



Friday, January 8, 2021

Mountains and Valleys

- July & August 2020
Safe Space Conversations
- October 2020
DE & I Strategic Plan (Road Map created)
- November 2020
Voices for Equity began training
- December 2020
Board of Directors trained
- January 2021
1st Meeting for DE & I Work Group (consists of board of directors, staff, community partners, and clients)
- February 2020
all employees trained in Diversity and ongoing training quarterly

On Wednesday of this week, I watched in disbelief as Americans attacked Capitol Hill. I remembered hearing Abraham Lincoln say to the North and the South that a “house divided against itself will not stand”. As I watched this attack unfold it reminded me of September 1, 2001 when terrorists attacked the Twin Towers and targeted prominent buildings in our nation’s capital. Therefore, as I watched, I reflected upon how afraid I was that day and how distraught I was because our nation had been violated. Then everything I felt 19 years ago came rushing back to me as I watched this attack.

Some people do not believe that racism, white supremacy, injustice, inequity, and white privilege exists. However, it was displayed on every news outlet as this horrific attack unfolded before our eyes. It was hard to miss the difference in how the Black Lives Matter protesters were handled in comparison to how the Make America Great Again protesters were handled.

I call attention to this because this must change and it is unacceptable in our nation. It is easy to be caught up in the predictions that are being made on the news, but the truth is that we are a resilient people. The truth is that as long as we are divided we remain on shaky ground. It is hard to see the impact the work we are doing is making, but we must push forward when injustice is uncovered.

In Dr. Martin Luther King’s message “I Have been to the Mountaintop”, he reveals that he had a glimpse into the 20th Century and witnessed our nation coming together. However, 2020 revealed that there were people of color still suffering injustice, racism, and inequity. Ironically, it also gave our organization the opportunity to focus more on our core values of Justice and Diversity. Therefore, we have been given a platform and we choose how we show up on this platform. We want to show up as facilitators of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We want to be the example of what the change looks like with our families, friends, and communities. These injustices bother me and that is my reason for being in the fight for justice, equity, and inclusion. Dr. King said, “But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land”. Stay encouraged, the work we are doing at Volunteers of America Mid-States is moving the needle. If you need space to process, all of this please contact your supervisor or myself to do so. We will continue the fight and fight together!

Voices for Equity Branding Contest

You could win a \$200 gift card if your design is chosen for the VOA Voices for Equity brand. We would like for the “V” in Voices to incorporate a Megaphone. Submit your design to Rita Finnie at ritaf@voamid.org.

Deadline is January 12, 2021

**FOR MORE
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