



**TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF ADVOCACY FOR A MORE
JUST LONG ISLAND AND NEW YORK:**

**ERASE RACISM AND ITS FOUNDING PRESIDENT,
V. ELAINE GROSS**



A TRIBUTE

We take this opportunity to highlight the superb achievements of ERASE Racism and its Founding President, Elaine Gross, since the organization's inception.

We hope you will spend time reviewing this booklet to learn about ERASE Racism's history and accomplishments.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors
ERASE Racism
June 2022

History of ERASE Racism

Advocates have been the backbone of the United States for centuries. Consistently, they hold a mirror up to government and the public to reflect barriers to progress for all. In that light, ERASE Racism was founded more than twenty years ago to expose structural racism and its insidious effects on equal opportunities for all, with a particular focus on access to housing and equitable education.

ERASE Racism was launched in June 2001 as a special initiative of the Long Island Community Foundation (LICF), the then 24-year old division of the New York Community Trust. The LICF Board and staff had long recognized racism as a critical issue affecting Long Island, though they received few funding requests from organizations seeking to directly address this issue. In 1999, LICF began convening a diverse group of individuals interested in racism, social equity, and human rights to listen to invited speakers and share their ideas, experiences, and concerns.

Elaine Gross was invited to participate in one of these forums in March 2001. Her comments challenged the LICF to move beyond discussion into action. Ms. Gross was hired as a consultant to help determine how LICF could meaningfully engage in these issues. Her recommendation was to focus LICF's work on identifying and addressing institutional and structural racism. There was consensus to move forward with Elaine's recommendations and, with funding from participants in the donor forums, board members and others who shared an interest, ERASE Racism was founded.¹

In keeping with LICF's initial intent, ERASE Racism separated from LICF in 2004, incorporated, obtained IRS tax-exempt status and began functioning as an independent not-for-profit organization. As it formed its Board, local civil rights icons joined, many of whom remain on the Board today, including: Howard Glickstein, Esq.; Marge Rogatz; Fred Brewington, Esq.; and Christina Vargas.

Advancing Policy Change

Over the past twenty-one years, ERASE Racism has served as a singular voice exposing structural racism on Long Island, with a particular focus on housing and education. Under Elaine's leadership, the organization framed its work to focus on data and research; public



I founded ERASE Racism in 2001 after being hired by the Long Island Community Foundation to develop a project to address racism rather than its symptoms. I was excited to have the freedom to design what I thought was needed: an initiative focused on identifying and addressing institutional and structural racism.

-Elaine Gross (2021)



¹ From 2008 Report "Racial Equity Report Card: Fair Housing on Long Island"

education and testimony; coalition building and advocacy; legal action as needed; and training and youth leadership development.

Data and Research

For ERASE Racism, the first step in advocacy has always been exposing the impact of structural racism through **data and research**. Since its founding, ERASE Racism has published numerous reports that articulate this impact, for example, on access to housing.² At their core, these reports include data on fair housing complaints, qualitative data from key informant interviews and surveys that illuminate discriminatory housing practices, and maps / graphs that visually depict how historical and current day housing exclusion have resulted in segregation on Long Island.

In the early days, ERASE Racism also collaborated with academic partners to commission reports on topics like the racial divide on Long Island (authored by john a. powell, then the Director of the Institute of Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota, which he founded³) and Black and Latino perspectives on housing discrimination on Long Island (with Stony Brook University).

Once these data were laid out, it was undeniable that rampant discrimination and bias were present in the private and public housing market on Long Island.

With regard to education, ERASE Racism has consistently shed light on the explicit and lingering segregation of schools on Long Island, hampering access to equal educational resources and opportunities for students of color. Reports and data since ERASE Racism’s founding have shown that students of color are grouped into few schools with “uneven” financing constricting the resources and opportunities available in those schools. For instance, ERASE Racism uncovered data showing that from 2004 to 2016, the number of intensely segregated school districts more than doubled; (meaning, 90-100% of the student body was non-white) and the students attending those segregated schools more than tripled.⁴



Diversity is an extraordinary strength, not something to fear.
- Elaine Gross (2021)

² ERASE Racism has catalogued and made available all of its reports since 2002 on the web site. We encourage you to review, download and share these reports available at www.eraseracismny.org (click on “Resource Center”)

³ john a. powell (who spells his name in lowercase in the belief that we should be “part of the universe, not over it, as capitals signify”) founded and leads the Othering & Belonging Institute, is the Robert D. Haas Chancellor’s Chair in Equity and Inclusion, and is a Professor of Law, African American Studies, and Ethnic Studies at the University of California Berkeley.

