

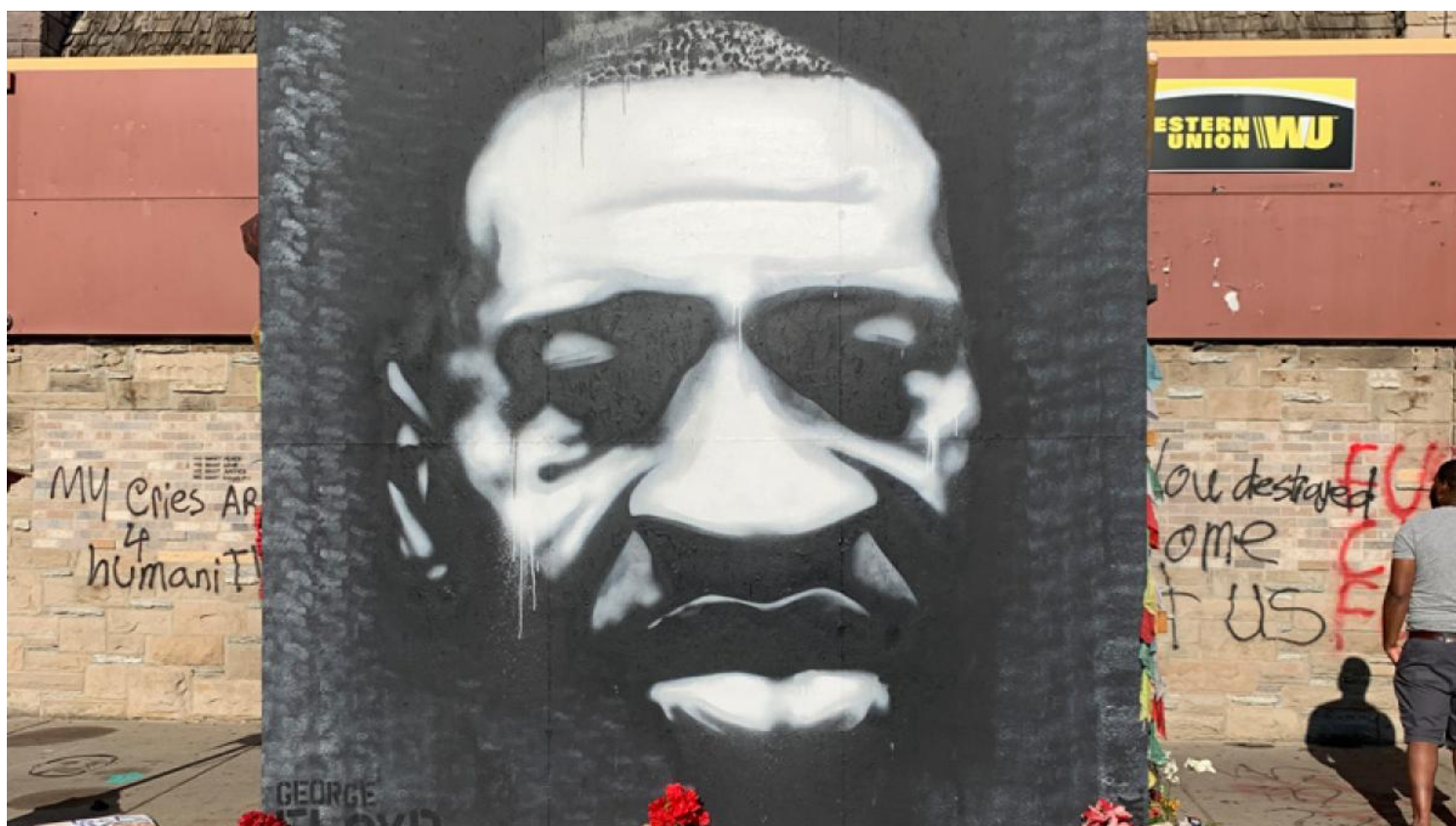


Center for the Healing of Racism

Internalize Oneness

JANUARY - JUNE 2025

“I can’t breathe”



By Chioma Uwagwu, Tiaryn Daniels, and David Todd Lawrence

— August 27, 2020

From Art and Uprising: The George Floyd and Anti-Racist Street Art Database
National Museum of History — Behring Center

P.O. Box 27327 Houston, Texas 77227-7327

Phone: (713) 520-8226

Email: cfhr1@juno.com

Website: info@centerhealingracism.org

"I can't breathe": George Floyd remembered

By Cherry Steinwender
Executive Director, CFHR

On May 25, 2025, the Center for the Healing of Racism, in partnership with Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, held a memorial service to commemorate the death of George Floyd.

