

A Progress Report

September 2015

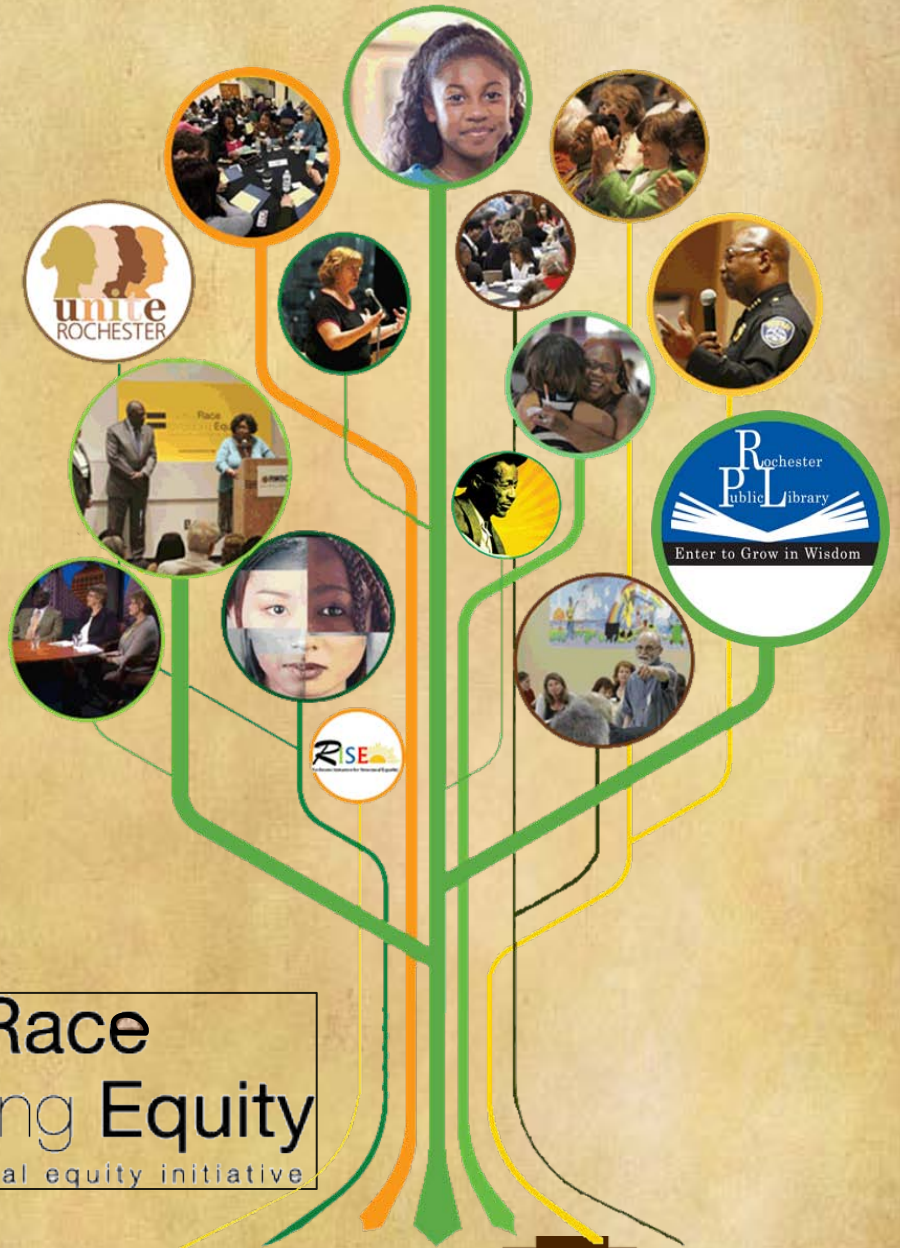
Education

Jobs & Economic Opportunity

Housing

Juvenile/Criminal Justice

Health Disparities



Facing Race
Embracing Equity
rochester's racial equity initiative



Introduction

**“It is not incumbent upon you to complete the work,
but neither are you at liberty to desist from it” – Pirkei Avot**

Some say racism has always been with us. In fact, it has not. It is a relatively recent invention in human history, a concept developed to give privilege to Europeans and to make non-Europeans lesser. With centuries of policies, practices and cultural norms reinforcing it, with damage to generations of hearts, minds and souls, racism is a foe that is as invisible as it is powerful. Fighting racism is no easy task.