⁴ Elaine Gross. “Housing Discrimination and Local Control.” NYU Furman Center. March 2019.

In 2012, ERASE Racism (with partner the Fair Housing Justice Center) conducted a joint investigation to examine whether Black renters on Long Island were being discriminated against when seeking housing. This examination paired white and Black testers to visit available properties in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. That investigation revealed consistent discrimination against Black renters who visited the properties and resulted in litigation against offending real estate companies and subsequent court-mandated settlements.

This work inspired a three-year investigation led by Newsday called “Long Island Divided”, which fully exposed extensive housing discrimination by real estate brokers toward people of color seeking to buy or rent homes on Long Island. The investigation found that Asians were discriminated against by real estate agents 19% of the time, Hispanics 39% of the time, and Blacks were discriminated 49% of the time.

More recently, ERASE Racism researched resources in school districts across Long Island and found significant disparities in access to resources for the 11 intensely segregated school districts. As compared to predominantly White districts, on average, these districts, populated by Black and Hispanic students, have less funding, less financial stability, less AP course availability, higher teacher turnover, and more students for every guidance counselor, social worker, and teacher. These data and related analyses informed an ERASE Racism report published in May 2022 titled “Unequal Resources for Long Island Students Based on Race.”

These reports also depicted the inextricable link between housing segregation and education -- resulting from years-old public and private policies and practices which prevented families of color from purchasing and renting homes in certain communities. Taken together, these data and research reports were the foundation on which policy change and related advocacy would build.

Public Education and Testimony

Elaine knew that the next essential steps would be to engage the public, gather colleagues in the fight for racial equity, and share her knowledge, data and research, ensuring a strong and consistent voice.

Elaine and ERASE Racism have always stressed that when individuals discuss current institutional racism and its damaging impact, that we first understand our country’s history and what laid the groundwork for present-day inequities. Citing Supreme Court decisions, and



I hope, with the exposure of this investigation, that there will be more people who are conscious about housing discrimination.

Elaine Gross (2019), in response to Newsday's investigation “Long Island Divided”



related federal, state and local ordinances, Elaine’s focus on history is an essential part of fully understanding how deeply embedded structural racism is in our current environment.

In 2004, ERASE Racism commemorated the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision by holding a conference to which representatives of 15 local universities and colleges were invited as well as interested members of the community-at-large. An audience of more than 600 participated in a lively discussion about developing new strategies and tools to address segregation and the inequities in Long Island public schools.

To ensure that the impact of segregation on Long Island was understood, ERASE Racism produced a documentary in 2010 called “A Tale of Two Schools: Segregation on Long Island.” The film follows David and Owen, two Black teenagers during their senior year of high school (who attend two different schools – one intensely segregated with very limited resources and the other almost all white and highly resourced), underscoring the persistent inequities not only in resources, but also in opportunities and experiences.

To engage the public, ERASE Racism led a series of five forums over 12 days in 2019 to discuss “How Do We Build a Just Long Island?” These sessions – which garnered a host of media attention before and after – drew more than 700 participants who discussed the impact of racism on their daily lives and collaborating to identify concrete corrective actions.

On a national level, ERASE Racism has monitored, initiated and joined actions to combat federal efforts to roll back civil rights in the areas of housing and education. ERASE Racism’s comprehensive report “Civil Rights Rollback: U.S. Government Actions to Reduce Civil Rights in Housing and Public Education” outlined the Trump administration’s attacks on civil rights between 2017 and 2019.

Throughout her years as ERASE Racism’s Founding President, Elaine wrote editorials, opinion pieces and articles for local and national news outlets. She was invited to participate in radio and television interviews and responded to news articles (often to share relevant data that had been omitted or overlooked). In the last two years alone, ERASE Racism and Elaine have been featured or cited in more than 300 stories in national, regional and local media.

Also as a leader and a foundation of advocacy, Elaine has provided testimony at local, county and State legislative hearings on topics



“We want an informed and self-conscious public that understands how institutional racism works and why dismantling it has eluded us as a nation.”