After George Floyd's murder in 2020, I made a personal commitment to keep his memory alive. To date, in conjunction with the Center for the Healing of Racism, I have kept that commitment. I want to thank Emerson UU Church for warmly opening their doors for the event commemorating

George Floyd's 9 minutes and 29 seconds of public agony inflicted by a Minneapolis police officer.

In addition to my remarks, Professor Stephen Cherry spoke to the audience about the day the murder entered his home through his television. Professor Cherry called it his "Emmett Till moment" —reminding him of the lynching of Emmett Till, a Chicago teenager, by two white men in



Drew, Mississippi on August 28, 1955.

Omari Allen, an African American teenager and Spoken Word Artist, performed his piece, "If You Asked Me How I Felt."

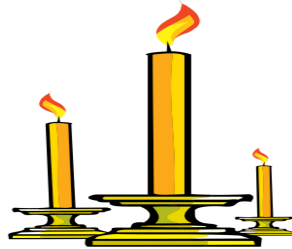
The memorial concluded with music from Marvin Gaye's song, "What's Going On?" Attendees were urged to continue to ask themselves that question as they left the sanctuary and went about their daily lives.

George Floyd presentation was quite inspiring

By Jurgen Ahlers
From Mexico

I was on Zoom and thoroughly there with you Cherry Steinwender when you, Dr. Stephen Cherry and Omar Allen gave a most inspiring presentation. Your measured words about George Floyd's tragic lynching will remain with me for a long time.

I was heartbroken, when in shock I was watching in real time the officer, so casually pressing his knee against Mr. Floyd's neck to the ground. I was angry, frustrated that the other officers, as well as folks



witnessing this tortuous moment, didn't intervene in this brutal act.

In our time, I would have thought there's no need to march, to remind ourselves that Black lives matter! However, it continues not only through today, but sadly, I fear, well into the future.

I am standing with you in solidarity, along with all people who are thoughtlessly dismissed because of the color of their skin, or religious/cultural/national backgrounds.

As you, Sigi Steinwender, Anne and I — as well as countless others — persevere in making our time more humane and more morally just, I pray for a time when ALL people on earth recognize what a gift it is to live and love freely with the one life we have been given while treating everyone with the dignity they, as fellow humans, deserve!

Much love to you!

Newsletter Team:

Editor

Robert C. Newberry

Copy editors

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Production

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Members of the Center
for the Healing of Racism

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<https://www.centerhealingracism.org/>

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Message from the Executive Director

The first six months of 2025 have been trying, exhausting and filled with uncertainty for the future. Rest assured the new board members of the Center have been working hard to keep hope and the Center alive.

Monthly programs celebrating the rich heritage of Americans of African, Jewish, Asian and Pacific Islander descent and women were held in our office. We still found time to host two wonderful interns from the University of Houston Downtown: Janeva Henderson and Sjhona Petersen.

With so much going on in our world, we felt it was timely to start off the year with *The Big Question*, a film about forgiveness featuring Deepak Chopra, Thich Nhat Hanh, Desmond Tutu, Sr. Helen Prjan and Rev. Joseph Lowery.

The film explores the Big Question in astonishing acts of forgiveness, courage, and will. The film gave people attending a chance to ask the big questions of themselves: What would you do? Could you forgive? Should you forgive? Marcy Jolosky did a fantastic job of facilitating the dialogue afterwards.

A few days later we partnered with the Jung Center in going



Cherry Steinwender
Executive Director

beyond just talking about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from the Birmingham Jail* to reading and interacting with it. In the two-hour program, individuals had to read pre-assigned portions of Dr. King's letter. To assist with processing and engaging in the content, I led the community in dialogue. Earlier that day, Jung Center's Executive Director Sean Fitzpatrick and I were interviewed on KPFT Radio, 90.1FM.

Each day brings about new challenges that cause me to go back and examine not just our mission but Who We Are.

Who We Are

We champion the vision of a united community where every person can thrive free from racial prejudice. Since 1989, our mission has been steadfast: to disrupt the cycle of racism by addressing how racism is transmitted in society and fostering healing through impactful education and dialogue.

