

# Standing Together

The JVS family stands with our staff and clients, and the broader communities of color as they struggle with the fear, anxiety, and pain of the recent spate of racial violence. The murder of George Floyd by a police officer, the murder of jogger Ahmaud Arbery, the attempted racial framing of Christian Cooper in Central Park, and the racial confrontation of four young black corporate leaders in their own office building health club are nothing new. They are only some of the more recent instances of racist hatred and violence that date back to the founding of this nation.

What sets them apart is that they were recorded, thus pulling back the curtain on what too many of us ignore or deny. In America, people of color have been experiencing an unbearable burden over the past several months. Oppressed for centuries, impacted disproportionately by the Pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis, and facing the reality and fears of racial violence, people of color, whether born in America or not, are truly up against it and deserve all we can do in our power to ease their burden.

JVS was founded in 1938 against a backdrop of anti-Semitism at home and abroad, and the economic crisis of the Great Depression. Built on the Jewish principles of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) and *Tzedek* (social justice), we provide educational and economic opportunity for thousands of individuals, from neighborhoods across greater Boston and immigrants from more than fifty countries, who face a myriad of barriers to economic success. But, we know that this is not enough.

We are committed to do more to combat racism and racial injustice. We will continue to diversify our staff, leadership, and board. We will continue to expand our diversity and inclusion work, including better understanding white privilege and addressing it concretely. We will re-double our efforts to ensure that our vital services are known and available to all communities and individuals of color. And, we will engage and partner with community organizations in those communities to ensure that we are doing all that we can do to combat racism, injustice, and racial inequities, and ensure that Black lives matter.

These are deeply troubling times and our clients and staff are struggling with the real impacts, fears, and anxieties of the moment. But our organization was born in a time of crisis, and we have persevered and continued to do our important work through many economic crises, wars, and great national and local challenges. We are once again re-committing ourselves and our organization to do more and to do better, and we look forward to better days.

Jerry Rubin, President & CEO  
Jane R. Matlaw, Board Chair