One example of the invisibility of racism is the way it defines our expectations – it makes us hungry for quick fixes in order to distract our appetite from the more substantive work that is truly required.

This document aspires to develop a new frame for understanding anti-racism work in this community. There are no easy solutions, no silver bullets, no magic workshops that will cleanse a person’s soul of bias. The work of undoing racism is ongoing, and it requires individuals to peer into their own experiences, their relations with others, the institutions they accept without question and the culture that defines what is the norm. What we find is that racism and its tentacles touch all of these areas.

This report shines a light on how FR=EE has cultivated multiple efforts, at different levels, in different sectors of the community. FR=EE’s impact can be seen in the people, thoughts, behaviors and commitments that have begun to shift toward a more equitable frame. It may take years for the fruits of these efforts to be fully realized.

Our identity

FR=EE is a citizen engagement initiative that seeks to prepare and mobilize individuals and the general public to advocate for racial equity and social justice through active participation in citizen-led dialogues, “public-inquiry” action groups and community forums on eliminating racism, racial disparities and structural racism in the Greater Rochester Community.

Contents

The Depth of the Problem	4
<p>“Race” is a highly complex concept with many built-in contradictions. When social power is added to race – to benefit one group and oppress another (racism) – the effects of the resulting racism are widespread, deep and firmly entrenched.</p>	
Our Journey	6
<p>Facing Race, Embracing Equity has challenged racism in the Rochester area for a relatively brief period of time. That history, however, demonstrates FR=EE’s focus on persistent dialogue, collaboration, education and advocacy.</p>	
Our Approach to Change	7
<p>Facing Race, Embracing Equity believes conscious and unconscious bias and institutional and structural racism are thoroughly intertwined and inseparable in American society. Our model for change requires ongoing courageous dialogues, education and concrete change efforts.</p>	
Dialogues with Impact	8
<p>Facing Race, Embracing Equity has encouraged and led community dialogues to put the issue of racism in the forefront. Public events, focused advocacy efforts, mass media efforts and individual outreach have put racism at the top of the public agenda.</p>	
Collaborations with Impact	9
<p>Facing Race, Embracing Equity has facilitated and participated in collaboratives that have not only merged existing equity efforts but also leveraged significant new resources to sustain long-term efforts required to eliminate structural racism.</p>	
Building Capacity for Impact	10
<p>Facing Race, Embracing Equity has provided local residents with deeper knowledge of racism and its nature, and techniques for implementing effective anti-racism practices. This capacity-building has led to the emergence of a corps of anti-racism advocates to build on existing long-term justice and equity work in the community.</p>	
Advocating for Impact	11
<p>Facing Race, Embracing Equity is pursuing community change across multiple sectors of public policy and community institutions. As a partner or leader of collaborative advocacy efforts, FR=EE is laying the groundwork for institutional change in the community.</p>	
Voices of FR=EE	12
<p>Across the community, residents are exploring their own privilege, bias or internalized racism, as well as taking steps to educate themselves into more effective community change agents.</p>	
The Future of FR=EE	13
<p>Undoing racism and its impacts will require a long-term, sustained commitment. FR=EE provides a space for new initiatives to develop and grow into powerful anti-racism change agents.</p>	

The Depth of the Problem

What is “Race”?

- It is a fiction, a human invention with no scientific basis, *and yet it is a driver of life outcomes.*
- It is uncomfortable and taboo, *and yet it must be understood and deeply probed.*
- It defines a power hierarchy in America, *and yet it defines heritage, pride, and identity.*
- It is invisible and elusive, *and yet It is present in all of our institutions, interactions, and cultures.*
- It is an outdated, historic concept, *and yet it is urgently relevant to the current times.*

What is “Racism?”

