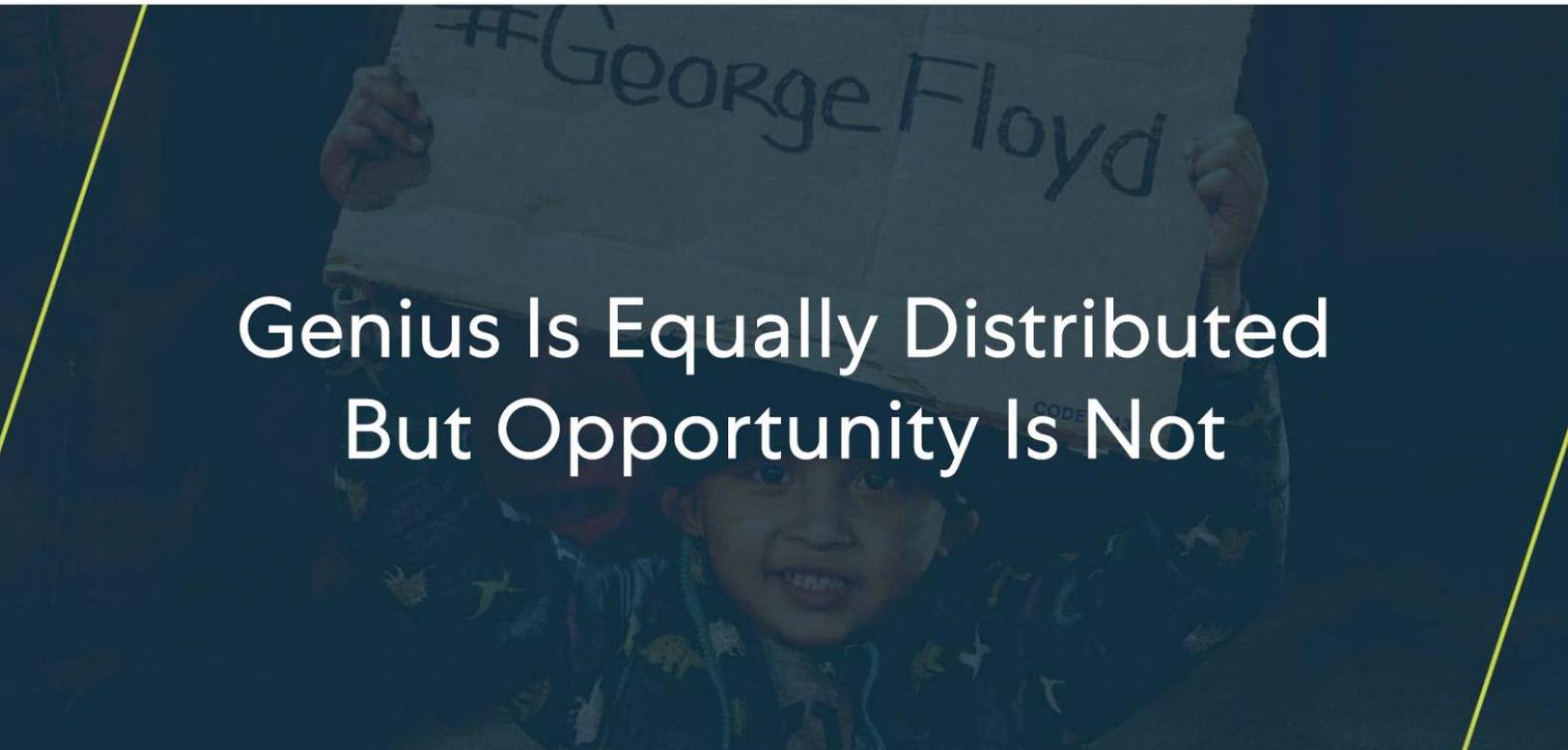


# A Message from Chastity Lord, JP CEO

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A young child with dark hair, wearing a patterned shirt, is holding up a white sign with the text "#George Floyd" written on it. The child is smiling slightly. The background is dark with some yellow lines.

## Genius Is Equally Distributed But Opportunity Is Not

**Chastity Lord, CEO | April 21, 2021**

Like many of you, I have been trying to find my thoughts, my center. The murder of George Floyd is only one example of injustice happening in our country. I have felt at a loss for new ways to communicate what I am feeling, experiencing, thinking. My words have felt deeply insufficient. However, this evening as I write, I am reminded of Audre Lorde's words.

*"I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. That the speaking profits me, beyond any other effect."*

Leading JP in this moment in this body and through the lens of all of my identities is a fierce and humbling responsibility. It is both a privilege and exhausting.

JP sits at this incredible nexus of everything we are navigating as a country. Women, single moms experiencing poverty have been hit harder than any other group, and when you cut across race, Black, Latinx and Indigenous women are the most acutely impacted. As

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Baldwin said, being poor has always been expensive in this country. The poverty tax of COVID; death of the direct service economy; and the blatant criminal justice inequities has resulted in a new level of rage and fear for many.

I know it makes some uncomfortable when the topic of race is broached, but we [JP] cannot deliver on our mission of disrupting generational poverty without holding all of the identities of those we serve (kids, moms, and staff). COVID and George Floyd's murder has laid bare that race and class remain inextricably linked in our country. To center our mission, we must be explicit in naming that JP moms face the challenges they face both because they are women and because they come from historically marginalized communities.

I am committed to leading and doing my part in building an organization where opportunity is equally distributed and all the identities of our staff, moms, and kids are celebrated and championed unapologetically and fiercely. Some may find that naïve but let's just say, I have witnessed more improbable things in my life: "my life".

