Let's widen the circle for human concern.

That we don't determine the value of life based on how much money we earn.

Ensure that every life gets a turn to live.

That we restore the dignity to the broken, remove the harm from judgement spoken.

A turned-up nose is where your heart reveals often what the masses feel.

How did you get there? And that reply is more of a story than an answer.

Usually, complex.

Far from an oversimplification of "try harder's" and "get a jobs". Grab your bootstraps and act like everyone has straps, or everyone has boots.

Because the truth is that most America is bare feet and concrete. So don't pretend that these are shoes you know if you don't know.

And empathy is fine, but equity is better. The weather is always changing but let's help in the storm. So, we can celebrate the sun when it comes. And some have not seen the warmth of rays for many days. But first they'll feel the heat from our hearts, then from our hands.

To stand in my humanity is for you to see you in me. It's a short bridge to build. Compassion is the harvest that yields.

My tears cry clear too.

And if I knew what I know now is a shared reality... Be it university classrooms or street alleys.

So, shift. So, there's no hesitation to uplift the lives of those who work to change.

It's the northwest, but together we'll be ready for the rain.

So, let's widen the circle for human concern.

Ensure that every life gets a turn to live.

Let's imagine enough for everyone as the norm, and people have homes that are warm, and provisions is plenty, and promises of equity are far from empty, and people who look like me and you don't live in lack, and prosperity too is both for the brown and the black.

This is the dream.

Not just big but bold.

This is the reality our hands and hearts should hold.

Fully. Without apology.

Because not until we all thrive are we all truly free.

- Tia Nache' Fields Yarbrough
Uplift Northwest, Empowerment Luncheon 2022