

## A Letter to Everyone Associated with Eliminate Racism 815

Dear Friends in the struggle to eliminate racism  
and create a community where everyone feels valued,

We are living in a stressful time. No matter who wins the election, we know for sure that we are a divided country: divided by color, race, religion, class and politics. We live in a time of “us vs. them”. As a result, we do not know what will happen in our country during the next four years and we can have little influence on what does happen. We can, however, have some influence on our community. We can continue to focus most of our energy and effort on the Rockford area. We can continue to strengthen the relationships we have with those who are engaged in the struggle for justice and equity. We can also build new relationships with people with whom we differ and with people who believe and think differently than we do.

As individuals and organizations who care about creating The Beloved Community that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and John Lewis talked about often, we may in some ways feel that we have little influence in our community to make the necessary major changes so that everyone feels that they belong here. This is probably true. But we do have control over our inner life: our thoughts, beliefs, and spiritual practices. We do know that “love conquers hate.” We know that kindness, courtesy, and civility help us build relationships. We know that anger, harsh words, judging others, and blaming people breaks down relationships and builds resentment and resistance.

So, my friends, I believe that, as hard as it might be at times, that we do know what we must do going forward through the difficult days ahead. We must continue to do what we have been doing. We must love one another. We must focus our energy and efforts on building a community that we all want to live in. We must draw on each other and our Creator for strength and guidance. We must have hope that, if we do this, we will slowly, but surely, bit by bit, change our community. That’s our plan. We hope you make it yours.

With love for you all and appreciation for all that you do,

The Board of Directors of Eliminate Racism 815 – Mustafa Abdall, Rev. Kenneth Board, Marilyn Board, Jim Roberts, Earle Rowe, Ann Rundall, Dick Rundall, Ron Simmons