-Elaine Gross (2002)



When we started talking to Long Islanders about structural racism, there were so many people who would say to me ‘We really don’t have a problem here.’ The problem was here but they didn’t recognize it.

-Elaine Gross (2022)



of housing, education, health and other issues relating to civil rights and social justice. She submitted expert commentary to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development; to Committees of the NYS Senate and Assembly; and to Nassau and Suffolk County legislature and other committees on matters related to the lack of equitable affordable housing and the enforcement of fair housing.

When she founded ERASE Racism, it was not uncommon to find Elaine in meeting rooms and settings where institutional and structural racism were neither mentioned nor understood. She courageously put herself in places where she was likely to receive pushback; but because she had deep faith and conviction that these issues and facts needed to be shared and talked about, she ensured they were raised and discussed.

As her work and that of ERASE Racism gained recognition and momentum, it attracted funding from such supporters as: The Long Island Community Foundation, The Ford Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Kellogg Foundation, The Rauch Foundation and the Long Island Unitarian Universalist Fund. It also engaged support, service and counsel from Community Advocates, Inc. and such family funds as the Horace and Amy Hagedorn Foundation and the Saltzman Family Foundation, along with national civil rights icons like John A. Powell and Howard Glickstein.

Coalition-Building and Advocacy

ERASE Racism's advocacy strategy involved engaging local and regional partners in housing and education campaigns along with the public; using its data, research and experience to develop policy recommendations; meeting with local and statewide elected officials; and sustaining this approach.

In 2006, largely as a result of Elaine and ERASE Racism's advocacy and leadership, Nassau and Suffolk County Executives signed into law historic fair housing legislation, drawing on the organization's recommendation of expanded and stronger fair housing protections and enforcement to protect individuals of color from facing endemic discrimination in housing.

Elaine also led the organization's work to build coalitions to amplify the advocacy's impact. In 2018, ERASE Racism initiated and led #BanIncomeBiasNY, a campaign to advocate for an amended NYS human rights law that would protect individuals using government assistance and other forms of non-wage income for rent from discrimination. Lead partners included The Fair Housing Justice Center, Enterprise Community Partners and the New York Housing



Institutional racism can thrive even in the absence of overt bigotry. Although slavery no longer exists in the US, the systems of institutional racism that began with slavery...are still significantly influencing who receives a good education, where Blacks can live, employment opportunities, etc.

- Elaine Gross (2002)



Throughout history, it has taken leadership, wisdom, moral judgment and bravery to enforce any civil rights law.

- Elaine Gross (2013)



Conference. The coalition's work - which grew to include 100 organizations -- was effective. In 2019, then-Governor Andrew Cuomo signed legislation into law that outlaws housing discrimination based on the lawful source of renters' income.

And recently, ERASE Racism's leadership in the Statewide Fair Housing Coalition, with its partners' advocacy for fair housing and elimination of housing discrimination, resulted in a historic victory in fair housing enforcement in New York State. In June 2021, the NYS Legislature passed nine fair housing bills, all of which were signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul in December 2021. Due to her expertise and leadership in this victory, Elaine was invited to provide opening remarks at then-Lieutenant Brian Benjamin's press conference announcing these momentous new laws.

To advance affordable and inclusive housing, ERASE Racism designed an assessment tool that can quantitatively measure a proposed housing development's potential to affirmatively further fair housing. Elaine, a Board member of the State of New York Mortgage Authority (SONYMA), introduced the assessment tool to the Board as a vital component of making funding decisions about affordable housing projects that further fair housing rather than racial segregation.

Under Elaine's determined leadership, ERASE Racism was unwavering throughout two decades of advocacy aimed at remediating the disastrous effect of structural racism on equal access to housing and education.

Training and Youth Leadership

To share its expertise and engage the public, school districts, businesses and others, ERASE Racism developed rigorous and meaningful anti-racism and racial equity trainings. To date, the organization has delivered hundreds of trainings to thousands of participants including school superintendents, teachers and administrators and business leaders, among others. Over the past 18 months, ERASE Racism provided 62 anti-racism workshops, retreats, and consultations for 28 clients, 13 of which were schools.

