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## ***A Message from Auberle CEO, John Lydon, on Racial Injustice***

(Released June 2, 2020)

*To our Auberle family,*

*We have yet again seen terrible images of racism violently ending life for black Americans: George Floyd; Ahmaud Arbery; Breonna Taylor. And even a stroll in the park isn't safe from its reach as Christian Cooper's experience demonstrates. But behind the videos and news reports, the problem of racism reaches far deeper. In many ways it is incorporated into our systems and way of life. Auberle staff can certainly attest to this as we see residential placements of black young people far exceeding the population ratio. We see it in those experiencing poverty and in need of our services across the board. And it is borne out in the impact of the COVID pandemic in the higher toll that it has taken on people of color. The overall picture is a disgrace to our country and the ideals that we claim to espouse.*

*It can seem to many people as too daunting a task for one person to tackle. But to fail to act is to accept it and our silence feeds into it. We have to start by acknowledging it as a deep seated problem yet capable of resolution. Auberle has been an early and eager participant in the equity and justice work that Allegheny County Department of Human Services started. In our current Strategic Plan, written in 2018, we committed to "participate fully in programs offered to address equity concerns in the regional human service system" and pledged to increase Board and staff diversity. We have followed through on this but obviously more is needed, much more. We have to all set our attitude to be part of a solution. We can recommit in our work to do everything we can to combat it.*

*On this Election Day, and each one hereafter, we can refuse to be swayed or distracted by people who emphasize division or who work to distract us by focusing on a few violent people in protests, while refusing to acknowledge that there is an underlying problem. We can use our vote on leaders presenting a way forward together. We can participate in dialogue directed to change and focused on a better future for all. We can expand services and deliver real outcomes to help those we serve move forward. And we can redouble our efforts to care for one another. Maybe we won't change the entire picture ourselves but we will change the part we touch, and together with others, we will remake this terrible picture.*

*Sincerely,*

*John Lydon, CEO*

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