



Spring 2006

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www.eraseracismny.org for the latest news and events.

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UNDOING RACISM TRAINING: IS IT FOR YOU?

What is racism? What is the relationship between racism and other forms of bias? Is the goal of undoing racism to look at an individual and not see race at all? What is race anyway? How can racism be tied to institutions and public policies, especially if good people are in charge?

These are just some of the questions posed during ERASE Racism's two-day Undoing Racism Training, conducted by the cultural bridges training institute. "In a racist society like the United States, all white people—even white people of conscience—benefit from their white privilege," stated jona olsson, a white trainer at cultural bridges.

The most effective undoing racism sessions involve a diverse group of 36-40 participants. Ages have ranged from 20s to 70s. The January training included twenty-five Branch Managers from Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, along with Kate Rossi, president of the firm. In March the entire staff of Sustainable Long Island attended along with twenty community activists from Catholic Charities who serve as part of the ecumenical evaluation group on racism.

"ERASE Racism provides an opportunity for people of color and white Long Islanders to bridge a gap that is invisible and painful," said training participant Merline Campbell, an African American staff person at Sustainable Long Island. Marilyn M. Rodahan, a white principal in the Port Washington public schools said of the training, "This two day workshop should be a mandatory part of all teacher preparation work in college."

The training provides a framework, common language, and incentive for genuine dialogue about racism. Racism today is placed within an historical context. Sessions include interactive exercises, small group discussion, and self-exploration. Each participant gets to understand the effects of racism, personal as well as institutional and

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Debbie-Ann Chang of ERASE Racism (center) with Achebe Powell and jona olsson of cultural bridges

ABOUT "RACE"

According to the consensus of geneticists and anthropologists, there are no biological human types to which "race" validly refers. When ERASE Racism uses terms such as "race", "racism" or refers to groups of people by commonly used "racial" descriptions we are acknowledging socially constructed categories of race but we are not endorsing racial classification schemes.

UNDOING RACISM TRAINING

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structural racism, where they work, live, and play. "This extremely experiential interactive training was the most insightful training I have attended, creating a comfortable environment to discuss one of the most uncomfortable topics in the world today. I am amazed how much I learned about myself," declared Shannon Boyle, LMSW, a white woman who directs clinical services at New Ground, Inc. in Hempstead.

For people of all racial and ethnic background, the training offers insight into how racism infiltrates our daily lives. Achebe Powell, an African American trainer from cultural bridges stated, "The workshop provides African Americans and other People of Color a unique opportunity to wed their instinctive and experiential awareness of racism to a broadened understanding of how racial oppression operates in the United States, including the not-so-obvious impact of internalized racism experienced by people of color." Rather than blame or guilt, this training helps white people recognize white privilege and offers them new skills to be effective anti-racist advocates in their own spheres of influence. Rather than inadequacy or despair, people of color gain deeper insights into coping with racism in their lives. "It was a life changing event. After the training, I was able to speak about racism in a different way. The interactive activities, small group discussions and self exploration activities clarified how internalized and institutionalized racism can be dismantled. I literally became a different person. I went back to my job and spoke to my supervisor about hiring more people of color, but I also talked to friends, co-workers, and clients about our internalized racism and what to do about it." Cecilia Escamilla, a Latina clinical social worker in a Port Washington Public School.

Trainings last for two full days and sometimes are part of an overnight retreat. The next training is scheduled for Thursday, October 19th and Friday, October 20th at Stony Brook University Charles B. Wang Center.

For more information about the Undoing Racism Training, please visit our website at www.eraseracismny.org or contact Debbie-Ann Chang at 516-921-4863, ext. 13.

ERASE RACISM WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER SCOTT A. WILLIAMS



Scott Williams is Senior Director for Changing Our World, Inc., a full service fundraising consulting firm based in New York City. Scott's responsibilities include managing and directing capital campaigns and fundraising initiatives, conducting feasibility studies and development audits, and creating development plans for a variety of clients. Building on his previous positions at the Waldorf School of Garden City and St. John's University, Scott brings extensive expertise in the areas of development, alumni relations, marketing, and fundraising. When asked why he wanted to join the ERASE Racism Board of Directors, Scott replied, "What appeals most to me is that in a very short period of time, ERASE Racism has had a significant impact on Long Island. Why? Because ERASE Racism has conducted skillful research, provided accessible education, and impacted policy through principled advocacy. Being a board member allows me to play a role in reducing institutionalized racism, which for decades has held back people of color."

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NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Welcome to this second edition of *Emerge: The Racial Equity Review*—ERASE Racism's newsletter about research, trends, and our on-going work. We believe that dismantling institutional and structural racism is everyone's responsibility—from deep within public and private institutions where customs and policies maintain disparities based solely on race to individuals, no matter their class or color. The articles about the Undoing Racism Training, the Partnership for Racial Equity, and the story about Coldwell Banker share the call to get educated and get involved. ERASE Racism's Fair Housing Initiative, under the leadership of Cathryn Harris, continues to break new ground, and here is an update. We also introduce you to our newest board member, Scott A. Williams.