In addition, student leadership development has been an important part of ERASE Racism's work and legacy. The organization founded a Student Task Force to engage youth, build leadership skills, identify their strengths and assets and build alliances across racial, religious and district lines. ERASE Racism's diverse, 58-member Student Task Force continues to lead student activism on Long Island, representing 28 public school districts. The Task Force is having daily

“ “
[The Student Task Force] provides a wonderful opportunity to work collaboratively with ... students...so that, as a 15-year old, I can have impact.
10th Grade Student Task Force Member (2021)



“ “
It was great to see students like myself creating real change in the world...I felt so empowered at the end of the conference.
-Student participant in ERASE Racism's Long Island Leaders of Tomorrow Conference (2021)



impact throughout members' schools, while also building concrete leadership skills in racial equity work.

The students' work had such an impact that The Teachers College of Columbia University invited members of the Student Task Force to participate in its 2021 Reimaging Education Summer Institute. ERASE Racism recruited 30 Long Island educators (funded by the Rauch Foundation) to attend this annual global event with 1,200 global participants. In front of this large audience (including 30 Long Island educators), five students led a workshop on facilitating difficult conversations about current events in class. Six students spoke during a plenary discussion about their experience in Long Island's segregated schools.

As ERASE Racism's voice has been essential in local and statewide civil rights work, it has also lifted and made space for youth voices to be integrated.

Conclusion

Elaine Gross's unwavering commitment to ending structural racism, her courage to speak about these critical issues for more than 20 years, her visionary leadership, and her commitment to engaging partners and the public has resulted in a better Long Island. Her work and leadership have changed lives. Tonight, we honor Elaine, we offer our heartfelt thanks to Elaine, and we commit to keeping her legacy strong by moving forward on the firm foundation she has built.

Significant Achievements and More Work Ahead

As Elaine has stated, "The world is changing. We need to be able to live together, work together and for our children to go to school together."

The structurally racist governmental policies that have discriminated against people of color for generations in this country are harmful not only to these communities, but to every community. Integrated communities allow us to move closer to racial equity – particularly in housing and education – and benefit society-at-large.

As ERASE Racism moves through this period of leadership change, we are as focused on our mission as we ever have been.



When we finished our presentations, it was incredible how happy all the students were. It was a huge opportunity to advocate for culturally inclusive curricula. We felt that we had helped teachers change their classrooms.

-Student Task Force Participant, Reimaging Education Summer Institute (2021)



Elaine reminds us that “[s]tructural racism must be addressed now. I invite you to consider the urgency of our movement. We cannot wait. It is a steep climb but if we wait, we will likely roll backwards.”

We invite you to participate in this work with us.

Notable News Coverage of ERASE Racism’s Work and Impact

Erasing racism and bias on Long Island

Discussion series aims to spark larger conversation

Posted December 13, 2018



Elaine Gross, president of ERASE Racism, addressed a diverse audience at a Dec. 5 panel discussion at Hofstra University to address structural racism on Long Island. It was one of five such talks intended to encourage a larger, ongoing conversation. SCOTT BRINTON/ HERALD



LONG ISLAND / INVESTIGATIONS

Founder and president of ERASE Racism reacts to 'Long Island Divided'



Following Newsday's three-year "Long Island Divided" investigation of discrimination by real estate agents across Long Island, Elaine Gross, founder and president of ERASE Racism on Monday reacted to its findings. Credit: Newsday / Yeong-Ung Yang

LONG ISLAND / LI LIFE

Volunteer Nation: ERASE Racism to host Island-wide discussions



Elaine Gross, president of ERASE Racism, near Commack's Mayfair Gardens, an apartment complex that in 2016 agreed to pay \$230,000 to settle a federal housing discrimination lawsuit filed by ERASE Racism and seven African-Americans who said they were denied access to rental apartments based on their race. Credit: Newsday/ Conrad Williams Jr.

By Merle English
Special to Newsday
November 12, 2018



In his book, "Crabgrass Crucible," Christopher Sellers, director of the Center for the Study of Inequalities, Social Justice & Policy at Stony Brook University, recounts the experience in 1950 of a newlywed African-American couple who sought to buy a home in Levittown.

Desegregating Segregated Long Island

Listen 40 min + Queue



Nov 26, 2018

Elaine Gross, president of ERASE Racism, talks about her group's work to desegregate Long Island -- one of the most segregated areas in the country.