We acknowledge that racism is a pervasive ailment with deep roots in our society. It is transmitted through systems, institutions, and interpersonal relations, often inadvertently perpetuating the cycle of hurt.

At our center, healing is not just an act but a journey. Our purpose is to mend the wounds caused by racism by empowering individuals to identify and challenge racial biases within themselves and their communities.

It is my hope that all of the people we touched on this journey since 1989 will do the same. My wish for the rest of 2025 is a deeper commitment to who you are and how you have been touched by the work of the Center. With this reawakening, I hope you will find time, energy and resources to keep the work going!

Cherry Steinwender joining KPFT 90.1 for biweekly show

"Children At Risk" is thrilled to have Cherry Steinwender joining the Wednesday, June 18, episode of *Growing Up in America: The Way It Is* to discuss her expertise and mission behind The Center for the Healing of Racism.

This radio show airs each

Wednesday from 9-10 am CT live on 90.1 FM KPFT Pacifica Radio, and features discussions on the quality of life of our children, and how our communities are doing when it comes to taking care of our next generation. Cherry will be on the show biweekly beginning in July.

Listeners can tune in live on the radio or stream the episode online at <https://kpft.org/listen-live-hd1/>. Each episode will also be available by noon the following Monday on the Growing Up in America podcast: <https://rss.com/podcasts/growingupinamerica/>

Jewish American History Month

The Center presented a workshop for Jewish American History Month titled *Black Jewish Americans*. Below is an email from a Black Jewish American woman. She attended the workshop and said she felt she was alone in her experience.

My name is Yael Abramson; I daven [pray] with the Meyerland Minyan. I've practiced Orthodox Judaism for almost 40 years. Your announcement was forwarded to me via a friend of mine who received it from a friend of hers

about the program. Event name - *Jewish American History Month: Black Jewish Americans*. I was extremely overjoyed when I read the name of the topic, and overflowed with joy when I read the synopsis of the event.

This event is an answer to a prayer...."take light into darkness" (I'll expand on this at another time), I've "walked this path" for many years, but to no avail. I was always wrongly accused of segregation or distracted from the idea, but my zeal didn't decrease, and I planned to "go alone".

And to this end. I began a "1-woman crusade" in every country and township, in other words, every area I've visited.

I recently returned from visits to South Africa, Ethiopia, Athens and Istanbul. I boldly stated my religious practices and followed it up with my "path" to Judaism (discuss at another time).

Currently, I live with my Anglo Jewish husband in Nahariya Israel; prior to that I lived in Netanya, Israel. More on this later. We also live in Houston in the Meyerland community. Thank you for convening this program.

Prolonging My Life by Changing Yours lunch session held

Cherry Steinwender led a Lunch and Learn session on Zoom presented by the Jung Center called *Prolonging My Life by Changing Yours*.

Sarah Garcia, Community for Conscious Aging Manager & Programs Coordinator at The Jung Center, followed up with this message and feedback:

Cherry, I hope you are doing well as we round out this Spring season. Thank you again for doing this Lunch and Learn with us! The conversation was rich; your story and insights created a lot of

enthusiasm for our community. I'm attaching a spreadsheet with student feedback to this email.

I hope these few warm comments come as a happy surprise for you as we head into Summer!

Prompt:

How does this class compare with other classes you've taken at the Jung Center, or elsewhere:

Responses:

1. "Similar"
2. "One of the best."
3. "Excellent!!"
4. "As usual it was top notch.

Very interesting presenter. Opened my mind to a world of new thoughts. Would love to hear more from Cherry! Would love an in-person session like she spoke about. Safe place to just talk it out with like-minded women."

5. "It was excellent."
6. "This class was very informative."
7. "Excellent."
8. "This class was well prepared and offered a compelling personal account of the costs racism on all of us."

Vision Statement

Our vision is to build One America in the 21st century by connecting people through education and dialogue in a diverse world.

Core Beliefs

The human race is essentially one and racism is a learned behavior that can be unlearned.

Steinwender speaks at screening of the film *Sugarcane*

Cherry Steinwender was a speaker at Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, during a screening and discussion of the film *Sugarcane*. Below is an email from the film series curator.

Dear Cherry,

It was so impactful being together yesterday to experience the film *Sugarcane*, and to share feelings, insights and connections. The audience participation, inspired by

your conversation in the talkback, was also very meaningful.