ERASE Racism is making a difference on Long Island—the message from local government reflects our hard work. On behalf of the board and staff of ERASE Racism, thank you for reading *Emerge*. Please, let us know what you think.

Elaine Goss

ERASE RACISM CELEBRATES FOR THE 2ND YEAR!

THE EVENT

Our Second Annual Spring Benefit "A Common Thread: Celebrating People of the African Diaspora with a Caribbean Flair"

THE DATE

Wednesday, June 14th, 2006 from 5:30 pm-8:30 pm

THE PLACE

Carlyle on the Green, located off Route 135 in Bethpage, New York.

HONORING

Mr. Abraham Krasnoff with ERASE Racism's Courage and Commitment Award.

THE BENEFIT CO-CHAIRS

Gini Booth and Scott A. Williams

"Although I knew it would be a huge task, I welcomed the opportunity to co-chair this year's Spring Benefit. The annual Benefit provides vital funds necessary for ERASE Racism to continue its ongoing mission. Participating in such an endeavor and introducing new people to our vision is extremely gratifying."

– Scott A. Williams.

"My parents taught me the value and honor of serving in the community. Co-chairing the Spring Benefit is an opportunity to serve an organization that speaks directly to my purpose and passion, to erase racism. And, I have unyielding faith in ERASE Racism and its leadership".

– Gini Booth.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU! Great company, food, cocktails, lively music, wine tasting, and a market place for shopping!

The board and staff of ERASE Racism are grateful for the generous support of our donors.

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FAIR HOUSING HIGHLIGHTS

Since the April 2005 release of its report, *Long Island Fair Housing: A State of Inequity*, ERASE Racism's housing project has drawn government and real estate industry attention to the issue of racial steering. Before its release, neither Suffolk nor Nassau County had functioning fair housing laws. Since the last edition of *Emerge*, progress has been made:

- Nassau County is due to launch a fair housing survey program, designed by ERASE Racism, which will be implemented in twenty-two Nassau County Departments. The purpose of the survey is two-fold: to educate the public about housing discrimination and the resources that are available to aid victims and to collect local fair housing data to identify any "hot spots" of housing discrimination.
- Suffolk County is considering implementing a similar fair housing survey program designed by ERASE Racism with Long Island Housing Services collaborating as the direct services agency.
- Successful negotiations with the Department of Justice, (DOJ) Civil Rights Division resulted in ERASE Racism receiving access to statistics and information on Long Island fair housing cases prosecuted by DOJ. Access to this data will allow ERASE Racism to track DOJ enforcement of fair housing laws with an eye towards recommendations to improve another avenue of enforcement.

- The New York State Department, Division of Licensing (NYSDDL), has agreed to collaborate with ERASE Racism. The NYSDDL is the only agency that can suspend or revoke a real estate professional's license. Current laws permit inter-agency sharing of complaints filed against offending real estate professionals. However, information is rarely shared. That discrimination might place a real estate license in jeopardy remains a toothless remedy. By opening communication between the human rights and licensing agencies, ERASE Racism hopes to revive another enforcement tool.
- ERASE Racism has worked with Nassau and Suffolk County Executives to introduce new Bi-County Fair Housing legislation to both County Legislatures. Explore the new protections that the proposed legislation offers in the "Special Release" section of this month's *Emerge*.

Nationally it is estimated by The National Fair Housing Alliance, that at least 3.7 million acts of illegal housing discrimination occur annually with fewer than 1% of these incidents ever being reported.

Visit our website for updates. ERASE Racism wants your support.

COLDWELL BANKER ENLISTS TO END RACIAL STEERING

Shortly after the release of ERASE Racism's acclaimed fair housing report, *Long Island Fair Housing: A State of Inequity*, Elaine Gross, president of ERASE Racism, received an unexpected although welcomed phone call. Kate Rossi, president and COO of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, the largest residential real estate brokerage firm on Long Island, wanted to discuss racial steering in the residential housing industry.

Ms. Rossi's outreach to ERASE Racism did not result from a lawsuit or fair housing enforcement action. Ms. Rossi wanted to make sure that Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage brokers were doing the right thing. Rather than ignore the report, Ms. Rossi stated that she is "dedicated to examining the problems real estate agents face and to take proactive steps to prevent racial steering by real estate professionals."

As a first step, Ms. Rossi and twenty-five Branch Managers from Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage attended an intensive Undoing Racism Training: a two-day, overnight retreat, sponsored by ERASE Racism and conducted by cultural bridges. (See related story on page 1.). Ms. Rossi commented after the training. "Every organization should expose its team to this program. Together we will make a difference."