Eraseracism is hosting a series of forums in the next few weeks. More details can be found on ERASE Racism's website, and below:

- [How Do We Build a Just Long Island? @ Suffolk County - Stony Brook](#)



Published by
The Brian Lehrer Show

A New HUD Rule Could Dismantle the Fair Housing Act

▶ Listen 26 min

+ Queue



Sep 10, 2019

The Department of Housing and Urban Development is proposing a new rule that would make it more difficult to bring discrimination claims under the Fair Housing Act. [Elaine Gross](#), president of ERASE Racism, a Syosset-based nonprofit [argues the change would lead to more discriminatory housing practices in Long Island](#), one of the most racially segregated regions in the country.

MENU TODAY'S PAPER

Newsday

LONG ISLAND

Leader of Syosset-based ERASE Racism to retire after 20 years of advocacy



Elaine Gross' announcement Monday of her pending retirement prompted glowing assessments of her commitment to fairness in housing and education on Long Island.
Credit: Chris Ware

By **Olivia Winslow**
olivia.winslow@newsday.com
Updated April 4, 2022



Elaine Gross, founder and president of Syosset-based ERASE Racism, announced Monday she plans to retire, prompting admiring assessments of her 20 years leading a civil rights organization that used research and advocacy to expose segregation in Long Island housing and education.

Historic Legislative Achievements on Long Island



Eliminating Barriers to Racial Equity

Email Signup



About Us

Our Work

Resource Center

Take Action

Donate

Press

Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi Signs Landmark Fair Housing Bill into Law

August 24, 2006 marked an historic day for Nassau County and its residents. Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi signed a landmark fair housing bill into law on the steps of One West Street in Mineola. The new law will go into effect on January 1, 2007.

The crowd present at the signing included Presiding Officer Judy Jacobs, Legislator David Mejias, Nassau County Village Mayors and political leaders, non-profits, community advocates and people from the business community. The new law greatly improves the fair housing protections for all Nassau residents who fall within any of the twelve protected classes. It also creates a local fair housing enforcement system which allows victims of housing discrimination to file complaints with the Nassau County Commission on Human Rights and have their complaint investigated and prosecuted at the local level.



Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi signs fair housing bill into law



Eliminating Barriers to Racial Equity

Email Signup



About Us

Our Work

Resource Center

Take Action

Donate

Press

Suffolk County Adopts ERASE Racism's Key Amendments to Fair Housing Legislation to be Voted on By the Full Suffolk County Legislature on September 19, 2006

The passage of I.R. 2027 as amended, coupled with the rigorous enforcement of the enacted law by the Suffolk Human Rights Commission will allow Suffolk County to take concrete steps to address housing discrimination. Residents of Suffolk County who experience housing discrimination in Suffolk County will at long last be given the opportunity to have their complaint investigated and prosecuted in Suffolk County. Many thanks are in order for all of those who championed the passage of a sound fair housing bill. We hope that this bill will receive unanimous support from the legislature. ERASE Racism is pleased to see this law moving forward, and we look forward to working with the Human Rights Commission in any way that will further our shared objective of fighting discrimination and promoting racial equity. A year from now, when we are all reviewing the annual statistics from the Human Rights Commission it will give us great pleasure to be able to affirm that housing discrimination in Suffolk is being vigorously enforced and that victims of housing discrimination are finally being granted the right to have their case heard before a Suffolk County administrative law judge. We congratulate the three co-sponsors of this legislation, County Executive Steve Levy, and legislators Ricardo Montano and Eli Mystal.

Historic Statewide Legislative Achievements

NEW YORK STATE

Services News Government COVID-19

Homes and Community Renewal Rental Housing Homeownership Development Resources Funding & Awards About

The New York State Homeowner Assistance Fund will not be accepting applications after February 18th. Starting on February 19th, interested homeowners will be added to a waiting list. Please apply as soon as possible. For more information about the program and determine if you're eligible to apply, visit: <https://www.nyhomeownerfund.org/>

APRIL 26, 2019 | ALBANY, NY

Governor Cuomo and Legislative Leaders Announce FY 2020 Enacted Budget Includes Measure Prohibiting Discrimination Against Tenants Based on Source of Income

New Law Prohibits Source of Income Discrimination to Protect Tenants Who Pay Rent Using Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Veterans Benefits, or Other Lawful Sources of Income

Announcement Made as New York State Celebrates Fair Housing Month and the Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Charles G. Walcott

Elaine Gross, President of ERASE Racism, said, "Governor Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Heastie deserve great credit for ensuring enactment of this vital law and now using their offices to draw attention to it. It's essential that New Yorkers understand their right to use legal sources of income for their housing and that property owners understand their obligation to immediately ensure that they and their agents are abiding by the law. Today's announcement puts the weight of the highest level of State government behind fair housing."

