DAY 21: Take Action in Washtenaw County

“If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” — Lilla Watson

About this photo: Temporary public art installation by artist Kara Springer on the campus of Temple University’s Tyler School of Art.

Congratulations on completing the 2021 United Way of Washtenaw County Equity Challenge. We are incredibly thankful you have come along this journey with us and made time to learn and reflect on topics of inequity in our County. We are all impacted by the system of racism and therefore all responsible for dismantling the structures that allow it to persist. We encourage you to explore Racial Equity Tools, a comprehensive site of resources designed to support learning, planning, acting, and evaluating efforts to advance racial equity.

We are incredibly thankful for your engagement with us. We need you. We know these conversations and the feelings they evoke are not always easy. Making more space for brave dialogue is one of the first steps you can take. Please take a moment to complete our post-challenge survey by clicking here.

We challenge each of you to share a reflection on your experience with a family member, friend or co-worker to continue the momentum from this challenge. Below we have compiled a list of opportunities for you to continue this conversation and take action to drive forward change in our community.

Sincerely,
Today’s Challenge:

Option 1: **Use your voice.** Our lived experiences are shaped by institutions and policies. Public policy advocacy is one way to shift the policies and institutional practices that keep problems in place. [Click here to sign up to receive future action alerts from us!](#)

![Mural by @BlurStreetArt, Photo by @StreetsDept](#)

Option 2: **Practice allyship.** Seek to understand what it feels like for another person or group to be oppressed, and despite knowing you will never fully understand how it feels, is committed to valuing and supporting people who are marginalized. Read the [Do’s and Don’ts of Allyship](#) and [Guidelines for Being a Strong White Ally](#) as you practice and evolve your role in supporting equity and inclusion.

Option 3: **Lend a hand by volunteering** in our community. Find an in-person or virtual volunteer opportunity or nonprofit service project that fits your schedule and interest at [VolunteerWashtenaw.org](http://VolunteerWashtenaw.org) and [washtenaw.catchafire.org](http://washtenaw.catchafire.org).

Option 4: **Join a movement.** [Apply to Nonprofit Enterprise at Work’s Champions for Change Fellowship](#), with cohorts designed specifically for leaders of color and white leaders.

Option 5: **Support a local organization engaged in dismantling racist systems.** [Click here for a directory of local organizations who are engaged in anti-racism work](#). These organizations are all actively working in our community and many participated in a gallery walk at our 2020 Equity Summit. Then, contact them directly to lend your time and talent to their missions.
Option 6: Shift the way you talk about others. Creating equitable outcomes requires that we change the way we talk about members of our community, focusing on their aspirations rather than their challenges- this is called asset-framing. Learn more about how the Skillman Foundation is using asset-framing in their work with Detroit Children, and watch videos from Trabian Shorters, founder and CEO of BMe Community, discuss how to put asset-framing into practice.

Option 7: Engage in dialogue about race. Read Race Forward’s 10 Ways to Start a Conversation About Race to learn more about how to start a conversation with friends, at school, at work, and more. Then, sign up to attend an 8-week R.A.C.E Dialogue series to explore the topic of race with your neighbors and learn from each other’s lived experiences.

Option 8: Continue your learning journey. Participate in a workshop like Poverty Simulation or Bystander Intervention from our partners at the Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice (ICPJ). Attend an event hosted by Showing Up for Racial Justice- Washtenaw.

Mural by @LoveisWisellu, Photo by @StreetsDept

Option 9: Explore artistic expressions of social justice. Visit Ypsilanti’s new Black Lives Matter murals. Support the work of Staying Power, a youth-driven movement for housing justice and belonging through arts advocacy and read their 2019 publication, “Staying Power: Concrete, Not Wood A Multigenre Production by Ypsilanti & Richmond Youth Artists.” At your next event book an artist from The Guild, a collage of Michigan-based artists best known for their honest and original spoken word poetry, which centers around the principles of social consciousness, scholarship, diversity, love, community action, and education.
**Option 10: Do better.** Many white people do not get involved in the work of racial justice because they do not know where to begin or how to use their voice to promote equity. Please read and challenge yourself to take a few of the actions in this article from Medium, "75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice". It is going to take all of us to dismantle racism. Today, make the choice to use your voice.

Don’t forget to complete our post-challenge survey by clicking here.

**Share your reflections** on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag #unitedforequity and tag @uwwashtenaw.