

Emma Norton Response to George Floyd

Dear Friends,

Violence committed. Pain expressed. Trauma created. As a society we perpetuate this cycle, repeating our historical patterns of racism and George Floyd's horrific killing becomes one more link in an oppressor's chain. One more time a white person makes a decision to target a person of color with violence because it is our history as a nation.

No matter where we are in this community - Minneapolis, St. Paul, Maplewood - or even further to Duluth, Mankato, or Bemidji - this affects all of us. Some more than others - but that in itself is an injustice because for all of us it should be unacceptable and we should all be responding in ways to ensure it would never happen again.

As a white person leading Emma Norton through this devastating moment, I have to be even more diligent in how I create equity and space for people of color. I am a voice for what Emma Norton stands for and represent an example of how we uphold our core values. One of those values is being responsible and accountable. Racism is the responsibility of white people to fix and we have to be accountable to the people of color in our communities.

It shouldn't take a horrifying video documenting George Floyd's final moments in this world to cause change. The pain and awareness of another life lost should move each of us to action. These actions can be the acknowledgement of another's reality, listening with an open heart, understanding for the protests and civil unrest from those who have too long felt unheard, and then sharing the message and tragedy with others to continue raising our collective voice that this MUST STOP.

Today I listen to the constant helicopters and emergency response vehicles as the protests and violence moves closer to Emma Norton Residence.

Staff are continually busy preparing for another unknown future. On top of the day to day running of the organization and safely housing nearly 200 people each night during a pandemic, we are:

- Tending to the mental health and trauma already felt by our residents;
- Focusing on their safety, and the building's safety, through the weekend if protests are held at the state capitol;
- Answering questions as they work through their own confusion, curiosity, anger, and sadness at what is happening;
- Supporting them in their emotions and processing what they are seeing and experiencing;
- Creating a sense of stability and normality within all of what is happening;
- And finding ways to creating healing and growth now and in the future.

Emma Norton Services will continue through all of this - and we can only do that because we are honoring the responsibility you gave us to do this life sustaining work for those in need.

In solidarity,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony B." followed by a stylized flourish.