

“LIVE UNITED” IS MORE THAN A SLOGAN.

It is something we must ask ourselves each day. How can we create a strong, equitable and unified community? More specifically: How can we be a better advocate and ally to our Black and Brown neighbors? We must push ourselves to answer such questions and challenge what has been deemed the status quo in society – an applicable reflection for all individuals, businesses, community-based institutions, religious entities and nonprofits alike.

Every person, child and family deserves access to the health and human services that allow them to live a safe, secure and peaceful life. But this is not the reality of Black America.

Economic, health and housing systems have been designed for the select few, and the color of ones' skin unequivocally determines who has access to those vital resources. This creates deep-rooted and normalized inequalities that have been absorbed and felt by Black and Brown communities for hundreds of years. To put it plainly: This disease that we too often see through our televisions, and for some, right on their own block, is racism in its most visible form.

We cannot truly “Live United” until we fervently advocate for Black Lives to Matter everywhere. Especially in the communities we serve across Lucas, Wood and Ottawa County. At United Way, along with our dedicated community colleagues, we will strive to be a partner in all efforts that seek justice and healing.

When Black and Brown individuals can live and participate in the functions of life without fear, then, and only then, can we “Live United.”

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