— Mrian Luntz

Mission Statement

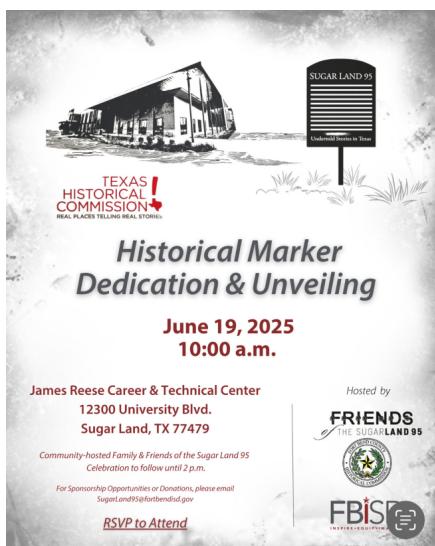
Our Mission is to facilitate the healing of racism through education and dialogue in a safe and supportive environment, in order to empower individuals and transform communities.

Texas State Historical Marker

A major milestone in the Sugar Land 95 Memorial Project occurred on June 19, 2025.

The long-awaited Texas State Historical Marker has arrived and was unveiled at a special ceremony and celebration at the James Reese Career and Technical Center.

The event was hosted by the Fort Bend County Historical Commission, Fort Bend ISD, and our community partner, Friends of the Sugar Land 95.



Let the living honor the deceased

On Tuesday, March 25th, the World Colonization Memorial team led a very powerful series of commemorative events that was co-hosted by the Thompson Chapel Missionary Baptist Church leadership in collaboration with Friends of the Sugar Land 95, the Missouri City & Vicinity Branch of the NAACP, The Texas Caribbean Chamber of Commerce, Trade & Industry, and the Center for the Healing of Racism.

While other diverse community leaders and political representatives were also in attendance, it was especially impactful to meet actual relatives and descendants of neighbors of the Sugar Land 95, African American victims of a horrendous convict leasing program at the Imperial Sugar Plantation and Factory during the pre- and post-emancipation era who were members of the Thompson Chapel MBC.

Soil was first collected at the Imperial Sugar Plantation Cemetery in the vicinity of the James Reese Career & Technical Center of Ft. Bend ISD where the Sugar Land 95 remains were found. The soil was driven by hearse for the first time in an official procession to Thompson Chapel MBC for the Commemoration Service and Eulogy by Rev. Eric D. Phillips and followed by a Repast.

Thompson Chapel Missionary

Baptist Church dates back to 1880 and was attended by members of the Sugar Land 95 with their families. By collecting soil from bondage sites nationwide, this historic remembrance initiative by the World Colonization Memorial seeks to dignify colonized and enslaved individuals whose brutalized lives and deaths have gone unrecognized. Upon completion, the preserved soil will be placed in the Transatlantic Tomb of the Unknown Slave at the World Colonization Memorial in Fort Bend and commemorated annually with a wreath-laying tribute.

Marilyn Douglas Jones

The power of a name

“This month marked Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and I found myself thinking about the power of a name [as I rewatched this Procter & Gamble video \(https://tinyurl.com/5cwjxnrf\)](https://tinyurl.com/5cwjxnrf) from 2022 celebrating AANHPI month. My name matters to me, both the long and short versions, because it is part of my immigrant family’s story. The next time you find yourself thinking someone’s name is too difficult to pronounce, I invite you to remember that a name carries history, identity, and belonging. Try to say it right because it matters.”

Archi Payati, CEO
Tahirih Justice Center



Internalize Oneness

Juneteenth Luncheon Ally Awards go to 3

The Center for the Healing of Racism's Juneteenth BBQ luncheon celebrated achievements and prepared for the complex challenges ahead.

Attendees from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods shared personal stories about their lives, healing journeys, and aspirations for the nation.

New friendships blossomed, creating vital opportunities to collaborate on the Center's mission to heal racism through education and dialogue while empowering individuals and transforming communities.

Cherry Steinwender, executive director and one of the Center's founding members, read love letters from former participants in the dialogues on racism, some of whom were present in the audience.

Starting a healing journey encourages the growth of shared understanding and feelings of connection, Steinwender said. "It doesn't matter how white your skin is or your shades of brown; we have all been affected by racism."

Daniel Filipak's letter, for example, explained how he had applied the workshop lessons as a classroom teacher in New York City.