- Racism = Bias + Power
- Racism infects **MANY** dimensions of our lives with multiple points of intersection
- Structural racism cannot be eliminated piecemeal – it must be reversed in **ALL** places at **ALL** levels of impact, from individual to institutional

Racism operates at multiple levels:

Racism affects all areas of our community:

Structural
Institutional
Interpersonal
Internalized

Legal System
Media
Culture
Education
Health

Racism affects everyone -- in different ways and degrees

“Freedom is not enough...

You do not take a person who, for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, “you are free to compete with all the others,” and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.”

Lyndon B. Johnson



The Depth of the Problem: Why is racism so hard to eliminate?

*FR=EE Recognizes the damage caused by racism
requires a multi-faceted approach*

The damage caused by racism: **Required actions to overcome racism:**

- Internalized feelings of inferiority
- Unconscious sense of superiority/privilege
- Implicit bias
- Micro-aggressions
- Slavery & Jim Crow
- Segregation
- Mass incarceration
- Racial profiling

- Changed hearts & minds
- Individual level introspection
- Interpersonal relationships
- Cross-class, cross-race dialogues
- Strategic Institutional reform
- Spaces for civic thinking & action
- Structural change & Policy change

OUR JOURNEY...



2009
Creation of RISE

Our Approach to Change

How does FR=EE offer a unique, effective response to the impact of racism?

FR=EE **creates** public spaces for inter-class, inter-racial dialogue and strategic thinking

FR=EE **lifts up** the multiple intersections of institutions, policies, individual behaviors and unconscious thoughts

FR=EE **catalyzes and supports** multiple “energy centers” for anti-racist action, advocacy and change

“Energy centers” are the vital people, organizations and institutions that have internalized the damage of racism and are actively, continually advocating for equity. Linked together, they reinforce the equity agenda across all sectors and at all levels, from individual to structural.

FR=EE is committed to cultivating, sustaining and connecting individual and institutional energy centers by encouraging them to Face Race and Embrace Equity.

FR=EE Encourages Individuals and Institutions to

Face Race
when they:



Embrace Equity
when they:

DIALOGUE:

Recognize that race matters, in multiple ways, across all sectors with broad, deep, impact

COLLABORATE:

Recognize that our community has significant capacity and opportunity to create multiple spaces to confront race

BUILD CAPACITY:

Affirm that we can DO better, we can THINK better, we can increase our capacity to pursue equity

ADVOCATE:

Develop and implement strategies and actions to pursue equity and eliminate racism

Dialogues with Impact

FR=EE has established multiple spaces/centers of activity to promote broad awareness of the impact of racism:

Public Events

- RISE conference in 2010 engaged **250** residents in discussions of structural racism.
- 2013 Launch events engaged **450** residents in discussions of structural racism.
- 3 Community Summits have attracted and engaged **900** community members.

Sector Specific Planning and Advocacy

- Racial Equity Community Agenda engaged **500** residents in planning activities and community focus groups.
- Race & Education Workgroup held a school to prison public event that drew **100** attendees.
- FR=EE members participated in the Community Task Force on School Climate.
- Health Disparities workgroup convened a community planning team that included **20+** agencies focused on reducing racial disparities in health employment and careers.

Mass Media Messaging

- FR=EE's launch events, community summits, community forums and advocacy efforts have generated dozens of articles and stories in local media.
- FR=EE's partnership with the *Democrat & Chronicle* has supported regular blogs on the subject of race and several op-eds on issues of racism in the community.
- ACT Rochester re-organized community indicators to identify racial/ethnic disparities.

