

To: Monica Rams, MS, Director of Multicultural Affairs
From: Margret Greene, MSW, Social Worker, Region 1
Re: 2021 Dr. Janet E. Williams Humanitarian Award
Date: 2/1/2021

Program Supervisor (DCF Norwalk), Tawanda Ebron, MS, has served the agency and our community with passion and concern for our staff, the families we serve and the community at large for years. She organizes the Region One Racial Justice Workgroup meetings and inspires our staff to do better to benefit the families and children we serve. Tawanda utilizes a racial justice lens when analyzing problems, looking for solutions and defining success. She encourages the development of racial justice allies with the providers we partner with. Moreover, she holds her staff and our providers accountable. She is not afraid to speak out against all forms of racism and address structural racism within DCF and the larger communities we serve. Tawanda has done this work, long before the death of George Floyd. However, after Mr. Floyd's death, she helped organize a staff meeting in our region where our colleagues could safely share their fears (and tears) and concerns.

Everyone in our community has felt the impact of COVID-19 but Tawanda immediately understood that people who are already targeted, marginalized, and underserved felt the pain more than others. She understood that COVID-19 came on top of existing economic, health, education and information inequities, as well as state violence that has shaped people's lives.

I have not met Tawanda's children but I have heard her talk about them, including her foster son, whom she loves as her own child. She has raised terrific kids who are also committed to racial equity and inclusion. I was particularly struck when she showed the staff a very moving video about the concept of privilege. She said she thought about having the staff perform the exercise in the video where the participants take two steps forward if they meet certain criteria but her son suggested that staff members may be embarrassed or feel shame about their individual circumstances. Her son was able to articulate wisdom beyond his years. I guess it's true what they say, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree!

The term, "talk the talk, walk the walk" comes to mind when I think of Tawanda. She supports what she says, not just with words, but also through action.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination of Tawanda Ebron for the 2021 Dr. Janet E. Williams Humanitarian Award. If you need more information, I can be reached at 860-951-9722 or Margret.Greene@ct.gov.

