more. Even while writing this, I am still crying.

Last week was my oldest daughter's 35th birthday. As her birthday present, she posted on social media that she would provide a \$3,500 matching donation to any contributions that her friends and family made to three organizations that are actively working to dismantle institutional racism. She identified three systems that she "believes are particularly guilty of perpetuating anti-black + discriminatory policies and injustice within minority communities". These systems are Criminal Justice, Healthcare, and Education. After doing her research to find three organizations that are BIPOC led and have clear anti-racism values, she chose two orgs in San Francisco (which is where she lives) and one in North Minneapolis. Within an hour she had met her match of \$3,500 and by the end of her birthday she raised over \$20,000. This is not offered to you as bragging, but rather as a testament to the power of young people who are actively mobilizing their resources and energy to end systemic racism!

My youngest daughter was recently interviewed with my dad on WCCO to compare and contrast the protests of the 60's with the protests of today. (You can watch their interview [here](#).) I firmly believe that our youth are the future and if we adults can just learn how to shut up and listen, we will open the way so that young people can work side-by-side with us to chart the path forward.

As we navigate through these turbulent waters, we are likely trying to find our true center that will guide our individual journeys and efforts forward. I have many passions and interests that will always be a part of my journey. But my true center - My Three Reasons - are the three young women that I have the honor and privilege to call my daughters. Skya Grace, Keagan AnnaMae and Cassidy Sadie are black women who have unfortunately had to endure too many incidents of racism in their schools, in their community, and in the workplace. But their collective voices, fight and fire for justice will never be extinguished. These past few weeks I have seen them energized, angry, sad, and anxious; yet they continue to mobilize their power to fight for change because Black Lives Matter.

I stand alongside My Three Reasons as we fight for justice! Will you?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lea'.

Lea Blackwell Favor
Operations Director