



Equity, Inclusion and Racial Justice Newsletter

Winter 2023

Racial Healing and Restorative Justice

Message from Our Executive Director

With Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's birthday coming up, I'm reminded of his famous "I Have A Dream" speech. I think many people are drawn to this line: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." I'd like to take a look at this statement in the context of the whole speech and current inequalities we experience in our society.

In an effort to "not see" race, I've heard some people say they judge everyone the same regardless of the color of their skin; that they judge everyone individually. I think some of these people truly believe that most other people do the same or that by doing so will result in equality for everyone. This is often accompanied by the belief that in the U.S. everyone has an equal opportunity to get a quality education, a good paying job and live with financial stability, if they just put in the effort.

Why isn't this true and why are we not at a place in time to ignore race? Let's remember an earlier passage in Dr. King's speech that references the Emancipation Proclamation, where he then goes on to say:

"But 100 years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check."

This speech was delivered in 1963. In the almost 60 years since, there have been some strides forward in racial justice and there have been many failures as well. Take a look at a few recent pieces of data exemplifying the inequalities in our society.

In 1979, Black men earned, on average, about 80 percent of what White men earned (\$15 per hour versus \$19 per hour in inflation-adjusted dollars); in 2016, it slipped to about 70 percent (\$18 per hour vs. \$25 per hour) (Karageorge, 2017).

Home ownership is a huge area of inequity (Stastia.com for 2021). Ownership percentages by race: White – 74.1%; Asian – 59.9%; American Indian or Alaska Native – 55.1%, Hispanic 48.4%; Black – 44.2%. The predatory lending practices of the early 2000s had a massive negative impact. From [Prospect.org](https://prospect.org): "Across the nation, black homeowners were disproportionately affected by the foreclosure crisis, with more than 240,000 blacks losing homes they had owned." Many banks were sued for illegal practices. "It turned out that several of the major banks had been purposely giving people of color subprime mortgages, including borrowers who would have qualified for a prime loan."

People of color are arrested more and are sentenced to longer prison terms for the same offense. Incarceration rates ([National Institute for Justice](https://www.nationalinstituteofjustice.gov)) for White men over the age of 18 are 1 out of 106; Hispanic men 1 in 3; and Black men 1 in 15.

Our school systems, housing policies – including predatory lending, and criminal justice system, to name a few examples, have all had disproportional negative impacts on people of color. This is why restorative justice and racial healing are such important concepts. Restorative justice would rely on government at various levels to put policies and budgets in place that would help balance out past inequities.

In order for many people of color to feel support from individuals and their community healing needs to take place. Racial healing begins when those who are white are willing to acknowledge and provide accurate information on past injustices. It involves recognizing systemic racism and white privilege and how our current societal issues of inequality and racial justice are connected to our past beliefs, practices and laws. The [Kellogg Foundation](https://www.kelloggfoundation.org) provides these three ideas for beginning healing conversations: 1) Listen; 2) Be open to hearing another's perspective and experience; 3) Allow yourself to be impacted and/or be transformed by the experience.

I hope you will take to heart the messages and ideas in this newsletter so that one day we will see Dr. King's dream turn into a reality.

Organizational Culture

This work group focuses on making equity and inclusion visible in our work practices. To that end, we lead the development of a living glossary of diversity and equity terms so that those in our agency speak with a common language about justice. We support systemizing historically accurate land acknowledgments that are delivered verbally and visually beautiful. We collaborate with other team members to organize and lead the development of our EIRJ newsletter. Organizational Culture work group facilitates the creation of this newsletter and invites any and all who are interested in participating in this worthy work to contact Shelly.Knight@ccacwa.org, Debbie.Roberts@ccacwa.org, or Melinda.Luark@ccacwa.org. Join our work group!

