Hi, my name is Jennifer, but most people call me JB. I work in the Development Office of the College of Arts & Sciences and have been working at UNM for just slightly over a year. I ran for Staff Council because from a young age I have been instilled with a strong sense of civic duty. I am also a UNM student who set foot in the classroom this past spring semester after a 20-plus year absence. As a woman of color in a same sex marriage and raising a young son, the subjects of racism and equality are discussed frequently in our home. I am determined to raise my son to not only be able to recognize racism when he sees it, but to also disrupt it. These are some of the practices I’ve learned to use with my son to take action against racism:

*It is never too early to talk to children about race.* Our actions speak volumes, and before they can even speak, they learn about the world and about race through the words we speak. It is important for children to value diversity and to hear “Black Lives Matter,” but if your actions don’t also show it, those words won’t mean much.

*Do not be silent.* Have open conversation with children about race and do not shame or shush them for asking questions about race. Even if they make an inaccurate or racist comment, probe deeper in order to understand your child’s thought process and then provide factual information to them.

*Listen.* It is important that children get to voice their perspective and how they are taking in events and issues taking place around them. When they are engaged in a topic, deep learning is taking place.

*Teach kids about structural racism.* Racism is structural and embedded into all aspects of society, including laws, institutional policies, dominant cultural norms, and even our very own consciousness.

*Our actions speak louder than words.* The actions we take on a daily basis as parents or role models is either reinforcing or disrupting racism. Hold yourself accountable because talking about race is a means, not an end.

I have hope that we can move on from this turbulent time in our history, and not forget it, but learn from it. Because when we know better, we do better.