

Dialogue



Center for the Healing of Racism Sep. - Dec. 2014 Volume 21, Number 3

Internalize Oneness

Send us your email address!

To save on postal costs, we no longer routinely mail the newsletter to members. Please send us your email addresses to receive the newsletter. Send addresses to cfhr1@juno.com or cfhr1@yahoo.com.

Quotation

"You may never know what results come of your action, but if you do nothing there will be no result."

— Mahatma Gandhi

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Houston Community College System seeks to provide equal educational opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

Director's Column

Center has seen, done some amazing things over 25 years

By Cherry Steinwender

AS WE APPROACH THE END of the year, we look back, not only over this year, but over our 25-year history. Since our beginning we have seen amazing things and made many of them happen. We were on the front line creating dialogues to aid people to talk after Los Angeles was burned in 1992 following the verdict in the beating trial of Rodney King; the nation split apart during the murder trial of O.J. Simpson from 1994-95 for allegedly killing his wife, Nicole Simpson; the world's horror and anguish at the vehicular lynching of James Byrd Jr. in 1998; the terror and the hatred that accompanied the fall of the twin towers in 2011; the mind expansion of Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* published in 2010; the all too familiar sorrow at the slaying of Trayvon Martin in 2012; and the renewed sorrow at the killing of Michael Brown in 2014.

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Amazing milestone for CFHR doing quarter century of work

By Linda Pilling

TWENTY-FIVE years, a quarter of a century! What an amazing milestone and I am privileged to say that I have been a part of the blossoming of this wonderful organization for more than half of its existence.

Cherry has requested me to put my thoughts to paper for the newsletter and outline how being a part of the 25th anniversary celebration affected me. I am delighted to oblige but before I continue there are a few things about me that you should know to put what I am about to say in a context.

I am from the UK and have

been living in Houston as an expat since 2002. British people are generally known for their unwillingness to express their feelings and are not comfortable talking about their emotions, so please bear with me! But what I can say is that I have been "educated." My mind has been opened with many new realizations. I am now beginning to acquire an understanding of what racism means in an American context.

So firstly, what brought me to the Center?

I am an avid reader and from a very early age I became

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Internalize Oneness

Comments on new office and open house

By Volunteer Leola Jones

I attended The Center for Healing Racism open house on August 29, 2014. The open house was held to introduce the new office to the people of Houston. It is at 3412 Crawford St.

The layout consists of Director's office, an office for interns and volunteers, a meeting and presentation room, a classroom, a computer area, and a staff lunchroom and kitchen.

The food was delicious and plentiful, and the fresh vegetables and fruit were very, very good. When the people started coming to the open house, I was amazed that I felt so at home here. Everyone was excited about the new office location, conversing with others they had not seen for a while, and meeting new people.

I am a recent volunteer with the Center, helping out with computer work and any job needed. This Crawford street location is the only location of the Center I have visited. When I first showed up at the Center, I was excited after meeting and conversing with Cherry Steinwender.

Just being in the Center's space, I was amazed at how much my thoughts went wandering on things long forgotten and now I am revisiting much of my past. I love the work that is being done at the Center!

Dialogue

Published three times
a year by the
**Center for the
Healing
of Racism**
P.O.Box 27327
Houston, Tx 77227
Phone 713-520-8226

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Healing of Racism

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MISSION STATEMENT

To facilitate the healing of racism through education and dialogue in a safe and supportive environment, in order to empower individuals and transform communities.

Have you gotten around to filling out your membership for 2014? If not, please take the time to do so. The work must go on!

Has your address changed? If it has, please notify us so your Center correspondence can be timely delivered!

Also, send us your e-mail address to receive your Dialogue newsletter in your email in-box.

Director's Column

Center saw, did amazing things over 25 years

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SEPTEMBER 11, 2011 rocked our nation! We saw a rise in hate crimes against people of South Asia and people of Middle Eastern decent, most of them being Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus. The nation's need for dialogue took us into many educational institutions and other venues from community centers to legal offices as we joined in the call for Houston citizens to remain calm. We were a powerful voice in Houston, Texas by taking our message of empowering and healing to a nation filled with fear and hurt.

ALL WAS NOT DOOM and gloom over the last 25 years. With each of our country's gains, we were right there playing a role. In 1997 President William J. Clinton announced Executive Order 13050, calling for the forming of a task force to study Race in America and then create the Initiative on Race. The members spent fifteen months finding ways to unite America to bring justice for all people. The results of the study went to Congress in 1998. Its report included two mentions of the Center for the Healing of Racism for its on-the-ground, productive work on healing racism. Our work was also acknowledged by The Center for Living Democracy in 1997 as one of the top 22 organizations out of the 184 cited in the United States creating positive change. This nation elected the first president of African descent, President Barack Obama, in 2008. In 2009, Congress passed the Matthew Shepherd and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA). In 2014, three schools in Houston, Texas changed their

mascots and mascots names that some Native people felt were offensive.