Elaine Gross, president ERASE Racism and Kate Rossi, president and COO Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

"Our goal is to work with the real estate industry to identify the obstacles real estate professionals face. Once we understand the business, its history, and its customs, we can develop practical tools real estate managers can use to support their complying agents. This is an important first step to promoting fair housing on Long Island," said Cathryn Harris, project manager for the fair housing campaign at ERASE Racism.

SPECIAL RELEASE
BI-COUNTY FAIR HOUSING LEGISLATION

Immediately following the release of its April 2005 report, *Long Island Fair Housing: A State of Inequity*, ERASE Racism began talks with both Nassau and Suffolk County Executives Tom Suozzi and Steve Levy and their senior staffs to put some force behind the promises of fair housing on Long Island. ERASE Racism convened a top-notch legislative team that included: Howard Glickstein, Esq., former dean of Touro Law School and one of the drafters of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Craig Gurian, Esq., executive director, Anti-Discrimination Center of Metro New York, an acclaimed New York Civil Rights attorney with extensive legislative experience; Elaine Gross, president of ERASE Racism; and Cathryn Harris, project manager of ERASE Racism. Proposed legislation, if backed by both County Executives, will fill in the loopholes in enforcement of local fair housing and human rights laws.

ERASE Racism’s proposed legislation will offer all Long Islanders significantly stronger fair housing protections. This proposed new legislation includes both substantive as well as procedural changes that will make enforcement easier and more viable as a deterrent.

SUBSTANTIVE PROPOSALS	PROCEDURAL PROTECTIONS
The definition of “couple” will extend beyond married and same sex couples to include unmarried heterosexual couples.	Each County will have its own administrative enforcement system with qualified administrative law judges presiding.
A victim who experiences harassment after moving into housing can file a post-occupancy complaint.	Clearly outlines the procedural rules and each step for all parties involved in a fair housing complaint, including an expanded list of remedies and increased civil penalties.
Makes it easier to hold an employer liable for the discriminatory actions of its employees.	Provides guidelines for County investigations and requirements for final investigative reports.
Allows claims by people who are discriminated against because they are mistaken as members of protected classes.	Allows a victim of housing discrimination to file a lawsuit in County Court under the County Human Rights Law. In some instances, authorizes eligible civil rights organizations to file cases on behalf of victims of housing discrimination and in the organization’s own right when there is evidence of fair housing discrimination.
Assures people with disabilities access and use of newly constructed dwellings by importing the federal Fair Housing Act’s construction and design requirements, and further increases access to all housing by requiring that all forms of “reasonable accommodations” be subject to a “reasonableness” test on a case by case basis.	In addition to allowing the County Attorney’s Office to represent selected individual victims of housing discrimination, the County will be authorized to pursue pattern and practice cases, which are cases to tackle repetitive violations of fair housing laws by the same defendants.
	To make enforcement more viable, allows for the award of attorney’s fees to be paid by the losing party. This provision encourages fair housing enforcement by victims without the means to pay for private attorneys while deterring frivolous lawsuits.

As this proposed legislation moves through both County legislatures, we will be contacting you for your support. Watch our website at www.eraseracsimny.org for updates.

SPOTLIGHT ON ERASE RACISM 2005 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ERASE Racism, launched in June 2001 as an initiative of the Long Island Community Foundation, was designed to foster public discourse about the need to dismantle institutional and structural racism in Nassau and Suffolk Counties and to implement activities to promote concrete changes that result in greater racial equity. ERASE Racism utilizes three primary strategies to accomplish this mission:

- Utilizes sophisticated fact-finding and research efforts to expose racial inequity and uses report cards to document ongoing regional tracking of progress and regress.
- Develops accountability systems with and for elected officials, government agencies and businesses through careful positioning, the use of media and increasingly, a mobilized constituent base.
- Serves as policy advocates and implementation consultants ensuring that public policy and government changes addressing institutional and structural racism and promoting racial equity are enacted and are supported by related changes in private sector institutions.

In 2005, ERASE Racism made significant progress in its housing, health care and public school education programs addressing structural and institutional racism including the following:

- Published *Long Island Fair Housing: A State of Inequity*—a groundbreaking fair housing study and report with 29 recommendations for change.

