



Center for the Healing of Racism

Internalize Oneness

AUGUST - DECEMBER 2024

During the holiday season our thoughts so gratefully turn to all the people who have made our progress possible. It is in this spirit of gratefulness that we sincerely say ... Thank You and Best Wishes for the holiday season.

AND Happy New Year!

Original founding member of CFHR dies

Kim Polk was one of the 15 original founding members of the first Institute for the Healing of Racism, which evolved into The Center for the Healing of Racism.

Her voice has been silenced as she passed away in San Marcos, Texas in the early morning hours of Thanksgiving Day, November 28, 2024.

Kim wrote The Guidelines that are used in each workshop and presentation. They have been read tens of thousands of times over the years. Her husband, Freddie, also a founding member, preceded her in death in August this year.

They were part of the original multiracial, grass-roots group of 15 who shared a common belief in the oneness of humanity and in



Kim Polk

embracing the beauty of human differences in culture, race, and life experiences. They came together

to address the issue of racism on a personal level in their own lives and what they could do to eradicate it.

The group eventually reached out to others who were interested in educating themselves to find solutions to the terrible stain of racism and racial injustice that is the history of this country.

When we look at the Center today, we look back at the legacy these people provided, planting the seeds with humility and dedication, not imagining that their efforts would survive decades later nor expecting it to bloom into the broad expanse that is now the Center.

Other founding members who have since passed on include Nelson Brignoni, Barbara Inihara, Andre'nea King and Zhiani Hedayati.

Community leader who supported Center and programs dies

Janis Scott, called “the bus lady” by four generations of Houstonians, was remembered for her kindness, generosity, humility, and infectious laugh. She will be missed.

Dug Begley, with the Houston Chronicle, wrote an article about her prominence in the Houston community. It included information that many might not know about her. We share with you a few edited excerpts from that article:



Janis Scott

ty meetings and public lectures who was lovingly called “the bus lady” by four generations of Houstonians, died

December 9. She was 73.

A nearly lifetime bus rider — there was a time in the 80s when she bought a car but ditched driving after a few years — Scott was one of the most passionate advocates for Metropolitan Transit Authority service, specifically frequent buses crisscrossing oft-neglected communities... Beyond the bus Scott was a “lifelong learner” who “regularly attended public events with speakers from around the country.” She was a 1974 graduate of Rice

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“Janis Scott, a fixture of communi-

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Racism FACEBOOK page for updates
on events, pertinent articles and
resources.

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Message from the Executive Director

The end of the year is a good time for reflections.

As the final pages of the calendar turn, we often find ourselves looking back at the months gone by, pondering the lessons learned, the challenges faced, the love ones gone, and the memories made.

For all of us as supporters of the Center for the Healing of Racism it is a period that brings a mix of emotions — gratitude for all the new people we met in the Center’s workshops, the wonderful programs we created as an offering to the public, and anticipation for what is yet to come as we create new programs.

As the year draws to a close,



Cherry Steinwender
Executive Director

I hope the end-of-the-year quote I am sharing can serve as a source of inspiration and introspection.

I hope it encourages you to take stock of your 2024 journey,

celebrate your achievements, and look forward with hope to the future.

Whether you’re in a reflective mood or gearing up for new beginnings, let these words resonate with you as you say farewell to this year and welcome the next...

“Well, we have a whole new year ahead of us. And wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could all be a little more gentle with each other, a little more loving, and have a little more empathy, and maybe, next year at this time we’d like each other a little more.”

— **Judy Garland**

Community leader who supported Center and programs dies

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University and was among the school’s first Black graduates. She excelled in school and won a scholarship to Rice, again taking the bus to class. After college she worked as an executive assistant and other roles at Marathon Oil, retiring early in 2003.

Freed from work, Scott poured herself into whatever she was passionate about: public meetings, museums, club meetings and local arts performances. In later life, she was commonly on the Rice campus, often mentoring students. She received the school’s award for outstanding achievement in civic and community service in 2016.