Community Partnerships

The Community Partnerships subcommittee is exploring opportunities to partner with CCAC's internal program teams to learn more about the community partnerships that already exist between our programs and other organizations as well as to share external-facing materials that programs can use when meeting with new and potential partners. The end goal is to collaborate on forming partnerships throughout the communities we serve and further support our commitment to equity, inclusion, and racial justice.

For more information or to join this subcommittee, contact: tracy.mitchell@ccacwa.org, beverly.barker@ccacwa.org; or alison.ponder@ccacwa.org

Recruiting, Hiring and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

This workgroup has finalized a new Hiring Checklist that all CCAC program managers will be using when seeking to hire new staff. All aspects of the hiring process (job description, posting, interview, notifying candidate) were considered through an equity lens. As a result, many steps were changed or expanded on based upon research and collective discussion. CCAC Leadership gave it a final approval. While deemed "final" for now, we consider it open to changes as new learning and considerations are gathered by program managers and staff. Our group has also developed a new Harassment Policy which has been sent to our CCAC Board for consideration. Finally, we are working to finalize an updated staff onboarding checklist with items that apply to all programs. If you would like to join our Policy and Hiring group, please contact Kristin.Gomez@ccacwa.org, Gary.Burris@ccacwa.org, Sandy.Kelly@ccacwa.org, Yvette.Hernandez@ccacwa.org, Brian.cole@ccacwa.org

Internal Growth For All Staff

Exploring Equity Learning Opportunities

Monthly opportunities for sharing and discussing topics about equity, inclusion, and racial justice are available to all staff through the Exploring Equity Learning Opportunities, EELO Group. Past topics include Critical Race Theory, cultural appropriations as well as racial and cultural identity development. In August, we explored Equity vs. Equality, and will also be jumping into more topics surrounding this work that involve our day-to-day field work, community partners, and personal life. We invite you to come join some rich discussion... whether you are new to this work or seasoned in it! Through EELO, all staff have access to interesting articles, videos, webinars, and podcasts. Links to resources are located here: [Previous EELO Resources](#)

Book Totes Project

Officially at an office near YOU- This project provides all staff access to more than fifty books through a mobile library process. Individual offices have a selection of these books on site at the Main Olympia office, Shelton- ECEAP, and Bremerton/PA. Staff can check out books for 3 weeks, and write an optional review afterward. Topics include history, stories, LGBTQ+ and ways to develop our skills for equity and justice work. We hope you enjoy!

For more information contact: emily.long@ccacwa.org, rose.tiller@ccacwa.org, ollie.feldman@ccacwa.org, kristin.gomez@ccacwa.org

CCAC Land Acknowledgements: Healing Through Truth and Beauty

The EIRJ team is committed to land acknowledgements that are historically accurate and that show the resiliency of native peoples. As a part of that commitment, our team practices verbal land acknowledgements and now has embarked on artistically beautiful and historically accurate visual land acknowledgments for each CCAC office in our region.

These visual land acknowledgments are works of art and are being created in partnership with tribes in our regional area so that beauty, accuracy, and respect for tribes and the message that tribes want to send are the focus of this project. There is healing through art, beauty, and truth.

To learn more about how other institutions are honoring Native Peoples through artistic visual land acknowledgments follow these links:

[Visual Art as a Land Acknowledgement](#) (Port of Seattle)

[Professor Makes Visual Land Acknowledgement through Art](#) (CSUSM)

January 16, 2023: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

We celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day this year on Monday, January 16th. When we think about the recent barriers to voting rights, and potential future attacks on voting rights, we may think about a lesser-known King speech, "Give Us the Ballot", A Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom delivered in Washington D.C on May 17, 1957 at the Lincoln Memorial.

This was the King's first speech to the nation, holding both political parties accountable for passage of voting rights. To read excerpts from the speech, follow [this link](#).

Practicing Restorative Justice

Imagine living and working in a world where agreed upon human interactions included conversations, connectedness across culture, race, and class; a world of community building based on equity and empathy. These practices are essential to restorative justice, practices with values rooted in accountability, trustworthiness, and human connection, values which guide our pathway forward towards healing for ourselves and our communities.

