COD, June 8, 2020: Call out white privilege and work to eliminate it
By Janet Miller

Editor, Times-Dispatch:

George Floyd was arrested for supposedly trying to use a counterfeit $20. In 2019, I tried to deposit a $20 at the bank that I received from a Girl Scout cookie payment. I clearly didn’t know it was counterfeit.

The bank teller identified the counterfeit and alerted me to it. She gave me the opportunity to replace the counterfeit $20 with a real $20. She gave me a free counterfeit detection pen to use going forward in case our Girl Scout troop might receive counterfeit money again.

The police were not called. No officers forced me down to the pavement or knelt on my neck while I could not breathe. I was not killed.

As a white woman, I simply walked out of the bank with all sharing the understanding that the counterfeit was an inadvertent mistake. No one assumed that I intentionally tried to pass a counterfeit bill.

Floyd was not afforded the same understanding that, even if his bill was counterfeit, it was an unknowing mistake. He was immediately treated as a criminal. But even worse, he was brutally killed.

For those who do not understand it, this is white privilege. It took me a long time to see it in my own life, but once you see it, it cannot be unseen. Why would I be assumed innocent while Floyd was assumed guilty? Assumed to be trying to intentionally break the law? Why was I treated with respect, while Floyd apprehended and killed? White privilege.
The sooner we understand that white privilege exists, the sooner we can work together to help change it. The sooner we recognize white privilege and call it out, the sooner we recognize the systemic racism that exists today, and the sooner we can all work together to change it.

Read Janet's article on the Richmond Times-Dispatch website here.