Individual Outreach and Dialogues

- FR=EE has stimulated several community members to pursue personal introspection and dialogues that will be critical in galvanizing change efforts:

"The FR=EE launch in the basement of Asbury church in 2013, was the start of the wonderful journey that is the Table 23 Book Club. This biracial group of 12 has been meeting monthly ever since in each other's homes, reading books for background and education and more importantly creating open, honest and informative dialogue. It's been my wife and my most important, educational and transforming activity among our community service efforts. It has led me to create, with the help of a young African-American woman, a presentation on racism we plan to deliver to suburban churches. -- Alan Ziegler, President Rochester Area Business Ethics Foundation & FR=EE participant

Public
Events

Sector-Specific
Planning &
Advocacy

Mass
Media
Messaging

Individual
Outreach
and
Relationships

Collaborations with Impact

Ending racism in the Rochester area requires collaboration, coordination and the resources to sustain these efforts over time.

FR=EE's collaborations have built partnerships and have leveraged resources for long-term community change:

Racial Equity, Economic Security Collaborative: Using **\$10,000** in funding from the Ford Foundation, Action for a Better Community convened community stakeholders to convene the Rochester Initiative for Structural Equity (RISE) in 2009

RACE Exhibit Collaborative: The Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester Institute of Technology, RISE and the Community Foundation joined together over 2011-2013 to contribute more than **\$250,000** in funds and in-kind resources to support the exhibit, "Race: Are We So Different?" attended by 50,000 Rochesterians.

Major Initiatives on Race Collaborative: From 2012 to the present, FR=EE has convened regular meetings of organizations leading racial equity and understanding efforts to coordinate and support efforts. Participants include the YWCA, GEVA Theater, CCSI, The Community Foundation and the *Democrat & Chronicle*.

"I'm Not Racist... Am I?" collaborative: In 2015, FR=EE's Youth & Race Committee convened several local school districts and The Community Foundation to provide **\$10,000** in funding to support student and public viewings of the documentary, "I'm Not Racist... Am I?" with facilitated dialogues to promote deeper understanding.

Media collaborations: FR=EE has partnered with the *Democrat & Chronicle's* "Unite Rochester" to promote both initiatives; FR=EE has also partnered with WXXI-TV to provide access to community events and dialogues around race.

Arts collaborations: FR=EE partnered with a young artist to produce a fundraising performance of "The Wiz" featuring area youth to support FR=EE in 2014; FR=EE partnered with GEVA Theater to support its "Theatre and Race" programming in 2014; FR=EE partnered with local filmmaker Carvin Eison to provide public showings of his documentary "Shadows of the Lynching Tree," as well as showings of the documentary series, "Race: The Power of an Illusion."

Health Professions Opportunity Grant (HPOG) planning collaborative: FR=EE convened over 20 community partners in 2015 to secure an **\$8.2 million** federal grant to promote health careers for low-income residents:

"A collaborative community-wide effort aimed to improve health equity and access culminated in our (ABC) submission for the Rochester Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) to the US Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Children and Families to Serve TANF Recipients and Other Low-Income Individuals. The proposal is the result of Rochester stakeholders' commitment to organize, analyze and agree on a collective community-wide approach that avoids duplication and maximizes resources." --
Melissa Wendland, Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, participant in HPOG planning team

Building Capacity for Impact

Eliminating racism in Rochester requires individuals and institutions to build capacity to sustain a long-term change effort.

It is often said, “We did not create this problem in a day, we will not end it in a day.” Racism has infused our culture, institutions and practices for centuries. Eliminating its effects will take knowledge, commitment and time. FR=EE’s educational and training efforts make both an immediate impact and set the stage for longer-term outcomes:

FR=EE supports increased capacity of community leaders:

- The 2010 RISE Conference (a precursor to FR=EE) introduced 250 residents to structural racism with nationally-known expert, Prof. John Powell.
- Action for a Better Community sponsored racial justice workshops from the Interaction Institute for Social Change (IISC) to 75 community leaders in 2011.
- FR=EE participants partnered with RIT’s Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations in 2013 and 2014, presented at the University of Rochester Diversity Conference in 2015 and educational programming at St. John Fisher College in 2015.
- FR=EE sponsored training from IISC for 20 leaders to facilitate community dialogues – those participants committed to facilitating at least two dialogues in the next year.
- FR=EE partnered with the Rochester City School District and other human service agencies to sponsor workshops by Dr. Joy DeGruy on the subject of the generational trauma caused by slavery and its aftermath.