"My school, located in East Williamsburg, serves a predominantly Black and Latino student body," he wrote. "I would not be the educator I am today without Mrs. Steinwender and the Center for Healing Racism. The lessons I learned about confronting history, unpacking internal biases, and fostering open, honest dialogue have become the foundation of my teaching."

Steinwender read his note, and several other testimonials, to show that the Center's sphere of influence has expanded beyond Houston.

"This was the 32nd time we hosted the luncheon and the Ally Award," Steinwender told the audience. "We



are gathered here to acknowledge Juneteenth, one of the greatest events marking the emancipation of people of African descent, and to celebrate people working for social justice and protecting freedom."

Approximately 140 people attended the luncheon, which featured a Texas-sized BBQ lunch, including chicken, brisket, sausage, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, and more.

Duane Bradley and Stephanie Coleman, hosts of Open Journal, a weekly magazine airing on 90.1 KPFT-FM, served as emcees, keeping the mood light and festive.

Evette Busby, Jazz singer, entertained the crowd, and Jade Coleman, a recent Fort Bend Independent School District graduate, received a standing

ovation after reciting her poem, *Echoes In The Earth*, honoring #sugarland95.

As participants chatted and discuss-ed plans to advance racial equity, they also celebrated the achievements of the three 2025 Ally Award winners.

— Tony Brown, Professor of Sociology, Rice University

A critical race theorist who investigates how racism works, from the womb to the tomb, to disadvantage Blacks and privilege whites,

— Joy Sewing, Pulitzer Prize-nominated columnist for the Houston Chronicle who covers social justice, politics, education, healthcare, and inequality.

— Joel Goza, Professor of Ethics, Simmons College of Kentucky, Author of *America's Unholy Ghosts: The Racist Roots of our Faith and Rebirth of a Nation: Reparations and Remaking America*.

The 2025 luncheon, which is the Center's sole fundraiser, was a huge success, Steinwender said. "I want to thank all our sponsors, volunteers, and contributors to the amazing silent auction, along with all the folks who came to join the conversation."

Civil Rights Icon

Renowned scholar, activist and author Angela Davis, Ph.D., appeared at the University of Houston - Downtown on Thursday, April 3, as the new Center for Social Inquiry and Transformation's (CSIT) 2025 Scholar in Residence. She met with students over lunch and in the evening gave CSIT's inaugural lecture. The discussion was free and open to the public.



Director and Board Members



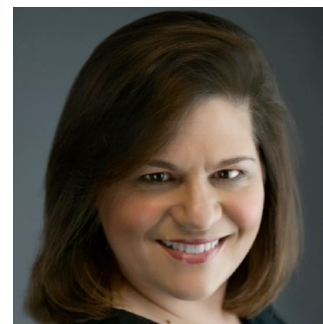
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"If you say you love freedom, but you don't believe freedom is for everybody, then the thing you love isn't freedom. It's a privilege."

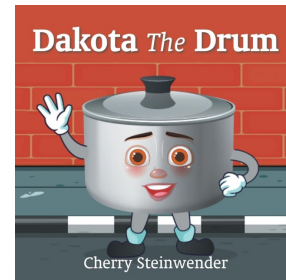
Minnesota
Gov. Tim Walz
April 23, 2025

Racism is a learned behavior that can be unlearned

New children's book by Cherry Steinwender

Dakota the Drum was first introduced to Elementary and Middle School students by Cherry Steinwender as a workshop. The students received the workshop well, leading to the book *Dakota the Drum*. The book follows the journey of Dakota, a young Drum who struggles to find acceptance in a world where everyone wants to define others. Through this experience, Dakota learns the importance of self-identity and the value of truly finding a place to belong.

The book enlightens children about the significance of self-identity, emphasizing



that they can define who they are and not let others dictate their identity.

It acknowledges the difficulties of staying true to oneself and the immense value of doing so. The story of Dakota's journey is a powerful reminder that finding the right people and places to be yourself is essential.

Cherry's first Children's book

Bread comes in different sizes, shapes, colors, and textures. Even so, it's all bread.

Little children also come in different sizes, shapes, and colors, but they all belong to the same human race. Bread is such a simple food, right? That is what many



elementary school children think before experiencing the innovative workshop entitled, "Opening the Breadbasket." The workshop was conducted 10 years before the book "Bread is a Simple Food" was written. Through this basic food children can learn a profound lesson about cultures. This book was written to help children internalize the oneness of the human family.

**BOOKS CAN BE PURCHASED IN
THE CENTER'S OFFICE.**