Typically wearing a colorful headscarf, Scott sat dutifully during daytime Metro meetings and city council sessions, always advocating

Typically wearing a colorful headscarf, Scott sat dutifully during daytime Metro meetings and city council sessions, always advocating for improved transit access...

for improved transit access, Scott often said speaking up is the first step toward making changes. “Metro is a lifeline for many of us — it’s a mandate and a civil right,” Scott wrote in an essay for the Linder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University. “If you do not have a car, public transit gives you access to many opportunities, including jobs, medical appointments, education and what I call life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness! Transit justice is a form of freedom, where sidewalks and curb cuts are

fundamental provisions, especially for people with mobility challenge.”

The daughter of a domestic worker who carried her along on cleaning assignments, hoping Janis would stay quiet, she was raised near the Port of Houston Park and attended school in Galena Park. Both mother and daughter relied on the bus for transportation. As a high school senior, she was bused from her neighborhood to the mostly white Galena Park High School as part of the district’s desegregation efforts. “We weren’t welcomed,” Scott said in a 2012 profile. “We weren’t wanted. And there we were in our senior year, in an unknown place with unfamiliar people who were hostile to us verbally and physically. The kids used to throw stuff at us—rocks, eggs, you name it.”

Intern experience during Spring 2024

By Janiva Henderson

My internship was inspiring and educational for several reasons. First and foremost, it provided an excellent opportunity for me to use fundamental information in a real-world situation.

I encountered opportunities that encouraged me to reflect critically and find new ways to handle challenges. My positive experience was influenced by the unity that exists at the Center.

I was exposed to a variety of viewpoints and approaches while working with a diverse group of

professionals.

I gained valuable knowledge from my peers and superiors, each of whom contributed to my success and made me feel appreciated as an individual. The collaborative environment that generated a sense of community, inspired me.

Having veteran professionals help me with the projects I worked on was one of the best aspects of the internship. Their willingness to share their knowledge and wisdom made the process of learning both efficient and pleasurable. The projects I was given were meaningful and had an impact.

Finally, the Center presented excellent

opportunities for individual growth, as I improved skills like teamwork and collaboration, creative problem-solving and, most importantly, interpersonal communication. I believe these skills will help me in my future career goals by developing the ability to adapt to various circumstances.

My internship was unforgettable because it consisted of real-world experience, teamwork and mentoring that helped my personal growth. In addition to my improved skill sets, I'm leaving the internship with a broader knowledge of the field and relationships that I will always value.

Center members travel to New Jersey to present workshop

Center members Christine Harrison, Anita Wadhwa and Cherry Steinwender traveled to Newark, New Jersey to present a workshop at a conference titled "Building an Anti-Racist Multicultural Community. The conference was presented by the Center for the Study of White American Culture, Inc. (CSWAC).

Following the workshop – "A Way Forward: Countering Racial Stereotypes: Learning From High School Students Building an Anti-Racist Community" – an attendee handed the facilitators a note with these words:

"Made me want to move to Houston to do this work with you.

You are so tuned in to the specific school environment and the needs of the staff/students in their school. I LOVE ALL of what I am hearing. I LOVE the heart that each of you carry regarding the work and the students. I LOVE that you carry this program to other areas of the U.S. and world. I LOVE that you have a program that reaches students weekly. I LOVE that you have such close relationships with the students."

–*Merrie Retired Teacher*

Letter to the Center: The Center for the Study of White American Culture (CSWAC) proudly presents the 2nd annual conference.

Dear Executive Director Cherry Steinwender & Dr. Christine Harrison,

We are pleased to inform you that your workshop proposal titled A Way Forward, Countering Racial Stereotypes: Learning from High School Students Building an Anti-Racist Community has been accepted for presentation at the upcoming Conference on Building an Anti-Racist Multiracial Community. The conference will take place from September 27 - 29 in Newark, NJ.

Given the limited capacity of our conference, with attendance capped at 200 participants, we had to make challenging

decisions regarding which proposals to accept. We evaluated proposals based on their alignment with the conference focus, the clarity of the workshop description, and how they complemented the overall range of approaches to the conference topic.