FR=EE participants build their internal capacity to grow :

- FR=EE established a capacity-building committee to promote the ongoing development of FR=EE participants and to ensure FR=EE itself honestly faces issues of race and embraces principles of equity within its own work.
- FR=EE participants have trained with other racial justice leaders at the Aspen Institute.

FR=EE capacity-building efforts have immediate impact on community institutions:

- Action for a Better Community wove racial equity throughout its 2014-2016 Strategic plan .
- Rochester Museum & Science Center has engaged a diversity consultant to advise on promoting diversity in museum activities and outreach.
- The Community Foundation has made racial justice a funding priority for Rochester.

“At the Aspen Institute, I was humbled to be surrounded by some of the people whose life stories were woven directly into the fabric of the civil rights movement and its aftermath. These are people who had lived the truths I had only read about, and together we learned to recognize the persistent power of structural racism that continues on today in its impact and implications.”

-- Jocelyn Goldberg-Schaible, Rochester Research Group, participant in FR=EE

Advocating for Impact

Racism's impact is eliminated only through ongoing advocacy to address both individual and institutional racism.

Confronting racism, building coalitions and gaining knowledge are only means to an end: The goal is to eliminate structural racism- in all forms- from our community and to replace it with a standard of equity. This is only accomplished through ongoing advocacy simultaneously attacking racism in all its forms, in every corner of the community.

CRIMINAL/JUVENILE JUSTICE

- FR=EE actively partnered and helped successfully pass the “Ban the Box” legislation that gave greater employment access to individuals with criminal records
- FR=EE partnered with groups to support “Raise the Age” to re-direct criminal justice system-involved youth into more appropriate alternatives than the adult prison system.

JOBS & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- FR=EE put structural racism at the forefront of the Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative.
- FR=EE's leadership of the HPOG planning process brought together stakeholders to expand living-wage careers to people of color.
- FR=EE's “Streets to Jobs” consortium has brought together service providers, local government and businesses to find ways to connect individuals to jobs who may lack formal/traditional employment credentials.

EDUCATION

- 100 residents engaged on the issue of the school to prison pipeline.
- FR=EE members influenced Community Task Force on School Climate.
- Candidates for Rochester City School Board faced voters at a candidate forum in 2015.

HEALTH

- FR=EE established the framework to quickly mobilize the HPOG planning team to promote opportunities to diversify the health sector.
- FR=EE developed and delivered a 6-week healthy literacy educational series for community residents.
- FR=EE presented to practitioners and students at the UR Diversity conference to educate them on structural racism in health care (eg. social determinants, micro-aggressions)

COMMUNITY

- FR=EE members advocated for additional child care funding to support working families.
- FR=EE members led the effort to bring attention to racist artwork on the Dentzel carousel at Ontario Beach Park.

“FR=EE's Making the School to Prison Pipeline Visible forum was a long overdue event. It was encouraging to see many people from different communities in Rochester attend. I am first and foremost a parent and I believe that all children deserve equal access to meaningful educational opportunities. These opportunities will prepare them for productive lives and more equitable economic and civic participation in Rochester, NY and the world at large. We as adults must create environments that celebrate and reward learning. I believe FR=EE is a leading voice in this endeavor.” – Hasana Martin, FR=EE participant

Voices for Change

*“Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass created Rochester’s identity as a City of Equality. They fought long and hard battles because they wanted those who came behind them to never be seen as unequal in the eyes of the law by virtue of their race or gender. While we have come a long ways, today minorities, women, and the LGBT community still feel like they are unequal. **Facing Race, Embracing Equity strives to continue the work of Anthony, Douglass and many others.** We, as leaders – particularly in this city – cannot stop pushing for equality until this job is done.” --Lovely A. Warren, Mayor City of Rochester*

