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Friday, October 16, 2020

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Sycamore Solace

Reflect, Reconnect, Respond, and Rejoice

A message of hope from Sumalayo Jackson

As I reflect upon the multilayered global crisis facing our nation, I am able to find solace in reconnecting with matters of the heart: my family, my Sycamores, and my community. I don't know about you, but I feel like I woke up to a new normal that I wasn't quite emotionally or physically equipped to fight. I often pondered the greater purpose and meaning for such turn of events in our nation. I've always believed everything happens for reason, but it is up to me to ensure it happened for the betterment of my character and understanding of my greater contribution and purpose. While my gut instinct wanted to react out of pain, anger, hurt, frustration and fear, I'm aware of how my response or reaction impacts more than my mortal being.



My time at home at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic forced me to stop and pay attention to the state of our world, our leaders, and my own children. Before COVID-19, my routine didn't allow for much reflection, reconnection, responsiveness or celebration. Since then, I've been able to reconnect with two preteens, my children, in ways I'd never imagined. Our time together provided priceless lessons, and a greater appreciation of the miracles we often take for granted. We seized the moment to prioritize self-reflection, to discover our life's purpose and contribution to the world. Additionally, I witnessed a resilient Sycamore family extend their hearts and resources to meet the diverse needs of our community of learners. Many members of our Sycamore family came together to be a beacon of light, hope, and support for students and community members facing insurmountable challenges.

COVID-19 is leaving an indelible wound exposing America's deplorable infectious inequities. However, I recently witnessed many leaders emerge to speak up and speak out on how we can work together to be the change we seek. Members from our ISU community used their platform to raise awareness for social justice. The momentous social justice demonstrations echoed a universal charge to be open and willing to work together toward equity and justice. I'm grateful to be among such visionary, creative, and fearless agents for change within our ISU and Terre Haute community.

I choose to celebrate the conviction and conscientious spirit of our student body, the corresponding concerns by staff and faculty, and the courageous call to action by our leadership team. Our Sycamore family is boldly moving onward together toward a brighter, better, and bountiful tomorrow. I encourage all of you to take a moment to **reflect** on your greater purpose, then find meaningful ways to **reconnect** with matters of the heart, and finally **use your light** to shine on darkness. **Celebrate** enlightenment and your contribution to an empowered, engaged, and emboldened community.

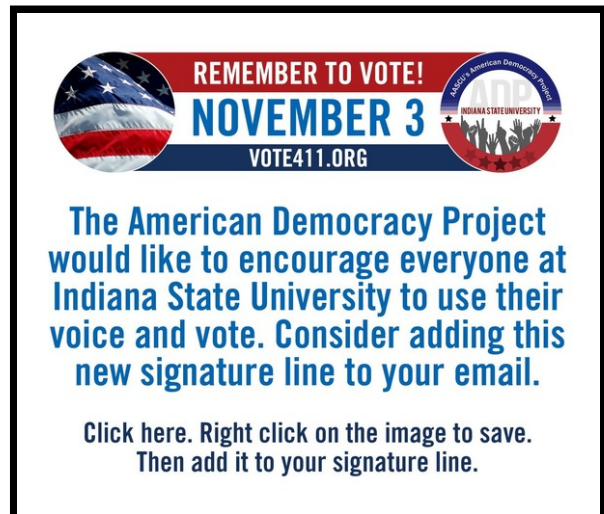
Note: "Sycamore Solace" is a new series on ISU Today. Its purpose is to share messages of hope and offer Sycamores the opportunity to learn from and lean on each other. Messages on "Sycamore Solace" can include a submission from a member of the campus community, just like the above entry from Sumalayo Jackson, Assistant to the President for Human Relations, and general messages of hope and inspiration from other sources.

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