



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

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Dear Fairfax Community,

I would like to dedicate my message to Black Lives Matter and to this final week of Pride Month.

In the midst of a Shelter In Place order, we are experiencing a massive wake up call; an alarm is going off around the world. The call came to the Town Council at the annual budget hearing. We listened to testimony for 3 hours from many of our younger generation, many first time Town Council meeting attendees, demanding change, massive societal systemic change to address racial inequity and reimagine public safety models. This week hundreds of passionate residents of Marin led by a generation of young people who have studied the roots and know the causes of oppression, spoke their truth at the County Budget hearings, demanding a shift of funding priorities and review of policies which have landed Marin County #1 one the list for racial inequity in California.

Entering the 4th calendar month since Marin County's Public Health Officer issued an order for Marin County Residents to Shelter In Place, I look back at what seems like yesterday, knowing that the entire world has changed. We are ordered to cover our faces with masks to protect one another from Covid-19 while at the same time, our young people are finding their voices and turning up the volume. They are protesting with their masks on (for the most part), but their passionate words resound and reverberate through Marin communities which have long resisted and held back change. It is profound to hear the words of our youth and their teachers, parents and mentors speaking louder than ever before, even as they comply with strict orders to mask and distance. The message of this moment and the power of the movement is visceral and impactful.

I find the voices of many of my generation muffled and difficult to hear, unsure of what to say. I find myself leaning in, in order to hear what my peers and people of my parent's generation are saying. Remembering to physical distance, I pull away quickly to maintain my 6 feet. Speaking for myself, I find it difficult to annunciate clearly, my voice almost smothered under my mask, and my wrinkles exaggerated under my eyes, as if to blur my vision and quiet my noise.

I find it profound and important that as we comply with the COVID safety requirements, our eyes and ears are left exposed. This allows for observation and listening, finding an internal silence and taking time for introspection. If we are quiet we hear cries for social equity and justice for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and the LGBTQ community.

Some may disagree with the substance and style of those cries and the protests, but it is undeniable that the volume will increase. It should, and will continue until we each do the hard and often uncomfortable work of finding our role in this movement, and start to listen to the generation who is inheriting systems that they did not create and will no longer tolerate.

It is a time for self examination and listening to one another. There are opportunities like never before to

speak with our children, read books together and watch movies in order to gain deeper understanding of systems of oppression embedded in the history of this Country and this County. [This website](#) has an extensive list of resources.

Currently I find it particularly difficult to read the headlines in the newspaper. Quite frankly they fail to draw me in and they ruin my morning. A friend forwarded me a Facebook post about the ability each of us has to write our own headlines. Headlines about finding the power of possibility and positivity in every day interactions, headlines highlighting the opportunities that emerge as we work through this most challenging time. I have decided to sit down with pen and paper and write my own headlines of the future. One thing is certain, and that is that we are all headed into that future, and we are headed there together.

What is your headline?

Fairfax Forward, now more than ever.

Please be well, wear your mask and take care of one another.

Respectfully,

Renee Goddard
Mayor of Fairfax