

August 12, 2017



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Dear BBA Family,

The demonstrations, violence and murders which have taken place over the last 24 hours in Charlottesville, VA are a heartbreaking reminder of how far we still must go in the fight for equality and respect in our country. I am personally saddened by the actions of the white supremacists leading these protests, and find it shameful that any political or public figure would refuse to recognize their actions as terroristic.

As President of the Benjamin Banneker Association, Inc. (BBA) my first thought is, and will always be, that our children are watching. Whether they are watching on CNN, Facebook Live or from Charlottesville, VA - our children are watching, and they need to know that we will always stand up for what's right.

They need to know that we will not back down from the fight, and that the fight for equality remains. They need to know that we will be unified, and that this organization exists to join individuals and groups who will provide solutions to issues - including those which are political in nature - impacting their academic participation and success.

For the last several months, members of BBA have been pouring their hearts, knowledge and personal experience into projects spearheaded by our organization to make a difference for the education and well-being of all children - particularly children of color. I want you - I need you - to be a part of these programs and projects because they are worthy causes and ways that we are coming together to say that we will not back down. We will refuse to work in isolation and be of no effect. We will refuse to allow generations of children and young adults to feel as if their lives and education do not matter.

The BBA Board of Directors is hosting a leadership meeting in Dallas, TX to put forth our plans for local, state, regional, and national advancement during the weekend of **September 8-10, 2017**. I would like to personally invite you to attend this meeting if you are able. If you are unable to physically join us, we will find ways for you to connect using technology. Over the next few days, I will be sharing more detailed information with you regarding the specifics of this meeting. I also hope you will contact me with your thoughts and suggestions.

In the meantime, I encourage you to speak out in your personal spaces about these repulsive acts, pray for our country, and continue to be a light wherever you are.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brea C Ratliff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brea C. Ratliff
President, Benjamin Banneker Association, Inc.