Two books focusing on getting started in practicing a culture of restorative justice include *Changing Lenses: Restorative Justice for Our Times* by Howard Zehr. Another book, a handbook for agencies, schools, government, and other workplaces provides technical support to begin the process of restorative justice.

What does justice look like for those who have been harmed? For those who have done harm? Twenty-five years after it was first published, *Changing Lenses* by Howard Zehr remains the classic text of the restorative justice field. To learn more, [visit this link](#).

Two books in one volume, *Restorative Justice Conferencing* combines (1) the official training manual that provides a step-by-step guide to setting up and conducting conferences and (2) actual conference stories to show how conferencing works and how it can change the way our society responds to wrongdoing in schools, criminal justice, the workplace and elsewhere.

To learn more about the *Restorative Justice Conferencing Guide*, [visit this link](#).

January 17, 2023: National Day of Racial Healing

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation recognizes January 17th as a day for racial healing. Communities are encouraged to come together to connect and restore trusting relationships at the personal and community level.

The EIRJ Internal Growth group would like to invite CCAC staff to a special Day of Racial Healing edition of Exploring Equity Learning Opportunities (EELO) on Friday, January 20th, at 12:30pm. For this EELO session, we are offering a hybrid experience. Anyone is welcome to join virtually on Teams as usual, but if you are around the Olympia office, you are welcome to join us in the conference room - and bring your lunch along if you'd like! The topic for this EELO session is the Day of Racial Healing, an annual event put on by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

[Here is the link](#) to a series of videos produced by the Kellogg Foundation in partnership with NBCUniversal titled "Changing the Narrative". We invite those who wish to participate in this discussion to watch any or all of the video series. Additionally, on Jan. 17, a live MSNBC town hall will air at 10 pm ET / 7 pm PT. Telemundo will also stream a Spanish language town hall at 7 p.m. ET / 4pm PT on Noticias Telemundo. If you can catch the broadcast, we would love to hear your thoughts!



Getting Connected with Shelly Knight

To promote connectedness and healing across the CCAC team, each edition of the newsletter will spotlight a CCAC employee. The questions asked in the interview are intentionally designed to promote getting to know our spotlighted coworker and to promote dialogue about healing and getting more connected as a CCAC team. We begin with our first spotlight on Shelly Knight, Early Achievers Coach and Tribal Specialist. [Read the entire interview here.](#)

You have a strong affinity for tribal communities. Can you say more about that?

I have native heritage on my mom's side. My grandfather was part of the Blackfoot tribe. My father's side has native heritage, as well, but I don't know so much about his background.

In college, my major was in Education and I minored in international studies. I didn't know exactly where it would lead, but knew I wanted to teach and work in foreign cultures.

When I moved to Alaska, it felt like my Native DNA kicked in. For over ten years I was mentored by the Athabaskan and Tlingit Alaska Native peoples before moving to a Native Alaskan Yup'ik village. I was teaching 3rd grade when I volunteered to take a group of Teens to Nome, AK for the end of the Iditarod. I made this trip three years leading mission groups to Nome.

One summer, I visited another remote Native village on the Kuskokwim River, called Kalskag. I saw in a newspaper there a job opening for a Head Start Lead teacher. I applied and got the job and within two weeks, had moved to the village and started my Head Start job. All the children and families were Native Yupik and the only transportation in and out of the village is by plane or boat. There is no police and fire department, but there is a small store with about three isles.

In the village we lead a life of subsistence. This means we eat what we catch or gather, and we must help each other, sharing our catch with single mom's or elders. Helpfulness is essential for survival of life.

After a few months teaching in Kalskag, the Elders gifted me with a Yupik name – Sayak, which means red salmon, "the giver of life to the village."

(Interview continued on next page)

"The moment we choose to love, we begin to move against domination, against oppression."

