

Dear Families,

As the owner and director of Desert Garden Montessori, I am stating **Black lives matter**.

Over the past few weeks, I have taken time to listen and to process all I have been receiving. I didn't want to just send out a quick email to check off a "to do" item and get back to business as usual. That is not what DGM is founded upon and that is not speaking from my heart.

Desert Garden Montessori is a school that believes in respecting and celebrating the unique individuality of each student and member of our community. We encourage our students to be conscientious, inclusive, and compassionate global citizens. We are intentionally diverse and strive to be an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, parents, and staff.

The recent actions and protests across the country are a vital reminder that racism must be acknowledged, unlearned, and dismantled on a mass scale. We must take responsibility for our actions and we must be committed to listening, learning, and growing in our understanding of the pain that is felt by the Black community.

After listening to our students, staff, and parents, I am pledging our school, its community members, and its resources to the following goals and **action items**.

1. Host open forums for community discussion on issues of race, bias, privilege, diversity, and justice for students and parents. – **Open forum held June 18 + ongoing**
2. Continue to listen, learn, and self-reflect as an organization and provide spaces and times for employees to share their experiences and to communicate their thoughts on how the school can improve. – **Leadership Meeting held June 16 + ongoing**
3. Support students, families, and staff socially and emotionally as we face and dismantle racism head-on as a united community.
4. Audit DGM's policies, procedures, and hiring practices to ensure fairness and equity.
5. Hold anti-racism and implicit bias training for DGM employees. – **Scheduled for August 3 + ongoing**

Please take my hand as we learn, grow, and take action. I welcome your feedback and input as we take this journey together.

Sincerely,



Shetal Walters
Executive Director