



A Message from the Executive Director

Dear friends and fellow change-makers,

I hope this newsletter article finds you all in high spirits and ready to dive into an important discussion. Today, let's focus on an issue that lies at the heart of our mission – creating safe spaces for truth, equity, and compassion to thrive, especially within the realm of EDUCATION.

Education is undeniably a superpower. It equips us with knowledge and skills, empowers us to grow, and enables us to make a difference in the world. However, for education to truly be the game-changer it should be, it must also be safe and inclusive for all. Safety here doesn't just mean physical safety (though that's important too). When we talk about safety in education, we inevitably stumble upon the subject of racism – a deeply ingrained issue that continues to affect many aspects of our society, including our schools.

In order to honestly discuss safety in education, we must be willing to address the elephant in the room – teaching TRUE history. History textbooks have often glossed over uncomfortable truths or presented a biased narrative, conveniently leaving out the struggles and contributions of marginalized communities. We need to acknowledge the painful and enduring effects of racism, bigotry, and prejudice, and how these continue to impact the present. By teaching true history, we can bring awareness to the often untold, unheard, and unappreciated stories, fostering a better understanding of the world we live in today.

If we truly want to challenge racism and work towards equity, we must confront our past head-on. Let us be brave enough to acknowledge the injustices that have been perpetuated throughout history. We must remember that teaching true history involves acknowledging the dark chapters of our past, including the pain and suffering caused by



racism. If we want our children to grow up in a more compassionate and just society, we must allow them to learn from the mistakes of the past and work together to rectify them.

But who gets to tell these stories? It is imperative that we seek diverse voices, perspectives, and lived experiences to ensure a more holistic understanding of history. The stories of Indigenous peoples, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other marginalized communities need to be heard and valued, not just during history lessons, but in all aspects of education. By doing so, we can build empathy and understanding, fostering a more inclusive society that celebrates the richness of diversity.

Addressing this challenge isn't the sole responsibility of educators; it's a collective effort. Parents, students, administrators, school boards, policymakers, and the wider community must come together with empathy, honesty, and perseverance to ensure TRUE history is told. Only then can we create safe spaces in our educational institutions where truth, equity, and compassion are upheld.

So, let's continue pushing for safer, more inclusive education, where true history is taught with openness and honesty. Together, we can challenge racism, break down barriers, and forge a path towards a brighter, more equitable future for everyone.

As we reflect on this, I invite you to consider how you can create safety for others. Let us all take an active role in shaping a better tomorrow for generations to come.

With hope and determination,

Monique Bryant

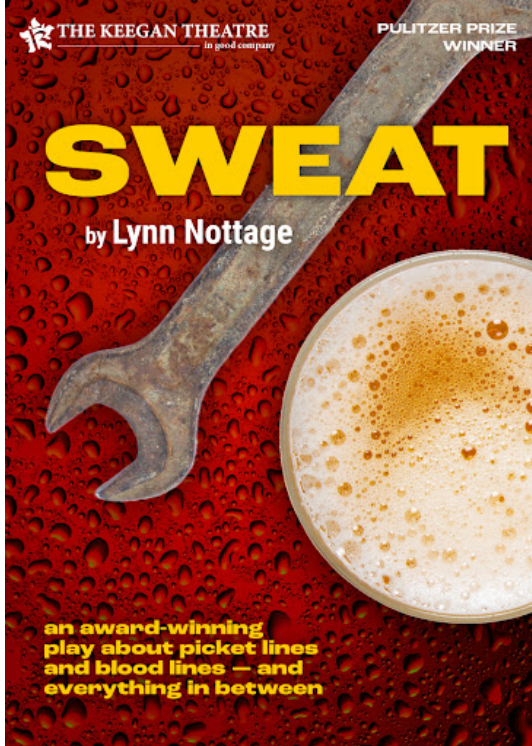
Executive Director, Challenging Racism

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Quote of the Month

"History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."

Maya Angelou



The Keegan Theatre presents *Sweat*, by Lynn Nottage, from August 19 to September 16, 2023. This is how it is described:

“Filled with warm humor and tremendous heart, *Sweat* tells the story of a group of friends who have spent their lives sharing drinks, secrets, and laughs while working together on the factory floor. But when layoffs and picket lines begin to chip away at their trust, the friends find themselves pitted against each other in a heart-wrenching fight to stay afloat.”

