

Healing Justice



Some of the Dialogue:Racism Workshop Participants

April 2nd & 3rd, 2016

Gratitude to all who helped make the Dialogue:Racism workshop SUCH A HUGE SUCCESS!!!

YES!!! It finally happened and it was glorious! The days were power packed and fast moving, leaving in their wake much to ponder. Creating such a successful workshop took the efforts of many.

First the wonderful, caring and knowledgeable workshop co-presenters Cherry Steinwender, Executive Director and Co-founder of the Center for the Healing of Racism out of Houston Texas and Lucy McLaughlin, RN BSN MEd MCHES.

From UUFBR...Gratitude goes to the Endowment Committee for the grant that supported the workshop. The Fellowship graciously provided both space and varied resources and the Reverend Harris Riordan provided invaluable wisdom and support to guide our planning.

So, here are the names of the many UUFBR folk who contributed time and expertise to the effort: Anjali Leon, Bill Bode, Cathy Lowes-Nelson, Doug Hughes, Gail Larkin, Grisell Martinez, Krystena Castro, Louise Malusis, Mary Ellen Kennett, Sharon Rosenberg, Vicky Kemish and Carolyn Brown.

To all of the community and faith based groups and individuals who helped get the word out about joining us to learn more about racism in our world today, HEALING JUSTICE IS GRATEFUL.

Carolyn Brown,
Member, Healing Justice

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Healing Justice, a group that formed two years ago at UUFBR to work for racial justice, heralded this Spring with the long-awaited Dialogue-Racism workshop. Occurring over two days, it was co-presented by Cherry Steinwender, Executive Director and Co-founder of the Center for the Healing of Racism out of Houston Texas and Lucy McLaughlin, RN BSN MEd MCHES. Attesting to the skilled, wise and loving leadership skills of the facilitators, this large diverse group stayed engaged over the two days. Each day brought 45 (plus or minus) people from varied faith communities, cultural groups and a wide variety of skin colors and ethnicities.

A resounding invitation opened the workshop. Open your hearts and minds to listen. Listen with your whole selves. Listen! Hear fully! Clear away the clouded lens of what you think you know. Clear away what you have been taught to believe. Let in what at first seems unreal, impossible. Things that result in your thinking of, "How could this be? Could this be real? How could I be a part of the racism that runs rampant in our society?" The challenge was to listen respectfully, without forming judgments or what you plan to say next. Just take it in. Begin to question what you think you know.

While the facilitators did not talk of Unitarian Universalism, it is the UU way to search for truth and meaning in a free and responsible way (UU Principle 4). At our center, UUs also believe in "The inherent worth and dignity of every person," (Principle 1) and in "Justice, equity and compassion in human relations" (Principle 2). Thus our UUFBR Healing Justice group brought this workshop to this area to help us to dig for deeper understandings of racism.

Cherry Steinwender, began the first day by having us consider the lies we have been told from childhood on and the web of untruths woven to

keep these "unfacts" in place. We went into our memory banks pulling forth images of Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. Then, not so pleasant, we began to unravel the lies leading to racism in today's world. We spent the rest of the workshop exploring the power of these lies in our everyday lives.

Many of us are activists. We came to this workshop expecting to learn how to heal racism by learning how to fix something evil out there, to make a difference in the world, being more efficient in creating a less racist world. After all, we truly are good people and stand ready to help. Instead, we began to take individual journeys by looking into ourselves and learning how we have been conditioned to believe in untruths that support both institutional and structural racism and how it is soooooo difficult to see.

So on April 2 and 3, under Cherry's and Lucy's loving leadership, we listened deeply. We listened with more than just our intellect. We listened with our hearts as well as our minds AND we began to understand a little more about racism. Midway in the workshop we were asked what we felt about what we were experiencing. Most of us were aware of what we thought, but getting to the emotional root of our thinking was not so easy. With the gentle guidance of our leaders we began to "get" what it might be like to be a "person of color" in the world today.

Please watch future Unicorns for more about what the workshop taught us about healing racism. Also, please join our Healing Justice Group as we continue to work to create justice that heals.

We meet the 4th Tuesday of every month at 7 PM in Osias at UUFBR. In our next meeting we will explore what some of what our next steps could be.