

Dialogue



Center for the Healing of Racism May - Aug. 2018 Volume 25, Number 1

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

Quotation

"Telling the truth about the past helps cause justice in the present.

Achieving justice in the present helps us tell the truth about the past."

—James W. Loewen
Teacher/Author

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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

Giving up is not an option

Each day we are faced with the horrors of racism from the media coming to us in such private spaces as our homes, work places, and in the quietness of our cars while driving from here to there. I once heard a man say, "I would give up if someone would tell me where to go." I think of this often but no one has yet told me where the giving up place is. When I think about all the hurts people are still feeling, I say to myself, "Giving up is not an option."

I have to remind myself of the Native American mother with two sons and the pain she must be feeling to have the police called on her sons on a university campus for no other reason than they were quiet. I feel the police suspected them because they were quiet while **BROWN**. I guess that beats sitting while **BLACK** such as the case of the two men in Starbucks, running while **BLACK** or driving while **BLACK**.

The media story that really hit home for me was the Southwest Airlines staff demanding that a white mother prove her maternity of

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Dialogue on the plantation

By Laura Gallier

The Center for the Healing of Racism took a busload of folks, from teens to seniors, to visit three plantations along the Mississippi, in Louisiana. On the way, the Center set the tone by airing a sobering film called *Traces of the Trade*, about the role of the Northern states in the Atlantic slave trade.

At the St. Joseph plantation, the enslaved workers were mentioned only briefly, and then, primarily in response to questions and in the form of statistics. Slave shacks could be seen in the distance but were not a part of the tour.

The Laura Plantation prides

itself on "presenting the stories of enslaved people." They gave credit to the skilled enslaved architects who designed the "big house." But the tour was primarily about the big house and the wealth and soap opera style dysfunction of the plantation owners.

To tell the story of slavery, curators at our third stop, the Whitney Plantation, carefully studied audio recordings of people who were interviewed by the WPA during the Depression after spending their childhoods enslaved on plantations such as this. At every point along the tour, the lives and labors of the

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Internalize Oneness

Letters to Cherry and the Center

Dear Cherry,

I can't thank you enough for the gift of your passion, your wisdom, and your immense energy. We truly appreciated your message, which will prompt further discussion and action by our group. Please, extend our thanks to Laura, too. Our group was blessed to have you enter our lives today.

Appreciatively,

Anne Papakonstantinou, Ed.D.
Clinical Professor of Mathematics,
Wiess School of Natural Sciences
Director, Rice University School
Mathematics Project

Dear Cherry,

You have had such a profound impact on my life and I love you very much.

Diana Turney

St. Agnes Academy

Ms. Cherry,

On behalf of the students and teachers at River Oaks Elementary, I would like to thank you for taking the time to come and present your workshop to our fifth graders! The message of your presentation is so incredibly important and you made a divisive conversation positive and relatable for our students. They loved tasting all the bread, too! Thank you, also

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Dialogue

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Visit the Center for the
Healing of Racism

FACEBOOK page for
updates on events, pertinent
articles and resources.

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 renewed your
membership for 2018? If
not, please do so. The
work must go on!

Has your address changed?
Notify us so our correspon-
dence can be delivered!

Director's Column

Giving up is not an option, but having hope is

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her multiracial son. She didn't seem to realize that children have parents that are both black and white. This story hit home with me because I remembered a conversation with the father of my godchildren. His children are also multiethnic.

They may look like the child on the airline. I told my god children's father to always carry pictures of his children with him in case he would have to prove the children are his.

He should be in all of the pictures participating in all sorts of activities with his children. I asked him what could happen while you were out shopping with the kids and your little girl became angry over the toy you would not allow her to have? If she threw a temper tantrum, drawing the attention of others, would someone call the police on you? Would you have to come up with proof that the child really belonged to you?

We watched for some years as many media outlets tried to convince people in the USA that we were in a post-racial America.

What are we going to call America now after reading headlines such as, "Wealthy white Manhattan parents angrily rant against plan to bring more black kids to their schools"?

I wonder how many of those parents would be the first to say racism no longer exists.

**Do parents now have to
prove biracial children
are theirs?**



I guess we shouldn't leave out the lawyer who was caught on camera berating restaurant employees for speaking Spanish and threatening to call immigration authorities. Should we name this story, "Not Speaking English While BROWN?"