NEW YORK STATE

Services News Government COVID-19

GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL Pressroom Schedule Executive Orders Legislation About Contact

DECEMBER 21, 2021 | ALBANY, NY

Governor Hochul Signs Legislative Package to Combat Housing Discrimination

LEGISLATION HOUSING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

In Response to Newsday's "Long Island Divided" Expose, Governor Hochul Signs a Nine Bill Action Plan to Combat Housing Discrimination

Establishes the Anti-Discrimination in Housing Fund to be Used by the Attorney General's Office for Fair Housing Testing

Establishes that All State and Local Agencies Have an Obligation to Further Fair Housing

ERASE RACISM

Eliminating Barriers to Racial Equity Email Signup

About Us Our Work Resource Center Take Action Donate Press

Elaine Gross, President of ERASE Racism, Opening Remarks at New York State Lt. Governor Brian Benjamin's Event December 28, 2021

Opening Remarks of Elaine Gross, President of ERASE Racism At a Media Event with New York State Lt. Governor Brian Benjamin December 28, 2021

"Good evening. I'm Elaine Gross, President and CEO of the civil rights organization ERASE Racism. We've worked for 20 years to increase fair housing, drawing on our research into ongoing housing discrimination in Nassau and Suffolk Counties on Long Island - as well as the deficiencies of the State agencies responsible for enforcing fair housing laws and licensing real estate professionals.

I'm pleased to welcome everyone to this important event celebrating the signing of new fair housing legislation. Collectively, these bills provide a clear

Editorials by Elaine Gross



Erase structural racism: 5 steps Joe Biden can take to make U.S. laws, policies more just

It will take concerted effort by the Biden administration and Congress to dismantle white supremacy and its racial inequities.

Elaine Gross Opinion contributor

Published 6:01 a.m. ET Feb. 4, 2021 | Updated 9:18 a.m. ET Feb. 5, 2021



Biden signs new executive orders, says 'now's the time to act' on racial equity

President Joe Biden signed four new executive orders, building on steps taken as part of his campaign promise to create a more equitable society. *Associated Press, USA TODAY*

OPINION / COMMENTARY

Slamming the courthouse door on equal access to housing

By Elaine Gross

September 9, 2019



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has proposed a rule that undermines the enforcement of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 — a mainstay in fighting housing discrimination.

The implications for Long Island are significant, because structural racism in housing is central to our region being ranked one of the 10 most racially segregated metropolitan areas in the United States.

Long Island's longstanding residential segregation and continuing housing discrimination confirm what Congress knew when it approved the FHA: prohibiting discrimination and offering redress when discrimination occurs is inadequate.

