Claiming the Torch:
Community Organizations Advancing Racial Equity

Monday April 15, 2019
Poetic Quest
Your Quest...

1. Turn over your nametag to begin your quest. You will find one stanza of the poem “Searching.”

2. Your goal is to bring together a group of people with all three stanzas of the poem.

3. When you have a group with the complete poem, snap a picture with your new-found companions and post it on the conference app with the hashtag #PeoplePlaces
Searching
by Hannah Hassan

You are seeking
The answers
Finding within the people
The questions
The ones that you didn’t
even know you needed to ask
You are making the kinds of connections
That will Open you up to the reality of your path
You are seeking

You are finding
That you are stronger and more
capable than even you knew
You are embracing the ideas and concepts
That you will ultimately use
To create a ripple effect of change
That will impact the world around you.
You are finding

You came through the doors
searching, willing, and seeking
Now you are finding that you are
prepared, hopeful, and believing
And with the support of the people and places
The resources and tools
You are open to the possibility
That the change exists within you.

Original poem commissioned by People
Powhatan land
Our Moment
Claiming the Torch: Community Organizations Advancing Racial Equity
Agenda

• PolicyLink: Racial Equity through Arts and Culture Strategies
• Speaker Presentations + Q&A
• Break
• Tableau: Living Picture exercise
• Closing Reflections and Learnings
Who is PolicyLink?

PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing racial and economic equity by Lifting Up What Works.®
Equity Questions

• Who Benefits?
• Who Pays?
• Who Decides?
PolicyLink Arts, Culture & Equitable Development Vision

PolicyLink lifts up and magnifies arts and culture as both a core component and approach to equitable development and movement-building to accelerate equity more effectively and resiliently. Arts and culture can activate, centralize, and amplify the voice and reach of the 1-in-3 Americans living in or near poverty to accelerate equity for themselves and the nation.
What do we mean by Arts, Culture and Equitable Development?

What makes up an equitable cmty?

Food
Health
Housing
Transportation
Education
Economy
Environment
Art & Culture
Research and document community organizations integrating arts and cultural strategies to advance community development goals

Co-created and assessed a creative placemaking technical assistance pilot for creative placemaking program.

Support arts and culture organizations to shape and advance equitable development and policy change
What have we learned?
Racial Equity Outcomes/ Indicators/ Ripple Effects with an Arts & Cultural Approach...

- Healthy Housing Rehab resources accessed by more Latinx residents (⇒ First Latinx representative on city’s housing committee)
- Little Tokyo narrative site control (⇒ Larger, cross-cultural base ready to mobilize)
- Mandatory police training an entire department created by incarcerated youth
- African-American community self-determine/ re-imagine park (⇒ resources redistributed that better meet needs)
- Park designed with a foundation in Native culture to advance health (⇒ empowered Native residents design cultural programming)
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About the first Latinx representative on a city’s housing committee:

“I think if we would have gone and said [to the city], ‘Oh, you should do this’, they'd be offended. So I think that change for them to see where they could do better as a community, on their own without being told.

And even if maybe they were told by [the artists], I'm sure they did it in such a nonchalant fun artist way, it became the city's idea.”

- Former COO, SWMHP
Why Arts, Culture and Racial Equity?

• More accurately diagnose/ reframe racial equity challenges/ opportunities
• Move hearts and minds and produce indirect racial equity impacts/ ripple effects without necessarily mandating them
• Transform how change happens in the greater community
• Help communities both heal from trauma and build power in the process
• Disrupt and reimagine ways of working that have negatively impacted/ communities of color
• Create visions by, for, and with the community that are human-centric, understandable, and have a gravitational pull that foster cross-sector partnerships
How did they do it?

- New Organizational and Stakeholder Relationships
- Organizational Changes
New Organizational & Stakeholder Relationships

- Identify artists/arts and cultural orgs as your partner to build and (re) form new and/or different relationships with your communities
- Identify artists/arts and cultural orgs to help develop more equitable processes
Organizational Changes

- Risk and Experimentation
- Redefine Success
- Internal Buy-in
Speakers

- Facilitator, Mallory Nezam, Founder, Justice & Joy
- Chelsea Alger, Resource Development Officer, Southwest Housing Minnesota Partnership
- Carolyn Johnson, Commercial Real Estate Director, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation
- Adela Park, Special Projects Coordinator, Fairmount Park Conservancy
- Michaela Pommells, Director of Community Organizing and Social Justice Initiatives, The Village of Arts and Humanities
Tableau: Living Picture
The activity

Practice an easy-to-use Theater of the Oppressed technique to help address racial inequity scenarios.

Talking is great, but there are other ways of knowing to explore. These might reveal new pathways forward.
Theater of the Oppressed

- Augusto Boal
- 1970s, Brazil
- Rehearsal for the revolution
- Give people the power and practice to change their situation
- Kinesthetic or Body knowledge
Go forth!
Share
Closing Reflections and Learnings
Reflections and Learnings

• What did you learn?
• What did you notice using your body to explore the scenario?
• How did this add a layer to your work around racial inequity and equity?
• How might you apply learnings to your work?
Equity Manifesto

It begins by joining together, believing in the potency of inclusion, and building from a common bond.

It embraces complexity as cause for collaboration, accepting that our fates are inextricable.

It recognizes local leaders as national leaders, nurturing the wisdom and creativity within every community as essential to solving the nation’s problems.

It demands honesty and forthrightness, calling out racism and oppression, both overt and systemic.

It strives for the power to realize our goals while summoning the grace to sustain them.
Equity Manifesto

It requires that we understand the past, without being trapped in it; embrace the present, without being constrained by it; and look to the future, guided by the hopes and courage of those who have fought before and beside us.

This is equity: just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

Unlocking the promise of the nation by unleashing the promise in us all.