

*While we have celebrated the success of our Locavore Event, we are also aware of the harm caused during the live auction when a board member was auctioned. The Locavore Committee and Bridge of Hope Harrisonburg-Rockingham as an organization take this seriously and offer our apology to all who were in attendance.*

*The auctioning of people should never be taken lightly. It is an offense to our African American brothers and sisters who carry the generational trauma of slavery. Also, nearly one-fifth of homeless youth are victims of human trafficking in the United States. We lament these realities.*

*As an organization committed to social justice and undoing oppression, we grieve the harm caused. We commit to continuing to do the work required to recognize and prevent future harm. Our desire is to continue to work toward cultivating an organization that is relevant to the entire Harrisonburg and Rockingham County community.*

*Our Locavore emcee communicated his desire to offer a response. He shared the following statement:*

***Now, more than ever before, we have a sacred obligation to confront privilege whenever and wherever it surfaces. Using Bridge of Hope as our model, we must become justice seeking bridge-builders. This begins with a conscious acknowledgement of wrongdoing. I deeply regret my insensitivity during the Locavore auction and apologize for the harmful impact it had on attendees. I take full responsibility for my actions and am committed to doing better in the future. Moreover, I welcome further conversation with anyone desiring it. Thank you for your forbearance and forgiveness.***