

A STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF BLACK LIVES MATTER, FROM CHAT ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LESLIE JOHNSON (POSTED 7/21/2020)

We at Chico Housing Action Team stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, and support the movement's ongoing efforts to end police brutality against African Americans, and all forms of racism in America. We continue to be awed and inspired by the unity, creativity, and perseverance of this movement, and especially by the amazing energy that young people have brought to bear in this struggle for justice.

As an organization dedicated to ensuring affordable housing for all in our community, CHAT believes housing is central to human dignity, and the lack of access to decent housing is a reflection of the economic inequities so prevalent throughout our country. Housing, like the criminal justice system, is an area where racist policies, written and unwritten, have had a huge impact on the quality of life for Black Americans throughout our nation's history. CHAT sees its role as ensuring, to the greatest extent possible, that everyone in our community has access to decent housing they can afford.

CHAT has begun, and will continue to review our own policies and procedures to ensure that our hiring and employment practices, as well as our housing management practices, are equitable toward people of color and other marginalized groups, including people with disabilities and LGBTQ people. We will pay more attention to the impacts of unconscious bias in our organization. We will reach out more to communities of color to share information about our services, and about job openings. We will be more vocal in our advocacy for economic, racial, and housing justice in our community.

We are living through unique and challenging times. This feels like a real shift, where historical racism and injustice finally are being openly recognized, acknowledged, and addressed in practical ways. We are hopeful the momentum will continue to build throughout the country, with important changes, large and small, in every community. As Rep. John Lewis said, "If we believe in the change we seek, then it is easy to commit to doing all we can, because the responsibility is ours alone to build a better society and a more peaceful world." CHAT aspires, in our small way, to be a meaningful part of this transformative moment in America.