

GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF WESTERN LANE COUNTY

People are hungry for interaction. In a recent article in the Washington Post, the headlines read “**The coronavirus pandemic is pushing America into a mental health crisis.**”

Anxiety and depression are rising, and according to a Kaiser Family Health Foundation poll, nearly one-half of Americans are reporting the Corona Virus is harming their mental health. A Federal Emergency Hotline for people in emotional distress registered more than 1,000 percent increase in April compared to the same time last year. Last month, 20,000 people texted that hotline for help.

The fear of contracting the disease, the loss of jobs, the isolation from our friends and loved ones, children from their classmates, and the collapse of our economy has many Americans afraid, in despair, and depressed. And then we turn on TV, and watch one of the most heinous crimes in our history as a white police officer puts his knee on the neck of a black man and holds it there until he has snuffed out his life. We don't have words in our vocabulary to express how angry and upset we are over this. We are horrified that this could happen in our country. Is it any wonder depression is so widespread?

The future of our nation rests in the hands of our kids and teens – young people who are watching the news and their social media feeds, overhearing their parents' conversations, worrying for their world and coming to our Club with concern in their eyes. With racist acts and national civil unrest combining with a global pandemic, our Club members – especially black children and teens – need us now more than ever.

At the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Lane County, we take a stand for the future of America's children. We stand against racism and discrimination. We stand for safety, health, dignity, and equitable opportunity.

Great futures for Florence's youth will always be the rallying cry for Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Lane County. We can and must demand change to resolve the inequities and injustices facing black children and families.

Club members of all races and backgrounds are still in a safe place where they are encouraged to have difficult conversations and stand up for what's right. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Lane County condemn all forms of racism and discrimination. Our country is long overdue for change, and our Club in Florence will continue using our local, state, and national platforms to help demand and deliver it.

What can you expect from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Lane County? A commitment to continuing working relentlessly to ensure:

- Our Staff and our Board are well-trained in anti-racism and equity.
- Programs are created through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Policies are reviewed, and we close gaps that exist at the federal, state, and local levels to help shape a robust and sustained advocacy strategy.
- All partners are examined to ensure they represent racial justice and equity.

The future of Florence and our nation rests in the hands of today's youth and what we choose to do today to see them, stand with them, and support them.

When you continue supporting The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Lane County, you support systemic solutions that address systemic problems. Great futures start by supporting today's youth as they become tomorrow's teachers, lawmakers, law enforcement officers, and leaders who will not let history repeat itself, and we'll do whatever it takes to make sure it doesn't.

Great futures start with each and every one of us taking action.

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