



Alliance Quarterly News  
May, 2020  
Volume 2



# Hand in Hand

## Oregon Alliance Quarterly News

Dear Community Member,

This edition of our quarterly newsletter was supposed to provide highlights from the amazing Alliance Summit we were to have on May, 6-8th in Redmond, Oregon. Summaries of interesting sessions, pictures of an engaged audience and profiles of speakers were to fill these pages. Instead, we'll adapt to this 'new normal' and provide you with resources and useful information as we face these challenging times together.

When the pandemic hit, Alliance staff and members sprang into action. We created a nonprofit coalition composed of over sixty community organizations to coordinate our message and policy recommendations to the governor, the legislature and other elected officials. We are in constant contact with leaders of our partner state agencies, advising them on action and disseminating information as the crisis changes. And, as Oregon starts a phased reopening and assess budgets and shortfalls, we'll continue to be at the forefront of those conversations, advocating for our members and the communities they serve. We know the importance of speaking as one voice during these uncertain times. The Alliance's message has resonated across the state and we're thrilled to welcome three new members, highlighted in this newsletter. I look forward to working with them, and you, in the coming months.

In the midst of this crisis, the Alliance and our members are also looking for opportunities. Some of these include the tremendous advancements in telehealth. Children with trauma histories have reported more of a sense of safety and comfort with the option of engaging telephonically. We've seen an increase in interactions between a child in care and their family through the use of technology.

John F. Kennedy said, "The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word 'crisis.' One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger, but recognize the opportunity."

Thank you, keep safe and healthy!

Royce Bowlin - Executive Director

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# HEALTH DISPARITIES AND COVID—19

By Pari Mazhar

While national conversations often claim that COVID-19 impacts all Americans the same, this is not the case. Yes, we are all impacted by the pandemic, but not equally.

This pandemic is hitting certain groups and communities much harder, including those living in poverty, marginalized communities, refugees and immigrants, Latinx people, Native Americans, homeless people, LGBTQ people, older adults, and people with linguistic barriers. This pandemic can be a death sentence for people of all races and nationalities that experience lower socioeconomic conditions and in particular, those living in communities who have minimal resources.

Every one of us, as individuals and groups, has a responsibility to shed light on this generational and systemic health disparity that has been reinforced by structural racism and poverty.

While public health advice suggests that the risk of devastating outcomes is low among those younger than age 60, this isn't the case for all groups. "In general, the age concerns and age data that is being promulgated is likely not accurate for the African American community," says Oliver T. Brooks, M.D., president of the National Medical Association. This may also be true for other communities of color.

Epidemiologist Camara Phyllis Jones, M.D., MPH, PhD, 2019-2020 Evelyn Green Davis Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and a past president of the American Public Health Association, explains the impact COVID-19 will have on the population as a whole and notes: "We can already predict based on everything we know that the burden of ill health will not be evenly experienced throughout the population."



Early data suggests COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting groups of color:

- In the District of Columbia, Blacks make up 45% of the total population, but accounted for 29% of confirmed coronavirus cases and 59% of deaths as of April 6, 2020.
- In Louisiana, Blacks make up 32% of the total state population, but accounted for over 70% of COVID-19 deaths as of April 6, 2020.
- Data from Illinois shows that groups of color accounted for 48% of confirmed cases and 56% of deaths as of April 6, 2020, while only making up 39% of the total state population.
- In North Carolina, Blacks make up 21% total state population, but accounted for 37% confirmed cases as of April 6, 2020.
- In Michigan, where Blacks make up 14% of the total state population, they accounted for 33% of confirmed cases and 41% of deaths as of April 6, 2020.
- Moreover, survey data find that Latinos are more likely than Americans overall to see COVID-19 as a major threat to health and finances.

Quarantining family members impacted by the pandemic is a serious challenge. Physical distancing is a luxury for poor, large families who live in small apartments, with little to no option but sharing space with close proximity of their family members. They may also be in a neighborhood with lower access to healthy food or medical facilities that are equipped to treat them effectively. In addition, implicit biases paired with assumptions that these communities do not care about their health set the stage for advantaged groups and the healthcare system to act and react on their

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# Inspirational Quotes

In times of crisis like we're experiencing now, meaningful and memorable words of wisdom can have give us fresh perspective or insight when we are feeling stressed or fearful and need it most. Keep them by your bedside. Tape them to the mirror write them down, and look at a couple whenever you feel in need of a little mental, emotional, or spiritual inspiration.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy.

