

Friday, June 19, 2020



Dear Anova Community,

On June 19, 1865 the State of Texas finally ended the practice of slavery, two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation and only after Union forces personally delivered the order to slaves who had no idea that the US civil war was over or that slavery had been abolished. Although the reality was that liberation wasn't quick or tidy, some slaves were not freed for years and many were lynched, this day was to become known in the black community as "Juneteenth" and is now the longest running event to celebrate freedom for black Americans and a holiday in 46 states. In the words of historian Henry Louis Gates Jr., "... defying confusion and delay, terror and violence, the newly "freed" black men and women...now had a date to rally around. In one of the most inspiring grassroots efforts of the post civil war period, they transformed June 19th from a day of unheeded military orders into their own annual rite..."

Fast forward 155 years to June 19, 2020 and we see another grassroots effort, Black Lives Matter, emerging as more than a small local movement into a global cause for justice and moral imperatives... populated by millions of Americans. Prompted by centuries of oppression and injustice and triggered by never ending videos of black Americans being persecuted, profiled and murdered by those in uniform, Black Lives Matter has transcended politics and now works in the realm of morality. Anova is listening to and joining with the voices of people of all colors who are able tell right from wrong. We are witnessing and participating in another profound social revolution today in America and the need for all of us to stand for justice, compassion, honesty, and love has never been greater in my lifetime. This is no time to be silent or passive when so much is at stake.

On behalf of myself and all Anova employees, we call for our community to stand together in solidarity with people of color and demand an end to police brutality, support for those who enforce our laws justly, systems to quickly and fairly exclude and punish those who do not, and robust enhancement of education and social services to prevent citizen contact with law enforcement that is too often based on punishment and control. Anova stands in solidarity with the national call for racial justice and in support of our students, families, and staff who have been marginalized by our society. For two decades Anova has been a champion for equity and justice in the service of children and families with disabilities and neurological differences that have led to discrimination and mistreatment. Never has our work been so important and our need for unity so great. Anova is saddened and outraged by the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many other black, indigenous, and people of color at the hands of authorities. As we grapple with the devastation caused by decades of discrimination and systemic racism, we must work as a team to provide opportunities for students to share their thoughts and feelings, and to ensure that all students receive the emotional and social support they need to process these challenging events. Additionally, Anova will re-affirm our commitment to hiring and supporting the most diverse group of educators possible and we implore our team to help us to create this diverse space for our community by continuing to recruit and welcome educators from all races, genders, sexual preferences and religions. We want you and we need you. This year on Juneteenth 2020, Anova is making ourselves heard and promising to help in standing up for what is right.

I am grateful to be part of such an amazing community on such a sacred mission. Please know that Anova is listening, learning, and standing with you today and always.

Stay safe as we change the world together!

Andrew Bailey, Founder
Anova