OUR OFFICES ARE always open to welcome anyone who needs us, we have enjoyed working with delegations of people visiting the United States through the State Department from South America, South Asia, Brazil, Rwanda, Afghanistan and several European countries. One of the reasons for their visit to the Center was to learn about America's brand of racism.

OUR TRAVELS conducting dialogues and lecturing has taken us to 45 states and two countries—Canada and Austria. We have conducted numerous interviews on all media outlets within the United States and as far away as Spain. We made the front page of the Houston Chronicle in 2009 for the partnership with the Jessie Jones Public Library. We hosted the first Living Library in Houston and the second one in the United States.

ROBERT NEWBERRY made it one of his commitments to keep the Center alive by writing about the Center in Houston's former daily newspaper, the Houston Post.

BREAD IS A SIMPLE Food: Teaching Children about Cultures by Cherry Steinwender was published in 2012 to teach children about the oneness of the human family. The book grew out of the workshop "Opening the Breadbasket" for elementary and middle school children.

EVERY YEAR, WE have celebrated all people, holding many workshops on months that celebrate Asian and Asian-Pacific

Island Month, Black History Month, Native American Month, Hispanic History Month and GLBTQ Month.

WE HAD MANY opportunities to meet some of the best activists this country has to offer by attending national conferences such as National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE) and the White Privilege Conference. We also presented workshops several times at NCORE.

OUR HUMBLE beginning started in the bedrooms of the founding members; expanded to one office in the Unitarian Universal Church; then to two rooms on the campus of Houston Community College Central Campus; and now to our new home, an entire building that is part of HCC Central. *We are now in a position to take on more, to do more, and to serve more!*

THE MONTHS OF March and April were very busy as we worked to move into our new home. As many of you know, the work involved packing, moving, unpacking, and getting insurance issued on the new building. It was more work for us since we wanted the office to be a place that is inviting to all ethnic groups so we were busy collecting artwork and mementos that speak that welcoming message. We were so proud of our new office and wanted to show it off, so on August 29, 2014, we gave a big house warming attended by members as well as old and new friends. As you enter the office building, the waiting room is

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An amazing milestone for the Center

Introduction to a new world was a baptism by fire in a city that would be home

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acquainted through books and classic comics with some of the injustices of life.

Two in particular have affected me deeply: the Holocaust and the Atlantic slave trade. My childhood feelings of bewilderment, incredulity, and disgust at such inhumanity have stayed with me to this day.

Twenty years ago my career took me in the direction of local government and public policy. For a decade, I was the Racial Equality Officer for Aberdeen, the oil city in the north of Scotland, helping to shape policy in the social justice arena for the whole of Scotland.

Fast forward to when I learned that my husband was to be transferred to Houston. I experienced a sense of panic as to what I would do.

The prospect of an expat life of idleness did not sit comfortably with me so I set about finding an organization in Houston whose mission and objectives were to raise awareness of the insidious nature of racism, and to work towards a fairer and more just

I felt such pride to be a part of this organization, this community of good, caring people who had “come together in oneness.” Never had the Center’s mission and objectives been so much in evidence!

and inclusive society.

I found the Center for the Healing of Racism. I contacted Cherry from Scotland. We arranged a meeting very shortly after my arrival in Houston. I attended a Dialogue: Racism workshop in my first month in the country and very rapidly found myself accompanying Cherry into schools and organizations to highlight the issues and educate about racism—the Breadbasket workshop, Racism and Bullying, Racism in Health and Human Services, and

Racism in Corporate America, *Blue Eyes, and Brown Eyes* among others.

Cherry was introducing me to a new world. It was a baptism by fire—an amazing introduction to the new city that I would call home. This was not the city that most expats and foreigners see. I was becoming immersed in the rich diversity of the people and the real issues that affected people’s lives. I have made life-long friends along the way.

Dialogue: Racism enabled

me to learn firsthand of the pain and injustice of white privilege, internalized, and unaware racism and so much more. The CFHR embraced me into its family and opened the door to discovery that in the racial arena it just might be white people who are the problem.

The celebratory Open House event on August 29 at the Center’s new premises was the culmination of all of the above. I felt such pride to be a part of this organization, this community of good, caring people who had “come together in oneness.” Never had the Center’s mission and objectives been so much in evidence!

It was wonderful to feel the energy and observe Cherry and the Board members, old and new, basking in the accomplishments of the Center over the past 25 years, seeing videos from past events, and hearing again how the Center was established.