—*Martin Luther King Jr.*

Opportunities to find deeper powers within ourselves come when life seems most challenging.

—*Joseph Campbell, author*

You have power over your mind — not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.

—*Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher.*

Danger gathers upon our path. We cannot afford — we have no right — to look back. We must look forward.

—*Winston Churchill*

In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity.

—*Sun Tsu, Chinese general and philosopher.*

Logic will get you from A to Z; Imagination will get you everywhere.

—*Albert Einstein*

What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson, 19th century lecturer, philosopher*

The wound is the place where the light enters you.

—*Rumi, 13th-century Persian poet*

Man cannot remake himself without suffering, for he is both the marble and the sculptor.

—*Dr. Alexis Carrel, Nobel Prize-winning French surgeon and biologist*

Life will give you whatever experience is most helpful for the evolution of your consciousness.

—*Eckhart Tolle, contemporary spiritual teacher*



# OPHELIA'S PLACE

EMPOWERMENT • EDUCATION • SUPPORT

*What was the main reason you chose to become an Alliance member?*

Ophelia's Place understands the value of partnerships. Prevention-based support requires a holistic approach to care for girls and youth. By becoming an Alliance member, we're hoping to discover more partnership opportunities with fellow youth-serving organizations to reach more girls across the state to share our prevention-based messages.

*What are some challenges Ophelia's Place faces today?*

It's a self-created challenge: we want to reach more girls throughout Oregon. Ophelia's Place provides its services three ways: through After and Out-of-School Programming, through School Partnerships, and through strengths-based Therapy. We currently have two sites – in Eugene and Junction City – where we offer our after school programming and therapy services. We provide school partnership programming throughout Lane and Linn counties. And we're launching Traveling Teams in smaller communities like Oakridge to provide a mix of our school and after-school programming. We have our sights on establishing sites in additional communities like Albany, and providing school programming beyond our current counties.

Interestingly, COVID-19 is a challenge, but our team met it with the idea of taking our services online. Virtual Drop-In, where girls can hang out in a safe and moderated chat group twice a day, is launching early May; tele-health therapy has been successful for the last month. We're also connecting with parents and educators via our blog, social media outlets and more. It's all valuable information – just shared differently. We're meeting girls where they are.

*What gives you the greatest pleasure in your work?*

There's nothing quite as exciting as watching an OP Girl come out of her shell during after school drop-in. Or watching girls share ideas about how to manage some of the challenges of being a teen, like how to create healthy relationships, staying safe online, or helping to prevent bullying. It's fun to see all youth learn how to be allies for each other during our classroom presentations, and to watch parents take a breath when they see they aren't alone in figuring out how to support their kiddos. The best part: catching up with former OP Girls who are now empowered, world-changing women working toward their dreams and inspiring other women and girls in their communities.

*What else would you like to share?*

We have a question for you and your audience, and it's something we ask adults who are new to Ophelia's Place: Looking back at your teenage years (and they were tough years for most) what advice would you give your 13-year-old self? Would you tell them to hang in there? Would you tell them that it's ok to share their opinion? Would you tell them to keep dancing or painting, or that their feelings are normal, or know it's ok to say no? Today's teen girls need that support too, and a safe space to ask questions along the way. That safe space is Ophelia's Place. We encourage your audience to check out our website for more information, and follow us on all the socials for more information.

# Welcome New Members



*What was the main reason you chose to become an Alliance member?*

We became a member so that we could have access at children's programming decision making bodies impacting policy and bringing guidance and direction to ongoing quality assurance and care for youth.

*What are some challenges Youth Unlimited faces today?*

Staffing up, online training for foster parents, expanding capacity. We have potential foster parents who would work with us but we are too small to bring them on. Additionally, without 1/12 state payment models its hard for us to ramp up and hold on to staff.

*What gives you the greatest pleasure in your work?*

Providing great homes for kiddos.

