

JOIN THE WEEK OF ACTION APRIL 19-24!

Dear YWCA Cortland Community,

YWCA is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families, and strengthen communities. Structural racism plays a large role in determining the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and affects people's access to quality housing, education, food, transportation, and other social determinants of health. Understanding and addressing systemic racism from this public health perspective is crucial to eliminating racial and ethnic inequities, and to improving opportunity and well-being across the Cortland community.

This year the YWCA Advocacy Committee re-imagined our historical Martin Luther King Jr. soup and bread luncheon celebration into a seven-week series to Stand Against Racism (SAR). This program concludes with a week of planned activities calling the Cortland community to action in alignment with YWCA USA's SAR national movement. YWCAs across the country will be lifting up this critical part of our mission in their communities bringing hundreds of thousands of people across the country to take the pledge to take a Stand Against Racism during this week—and every day.

The YWCA's work is ongoing and will be continued year after year realizing that we will not eliminate racism today, next week, or even next year. So, we will get up every day to do the work of justice and dispel the myth that racism doesn't exist in Cortland. We will work with community leaders and community members of all ages. We will do the work until the world sees women, girls, and people of color the way we do: Equal. Powerful. Unstoppable.

On April 21st we will be sharing firsthand stories of Cortland community members that should have you deeply concerned and motivated to do better, be better, and become allies for people of color in our community recognizing and owning our white privilege. We cannot remain silent out of fear of saying or doing the wrong thing. In remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. he once said, "we will not remember the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

Together we can raise our awareness and learn how to use our voice, our collective power to educate ourselves in racial equity, white privilege, and learn the difference between diversity and equity and inclusion. Let's take a stand against racism together! Visit the SAR event page on our website to take the pledge on April 23rd.

Thank you for joining the YWCA in this important work!

Kelly Tobin, YWCA Cortland Executive Director