I would like to say a “thank you” to everybody for making this possible.

Director’s column: Center saw, did amazing things in 25 years

Continued from page 2

decorated with art from Native cultures. This was our effort to make Native people visible since all too often they are invisible in our country as well as our city and state.

OUR FIRST OFFICE event was special. We invited the police officers of Houston Community College for coffee and donuts to get to know them and to tour our new office. The feedback from the police

officers was wonderful and they expressed gratitude to us for taking time out to acknowledge them.

THIS YEAR WE HAD fourteen traveling dates. We traveled to Denver, Colorado; Astoria, Oregon; Miami, Florida; Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas, Texas conducting “Race: the Power of an Illusion” and “Dialogue: Racism.”

THIS YEAR WE celebrated our twenty-fifth year, we celebrate

twenty years of our Ally Award Recipients. This award is given at our annual Juneteenth Luncheon fundraiser. We have been successful in bringing some of the most powerful activists from all over the country such as Tim Wise, Jane Elliott, Eddie Moore, Micki Deardoff, and Katrina Brown to name a few. This coming year we will bring Francis Kendall.

IN NO WAY DID WE forget about our local people who played a role in making Houston

one of the best cities in the nation. Activist such as Maria Jimenez, Ada Edwards, Tatcho Mindiola, Jr., Robert Newberry, Janis Scott, Dave Atwood, and many others. The list goes on and on.

WE COULD NOT have accomplished so much without the support of our members, committed people like you wanting a better tomorrow. Yet, we still continue to need your help for the work is not finished.

Let's Review

Black Stats: African Americans by the numbers in the Twenty-First Century

By Barbara Hacker

Those who have been part of the Dialogue: Racism experience will recall that one form of racism is institutionalized racism and that statistics can be key to understanding it.

A valuable new book, *Black Stats*, subtitled, *African Americans by the Numbers in the Twenty-First Century*, is a resource for understanding. Written by Monique W. Morris who is a co-founder of the National Black Women's

Institute and who formerly served as Vice President for Economic Programs, Advocacy and Research for the NAACP. Full of data, but not at all dull, *Black Stats* is a fascinating look at the progress made and lack of it for the full diversity of the African American community.

Statistics can, of course, be manipulated for negative purposes. An introduction by Khalil Gibran Muhammad, gives an excellent overview of the history of the use of statistics, beginning with those of W.E.B. DuBois, who did statistical

analysis of the black community at the turn of the century, and lived to see white supremacists cherry picking his stats for their own purposes. Muhammad's analysis gives us understanding of how statistics themselves can and have been used to perpetuate a racist agenda.

The main body of the book has a great deal of research that paints a picture of the African American community today on such subjects as education, the environment, health, entertainment and sports, justice, lifestyle, military service, money and jobs,

politics, voting and civil engagement, and science and technology. Organized around a series of questions under each topic, the data paints a fascinating picture on a diversity of subjects, which most of us have probably never even considered.

Black Stats is an eye-opening collection illustrating progress made and the challenges we still face in undoing racism and reaching true equality. It is a valuable resource and a must read for anyone engaged in the struggle.

Hope 2014 was as good for you as it was for the Center



As we wish you wonderful holidays and an even better 2015, please remember to give a present of the book, *Bread is a Simple Food: Teaching Children About Cultures*, by our Executive Director Cherry Steinwender.

You can order the book online from Amazon or call the Center for the Healing of Racism at 713-520-8226 to purchase a copy.



Wreaths Across America: A gift worth giving

By Jackie Newberry

This year, the historic **Evergreen Negro Cemetery Houston** will participate in the annual laying of wreaths on December 13. Wreaths Across America lays remembrance wreaths at the graves of almost every veteran in national cemeteries, including Arlington, as well as private cemeteries that show an interest in being included for their veterans. Volunteers provide support by donating funds, sponsoring wreaths, and being part of the wreath-laying ceremonies. As a war orphan of my father who died in World War II, I can tell you how much this honor the means to veterans and their families. Two years ago, several of us laid wreaths at the Houston National Cemetery. It was remarkably moving and beautiful. Here's info on the ways to volunteer: <http://www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/act-now/> Across [volunteer/](http://www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/act-now/) Info for the coordinator of the Houston National Cemetery - 70,000 graves: Scott DeMasi, [281-540-9444](tel:281-540-9444), info@waahouston.com Info for **Evergreen Negro Cemetery** - 26 graves: Woodrow Jones III, [713-494-9306](tel:713-494-9306) respecthouston@yahoo.com Both Wreaths America and Wreaths Across America Houston have Facebook pages. If you participate in wreath laying, leave early to go there, wear comfortable shoes, and use assistive devices - cane, walker, wheelchair if mobility aid is needed. Ceremonies will be held with representatives of all service branches before the wreath laying.

