

June 3, 2020

Dear Minnesota Youth Soccer Community,

As leaders in our community, we have leaned on each other for many years and even more in the past week. Unlike some, we have not been at a loss for words. Quite frankly, it's been the opposite. We are outraged and horrified by the senseless murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and countless other black lives. We are heart broken and saddened to see our community in pain.

While we all struggle with our own battles during what has become an extremely challenging time in the world, it's important that we recognize that this is not the time for us to turn inward – it is the time for us to unite. As coaches, educators, and leaders working with our youth, we must not only embrace diversity and promote inclusion, but we must speak out against racism and all forms of social injustice no matter where it occurs.

Participating in peaceful protests, posting on social media, and making donations are all great places to start, but they alone, will not get us to our desired destination. In order for us to drive real change, the type of change that will impact our children when they are adults, deliberate conversations and conscious actions will need to continue. As we look to do better in our own lives and communities, we challenge each of you to be change agents in your community, both on and off the field. When the media leaves our black communities and social injustice is no longer trending on social media, will you still be an advocate for change? The next time you hear a racist joke or an off-color comment, will you speak out against it? The next time you have a job opportunity, will you be willing to hire someone who doesn't look like you? The next time you encounter someone with a different background, will you seek to understand with an open mind?

Nobody is expected to have all the answers and we don't need to be experts on racism or social injustice in order to be advocates and allies. Being open to new perspectives, showing the willingness to ask questions, and providing environments that encourage conversations about our cultural backgrounds creates a powerful learning environment that honors different identities and lived experiences.

We are calling for everyone in the youth soccer community to step up. In partnership with The Sanneh Foundation, we have set up a fundraiser that will bring meaningful resources to the most affected communities within the Twin Cities. With over 60,000 youth players in our state, if everyone gave just \$10, we would beat our goal by 400%. Please join us in adding your name in support of our collective commitment for change and consider making a donation to aid in the healing of our community. Not for the greater good of the game, but more importantly, for our children and the world they will inherit. Let's show the world how strong and united the Minnesota soccer community is against racism and social injustice.

[Click here to join us in our commitment for change.](#)

Please be safe and take care of yourselves and each other.

Sincerely,

Tamba Johson, Technical Director, Minneapolis United

Lawrence Tsoi, Technical Director, Fusion SC

.....Together with Minnesota Youth Soccer Association and Twin Cities Soccer Leagues

About The Sanneh Foundation

The Sanneh Foundation serves the holistic youth development needs of the increasingly diverse Twin Cities metro area. Our mission is to empower youth by supporting and promoting educational attainment through in-school and after-school support, improve lives by providing programs that strengthen physical health and social and emotional development, and unite communities by advancing diversity, equity, and community well-being.