



HOW DO WE BUILD A JUST LONG ISLAND?

That's the question that frames and animates ERASE Racism's work. "How Do We Build a Just Long Island?" is informing, engaging, and activating Long Islanders around the prevalence of structural racism, what underpins it, and what can be done about it.

This ongoing public initiative—"How Do We Build a Just Long Island?"—began in late 2018 with five public forums across Long Island that were so well attended—more than 700 people in all—that registration for four of the forums had to be closed early to avoid exceeding the venues' capacity. The initiative continues to expand its scope, broaden its participation, and increase its impact throughout the region.

E·R·A·S·E



RACISM

INTRODUCTION

Long Island is one of the 10 most racially segregated metropolitan regions in the nation, and structural racism provides the foundation for that segregation. This brochure describes the extraordinary activities unfolding under this framework—**“How Do We Build a Just Long Island?”**—to defeat structural racism and end racial segregation on Long Island. It highlights three key components: the engagement of Long Islanders around education equity; efforts to eliminate racial discrimination and segregation in housing; and the vital role of facilitated discussions and training in combating structural racism. It invites all Long Islanders to become involved in this ongoing public initiative to move forward from segregation to inclusion and equity.

The activities described here reflect just a portion of the tools that ERASE Racism uses at different intervals to defeat structural racism including legal action, educating and engaging the public, leadership development, research, policy and legislative advocacy, and collaborations with allied groups. Those tools together define the work of ERASE Racism.

E·R·A·S·E



RACISM

“HOW DO WE BUILD A JUST LONG ISLAND?”
WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE LARGE
GRANTS PROGRAM OF THE UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
AT SHELTER ROCK IN MANHASSET, NY—
WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
FOR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE
RAUCH FOUNDATION.



Hauppauge



Hempstead



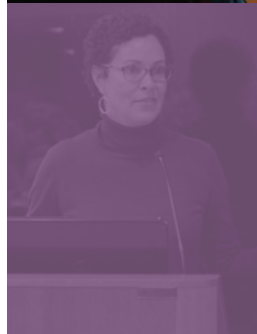
Riverhead



Melville



Stony Brook



THE LAUNCH OF "HOW DO WE BUILD A JUST LONG ISLAND?"

The launch of ERASE Racism's ongoing public initiative "How Do We Build a Just Long Island?" consisted of five public forums that took place from November 29 to December 10, 2018, in Nassau and Suffolk counties. More than 700 people participated in the forums, which were held in Hauppauge, Hempstead, Melville, Riverhead, and Stony Brook. Even more wanted to attend, but registration was limited by the venues' capacity.



Each of the five forums had a co-sponsor with ERASE Racism. The co-sponsors were the Center for the Study of Inequalities, Social Justice, and Policy at Stony Brook University; the Long Island Association; the State of Black Long Island Equity Council convened by the Urban League of Long Island; The National Center for Suburban Studies at Hofstra University, and the Town of Riverhead's Anti-Bias Task Force.

*Elaine Gross Featured on
Newsday's Long Island Life
Left/opposite page: Engaged
Audiences at the Five Public Forums*



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PARTNERS FOR EQUITY

Providing facilitated discussions and training, vital tools in leadership development and combating structural racism.

EDUCATION EQUITY

ERASE Racism's Education Equity Initiative, with key funding from the Rauch Foundation, engages individuals in developing and implementing real solutions to the intensely segregated public school districts on Long Island. Strategic actions include educational campaigns on the benefits of diverse learning environments, policy advocacy, promotion and support for existing racially diverse schools, promotion of evidence-based integration models, professional development for teachers, leadership development for students, and recruiting and retaining teachers of color. Highlights of recent activities include the following:



Student Leaders (above, front row). (left to right) Leah E. Watson of The Links, Inc., Elaine Gross of ERASE Racism, Dr. Makila Meyers of NYS Education Department, and Dr. Andrea Honingsfeld of Molloy College.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINING EDUCATION FORUM

On March 16, 2019, members of ERASE Racism's Student Task Force led a day-long *Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education Forum* at Molloy College. Co-sponsored by ERASE Racism, The Long Island (NY) Chapter of The Links, Inc., and the Molloy College Doctoral Program in Education, the Forum was attended by some 100 participants, 49% of whom identified themselves as educators, 37% as students, 6% as parents, and 8% as other. They came from 34 communities in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The Forum injected a much-needed student perspective in discussions regarding inclusive and integrative learning environments and education equity. It received coverage in *Newsday*, the *Rockville Centre Herald*, FiOS1 News, and News 12, and it showcased the talent and commitment of our next generation of leaders.