Sweat is a contemporary story that echoes the struggles of the past. The intersection of race and labor unions has a long and complex history influenced by civil rights leaders such as Booker T. Washington,

Frederick Douglass, A. Philip Randolph, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and John Lewis. It is a history built on structural racism, discrimination, and the struggle for equal rights. *Sweat* portrays the story of a rust-belt industrial town in the early 2000s: a manufacturing plant taken over in a leveraged buyout, union workers financially squeezed by lower wages and reduced benefits, the strain in the community that leads to violence, and the devastating effects of strike breaking and unemployment.

For tickets: <https://keegantheatre.com/portfolio/sweat/>

Frederick Douglass was a pioneer in African American equality and the right to organize unions. In 1872, he became president of the “Colored” National Labor Union and published its newspaper, *The New National Era*. In the 1880s, the Knights of Labor formed to unionize workers regardless of race, gender, or skill level, but it was largely quashed by big business.

Demand for manufacturing and production increased in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and millions of African Americans moved north to escape the Jim Crow South and find work in industrial cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, and Detroit. The increased importance of African American workers began to tip the scale a bit toward inclusion. In 1935, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) was granted a Charter by the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The BSCP was founded by African American workers and led by A. Philip Randolph, a leader of equality within the labor movement. In 1941, Randolph threatened a march on Washington if the federal government did not take action to end employment discrimination in the defense industry. This led President Franklin Roosevelt to issue an executive order prohibiting discriminatory practices and establishing the Fair Employment Practices Committee. In 1942, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) created a committee to abolish racial discrimination related to job assignments and promotions. In 1946, the Fair Employment Practices Committee was abolished amid the conservative politics of the Cold War era.

- One in 9 workers in the US - about 15.9 million workers - are represented by a union.
- Two thirds of union workers are women and/or people of color.
- Almost half (47.1%) are women.
- Nearly 4 in 10 are African American, Latinx, AAPI or other POC.
- The biggest industries represented by unions are in Education and Healthcare.
- Unions represent workers at all levels of education: 30.3% high school or less, 58.4% associate degree or more.
- Union density varies from state to state with Maryland at a high density (13%+), District of Columbia at medium density (7-13%) and Virginia at low density (less than 7%).

[Who are today's union workers?: Unionized workers are diverse, and they work in most industries across America.](#)

Challenging Racism Program Update

Challenging Racism: Learning to Lead is coming soon! **Really!!!!**

Executive Director Monique Bryant and Curriculum Designer Susan Levy have been working with me to put the finishing touches on a brand new curriculum that we will be rolling out this fall. Grounded in the solid principles and best practices of adult learning, presentation, and facilitation, Challenging Racism: Learning to Lead is the updated curriculum we have been working toward. Our task is to get our facilitators ready to present Challenging Racism workshops to a wide variety of clients and environments. We are contracting with an increasing network of organizations that are looking to Challenging Racism for solid, transformative workshops, and we are committed to making sure that CR facilitators have everything they need to present and facilitate workshops with confidence, competence, and grace. Please stay tuned—we'll have more information very soon.

With thanks and excitement -

Dawn Kyser, Curriculum and Facilitation

What's Coming Up - Summer 2023

Volunteers Needed - New Committees!

Join a Challenging Racism Committee! It is a great way to help us achieve our mission to empower and inspire people to disrupt racism one compassionate conversation at a time. Committees meet once a month and you can jump right in and work on something meaningful. Here's what is upcoming in our committees.

Events Committee

This committee will work on planning and executing events for the public both online and in person. Planning and supporting our fundraising and outreach by way of events. We are planning on 2-3 events for the year.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities or would like more information, email admin@challengingracism.org.

Follow Us on Instagram!

International Day of World's Indigenous
People August 9th

National Non-Profit Day August 17th

World Humanitarian Day August 19th

Women's Equality Day August 26th



**If you want to support our mission, you can
donate here. Thank you!**



Challenging Racism

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