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RACISM

PURSUING RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY
GETTING RESULTS

2018 Annual Report

For ERASE Racism and Long Islanders concerned with racial justice, 2018 ended on a high note. More than 700 diverse residents came out for the five public forums that kicked off our *How Do We Build A Just Long Island?* initiative.

Forums took place from Hempstead to Riverhead. Each featured experts who explored drivers of structural racism on Long Island and nationally as well as engaged inquisitive audiences. Accompanied by widespread media coverage, the forums sparked a surge in new Partnership for Racial Equity members as well as momentum for inclusive housing and education equity.

This momentum, along with a historic shift in the New York State Senate, portended major progress on a measure long sought by ERASE Racism and allies. In 2016, we launched the *#BanIncomeBias* campaign to ban housing discrimination based on legal source of income, so that landlords can no longer turn away those who rely on veteran's benefits, alimony, Section 8 housing support, and the like. A vast network of organizations and advocates have joined and supported this campaign, and we are optimistic about its passage in the 2019 legislative session.

How Do We Build A Just Long Island? also reinforces the considerable momentum behind our Education Equity Initiative, which benefits from an energized and growing Student Voices Campaign and Education Equity Working Group. Our second *Long Island's Leaders of Tomorrow* interdistrict conference drew 168 students from 22 districts. Our professional development helped 500 LI educators recognize implicit bias and implement culturally responsive curricula, and for the first time, we arranged for 20 of them to attend *Reimagining Education: Teaching and Learning in Racially Diverse Schools*, a four-day conference at Columbia University Teacher's College.

We also continued to produce important research that informs not only our own work but also reminds the general public of the many ways – and reasons why – Long Island is one of the ten most racially segregated metropolitan regions in the U.S.

I hope this report not only helps you to understand how ERASE Racism is making a difference but also inspires you to join us and get involved. Please sign up for our Partnership for Racial Equity and contact us if you have any questions. Thank you for your interest in a fair and just Long Island.

How Do We Build A Just Long Island?

In 2018, ERASE Racism launched a major new initiative to spark a much-needed discussion about the structural and historic reasons behind Long Island's extreme segregation and inequity. This initiative, known as *How Do We Build A Just Long Island?*, was made possible by a \$100,000 grant from the Large Grants Program of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY.



As the centerpiece of this initiative, ERASE Racism conducted a series of high profile public forums over twelve days in November and December. Over 700 Long Islanders attended, and we reached hundreds of thousands more via 24 news reports in mainstream, alternative, and social media. This included a five-page feature and follow-up in *Newsday*; detailed interviews with Elaine Gross on WNYC's *The Brian Lehrer Show*, Thirteen/WLIWTV/NJTV Metrofocus, and WSHU public radio; feature in *Long Island Business News*, and laudatory editorial in the *Long Island Herald*.

The series' visibility and success means that knowledge and understanding of structural racism, segregation in public education and housing, and the urgency of addressing these problems have immeasurably increased. We look forward to building on this momentum with more forums and public education efforts as well as policy successes.

Education Equity Initiative



Although Long Island has become more diverse in recent decades, its public schools have become more segregated and unequal. In addition to documenting this trend and its consequences – especially for black and Latino students – ERASE Racism’s **Education Equity Initiative** promotes priorities, strategies, and measures that are achievable in a region with 125 separate, self-taxing school districts.

The Education Equity Initiative consists of the following interrelated elements:

- An **Education Equity Working Group** consisting of educators, parents, academics, and advocates who help devise solutions related to curricula, teacher diversity, public policy, restorative justice, professional development, and the Student Voices Campaign.
- A **Professional Development Program for Teachers** lauded for its workshops on culturally responsive pedagogy, understanding and eliminating bias, and serving diverse classrooms.
- **Student Voices Campaign** to engage, equip, and empower high school students so they become advocates for integrative learning environments in their schools, communities, and on social media.
- **Engagement of schools of education** to increase the pipeline of teachers of color.
- **Advocacy** aimed at state, local, and district policies and practices, so that they encourage rather than inhibit integration and equity.
- **Knowledge and Awareness-building** via social, alternative, and traditional media as well as workshops and forums
- **Mobilization of partners and the public** to challenge segregation and inequity.