STUDENT VOICES IN NEWSPAPERS



Gabriela Daza

On February 8, 2019, **Gabriela Daza**, a Mepham High School senior and a participant in ERASE Racism's Student Voices Campaign, became the first high school student

ever to have an op-ed published in the *Long Island Herald*. Her commentary, which ran in all 18 local editions, was titled "Talking About Race on Long Island."

The *Long Island Herald* then published an op-ed by **Sufyan Hameed**, a college student and 2018 graduate of Elmont Memorial High School who remains active with ERASE Racism. It is titled "Structural Racism on Display on L.I. Schools' Sports Fields."



Sufyan Hameed

STUDENT VOICES CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

ERASE Racism's **Student Voices Campaign** helps students develop leadership skills, identify their strengths and assets, and build alliances with students



of different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds as well as across district lines. The Campaign supports them in actions they decide to take to challenge racism and school segregation and advocate for equity and inclusion.

Annually, ERASE Racism holds student conferences in Suffolk and Nassau counties. The two most recent events brought



together a total of 166 students engaged in vibrant discussions of structural racism and its implications for students, schools, and education on Long Island.



Long Island Student Panel

NYSSBA STUDENT FORUM

On October 26, 2018, nine students from eight Long Island high schools were presenters in two panel discussions with standing-room-only attendance, as part of the 99th Annual **New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) Convention**.

ERASE Racism organized the panels and students' involvement at the invitation of the New York State Caucus of Black School Board Members. Each panel was moderated by Dr. Mark Gooden, Professor of Education Leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University, and for nearly two hours the students responded to questions from Dr. Gooden and the audience. While the students conveyed a variety of perspectives, one key theme that emerged was the need for culturally responsive curricula.



Dr. Mark Gooden

REIMAGINING EDUCATION SUMMER INSTITUTE

ERASE Racism, for its second year, is organizing a delegation of educators from Long Island school districts to attend the 2019 Reimagining Education Summer Institute, hosted by Teachers College, Columbia University, from July 15 to 18. Through a collaboration with the Rauch Foundation and Teachers College, ERASE Racism offers fellowships to selected school districts to send a team of teachers and administrators to the Institute.

In 2018, with the support of the Rauch Foundation, ERASE Racism led 20 Long Island educators from five school districts and 11 schools to attend the Institute. The event convened 450 educators from 24 states and eight countries to gain knowledge regarding topics such as cultural and racial literacy, equity pedagogy, anti-racist leadership, and student activism. Through speakers, workshops, and interactive dialogues, attendees were exposed to policies, practices, and implementation strategies that promote cultural literacy and racial equity.

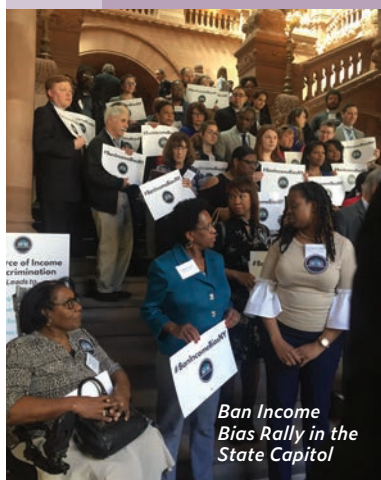


Long Island Delegation of Educators

INCLUSIVE HOUSING

Addressing structural racism in housing, which underpins housing discrimination and segregation.

