

COVID-19 Update: 06-08-2020

Good afternoon Stone Academy Community,

Over the three months I have written to you regarding the COVID-19 crisis that has overtly effected each of us. In that time our community has felt the entire continuum of emotions between fear and hope. Every day brought news, some for the better and some for the worse, but we took it in stride and find ourselves with a world that is cautiously opening up.

With any luck this nightmare will be resolved in a matter of months with a treatment, vaccine, or other development.

Today, I am writing to you not to speak of this disease, for which a cure is likely, rather I want to speak to the most recent incidences of racial injustice for which we must find a cure. With the horrific passing of George Floyd and the ensuing protests, riots, and demonstrations each of us should have found ourselves at one point or another considering the state of racial bias in our society. As for myself, I struggled to find words that could properly encapsulate my emotions on the matter.

In an effort to respond to students, faculty, and staff that have looked for my opinion on the matter, I will start by succinctly stating that the injustice to George Floyd was atrocious and I support those protesting systemic racism. The greatness of America was supposed to be built upon providing opportunity to all without regard to race, ethnicity, creed, or bias but unfortunately that has not been the case for generations of many Americans. It is in this moment that we must forge a path to fix what is broken.

It is easy to condemn racial injustice without taking the next step to enact change. From our homes, self-isolated, it may feel like we are all helpless in the face of this massive issue. I admit my own struggles to determine how, as one voice and one man, I can effect change. I found that my strongest option is to use it, to speak out against the injustice and encourage others to use their voice as well. We can only win this fight with enough voices decrying it, and I am adding my voice to the chorus.

So from each of your homes, I encourage you to use your voice. Don't accept the normalization of this injustice, educate people on your experiences, learn from theirs, speak up, speak out, because in doing this we will give our voice to those that have lost theirs and if we all play our part then we can rebuild a society based on equality.

I believe that each of us has a purpose and over the past three months, I have seen incredible compassion and understanding from every member of our community. These two traits will serve as a salve to subdue the pain that so many in our society are feeling today.

Thank you for everything you have continued to do to serve humanity and I continue to hope for your health and safety.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Bierbaum