*“To date, the RACE: are we so Different” Exhibit has been seen in more than 50 museums across the United States. In addition to the showing in museums; some museums in partnership with their local communities have taken the material that we have developed and used it in unique and engaging ways. The ‘Facing Race Embracing Equity Initiative’ in Rochester New York is just such a program. Our material is designed for communities to take it and use it to highlight issues of racial concern in their communities. I could not be more pleased with the total community engagement around this material in Rochester. This initiative is exactly what we had in mind for providing tools for helping communities across the nation use our material to take the conversation about race to new and engaging levels of conversation and action. **Facing Race Embracing Equity is one of our best national engagement successes.**” -Dr. Yolanda Moses, co-creator of the national exhibit, “Race: are we so Different?”*

*“I am riddled with contradictions, inner compromise, racism, passionate resistance, acquiescence. After years of anti-racist work, after attending numerous anti-racist workshops, after scores of conversations about race, race-relations, individual racism and institutional racism, after teaching anti-racist pedagogical principles to pre-service and in-service teachers, the struggle against my inner racism continues. So, you see, I am a racist and will die a racist, but that does not mean I am resigned to let racism within me be at peace. It is a cancer **and I choose to fight it until I pass from this earthly realm.**” --Jim Wood*

*“I attended FR=EE’s launch event in 2013. I met individuals that day with whom I have continued to work to better understand white privilege and structural racism. Attending the FR=EE event provided the impetus and connections with others that I needed to immerse myself in exploring my own white privilege, view the systems and structures of our community through a new critical lens, and to **become activated in support of racial equity.** I am grateful to FR=EE for elevating the conversations about racial issues in Rochester. ” --Barbara Zappia*

*As an African American, I am no stranger to the lived experience of balancing who I am, with what I must do to make space for myself in the world that I live in. Daily, this world neither confirms my existence, nor declares that I matter more than a mere nod of recognition. It won't do this; so I must. At the end of the day, home is the sacred space that I've made for myself to review the commentary of my life (good and bad), reflect on it's importance, reject what is harmful, and most unnecessary, and refuel for the next day. Each day I do this. So it is with great care, deliberation and discernment that I consider who I let into the sacred space of my home. Close family and friends, the overwhelming majority of whom are Black like me, they can come. **Being involved with FR=EE, and Table 23 has changed the above narrative for me,** by expanding the term "friend" to include those brave enough for the journey of racial dialogue. These friends seek merely to understand, and literally to know not only what has happened to me, but more about what has happened to them. Together, we learn more about each other, but more importantly what we each can do in the varied spaces we all move in. This is the power of what is possible when we stretch and refresh what we think we know, with who we know we are becoming. This is brave space, and FR=EE has helped me move along in this journey; my journey. Yes, even me. -- Jackie Campbell*

The Future

Facing Race, Embracing Equity is committed to the long-term work needed to undue the impact of racism.

- Facilitate community adoption and action on the goals of the Racial Equity Community Agenda, with near term emphasis on: Jobs/economic equity and anti-racist professional development for community service providers.
- Expand citizen engagement opportunities in FR=EE by responding to those community voices who are advocating the establishment of new work groups/energy centers, to address areas of inequity that are not presently included in the Racial Equity Community Agenda.
- Continue to build new leadership for racial equity and social change by identifying new community members as co-chairs for new workgroups.
- Continue to build partnerships with groups and organizations that are addressing matters of racial and ethnic discrimination and inequity.
- Convene and support a collaboration of leaders from the for-profit, non-profit, and governmental sectors who are committed to working on equity initiatives within their respective organizations.
- Create learning opportunities for FR=EE volunteers and community members in general to deepen personal and interpersonal understanding of race and racial identity, by ensuring that available resources are aligned and new resources are acquired to support such learning opportunities.
- Build on what we have learned about workgroup development, community engagement for vetting findings and developing appropriate reports to the community and funders.
- Continue to host annual community summits on race to recognize and recommit the Greater Rochester Community's efforts and strategic initiatives toward the elimination of structures and systems that maintain race-based social inequalities.
- Engage urban and suburban youth in dialogues on identity and race using the documentary "I'm Not Racist, Am I?" and other youth-initiated activities.

Join Us!

www.faceraceroc.org