- bell hooks



From your perspective what is the most pressing work that needs to be done by CCAC and the EIRJ team?

I think the most pressing work within our group is to work toward a common ground, unified goals and racial healing within our committee. We all come from different backgrounds and worldviews and it's not easy to work through the racial issues we face in our culture today. Our subgroups are beginning to collaborate, and our work overlaps sometimes. Working together gets more equity work done for CCAC and it also builds relationships. Relationships are what will keep us going when the going gets tough. This is true for most things in life.

What activities at work keep you feeling engaged and happy after you have done it? Describe why this brings you so much happiness?

I feel engaged at work when I am intentional about relationships and that brings me joy. I have a professional relationship with many of my providers. Some have shared personal struggles with me because of the trust in our relationship. I even have providers ask me about my mother and son who have health challenges! That brings me joy, knowing that my colleagues have picked up on little tidbits that I've shared and are concerned about my life struggles. I try to reaffirm others and notice people's strengths. I do this through coaching but also try to be intentional with my coworkers. I may comment on a person's strengths or successes in a conversation, this is especially true of new coaches and my leads too.



Healing Thoughts

- **Is there someone you need to forgive?**
- **How do you go about forgiving another?**
- **Our values are our guiding light throughout our lives. As you think about your work with CCAC, what are two values that guide your practice?**

Fictional Book Review

Our Missing Hearts, by Celeste Ng

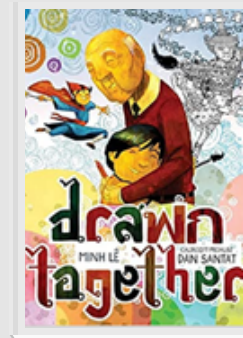
Our Missing Hearts by Celeste Ng is the story of what happens to humanity in a monolithic dystopian culture. When public policy, and societal values focus on “preserving American culture” – the dominant culture, we end up creating a society where we lose our humanity when we lose our value for diversity. This is the story of how one diverse family tries to survive in an autocratic society and how resistance is revealed to be the path towards hope and healing. To hear more about the book from the author, [visit this link](#).

The Long House at Evergreen State College

In honor of Native American month in November, some of CCAC staff visited the Long House at The Evergreen State College. We learned about the Long House, local Native culture, and were able to appreciate the beautiful art and culture there.



Children's Book Review



Drawn Together by Minh Lê and illustrated by Dan Santat, shows us how art is a superpower for helping us connected across cultures, language, generations, and that art is the universal language of human connection. This is the story of a little boy at risk of losing his home culture and his connection to his grandfather because he has lost his home language. However, in this beautiful story, as in life, art is the medium of human love and connection.

Minh Lê is the winner of the 2019 Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature. Minh Lê spoke at the General Opening Session at this year's Annual NAEYC Conference!

Click on the link below to hear the author read the story aloud.

Drawn Together is appropriate for preK through 1st grade children – and any adult who is a child at heart.

[Watch Minh Lê Read *Drawn Together* on PBS Books Storytime](#)

Drawn Together Family and Child Activity: Connecting Through Art is a Superpower

- (1) For this activity, you will need the book *Drawn Together*, two blank sheets of paper, and drawing materials such as crayons, colored markers, colored pencils, watercolor paints, etc.
- (2) After reading the story, *Drawn Together*, think about what kind of a superhero you could be. What would be your superpower? On the first paper, Draw a picture of yourself as a superhero. Write, scribble write, or dictate a description of your superpower.
- (3) Think about someone in your family or in your life who helps take care of you, someone who matters to you. What is their superpower? On the other sheet of paper, draw a picture of your loved one as a superhero. Write, scribble write, or dictate a description of your loved one's superpower.
- (4) Frame the two pictures together. Title it “Drawn Together” and talk about how being connected through art is a superpower because art is a language of sharing ourselves with another.

This activity can be tied to the WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines under “About Me and My Culture” and “Communication” – ages preschool through 3rd grade.