*What else would you like to share?*

We are a for-profit company. The black community in Oregon is historically oppressed and there are few models of business/financial success. We want kids to see themselves in the landscape of success. There is not even a successful black neighborhood whereas most large cities have them. We are not interested in peddling oppression. We want foster kids to have the best experience that we can give them. We want them to know that in spite of their current situation it doesn't have to be how it ends. They don't have to take a vow of poverty. They can go to college, they can own businesses, and they can go on to live successful lives and have their needs met. It's hard to show a kid that through the nonprofit lens. In my experience working with kids of colors from low income communities, they will tell you in a minute that they feel like their choices are selling dope or working at McDonalds and they'd rather sell dope to get the trinkets. If we were a nonprofit, we'd cement that poverty mindset. In reality, we run the risk of looking like poor African American beggars who are poor like them and they won't listen to us. Kids are smart. They know when folks are real and when folks care about them. They have very good ideas about what success looks like. If everybody in their lives are from a non profit then what message are we sending them about what success looks like?



*Welcome back to the Alliance!*

Family Solutions provides a continuum of children's mental health services from early intervention to intensive residential treatment.

Family Solutions overall philosophy is based on the value of preserving individual and family integrity by helping children and families build on their innate strengths. We empower participants by guiding them through the process of identifying and implementing solutions to their problems. Family Solutions strives to meet the special needs of children and youths in the least-restrictive setting possible.

# HEALTH DISPARITIES AND COVID—19

*(Continued from page 2)*

presumptions and biases toward these communities. The reality is that disadvantaged communities will not be able to access the already limited resources, nor be able to navigate the system to meet their basic needs.

We can either continue to practice cognitive dissonance, or we can recognize that this pandemic is drastic and that we need to take an active role in unpacking generational trauma inflicted by racism, poverty and un-addressed health equity. It is up to us to do something about these harsh realities and help those unjustly being further marginalized. We need to advocate with our law makers, legislators, and health officials; and we need to push globally and locally for equitable access to resources and health equity for these communities that are in high health risk already.

We also need to collectively ask for clear data around the impact of COVID-19 on minority communities in order to understand the extent of impact and depth of health inequity. We need to push for collecting data based on the age, gender, race, linguistic ability, disability, and immigration status, socioeconomic status, with special attention to marginalized communities like LGBTQ, Refugee & Immigrants, homeless youth and

families, and those who have underlying health conditions. Transparent communication and release of data by health officials on the state and federal level is essential, and looking at the data through a lens of trauma and equity when setting up resources and interventions not only is encouraged, but should be required. We cannot see this data and turn our heads, pretending that this is not a serious danger that is further threatening marginalized communities. It is trauma over generational trauma combined with generational poverty, which can result in long lasting physical, psychological, and spiritual injury for generations to come.

The next time we think about how COVID-19 is impacting the world .let's consider all of these factors While we are all affected by the virus, it is important to remember that we are not affected equally, nor treated equally. This pandemic can be a death sentence for disadvantaged communities, but it can also be an opportunity for all of us at various levels to shift the paradigm by understanding the problem, and doing something about it.

Written by Pari Mazhar, LCSW, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion | Refugee & Immigrant Service Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare

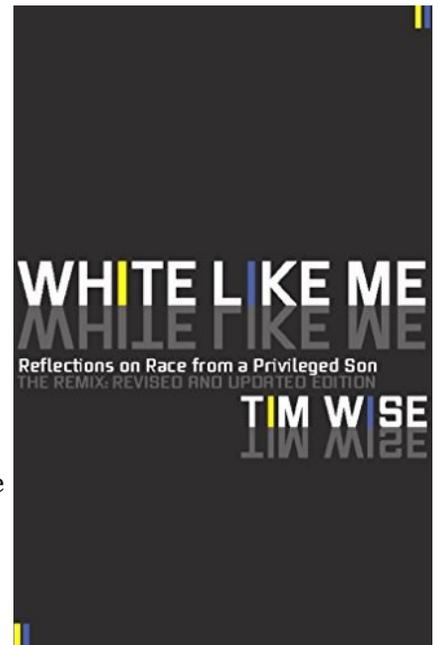
## SOCIAL JUSTICE BOOK CLUB

### White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son

Using stories from his own life, Tim Wise demonstrates the ways in which racism not only burdens people of color, but also benefits, in relative terms, those who are “white like him.” He discusses how racial privilege can harm whites in the long run and make progressive social change less likely. He explores the ways in which whites can challenge their unjust privileges, and explains in clear and convincing language why it is in the best interest of whites themselves to do so. Using anecdotes instead of stale statistics, Wise weaves a narrative that is at once readable and yet scholarly, analytical and yet accessible.