OP-ED

Slavery on L.I.: We should talk about it in school

Posted November 18, 2021

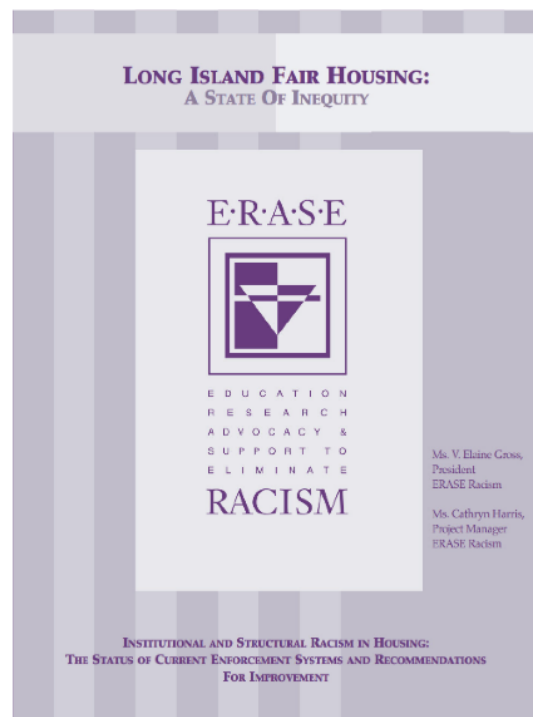
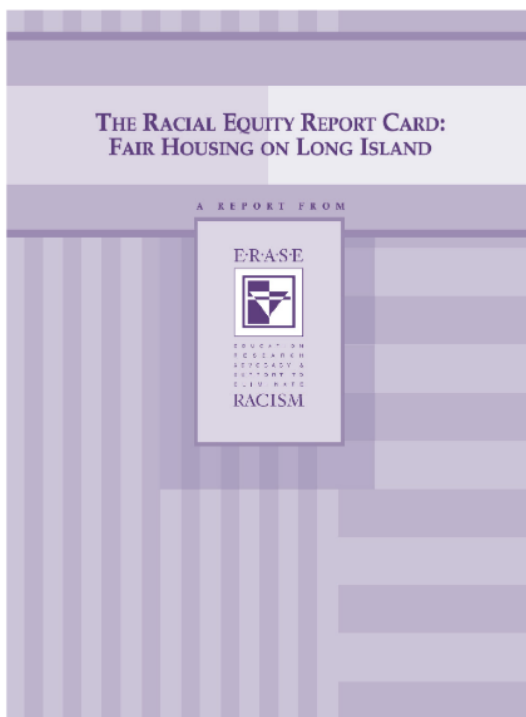
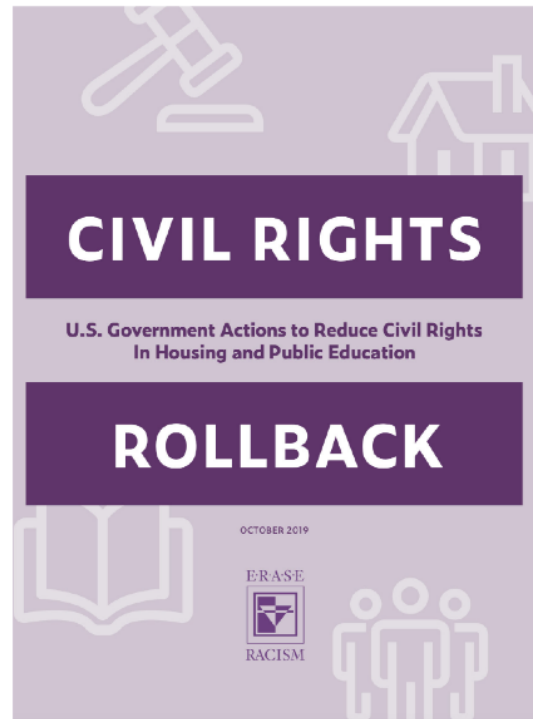
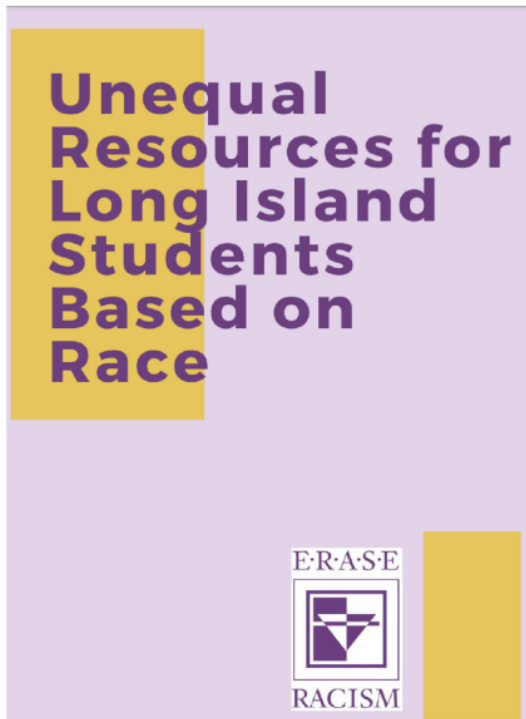


