

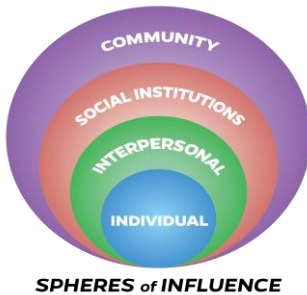
# February 2021 Newsletter

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## Dear Friends,

February 2021 marks the first celebration of Black History Month after the racial tragedies of last spring. In June of 2020, Parker's Diversity and Equity Critical Friends Group (CFG) wrote a letter to Todd with suggestions to further support students and faculty of color. This resulted in the creation of an Anti-Racist Task Force and two book recommendations for summer professional growth (*White Fragility* and *How to be an Anti-Racist*). In this newsletter, we highlight different areas of current work at Parker related to race, equity, and anti-racism.



## Race and Equity Critical Friends Group (CFG)

Wes Moreno, Parker's IT Director, and Colleen Meaney,

## From Todd

I'm grateful for the thoughtful efforts of teacher leaders,

## Student Advisory Council project

Earlier this winter, Parker's

the Director of the Sizer Teachers Center, are the co-facilitators of a Race and Equity CFG where eighteen Parker staff members are engaging in personal and professional growth each month.

Moreno and Meaney have developed a Theory of Action with four bodies of work:

personal development; new learning; implications; and action. "Racial Identity and Adult Development theories show us that people don't grow if they stay in just a scholarly lane. You can read articles and listen to podcasts, but you will not grow if you stay only in that lane," Meaney said. "You have to look at your own lived experience- in the past and now." In the CFG, members are asked to notice their roots and question themselves; they are asked what the implications of race are for themselves as people- and what the implications are for their students, colleagues, school, and its systems. Meaney continued, "When individuals have personal growth, that has an impact on their professional lives and how they interact in their greater community. We allow for people to figure out what their growth is and how to apply that growth in the world around them."

"I think it is important to recognize that we are all parts and products of

students, and community members as Parker strives to meet this historical moment with humility and commitment: to deepen our understanding of White Privilege; articulate and pursue goals related to Anti-Racism; and further our learning about race as individuals and a community.

It's a vital journey to learn, unlearn, and transform in ways that exemplify a commitment to Common Principle #10.

**From the Board of Trustee's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee chair, Mario Silva-Rosa**

As a member of the Board of Trustees at Parker, I am particularly excited about the work that has been initiated around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and the impact that the work will have on the community members. It is important for the members of the Board of Trustees to work closely and continue to collaborate with the school's leadership, faculty and staff to find ways to integrate multicultural practices into the classrooms and everyday activities, promoting awareness of identity, equity and inclusion across all grade levels and throughout the Parker community. This in turn can promote strategic relationships among its members. DEI efforts are meant to build trust and allow students to not only

Student Advisory Council leaders, Audrey, Theo, and Yarrow, developed a plan for a People of Color History Wall to be installed at Parker. "It is a pattern throughout United States and world history, that People of Color who are upstanders, heroes, saviors, authors, musicians, artists, mathematicians, scientists, or others who excel in their field are unrecognized and their voices stifled by a society *still* plagued by white supremacy. We know this is unequal and wrong," the leaders said.

"Parker is a school that values diversity and equality. This wall is a way for Parker to continue to bring forward all voices and ensure that the hard work of talented people from disenfranchised groups is recognized and appreciated," said Yarrow.

They will build and paint the physical installation themselves, while a future step includes advisories taking part in the educational aspect-learning of the challenges, accomplishments, and missions of unsung People of Color. Theo said, "This work is important to me because there are so many People of Color out there that don't have their voices heard. This project brings awareness to these amazing and wonderful people's work and who they were/are."

Parker's 10<sup>th</sup> Common Principle is demonstrated in

systems that we might not have had any part in the creation of, but have some agency in the current iteration of," Moreno said. "We're not responsible for how we got here, but we are responsible for what we do with it. We are giving people a safe place to break down their feelings and beliefs about the systems and our histories."

feel welcome but also it gives them a sense of belonging while honoring differences.

The Parker community will continue to evolve in all aspects related to DEI and be able to "walk the walk."

Among some of the issues to tackle are conflict resolution, hiring, recruiting, onboarding, and certainly optimizing organizational culture. The faculty has developed a working group that is committed to professional development and education around DEI issues and they will be able to identify areas for community growth and address a number of issues that may arise as part of the DEI progress within Parker.

reaching for thorough inclusion of the formation and work of racist systems not only in Arts and Humanities history, but also in genetics, wellness, and other subjects.

"By creating a People of Color History Wall, we are 'deliberately and explicitly challenging...inequity'; we are helping Parker continue to live up to our 10<sup>th</sup> Common Principle." Audrey added, "As moderators, we made a commitment to the student body to *act*, to be upstanders to injustice, to be impatient for change, to do what is right, and we honor this promise. The moderators are in their final stages of project design, then will embark fully on the installation.

As a Parker community we are aware that diversity, equity and inclusion work is ongoing and we ground our commitment and values in one of our Ten Common Principles:

**"Democracy and equity.** The school should demonstrate non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies. It should model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school. The school should honor diversity and build on the strength of its communities, deliberately and explicitly challenging all forms of inequity."

### **From Jocelyn Foshay, Parker Class of 2013**

*Current Middle School Social Studies Teacher in Texas*

I love teaching the Bill of Rights. We draw fun little cartoon images for each amendment and I get the most creative "what if" questions about amendments and what they entail. We talked at length about the origins of the 4th amendment and what its modern day implications are. A student asked me why the 4th amendment did not apply to Breonna Taylor. As we talked about the 8th amendment, another student asked about George Stinney and where the 8th amendment was when he needed it most. Kids ask how Thomas Jefferson sat there and wrote "all men are created equal" and then turned around and enslaved human beings. These are the questions that give me goosebumps as an educator. They are somehow the questions I love the most and the questions that make me the most uncomfortable to answer. As February comes to a close, let's remind ourselves that our continued efforts in anti-racism must continue. We have spent a month uplifting, highlighting and celebrating Blackness. Our critical eye and drive to be better and do better and take action are needed more than ever. As we enter Women's History Month, we must continue to examine and overturn the whiteness that inevitably blankets that month. We need to remind ourselves that Susan B. Anthony's triumph was because of her vocal anti-Blackness. We need to remember that learning and educating are step one but action is step two, three, four and more. Keep questioning, keep making people uncomfortable with your questions. Be loud, take up the space. Ask the questions that are hard to answer because we need those the most.

**If you missed Jocelyn's Community Connection video from last summer, you can view it here.**

[Community Connections - Alumni Spotlight - August 31, 2020 - YouTube](#)



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