Maybe if I google the Giving up Place, I can find my way there.

Then it happens—that flash of hope. Starbucks closed 8,000 of its coffee establishments to give employees diversity training. Even a little hope is better than none at all. Yes, a few hours of

training won't solve this nation's racial problem, but it is certainly a start. Perhaps that initiative will get other CEOs moving, prompting them to begin to do the same thing for the people who run and serve their institutions.

I dare to remember the words of Jessie Jackson "Keep Hope Alive," I realize how much I want to keep hope alive, and I know how much help I need from my allies.

Until I find that Giving up Place, I will continue to provide healing places for people damaged by racism.

The work continues...

Programs YOU have invested in so far in 2018

Educational Institutions

- Twenty “Opening the Breadbasket” workshops for 2018
- Breadbasket workshops at Montessori Country Day School, three classes for 120 students
- Breadbasket workshops at Glover Elementary School, three classes 240 students
- Breadbasket workshops at River Oaks Elementary School, three classes for their fifth graders
- Breadbasket workshops at Garden Oaks Montessori School, nine classes for more than 600 students from pre-school through elementary. *Note:* The workshops for students at Garden Oaks Montessori were made possible by the \$5,000 grant from “Bridgeway Foundation.” We have three additional breadbaskets to complete the grant requirements
- Shattering of Stereotypes at Garden Oaks Montessori School for 80 sixth to eighth grade students
- Noyce Fellows Presentation for 15 teachers, two from Russia, two from Mexico, one from Colombia, one from China, and the others from the USA
- Two Teacher Development Workshops at Garden Oaks Montessori School for 70 teachers
- Annual Health Week at School of the Woods for 50 students, this being the third year the Center has presented a workshop on racism as a health issue
- Three classroom presentations for 12 students in the “Healing Racism” class at St Agnes Academy
- Two-day workshop on racism for fifteen teachers at St. Agnes Academy
- Panel discussion on women acting as allies for one another at the Central and South Campuses of Houston Community College for its Celebration of Women’s Awareness month
- Two workshops at Center for the Healing of Racism office for 80 students of Houston Academy of International Study

Faith Communities

- Holocaust Museum. “Opening the Breadbasket” workshop at their temporary location for 30 Warren Fellows, university

students from across the country

- Holocaust Museum. “Opening the Breadbasket” for the Max M. Kaplan Summer Institute for teachers, two from Poland and the others from other states in the U.S.
- SGI USA Soka Gakkai International. Grand opening of their new community center. Our Executive Director was a part of the ribbon cutting and gave the opening remarks
- Bay Area Unitarian Workshop, “Do you Really Want to Talk About Racism?” for 30 of their members
- Baha’i Center of Houston. Hosting the eight-week Dialogue: Racism workshop for 45 people
- Pax Christi Houston. The 2018 Peace Award presented to Cherry Steinwender. Her acceptance speech called for the work on racism to be increased. 100 people in attendance
- Dominican Sisters. Hosted Race: The Power of an Illusion, a one-day workshop for 100 participants
- ISGH Maryam Islamic Center. Cherry served on a panel discussion following the viewing the film, *Noshoba*, produced by one of our ally recipients, Micki Deardoff

Workshops in Office

- Coffee and Doughnuts for the police and security guards at Houston Community College Central Campus to say “Thank you”
- Waking News on the last Fridays of each month
- Volunteer appreciation dinner to say, “Thank you so much for your service!”
- Film and dialogue in celebration of Black History Month for 25 people
- Film and dialogue in celebration of Asian and Asian Pacific Islanders History Month for 10 people
- Film and dialogue for International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination held each year on March 21
- “Got Privilege?” Cherry Steinwender and Laura Gallier in partnership with SURJ reflected on their experience at the 19th annual White Privilege Conference

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The work continues...