Center Open House

New office on Crawford reminds one of an international museum

By Lucy McLaughlen

On August 29, the Center held its Open House party at its new location at 3412 Crawford and Holman.

As usual with any event at the Center, it was a fun and very engaging evening. The catered food was terrific and plentiful. Cherry had the Center's office decorated with twenty-five years of memories. Finally, we have a place to show off all these years of hard work by so many folks.

The new office is more like an international museum. There are three actual offices plus two wonderful meeting rooms for all the activities the Center sponsors, especially, the Dialogues.

It is a perfect venue for the video and speaker presentations which have already started. Bookcases are lined

with so many books, videos, magazines, tapes, and workshop files on any issue regarding diversity, racial conditioning, gender, and religious discrimination plus plenty more. There are even lots of children's books to browse.

The walls are decorated with pictures acquired over many years. One wall has framed pictures of "Better World Heroes" such as Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Daniel Berenboim, William Deane, and others.

Another wall has pictures of all the Ally Award winners over 20 years. Another wall display has framed programs from events at Houston Community College's main campus (e.g. Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, etc.), the Unitarian Church Dialogue on Racism, and Edwards' Theater (*American Violet*). Numerous

Numerous pieces of beautiful art work and craft items, many of which were gifts from around the world visitors, add to the colorful décor

pieces of beautiful art work and craft items, many of which were gifts from around the world visitors, add to the colorful décor.

Sweet Mama Cotton played her heart out during the evening. Sandy Boyd gave a short history of the Center and what it has accomplished over all these years. Most importantly, the diversity of old and new friends of the Center, seventy in total, is really what made it all come

alive.

The Center is a gold mine of resources and it now has a real home in which to display it all. Once you attend an event there or just visit—you will leave empowered and enlightened.

The Healing of Racism continues with the Center's new home. Come be part of the movement that started 25 years ago. We look forward to welcoming you.

Programs held at the Center

In May: Dr. Stephen Cherry from UHCL presented his book *"Faith, Family, and Filipino American Community Life"* in celebration of Asian/Asian Pacific Month.

July 22: Our office was the setting for the film, *In Whose Honor*, followed by dialogue. Our office was well blessed with seven Native people attending the screening.

May 23-July 29: Several people met each Tuesday for the Clippers Club. Each person was asked to bring news articles about racism, oppression, or discrimination from the media. The group read and discussed each article to bring better understanding of what is happening in our country. The Clippers Club will start up again the first of next year with Michael Ingram as host, (check website for dates).

September 30: We celebrated National Hispanic Month with two showings of the film *Harvest of Empire*, each showing followed by dialogue. For the evening session, we partnered with the domestic workers who wrote the book *We Women, One Woman*.

October 13: We celebrated National Indigenous People's Day recognizes 500 years of resistance and the continued existence of North American Indigenous people. This day is celebrated instead of Columbus Day.

Reflection on new Center office sees the space as a sacred one

By Ana Eigler

While attending the new Center's open house, I was very impressed with the new home of our organization, the Center for the Healing of Racism.

It is a very beautiful place, very homey, welcoming and

inviting. It was a great feeling to see that the Center finally has a proper home. I believe the work that will be done here and the discussions people will have in it will make the space a sacred one.

Congratulations CFHR for our new home!

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SUBMISSIONS

Newsletter submissions are due the first week of the month before publication. Articles are accepted via e-mail and may be edited for brevity or clarity. Send submissions to the Center's e-mail address.

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DIALOGUE: RACISM SERIES

The Dialogue: Racism series is held in a supportive and honest setting. Information is provided at each session, followed by an opportunity for voluntary sharing. Facilitators say participants leave with a new understanding of racism, what they can do about it, and a sense of community with others of different backgrounds and life experiences.

STAFFING EVENTS

Judith Jenkins and Michael Ingram staffed a booth at the 2014 Civil Rights Conference held by the Houston Peace and Justice Organization.

Board member Mike Ingram staffed a booth at the First Unitarian Universalist Church Social Justice Fair to introduce people to the work of the Center and its programs. See below to read a letter to Mike:

September 15, 2014

Dear Mickey,

A big thank you from the Social Justice Team of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston. Your presence helped make our Social Justice Fair a vibrant affair.

We are excited that the Dialogue: Racism workshop will be presented at our church in October. It's a life-changing experience.

*Sincerely,
Lois Hardt and Craig Oettinger
Co-Chairs of the Social Justice Team*

**CENTER FOR
THE HEALING OF RACISM**

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