BAN ON INCOME BIAS



ERASE Racism achieved a major victory in 2019, when New York State enacted a new **ban on housing discrimination** as a result of a campaign initially organized by ERASE Racism and later broadened for maximum impact. With the support of the Governor and the Legislature, the State's Human Rights Law

was amended, as part of the State budget, to prohibit housing discrimination based on legal non-wage sources of income. It is now illegal for landlords—except in owner-occupied buildings with two or fewer units—to turn away tenants who receive any form of legal non-wage income such as alimony, Section 8 housing support and other public benefits for veterans and people with disabilities.

The new ban came as a result of a statewide coalition and campaign started in 2016 by ERASE Racism. The coalition grew to be co-led by Enterprise Community Partners, ERASE Racism, Fair Housing Justice Center, and New York Housing Conference and to include more than 100 organizations. ERASE Racism is grateful to all of them and to everyone who helped achieve this landmark accomplishment.

ERASE Racism President Elaine Gross discussed the ban and the need to engage the public in ensuring its enforcement in an op-ed article in *Long Island Business News* titled "The next step toward fair housing is awareness and enforcement."

LOCAL CONTROL AND HOUSING DISCRIMINATION



At the request of the New York University Furman Center, ERASE Racism President Elaine Gross contributed a detailed exposé—titled "Housing Discrimination and Local Control"—to the Center's discussion series "The Dream Revisited." In it, she explains how local control has perpetuated racism and segregation on Long Island through home rule, which "transfers to localities control of land use, public services, and community benefits, which, in the context of structural racism and white supremacy, give whites the power to exclude."

On March 27, 2019, Ms. Gross discussed her article with Rafael Pi Roman on MetroFocus on WLIW21, THIRTEEN, and NJTV, elaborating on the relationship between local control and housing discrimination.



Elaine Gross at "The Dream Revisited" Conference at NYU

Photo credit: NYU Furman Center

PARTNERS FOR EQUITY

Vital tools in combating structural racism are facilitated discussions, training, and professional development. ERASE Racism plays a key role in that regard, including the following activities:

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ERASE Racism's **Unraveling Racism Training (URT)** provides a context, framework, and language for understanding the realities of racism and how individuals can work to dismantle racism in their personal and professional lives. Workshops provide the knowledge and understanding necessary to address issues of racial inequities, and a safe and supportive environment to reflect upon one's own experiences. Participants can also develop individualized plans of action to increase racial equity, whether at work or in their communities.

ERASE Racism also offers a variety of Education Equity Seminars for schools. Topics include "The Construction of Race," "Racism, Power and Privilege in America" and "Implicit Bias: What is it and what can we do about it?"



URT Participants

ONLINE DISCUSSION WITH ACCLAIMED AUTHOR AND PROFESSOR CRYSTAL MARIE FLEMING, PhD

ERASE Racism hosted an online discussion with **Dr. Crystal Marie Fleming** of her book *How to Be Less Stupid About Race*. A professor of Sociology and Africana Studies at Stony Brook University, Dr. Fleming shared her own journey to learn about racism and intertwined systems of oppression. "Living in a racist society exposes us to racial ignorance, and we absorb that racial ignorance," she said. While noting there is no easy solution, she stated that "the good news though is that we can nevertheless make a difference and working together we can multiply that difference..."

Dr. Fleming had previously helped launch "How Do We Build a Just Long Island?" She served as a riveting speaker at two of its five inaugural public forums.

Dr. Crystal Marie Fleming



HOW DO WE BUILD
A JUST LONG ISLAND?

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

**PLEASE CONSIDER
MAKING A DONATION:**

**Donate now by
scanning the QR code:**



Donate online at:
www.eraseracismny.org

Mail a check payable to:
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Syosset, NY 11791-4401

Much of ERASE Racism's work would not be possible without our many volunteers and supporters. If you are not yet part of our Partnership for Racial Equity, Education Equity Working Group, or mailing list, we encourage you to visit www.eraseracismny.org to sign up and join our conversation and movement. The financial support of Long Islanders is also crucial to creating a just and equitable Long Island.

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