



**A Message from Kathy Fletcher, President/ CEO
Voices for Children of San Antonio**

As we watch with sadness the intense and justifiable pain and anger playing out across the country, and indeed across the world, I wonder what the children are feeling. Are black children gratified that so many adults are protesting the tragic and brutal murder of yet another black man? Do they believe that the protests are also about their safety and their futures? Are they confused about why people who look like them are chased, beaten and killed? Are they scared?

Imagine being a young black child who is excluded, called names, afraid of being hurt, not recognized as special and beautiful as is the right of every child—because of the color of their skin. Imagine being a young black boy who has to be taught by his parents to never, however unintentionally, do anything that might be considered antagonistic by those who are sworn to protect and serve, out of fear for his very life—because of the color of his skin.

As a mother and grandmother, I cannot begin to imagine the heartache of a parent who sees their hurt and shame, who cannot protect a beloved child from the cruelty of racism.

The care and protection of the next generation is the responsibility and the privilege of all adults in every society. None of us know all the answers, but too many generations of black children have been left behind, had their talents ignored and their lives cut short and we are all the lesser for it.

We must all commit ourselves to listen, to learn, and also to act. We must recognize and truly address the inequities that impact black children from birth. We must begin with the very youngest children to ensure their health, their safety, and the nurturing of their hearts and minds and souls. We must teach our children, by our words and by our actions, kindness, caring, and respect for all people regardless of race. Children grow up much too quickly. The children can't wait.