Programs YOU have invested in so far in 2018

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- Dialogue about the Book: Lies My Teacher Told Me
- Black Democrats of Houston. Dialogue with Laura Moser on Systemic Racism and White Privilege

Additional Programs

- Houston Peace and Justice Center's Annual Peace Camp. The Center presented a workshop on bullying for 12 students under 10 years old at First Congregational Church
- Plantation Trip. The third annual bus tour of three Louisiana plantations.
- City of Houston Community Resource Youth and Family Resource Services. Shattering of Stereotypes (SOS) workshop for 35 staff members
- Texas Network of Youth Services' annual conference hosted Shattering of Stereotypes (SOS) for more than 40 participants. Calvin King, graduate from Houston Academy of International Studies and intern for the Center, wrote and performed a spoken word piece for this workshop.
- The Mayor's Diversity Month hosted The Living Library
- Boys and Girls Club Workshop
- Big Brothers Big Sisters Workshop

Media

- KPFT Radio interviewed Cherry on "Open Journal" and

"People of the Earth"

- *Houstonia* Magazine's Nicki Koetting interviewed Cherry for an article that is scheduled to appear in the upcoming August issue.
- *Houstonia* Magazine's Monica Fuentes will list the Center for the Healing of Racism as one of the top 20 non-profit organizations in the city of Houston.

In-office Consultations

- Regina Galassi, M.Ed., from Incarnate Word Academy requested a meeting to aid her students in a service project about racism.
- Christine Spencer from The Tahirih Justice Center consulted the Center about presenting future workshops for the agency.
- Jessica DeFeo from Pantsuit Nation requested consultation
- Christine from Mending Bridges requested consultation about a workshop between African Americans and recent African Immigrants
- Helen Chou requested consultation about possible future partnerships
- Hala Ahmad, teacher at River Oaks Elementary School, visited the office with two students seeking help for the students to create a class project on racism
- Nicque Montgomery, Communications/Outreach Strategist

Reflections on Dialogue on the Plantation

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enslaved people were highlighted.

A picture emerged of an antebellum lifestyle that was utterly dependent on the arduous work of highly-skilled, hard-working, enslaved people. From cultivating the plantation crops

and husbanding the livestock, to designing and building the "big house," to preparing the meals and nursing the plantation-owners' children, to preparing for and recovering from floods and hurricanes. All of the work on the plantation was done by enslaved people. Statues of enslaved children stood watch as

the docent demonstrated the inhumane working and living conditions, including 96-hour work weeks during the harvest and refinement of the sugar cane.

Since the plantation owners played such a minor role in plantation life, their stories were given minimal attention.

Afterwards, we gathered under

an ancient oak tree to dialogue about what we'd seen and learned and felt. We shed tears and shared long silences in between sharing our feelings.

Returning home, we watched a film called *Slavery by Another Name*, about the con-

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Ally Award Luncheon

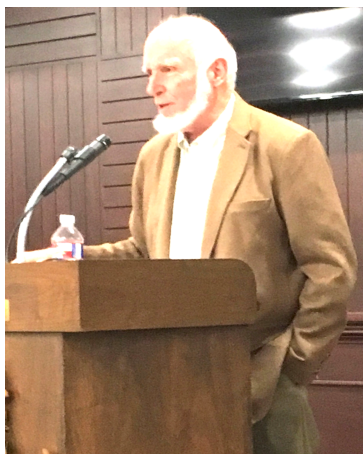
Annual Juneteenth event dedicated to young people

For 24 years, the Center for the Healing of Racism has recognized and honored those on the frontlines in the ongoing battle against racism in the United States of America. Allies, they are, in this ongoing battle.

This year, on Saturday, June 16, the Center awarded its 24th Annual Juneteenth Ally Award to James W. Loewen, Tahirih Justice Center and Lisa Falkenberg. Ben and Sarah Becker received the Center's Individual Initiative Award.

Loewen, a sociologist, historian, and author of the national bestseller *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your High School History Textbook Got Wrong*, was the primary recipient of the award. He has dedicated much of his life to examining the many distortions found in American history textbooks.

As a college junior in 1963, Loewen spent a semester in Mississippi and experienced a different culture that led to his



Loewen can tell many stories that are both funny and sad

questioning what he had been taught about U.S. history.

Loewen first taught in Mississippi at Tougaloo College, a historically black college, which was founded after the Civil War. After Tougaloo College, Loewen taught about racism for 20 years at the University of Vermont, where he is professor emeritus of sociology.

