

1325 Ansel Road  
Cleveland, OH 44106  
t.216.791.6476  
f.216.791.6485  
famicos.org

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It has now been one month since the brutal murder of George Floyd. Our pain over this heinous act of injustice is still very real and palpable. We chose to take some time to reflect and to have honest, at times uncomfortable, conversations with our staff and Board of Directors before issuing this statement. Fifty years ago, Famicos was born in this same strife. We were forged in fire and our mettle has been tested. The neighborhoods we serve suffered appalling systemic racism back then, just as they still do today. We were a part of the neighborhood we served then, just as we are still today. Decades of systemic racism and oppression have led to a certain trauma in the communities we serve. We see it, we feel it, we acknowledge it and we want to be a part of the healing process that is needed.

To effectively be a part of that healing, Famicos needs to acknowledge that we, like many other community organizations, have been complicit in the perpetuation of systemic oppression and injustice and we vow to evaluate our own practices. As we embark upon our next 50 years, Famicos will strive to infuse racial equity and diversity principles into all that we do. We will put together a practical action plan, with significant input from the community members we serve and in partnership with other community organizations. We will use our platform to be a megaphone to amplify the voices, fears, needs, and frustrations of those we serve. We will continue to provide services to those who need it most, the most vulnerable members of our neighborhoods, and to do so with respect for the dignity of each person we serve. We will facilitate multigenerational conversation around racial equity and diversity because we know that it will take all of us to effect real and lasting change. We have been encouraged by the galvanization of young people that we are now seeing. We will support sister organizations, especially those lead by young Black people, in their efforts to tear down the systems of oppression that have been allowed to exist for far too long. We will support education of Black communities on the importance of filling out the census, registering to vote, and voting in elections.

To varying extents, Famicos has already been doing these things. But we know we need to do things differently, including holding the community development system accountable for its treatment of Black people. As we continue to serve the neighborhoods of Hough, Glenville, and St. Clair-Superior for the next 50 years, we pray we may be leaders in thought and action in changing the unjust systems in place, particularly in housing, education, employment, and health and wellness. Famicos will lead by example. We will listen to the needs of our community members and respond to those needs, not just what we think they need. We invite you, the members of Hough, Glenville, and St. Clair-Superior, to engage with us during these important conversations. Please watch the Famicos website and social media channels for various upcoming opportunities to share your thoughts and have your voices heard.

Laura Junglas  
Board Chair

John O. Anoliefo  
Executive Director