

Dear Board of Directors, Elected Officials, Friends, Volunteers and Staff of the WJC:

Thank you for the honor of having served you for these past years, it has been a joyous time and at times we faced obstacles and difficulties together that cut apart communities, we were together in the eye of many storms and built friendships and relationships that will endure.

I wanted to thank you for recognizing that the true measure of a man or woman is their capacity to love and bear the pain of others. Simply put that has been the philosophy of my leadership and vision. For a true peacemaker, you who have been there know that ultimately, one cannot resolve anything until you are fully imbued with the passion, pain and suffering of all sides of a dispute. You let it into your heart and mind, hold it in a sacred place and recast the pain into hope and your only role is to help humanize the problem and people for each other.

You hold this space and then pull others into it with you until they too see the pain of the other and put down their weapons, whether real or just words, and find that which is the living pulse of the other. Once you have found someone's humanity you hold onto to it and leave behind the insults, the need to brandish your sword and you learn to listen to someone else.

I thank you also for being there when I took you on journeys that seemed improbable. For me power has always been drawn from those who are quiet, left out, on the side, pushed down, pushed around. That is why our founder, Judge Dorothy Nelson always insisted that we work with children and young people, she knew they are often the most powerless. This lovely and hallowed building should be abuzz not just with people of traditional influence, but as a gift to those who often are not given access to such a space. We are nothing without you.

Those who are closest to the conflicts, we see you as the most powerful. You have the answers, the history, the capacity, the investment to change. My vision was not to just parachute in and move on, it was always to engage, to stay through the messy parts, the difficult parts, speak to those in power and redefine relationships so that solutions are durable, lasting and transformative. Some have seen my vision as emotional, not drawing on people of influence. I saw us just as the vessel by which people can move forward on their own, we are a vehicle to bring that process for healing, reconciliation and movement towards stemming the root causes of discord and violence.

I am so pleased that our philanthropic and civic leadership have recognized the value of this approach as they move more and more invested in place based orientations. Each block on the neighborhood has leaders that we must uphold and work with, and even more importantly view as full, respected, integral partners to resolution. This has been my simple mantra and contribution to theories of change whether I was asked to do work in Pasadena or in India. Often, you don't see me up front, because my leadership is quiet, it is in helping others find their voice and from an ethical compass that says that it is not me, not my agenda, not my person or being that will change others. It is the souls that are hurting the most that will change and bring change to others. You will see me there, with those souls, searching for their capacity to heal and heal others. I thank you for having joined me on this journey and for believing in it, for supporting our collaborative spirit for doing things often in the most the unconventional way. May your journeys be blessed wherever you go and may our memories of joy and shared accomplishments be rewarded by the most simple of gifts, a smile and belief in the capacity of humans to move beyond hate into love.