His interest in racism in the United States led Loewen to also write *Sundown Towns: A Hidden*

Dimension of American Racism, which was released in 2005. The book documents the histories of sundown towns, which are towns where African Americans, Jews and other minority groups were forced or strongly encouraged to leave town prior to sundown in order to avoid racist violence that was threatened and perpetrated by the towns' white populations.

The Tahirih Justice Center is a national non-profit organization that has served more than 25,000 courageous individuals fleeing violence since 1997. It is inspired by a heroine of Persian history who shockingly removed her traditional veil in an assemblage of men where she spoke about rejecting old patterns of society.

In 1852, she was executed for her adoption of the Baha'i Faith and activities focusing on the emancipation of women.

The Justice Center has been the most successful organization of its kind, representing women and girls seeking asylum from gender-based violence.

Its 99 percent success rate in achieving asylum for its many clients has included presenting cases before the United States Supreme Court.

The organization is increasingly active and is currently assisting asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border during the current crisis.

Lisa Falkenberg, as a columnist for the Houston Chronicle, won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for her columns about grand jury abuses that led to a wrongful conviction and also uncovered other egregious problems in the legal and immigration systems – a legal system that dis-proportionally incarcerates and punishes people of color.

Ben and Sarah Becker were honored with the Center's Individual Initiative Award for their grassroots leadership of a movement to keep open schools populated by people of color. The Houston Independent School District (HISD) targeted the schools for closure, but Ben and Sarah are working tirelessly for education equity in HISD for all students.

The Beckers, HISD parents who launched HISD Parent Advocates to help parents stay informed about the district, write a blog and have an active Facebook site. There, they recap board meetings and provide their own commentary.

The event was dedicated to young people, giving them a voice. Children and grandchildren of Center members participated in the program by presenting the awards. The

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Reflecting on Dialogue on the Plantation

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tinuation of the enslavement of African Americans through convict leasing.

Nilah Pierce, age 14: "The trip was a great experience for adolescents because it tells the real story behind slavery. The

reflection discussions were my favorite part of the trip. It was an opportunity to hear everyone's perspective about the past, including their thoughts on the present. It was a real eye opener for me."

I'm no adolescent, but I couldn't say it better myself.

SAVE THE DATE
NEXT DIALOGUE ON THE PLANTATION TRIP

MARCH 30-31, 2019

INTERNALIZE ONENESS

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To reduce mailing costs, the newsletter is no longer routinely printed and mailed. Send email addresses to cfhr1@juno.com or to cfhr1@yahoo.com



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.

Letters to Cherry and the Center**Continued from Page 1**

for the donation of your book to our library. I know it will be used!

You have an open invitation to River Oaks Elementary any time!

All the best,
Liz Goodman

Yesterday Mrs. (Laura) Gallier came to show us about bread. She used it as a metaphor to show us that just like the bread, people are different but should be treated the same. She brought bread from places like Russia, Ethiopia, Austria, England, and Lebanon. My favorite bread was called challah. It is from the Jewish faith. But when they had to flee, they didn't have the time to let the dough rise. So they made a flat bread called matzo, which tasted like a cracker. The croissant was delicious.

— **LA, 2nd grade**

Yesterday we went to an Opening the Bread Basket program. Ms. Gallier brought the bread basket. She brought a blue corn tortilla, challah, and injera. She brought other breads to show that we're all different and we're all beautiful. She brought the bread to show a similarity because breads are different in shapes, sizes, and colors. The challah tasted sweet. The injera and blue corn tortilla tasted a little spicy. I enjoyed this bread because we tasted bread from all different countries. They all tasted different.

— **CH, 2nd grade**

Ally Award honors those dedicated to fighting racism**Continued from Page 5**

group included, Astrid Yeager, Max Philippe, Jordan Pierce and Andrés Miguel Barkhouse-Geyer. Corinne Rose Harris, a fourth-grade student, presented the history of Juneteenth.

The audience was entertained with music by Marcy Jowasky (Sweet Momma Cotten) and a dance performance by the Guangdong Association of Texas Art Performing Troupe. The dancers, Cherry Pan, Limei Han, Peggy Liang and Tracy Nong performed to Chinese Yunnan Music. Currently, the committee Chairman is Cherry Pan and the Vice chairman is Limei Han.

**CENTER FOR
THE HEALING OF RACISM**

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