#### About the Author

Tim Wise is among the most prominent anti-racist writers and activists in the U.S., and has been called, 'One of the most brilliant, articulate and courageous critics of white privilege in the nation,' by best-selling author and professor Michael Eric Dyson, of Georgetown University. Wise has spoken in all 50 states, on over 1000 college campuses, and has spoken to community groups around the nation. He is the author of seven books and has contributed essays to twenty-five additional volumes.



## FEATURE MEMBER



The team at Youth Progress focuses on seeing young people for who they are today, and helping them see who they can become in the future. Staff and foster parents focus on really getting to know and understand each youth. They build trust and relationships through more than just surface-level conversations. The young people benefit from being in our programs and at the same time, program staff and foster parents are learning from the young people and are able to grow their knowledge, skills, and abilities along the way.

May is National Foster Care Month and the Alliance recognizes all the amazing proctor parents Youth Progress and our other members team with!



*Ms. Cynthia Binns*

“Ms. Cynthia is always willing to work hard and stays committed when things get very tough. She has a huge heart and a great amount of endurance. Ms. Cynthia was recruited about two years ago at the NE Alberta recruiting event and over a cup of

coffee. She’s had an ample amount of experience with kids since having her own kids and 17 grandchildren. She is nurturing and refers to the youth living in her home as “my babies” or “my boys” and the youth love her.

It is very endearing and rewarding for Youth Progress staff to experience the connection and care happening in Ms. Cynthia’s home. During the many challenges faced as a proctor parent, Ms. Cynthia has never given up on the young people. Instead, she shows steadfast perseverance and great care for each young person placed in her home. Youth Progress is so fortunate to have such an inspirationally strong Proctor parent like Ms. Cynthia.

Thank you for helping us support the youth in our programs, and for continuing to be actively engaged even through these challenges. You are awesome and we can’t thank you enough!”

[Learn more about National Foster Care Month here](#)

[Learn more about Youth Progress here](#)

[Watch a video of a family who signed up to be a therapeutic foster care parents and how it impacted their lives.](#)

## You are invited to help inform strategies for the next State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

The Oregon State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) is a five-year plan that identifies our state’s health priorities with strategies that will lead to improvements in outcomes. The SHIP is a key initiative of the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) that aims to advance health equity. The SHIP is intended to inform Community Health Improvement Plans, and state agency policies, partnerships and investments.

The 2020-2024 SHIP will be addressing five priority areas: institutional bias; adversity, trauma and toxic stress; behavioral health; equitable access to preventive care; and economic drivers of health including housing, transportation and living wage.

OHA will launch the 2020-2024 SHIP as a tool for our state’s recovery from COVID-19. Co-created with over 100 community partners, the SHIP is designed to respond to priorities that communities identified in 2018 and 2019. Prior to COVID-19, social determinants of health were identified as critical to health in our state. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the short- and long-term trajectory in each of these five priority areas, making implementation of the SHIP even more critical.

[Take the survey and get more information here](#)

Save the Date ◆ October 28—30, 2020

## Oregon Alliance Summit

***The State of Children's Mental Health  
and Substance Use Prevention  
Across Oregon: Changes,  
Challenges and Innovations***



Eagle Crest Resort ◆ 1522 Cline Falls Road ◆ Redmond, OR

**Oregon Alliance**

Safe Kids, Healthy Families, Strong Communities



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### ABOUT THE OREGON ALLIANCE

The Oregon Alliance was founded in 1917 to support the lives of Oregon's Children.

Alliance member organizations provide services and supports to over 100,000 children, youth and young adults across Oregon annually.

We are committed to transforming Oregon's system of care and promote and support the well-being and sustained success of every Oregonian we can reach - the children, youth, families, and communities that make up this state's vast potential.