



# Sunday meetings and public forums on 'Race and Racism in American History'

August 25, 2020

*Omar Ali, Bree Person, Tamera Jones*



We are teachers, students, civil rights attorneys, artists, scientists, musicians, historians, retirees, former police officers, editors, office workers, parents, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters.

We came together in early June to connect emotionally-socially-politically in response to the outrage of the killing of George Floyd and countless other black people by the police. We kept meeting every Sunday evening as we were shaken.

We created community with each other to give us strength to move forward by connecting with and looking to our history.

We spoke about the things we were involved in on the ground, in Greensboro, Durham, Goldsboro, Raleigh, and New York. We read and listened to the words of Frederick Douglass, James Baldwin, John Lewis, and Kimberly Jones, among others. And we took our discussions to the broader public with a series of forums on "Race and Racism in American History."

The forums we created off of our Sunday meetings were a continuation of the community-building, healing, nurturing, and demanding we all do in the face of systemic and brutal acts of racism in the nation and the world. And we keep building with our passion, our pain, and our joy—creating new possibilities.

It is the hope and expectation of these discussions to enlighten and enable us to have further dialogue with friends, neighbors, colleagues and co-workers; to hear and be heard; to learn about each other's experiences, and create new ways of being, feeling, and thinking; to self-reflect on our actions—the things we say, the things we do; the things we don't say, the things we don't do—and how this affects others and ourselves in the environments that shape us, even as we shape these environments ... moment, by moment, by moment.

As Baldwin wrote, "History is not the past. It is the present." We, all of us, make our history. Join us in creatively building community, whatever that looks like to you and wherever you are. We are with you.

## A poem by the Sunday group participants

(directed and compiled by Lalenja Harrington)

*In the face of  
confusion  
stress  
being tired  
of being tired  
stress  
trauma  
exhaustion  
emptiness  
sadness  
disappearing  
wandering  
paralysis  
loneliness  
isolation  
forced joy and fear  
there comes hope  
and faith in divine intervention  
that we will have the strength  
and will  
to move forward  
to listen  
dialogue  
document  
expand knowledge  
be in solidarity  
empower  
liberate  
break out of boxes  
contemplate  
mobilize  
collaborate  
and meditate  
our way  
into the future*

**Thank you to all who either led or participated in the series of public forums. We are especially grateful to the following community-builders:**

Tiera Moore

Lalenja Harrington

Nodia Mena

Mariah Hunt

James Stephens

Derick Jones

Aliyah Ruffin

Linda Dunston-Stacey

Torren Gatson

Portia Harris

Justin Demeanor

Darrenta Haley

Sangeetha Shivaji

Xan Marshal

Kenneth Wilson

Armondo Collins

Janet Harrell

Mike Cauthen

Steve Haines

Justina Licata

Theo Barklage

Hewan Girma

Stephanie Orosco

Dominick X

Kasia Sanchez

Nadja Cech

Gavin Douglas

Andrea Hunter

Brittany Rodman

Tsion Hailu

Alexis Brown

Rebecca Muich

Julia Mendez-Smith

Aisha Chaudhry

Lucy Mary Ali

Jennifer Feather

Andrew Hamilton

Patricia Lynch

Bret Mazzei

Amanda Josiah

Mike Harris

Noelle Morrissette

Sherine Obare

Arthur Durham