- Collaborated with Nassau and Suffolk County Executives on drafting a new bi-county human rights law with greater protections and strong enforcement systems.
- Created a new Fair Housing Access Initiative—a data collection and referral project that provides the general public with access to information about housing discrimination, refers victims of discrimination to appropriate services and tracks regional fair housing trends.
- Collaborated with Coldwell Banker Real estate industry—providing training and consultation.
- Completed a Cultural Competency Report for Nassau Partnership for Healthy Communities; helping health care providers assess internal policies that may impact differential access to care for different racial groups.
- Public school education study launched—building on the *Brown v. Board of Education: The Unfinished Agenda* project.
- Partnership for Racial Equity launched—a constituency building initiative in support of advocacy campaigns.
- Published *Emerge: The Racial Equity Review*—ERASE Racism's newsletter.
- Hosted Undoing Racism Trainings.
- Delivered speeches, presentations and or/trainings at 20 events.
- Raised \$100,000 at inaugural fundraising event—A Common Thread: Celebrating People of the African Diaspora.

ERASE RACISM WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER SCOTT A. WILLIAMS

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Before his current fundraising career, Scott enjoyed a varied professional background, including service in the U.S. Secret Service Uniformed Division, Foreign Missions Branch, and as both a college baseball and football coach. Along the way, Scott found opportunities to fight for racial equity.

"Scott joins a board of exemplary leaders," said Elaine Gross, president of the ERASE Racism board, "and it's a pleasure to have Scott's expertise and enthusiasm in the mix."

Scott was born in New York City and currently resides in Freeport. He is a graduate of The Waldorf School of Garden City and Trinity University in Texas. He has a bachelor's degree in Communication and a minor in Sociology. Dr. Aldustus Jordan, chair of the ERASE Racism board said, "I knew Scott was going to be a great addition. Soon after he joined the board, I asked him to co-chair the 2006 Spring Benefit. Without a moment's hesitation, he said 'yes'." Welcome Scott!

ERASE RACISM PARTNERSHIP FOR RACIAL EQUITY PROGRAM GETS A BOOST

With a \$15,000 grant from the Long Island Unitarian Universalist Fund in the Long Island Community Foundation, ERASE Racism will jumpstart its new Partnership for Racial Equity Program. Individuals who attended conferences, trainings, or just visited the website wanted to do more. The Partnership for Racial Equity was born out of this demonstrated need. "With no funding and no staff, it was hard to get started," president Elaine Gross commented. "Now Debbie-Ann Chang, our new Communications/ Outreach Manager, is staffing this initiative with the help of the LIUU grant."

A kick-off Partnership event was held on May 9th. ERASE Racism staff offered briefing sessions for Partners on the Fair Housing Policy Campaign and launched a dialogue among Partners about addressing institutional and structural racism. "We are eager to find new people who believe in our mission," said Debbie-Ann Chang. "We are aiming to have at least 500 Partners by the end of 2006."

To learn more about the Partnership for Racial Equity or to sign up to become a partner, please contact Debbie-Ann Chang at 516/921-4863 or visit the webpage at www.eraseracismny.org and complete the Partner form. You may also complete the form on the back of this newsletter.

ERASE RACISM PRESIDENT APPOINTED TO LONG ISLAND REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD

Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi asked ERASE Racism's President, Elaine Gross, to serve on the newly revamped Long Island Regional Planning Board. Six new members were selected. Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy and Tom Suozzi each appointed three members. Other appointees to the Long Island Regional Planning Board are: James Larocca, former president of the Long Island Association and former chairman of the board of The Nature Conservancy of Long Island; Paul Tonna, former Suffolk County legislator and presiding officer. He's now the executive director of Energia, a leadership program at Molloy College; Theresa Sanders, President and CEO of the Urban League of Long Island; John D. Cameron Jr., managing partner of Cameron Engineering & Associates LLP; and James Large, Jr., former chairman and director of the Dime Bancorp and subsidiary Dime Bank.

"We're trying to reinvigorate the board with some new energy and a new direction that will help us to develop regional priorities and solutions," County Executive Suozzi was quoted in a February 3rd Newsday article. The respective county legislatures approved all six appointments.

President Gross stated, "I accepted the nomination because I felt the planning board has the potential to make decisions that will break down institutional and structural racism. I will work hard to make sure the Regional Planning Board's decisions promote racial equity."



County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi swears in LIRPB appointees: Elaine Gross, president of ERASE Racism and John D. Cameron, Jr., Cameron Engineering & Associates, LLP.

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ERASE RACISM'S PARTNERSHIP FOR RACIAL EQUITY BECOME A PARTNER!

ERASE Racism is always eager to find people who believe in our mission. We are proud to introduce a new way for you to follow our progress and get involved in our work. Becoming a Partner is free.

People who sign up for the Partnership for Racial Equity receive:

- Updates on our work and upcoming events
- The latest news and trends relating to race & racial equity
- Invitations to forums and events that will connect partners with others committed to social change.
- Opportunities to participate in policy campaigns.

Yes! I am interested in supporting ERASE Racism as a Partner for Racial Equity.

Mail to: ERASE Racism
6800 Jericho Turnpike, Suite 109W
Syosset, NY 11791-4401
Fax: 516/921-4866
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www.eraseracismny.org

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