Your proposal stood out for its strong alignment with our conference objectives. We are excited to include it in our program and believe it will contribute significantly to our goal of fostering an anti-racist multiracial community.

Thank you for your contribution, and we look forward to your impactful workshop.

On behalf of the Conference Program Committee, sincerely,

Jeff Hitchcock
Executive Director (Retired)
Center for the Study
of White American Culture, Inc.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to build One America in the 21st century by connecting people through education and dialogue in a diverse world.

Core Beliefs

The human race is essentially one and racism is a learned behavior that can be unlearned.

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to facilitate the healing of racism through education and dialogue in a safe and supportive environment, in order to empower individuals and transform communities.

Infected

By Sha Falcon

Racism is a disease
It kills, steals, and destroys
It murders my pride
It robs me of joys
But this is America
We are offered the “American dream”
Built on the backs of slaves
Powered by whiteness esteemed
This country is not under God
No, Satan has ruled this land
That’s why hatred floods our streets
From California to the New York
Islands
We are
The United States of Evil
The United States of Pain
The United States of Trauma
The United States of Chains
We have been fed poison
Disguised as a full course meal
We’ve been broken the systems
But belittled for not being healed
So, exactly how do I do that
With the underwriting still in place
That judges me by my name
My gender, my race?
How can you call us free
When on my neck your knee lies?
How can we be one nation
When you won’t allow me to rise?
Give me a hand, instead of a fist
Pull me up to join you
Give me the benefit of being human
Share the privilege around you
Remember that racism is a disease
And it has hurt us all
Remember that united we stand
And more division causes us to fall

Reflecting on Dialogue Racism

By Sha Falcon

What is racism? Who has been hurt by it? Who needs healing? What is my role? I was invited to ask, answer and ponder these questions and many more as I participated in the Center for the Healing of Racism’s two-day workshop Dialogue: Racism. These questions have stuck with me since I attended the discussion.

During the workshop, Cherry Steinwender provided insight into the impact of power and privilege. Growing up, and even in young adulthood, I didn’t have the language or awareness to understand how far-reaching and deep-rooted the power of racism is; but today I can see it so clearly, thanks in large part to the work done by the CFHR.

I can see the intentional creation of race to separate and subjugate. I can see the commitment to ignorance displayed by people who refuse to look truth in the eyes. I can see the disease in action, and I can see how there is not a single person who hasn’t been infected by it.

Participating in Dialogue: Racism was, by far, one of the most intense experiences I have had. It was difficult and overwhelming at times. It was heartbreaking in many instances. I felt rage, anger, disappointment, fear and disgust at a level of intensity I didn’t even know was possible in my 5’2” body.

But I was not left in the darkness created by these vibrational emotions. Facilitators Cherry and Christie expertly guided each of us through “the valley of the shadow of death” and the climb up the mountain. By the end of the workshop, I still felt those emotions, but now I also felt extreme hope and conviction to do my part!



Sha Falcon

As a CFHR board member, I appreciated the dialogue and listening that took place during the workshop and valued the new insights

and knowledge I received. Having gone through Dialogue: Racism I am more convinced that racism is not about White and Black. It’s not about what happened in the 1800s. Racism is a reflection of you and me and the United States of America. This is good news to me because it no longer points a finger outward, but instead brings action knocking on the door of my heart.

I am responsible for getting well and spreading healing to the world around me.

I am responsible for creating the change I want to see and for having the stamina to endure letdowns.

I am responsible for extending grace as I plow through a system that was set up to create fear and failure for people who look like me.

I am responsible for looking the truth in the eyes and accepting the challenge. I am a reflection of racism and, as I change my reflection in the mirror, the world around me can change, too.

I would like to finish with this: We all should encourage more people to participate in this workshop. Everyone we know should experience it. This is non-negotiable. We can bring true healing to this country, but we must bring people along with us. We cannot afford to be nonchalant about it. Take someone by the hand and bring them to Dialogue: Racism.



