“Music with all its subtlety has immense power to unite people, spread love and bring peace in the world!”
– Sanchita Pandey

To our community,

On behalf of the Music Settlement and its Board of Directors, I want to acknowledge the recent events that have unfolded across the country, and for some of you, right here in Cleveland outside of your home. I am deeply saddened by the loss of George Floyd’s life. If you are like me, events like these may leave you feeling angry, helpless and defeated. Intolerance from any source is wholly unacceptable. Our country was founded on the principle that we are all created equal, and sadly, our country has not lived up to this principle for much of its history. We grieve for our country and for all those experiencing pain from what has unfolded over the last few weeks. Injustice of any kind has been, and remains, the antithesis of who we are and what The Music Settlement does as a community arts and education school.

The Music Settlement family stands united in our century-long guiding Mission “to welcome all to our music and arts community to learn, create, inspire and heal”. The word “all” refers to people of all races, genders, sexual orientation, ages, socio-economic and religious backgrounds and ability levels. Today, we desperately need the comfort, healing, hope and connection that music and the arts can provide during this time of personal and worldwide disruption and sorrow.

The Music Settlement’s founding and deep-rooted history is built upon the ideals of social equity, understanding and opportunities for all people, using music as the common language. As we carry out our mission through our programs and services, we continue to bring our community members together to support and strengthen each other and build a future of respect for all people, as individuals.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to Mr. Floyd’s family and friends. Please pray for the family of George Floyd and honor his life and memory by engaging in acts of tolerance and peace. We must work towards positive and real solutions to eradicate injustices.

If there is ever to be true change, it must begin with me. It must begin with us. Throughout my career as CEO, I’ve espoused our organization’s Mission and Core Values -- accessibility, community-focused and responsible stewards of the community’s trust -- as part of the foundation of our success. When we strive to genuinely live our Mission and Values, we can’t help but treat others with compassion and respect. I ask all of us to do the same. This sounds almost too simplistic a panacea when we are confronted with the enormity of this issue. But we have to start somewhere if we are ever to turn the tide against the racism, oppression and prejudice that too many in our country face every day of their lives.

My final request is that we stay strong, kind, and compassionate. The Music Settlement is committed to continuing the important work to make someone else’s life a little less burdensome and a little more joyful, while respecting and celebrating the differences among us all. Together, we will find a way into a better future. Thank you.

Geri Presti, President & CEO