



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

To the community both local and nationwide:

I am horrified and saddened about the treatment of African Americans in our country. This is not just a law enforcement issue. How we treat the African American community is all of our responsibility and concern. Libraries are not excluded from discriminatory treatment of African Americans both from a historical perspective and the current struggle to diversify library staff and literature. I keep thinking about how to move forward from concern, outrage, anger, grief to action and change. For me, the first step is to look inward – am I willing to evaluate myself and see uncomfortable truths, examine them, and make a change. Next, listen to the African American community, empathize, and be willing to extend my belief that they have a different experience of society and the world and it is often negative, hurtful, and violent. Then, engage in a dialogue with those who are affected, who share my viewpoint, those who don't, and work with people who are interested in making a change. Finally, I will speak up and take action not just as an individual but as the Library Director. I invite those who wish to participate, want to process, or don't know how to help and want to – contact me directly. Bishop Desmond Tutu said “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality”. I stand with City Manager Wyatt Shields, Police Chief Mary Gavin and City Council in the commitment to actions that promote justice and peace. If you want peace, work for justice.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Carroll
Library Director
Mary Riley Styles Public Library