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## Letters to the editor

Leveling the playing field for all

White people sometimes say "I'm not a racist; I'm color blind!" Unfortunately, racism is more nuanced than just belonging to the KKK. Racism is failing to acknowledge that Black and Brown people have suffered greatly and continue to suffer greatly at the hands of white people in this country. Racism is failing to admit that the system is stacked against People of Color.

Which system? The justice system. People of Color routinely get harsher penalties than white people. Just ask the Stanford rapist. People of Color are also disproportionately injured and killed by police compared to white people. Just ask Rayshard Brooks, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Atatiana Jefferson, Stephon Clark, and Philando Castille.

Which system? The financial system. A recent study concluded that it will take 228 years for the average Black household to accumulate the same level of wealth as held by the average white household today.

Which system? The educational system. Poor communities have fewer resources to fund their schools; students within those schools typically have poorer outcomes in terms of getting into college, in terms of succeeding in life. People of Color are more likely to attend public schools with fewer resources.

Some may say that racism happens elsewhere but not in Lafayette; however, the prior Police Chief, Eric Christensen, stated at a public meeting in 2017 that his department often gets two or three calls per week where white people call the police on People of Color in our community, because the white folks are sure that the People of Color don't belong there - that they're up to something. Nearly all of the time, he said, the People of Color are not the problem.

Fighting racism in this country is not a zero sum game. By recognizing the inequalities in society and then acting to eliminate these inequalities, by elevating People of Color to the same level as white people, by leveling the playing field, we can make our community and our country better for all.

Gwenyth Searer, P.E., S.E.  
Lafayette

Embracing the truth of racism

Members of our committee have received many notes of support since our last editor's letter. We also received some messages questioning the need for efforts to increase belonging and inclusion in our community. Some even came in the form of aggressive messages sent from alias emails. We have work to do as a community and country to acknowledge how privilege and racism touch our daily lives.

Our children watched the storming of the nation's Capitol on Jan. 6 with bewilderment. They are asking: why did people breach the sanctuary of our government? How were they allowed to terrorize national leaders, attack and kill police, plant pipe bombs, and wave Confederate flags in the cradle of our democracy? Others wonder why rioters were unmasked, showing little regard for protecting others, while students are homebound on Zoom classes.

Nationwide, BLM protesters were marching in desperate protest for their people literally dying in the streets and in their beds. They were met with throngs of officers, rubber bullets, and tear gas. In contrast, the angry mob that marched on the Capitol was enraged that its candidate lost a free and fair election. These insurrectionists brought guns, bombs, and tactical gear. Yet they drew a mild, tolerant response. The contrast was devastating.

We won't come closer together with denial. Exposing the wounds of racism is not divisive; it is our only path toward equality. Lamorinda families and students of color have shared their unique stories, repeatedly, in multiple venues, challenging the fantasy that Lamorinda is a utopian bubble immune to privilege and racism. We must not continuously minimize their experiences and be brave enough to embrace their truths. Contact us at [lafayettek8equity@gmail.com](mailto:lafayettek8equity@gmail.com)

Yukie Fujimoto  
Founder, LafSD DEI Committee

Thanks to volunteers helping with vaccine distribution

I want to thank Dr. Rebecca Parish and Dr. Denise Hillard for their initiative to have vaccines delivered to our community. One of the advantages of living in the Lamorinda area is that there are so many individuals who see problems and rather than just complaining about it they seek out solutions. When their patients along with other members of the community were having a difficult time getting vaccinated, they came up with a solution and delivered it. I also want to thank all the volunteers that were involved including the CERT Organization. (Community Emergency Response Team) making the event at the Stanley Middle School so successful. "Those who say it cannot be done need to get out of the way of those that are doing it." Thank you, Dr. Parish, Dr. Hillard and all the volunteers. You are all doers.

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