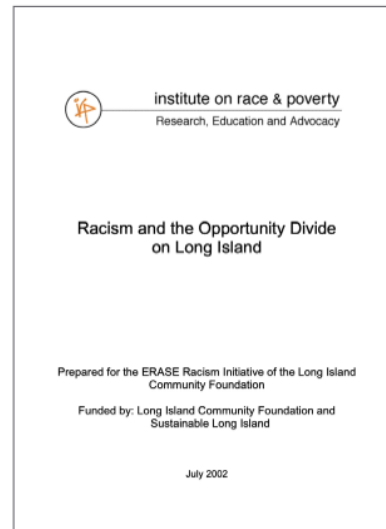
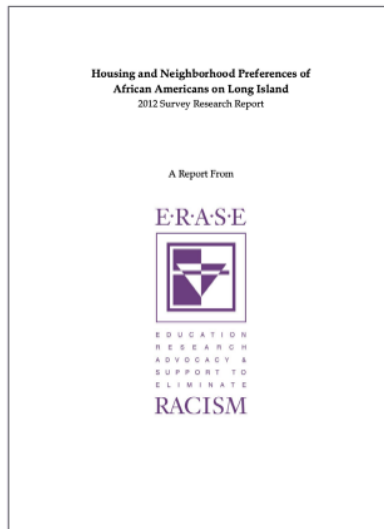
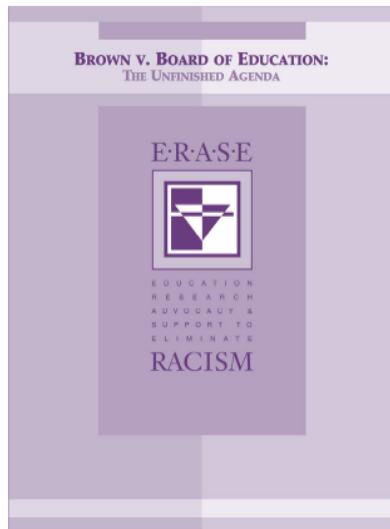
By Elaine Gross

I recently joined five Long Island high school students for a visit to the Joseph Lloyd Manor in Lloyd Harbor, the 18th-century site where many enslaved people of African descent lived. The visit yielded a fascinating discussion with significant implications for education on Long Island.




The five diverse students are part of ERASE Racism's Student Task Force, a student-led initiative that advances racial and socioeconomic equity on issues that impact their everyday lives. The students came from four school districts in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The visit was part of a series of similar events happening across the country called Teach the Truth Day of Action.

ERASE Racism's Groundbreaking Reports





ABOUT TEAM SUPPORT JOBS IN THE NEWS CONTACT

SIGN UP   

NYU Furman Center
Advancing research and debate on housing, neighborhoods, and urban policy
School of Law
Wagner School of Public Service

THE LATEST RESEARCH DEBATES & DISCUSSIONS HOUSING SOLUTIONS LAB COREDATA.NYC STATE OF NYC HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

NYU Furman Center | **THE DREAM REVISITED**

HOME ABOUT INTRODUCTION DISCUSSIONS

Housing Discrimination and Local Control

by Elaine Gross | March 2019

The fundamental problem with historical and modern-day local control of housing policy, including the placement of housing developments, is that it perpetuates the toxic combination of historical segregation plus white supremacy—the exclusive power of whites to marginalize groups deemed “not white” and mark them for discrimination and oppression. It thus victimizes descendants of enslaved Africans, Native Americans and other people of color deemed not white.

This power is not just used against individuals of color but has been systematically baked into laws and government policies, institutions large and small, and the very culture of the United States. This is structural racism. And local control legitimizes the power arrangements already in place from structural racism.

Local control derives from home rule, which consists of specific powers delegated by states to local municipalities. Those powers transfer 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. This power to exclude creates and perpetuates residential segregation.

Local control does not even require overt racial hatred. That is what is so insidious about it. It will automatically perpetuate racial segregation.

In many places, local control is accompanied by intense government fragmentation. On Long Island, where I live and work,

“Consider a seed: when you first plant it, you can’t see anything. You don’t know if anything is changing and there are no signs of life. With light, nourishment, and time, it will eventually peak its head out of the ground. Then, it will reach towards the sky.

The pace of change may still feel unbearably slow. But we know that this is a necessary step for every tall tree in a forest. Each small step, even weeks of the seedling being invisible and underground, was critical to its ability to eventually be a full-grown tree.

Change is not always obvious or visible, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t happening. Always, an intricate roots system needs to be laid underground in order for meaningful change to eventually reach branches toward the sky.

We appreciate your efforts in our ongoing endeavors to impact real change, which requires a strong foundation.”

- Elaine Gross, January 2021

And so we move forward, together. Onward.