



**For Immediate Release**

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**York Community Responds to Racism with A New Coalition**

"Ignorance and prejudice are the handmaidens of propaganda. Our mission, therefore, is to confront ignorance with knowledge, bigotry with tolerance, and isolation with the outstretched hand of generosity. Racism can, will, and must be defeated."

— Kofi Annan

York, PA – (May 2, 2019) In May of 2018, a meeting was convened with the intention of discussing recent public racial incidents in York County. The composition of the group was made up of over 70 people from various organizations, including: civic leaders, elected officials, diversity coordinators, community volunteers, law enforcement, educators, faith leaders, philanthropists, and citizens.

The key themes that came out of a brainstorming session at the meeting were: the need to move quickly from talk to action; address frustration at the seeming lack of awareness as to how bad racism is in York County; willingness to become engaged in systemic change; and staying committed for the long haul as this type of change takes time. Individuals and organizations were asked to commit to meeting on a regular basis to identify solutions to these issues.

The Confronting Racism Coalition (CRC) was the name selected for this community group. The CRC met every month and developed a mission and vision, and established multiple workgroups around key priorities.

Confronting Racism Coalition Mission: To create sustainable change by breaking down systemic racial barriers and promoting healing, equity, and inclusion for all.

Confronting Racism Coalition Vision: York County is a place where differences are valued and equity prevails.

The first-year goals of the workgroups have been identified and progress is taking shape.

### **Education**

1. Develop a survey which would be provided to all schools in the county to assess demographics that will help determine needs.
2. Provide comprehensive education and information on the county education system as it relates to funding.

### **Economic Equity**

1. Launch Major Employers Council to implement best practices for diverse talent attraction and retention and the creation of more welcoming and inclusive workplaces.
2. Launch small business development programming to create opportunities for small and diverse businesses, and to increase the amount of locally owned Minority-Business Enterprises.

### **Inclusive Leadership**

1. Create a guide of racial justice-related resources and work available for use by others.
2. Develop a training series addressing the understanding and challenges of biases, how to be welcoming, and programming for board members, administrators, etc. This will accompany the toolkit for organizations.

### **Racial Bias**

1. Create and provide trainings on diversity, implicit bias, and cultural competency.
2. Identify and implement both short term and long-term objectives to increase racial diversity in the police force.

### **Welcoming Community**

1. Organize a community response network to decry acts that harm or demean others.
2. Develop a campaign to promote the Confronting Racism Coalition's work and the theme: *York...Together We Are Stronger*.

The York County Community Foundation provided initial administrative and financial support. Currently, administrative support is provided through a partnership between YWCA York and the York Jewish Community Center (IDEAS Center).

The CRC is in the process of selecting a facilitator to organize a community change process around equity and inclusion and spend a few months to a year assisting with the development of meaningful plans, gain buy-in from stakeholders, build trust and a sustainable organizational structure to move forward.

The next meeting of the CRC will be on Thursday, May 30, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the JCC at 2000 Hollywood Drive in York. Each meeting starts with a relationship-building activity aimed at raising awareness of racial bias and building trust. The remainder of the meeting is spent in the groups working to advance the objectives of each goal.

A press conference is being held to talk about the work of the Coalition:

WHO: Confronting Racism Coalition (CRC) represented by Ophelia Chambliss, Artist/Educator/Community Activist (email: [opheliachambliss@comcast.net](mailto:opheliachambliss@comcast.net)) and Jean Treuthart, CEO, YWCA York (email: [jtreuthart@ywcayork.org](mailto:jtreuthart@ywcayork.org)).

WHAT: To share the work of the CRC to create sustainable change by breaking down systemic racial barriers and promoting healing, equity, and inclusion for all.

WHEN: Wednesday, May 8, 2018 4:30 PM

WHERE: Hosted by the IDEAS Center, Cherry Lane, York, PA 17401

#### ABOUT THE IDEAS CENTER

The purpose of the IDEAS Center (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Social Change) is to create a physical space operated by the JCC on Cherry Lane in York City to bring together diversity and inclusion resources, organizations, and influence together in a coordinated manner to increase these programs' impact, to address multiple barriers to equity, lay the groundwork for collaboration and make deeper and wider impact in our county.

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