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Programs presented in last six months

Center programs during the last six months of 2024

National Hispanic American Heritage Month (Sept. 18)

On May 5, 1977, Jose “Joe” Campos Torres, was arrested at a bar for disorderly conduct. Instead of being taken to jail, Houston police took Campos Torres to “The Hole,” an isolated area behind a warehouse along Buffalo Bayou where Houston Police Department officers could write reports, question suspects and sleep. Torres was beaten and thrown to his death into the bayou.

The presentation was made by Torres’ nephew, Richard Molina.

In Observance of National LGBT Heritage Month (October)

Showing of the Film “After Stonewall” (Oct. 9)

Documentary provides a retrospective examination of the gay rights movement from the 1969 Stonewall riots to the present day.

Dialogue: Racism

“Men hate each other because they fear each other, and they fear each other because they don’t know each other, and they don’t know each other because they are often separated from each other.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dialogue: Racism Fall Sessions (October 12 and 19)

In Observance of National Native American Heritage Month (November)

Showing of the Film “Black Indians: An American Story” (Nov. 19)

The late actor James Earl Jones

narrates this stunning documentary that explores issues of racial identity between the mixed-descent peoples of both Native American and African American heritage. Jones was of Black Indian descent.

A Proclamation on National Native American Heritage Month Issued on Oct. 31, 2024

I have always believed that we must know the good, the bad, and the truth of who we are as a nation. We must acknowledge our history so that we can begin to remember and heal. That is why I became the first president to issue a formal apology for the Federal Indian Boarding School era, one of the most horrific chapters in our nation’s history.

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States of America

Mark your calendars for these events!

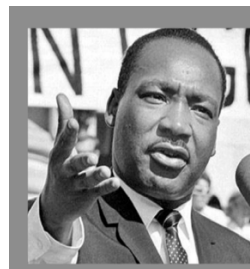
**In celebration of the birthday of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.
The Jung Center in Partnership With the CFHR Presents a Reading of Dr. King’s “Letter From a Birmingham Jail”
January 20, 2025 at 6 p.m.
5200 Montrose Boulevard, Houston, TX 77006**

**In Celebration of National African American Heritage Month (February)
A showing of the film “Rosenwald”
Feb. 12, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
3412 Crawford St., Houston, TX 77004**

The Rosenwald schools were the result of a collaboration between [Booker T. Washington](#) and [Julius Rosenwald](#), the president and part owner of [Sears, Roebuck and Company](#). The 5,000 rural schools were built in the American South in the early 20th century to educate African American students. The schools boosted educational attainment and literacy rates in

rural African American communities and helped educate the generation that would lead the civil rights movement.

Many of the buildings are still intact, and several dozen are included on the National Register of Historic Places, though only a few still operate as schools.



“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Center adds nine new board members



Mike Alvarez



Martina Alvarez



Sherry Bernard



Sha Falcon



Sean Fitzpatrick



Ethan Michelle Ganz



Joy Malbrough



Richard Molina



Shavonne Spencer

New children's book by Cherry Steinwender

Dakota the Drum was first introduced to Elementary and Middle School students by Cherry Steinwender as a workshop. The students received the workshop well, leading to the book *Dakota the Drum*. The book follows the journey of Dakota, a young Drum who struggles to find acceptance in a world where everyone wants to define others. Through this experience, Dakota learns the importance of self-identity and the

value of truly finding a place to belong.

The book enlightens children about the significance of self-identity, emphasizing that they can define who they are and not let others dictate their identity.

It acknowledges the difficulties of staying true to oneself and the immense value of doing so. The story of Dakota's journey is a powerful reminder that finding the right people and places to be yourself is essential.

Director and Board Members



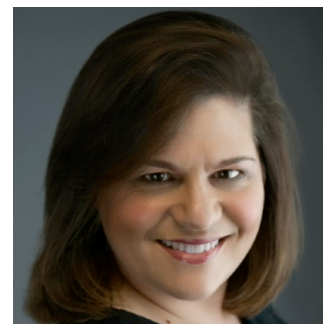
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