



Black Queer & Trans Lives on the Frontlines: A Letter to Our Community

June 2020

We see you. We support you. Because #BlackLivesMatter. Black queer and trans lives matter! Within these narratives, our community is often forgotten during times of protest and civil unrest and don't make the news or get a hashtag, but we need you to know we are here to speak up as united community organizations. Our community is struggling, tired, and sick of being tired.

We cannot sit silently following the actions of Amy Cooper who weaponized her white privilege while fully aware of her actions. We refuse to sit silent and ignore the recent murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breona Taylor, George Floyd, Nina Pop, Mckinsley Lincoln, and Tony McDade. Furthermore, we condemn the system in which they lost their lives through police brutality, white supremacy and the systematic racism that perpetuates the active slaughtering of Black lives within our communities. The legacy in the Riverside community includes memories of the death of Tyisha Miller in 1998. The loss of Black lives by police is not new, has never been new, and continues on and on.

We are here to acknowledge that our Black and African American community is hurting right now. We speak to the systemic structure that has allowed institutionalized racism to propagate within our communities by the words, actions or more often than not, the non-actions of our leaders on all levels. We cannot accept the words of our president that gives praise and glory to white supremacist and national terrorists, while at the same time ignoring or celebrating those who racially profile, stop, frisk, beat, hit, and strangle Black and Brown bodies in our community. We cannot accept the fact that you can be Black and in your own neighborhood or home and still be shot and killed.

The verbal condemnation of these systems and current actions is simply not enough. Our history tells us that we must fight, march, organize and mobilize to create true and meaningful change. This means our current leaders; especially white leaders, must use the power and influence they have to support our fighting, marching, organizing and mobilizing. This means being active to use our privilege within the queer and trans community, precisely and specifically White LGBTQ+ folk to uplift and give power to the most marginalized voices within our community. As a community we must simply do better. We need to do better.

As we step into Pride month, we remember the first pride was a riot at the "Stonewall Inn" (1969) led by Black and Brown people, like Marsha P. Johnson, Miss Major, Silvia Rivera, and many others. Pride was always a protest. We stand on the shoulders of those who dared to say, "enough is enough." We call back to the protesters who wanted something better for our community, including the simple desire to just be ourselves.

Without our Marsha, Miss Major, and Sylvia, we would not be where we are today. They were also tired and angry and took a stand.

Over 50 years later, we still honor their actions with Pride Month. Fifty years from today, our collective actions in the face of ongoing police brutality supported by white supremacy will also be remembered.

Black queer and trans lives matter!

In community and power,

Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance - <https://www.rainbowprideyouthalliance.org>

TruEvolution - <https://truevolution.org>

UC Riverside LGBT Resource Center - <https://out.ucr.edu>

Youth Mentoring Action Network - <https://www.yman.org>

A call to action for our White and non-Black POC community members, shared by way of the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals:

This legacy of resistance should call us all to honor, remember, and act in solidarity with Black folks in our lives, institutions, and broader communities. For those needing education to turn to—with a particular call to reading for white and non-Black POC members—here are some resources that we hope will also lessen the burden of education from our Black peers and students:

- [A Timeline of Events That Led to the 2020 'Fed Up'-rising](#)
- [Anti-Racism Resources](#)
- [A Racial Justice Reading List: Benefiting The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#)
- [Donate to Local Bail Bonds across the Country.](#)
- [75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice](#)