Activities and accomplishments to advance education equity in 2018:

- The Rauch Foundation renewed its support of the Initiative with a \$100,000 and we received major new awards from the Horace and Amy Hagedorn Fund and Long Island Unitarian Universalist Fund. The Initiative continued to benefit from a two-year grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded the prior year.
- ERASE Racism increased its Education Equity Working Group from 181 to 289 members. The EEWG's subcommittees continued to devise ways of implementing the five-point policy agenda developed in 2017.
- We analyzed district demographic shifts and how they have affected the handful of diverse districts on Long Island; built profiles of districts, schools, and faculty; suggested strategies to involve parent; and encouraged the input of ERASE Racism's Student Voices Campaign.



- Throughout the year, ERASE Racism provided professional development to more than 500 Long Island educators. Workshops addressed understanding implicit bias and the process of debiasing, implementing culturally responsive curricula, the history of Long Island's extreme residential and educational segregation, and the benefits of integration. With the support of the Rauch Foundation, we enabled 20 educators from five districts to attend *Reimagining Education: Teaching and Learning in Racially Diverse Schools*, a four-day conference at Columbia University Teacher's College.

- In 2018, ERASE Racism's Student Voices Campaign engaged 379 students via school-based workshops, contests, and especially our two all-day *Long Island's Leaders of Tomorrow* conferences. We organized one conference for Nassau students and one for Suffolk students. Together they convened 168 from 22 districts for full day sessions of leadership development, an overview of how structural racism shaped the region's development, and discussion of how they can make a difference. These conferences provided many students with an all-too-rare opportunity to interact meaningfully with peers from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.



- In collaboration with ERASE Racism, C.W. Post Research Collaborative completed a detailed, data-driven study regarding teachers' professional development needs on Long Island.
- ERASE Racism participated in the New York State Education Department's Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education (CRS) Initiative. The first meeting took place in July 2018 to gather stakeholder feedback on a major new framework that will incorporate CRS into all aspects of NYSED's work.
- ERASE Racism sent four *EMERGE* e-newsletters to 3,800 subscribers. The newsletters announced ERASE Racism professional development trainings, student contests, *Long Island's Leaders of Tomorrow* conferences, the *Reimagining Education* Institute, and other activities, as well as offered resources for educators to broach sensitive subjects and promote inclusion.

Inclusive Housing Program

The Inclusive Housing Program promotes effective fair housing laws, nondiscriminatory affordable housing policies, and vigilant fair housing enforcement. We also organize residents to engage in civic actions to support these activities. In recent years we have used our research and documentation to strengthen fair housing laws, successfully settle federal housing discrimination lawsuits, and elevate the voices of people in low-income housing.

A sampling of activities and accomplishments to advance inclusive housing in 2018:

- ERASE Racism continued to spearhead the Statewide Source of Income Coalition in collaboration with Enterprise Community Partners, Fair Housing Justice Center, and the New York Housing Conference. Known by the hashtag **#BanIncomeBiasNY**, the Coalition advocated for a ban on discrimination based on legal, non-wage source of income. In 2018, the Coalition grew to 114 members.

Given this momentum, change in the NYS Senate, and continued support of the Governor and Assembly, we believe that a ban on housing discrimination based on legal source of income has a good chance of becoming law in 2019. That would protect hundreds of thousands of people across New York State that receive Social Security, alimony, veterans' and disability benefits, housing vouchers, and other government assistance.



Community Education and Mobilization

In addition to *How Do We Build A Just Long Island?* ERASE Racism conducted its intensive, two-day Unraveling Racism Training for 32 attendees, many of whom were teachers and administrators from the North Shore School District in northern Nassau County.



Throughout the year, ERASE Racism conducted community education and mobilization of its Partnership for Racial Equity and the public to support diversity, equity, and inclusion in our region. Driven in part by *How Do We Build A Just Long Island?*, the Partnership for Racial Equity grew from 1,300 to nearly 1,700 members. In addition to the forums and related press coverage, education took place via EMERGE e-newsletters and press coverage of our Student Voices Campaign.

ERASE Racism president Elaine Gross continued to educate the public about structural racism and its legacy via lectures and presentations at area universities, professional and nonprofit organizations, and topical forums. Such examples include: *Songs of Protest* at the Landmark Theater in Port Washington; a workshop for students of Jack and Jill on Martin Luther King Day; and a student symposium co-sponsored by ERASE Racism, the Links, Inc. LI Chapter and Molloy College; workshop for The Energeia Partnership at Molloy College; staff and student presentation at Farmingdale State College; Communications Department faculty day-long workshop; presenter at New York State Social Workers Association conference; and workshop for United Way grantees and staff.

Elaine Gross's article "The Need to Tackle Segregation head-On" was published by the Long Island Index and appeared in *Newsday*.

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