

### BACKGROUND:

In 2013, Spirit & Place conducted an evaluation (funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.) of its role in the community and how it should position itself as a community change agent. In that same year, Spirit & Place embarked on one of its earliest initiatives at tackling racism. With support from the Scott Jones Foundation, Spirit & Place hosted a “pitch fest” in which various organizations and individuals submitted ideas on how to improve race relations for a \$20,000 prize. Lessons learned from these initiatives launched an internal journey in 2015 to dismantle our own complicity in upholding institutional racism and white supremacy. Under the guidance of its first Community Engagement Director (LaShawnda Crowe Storm, hired in 2015 with support from the Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation), Spirit & Place moved from an outreach model towards one rooted in community engagement. Operating principles, which emerged after a year’s work and were updated in 2020(\*), are as follows:

1. *Center Community* (support and follow the community’s goals and movement)
2. *Show Up* (be present in community spaces and places and participate)
3. *Invest Time* (the most critical investment for success)
4. *Actively Listen* (without expectation or agenda to center people and make way for new discoveries)
5. *Adapt* (to be responsive and nimble)
6. *Weave Networks* (to make space for unexpected collaborations, voices, and opportunities)
7. *Stay Relevant* (to be part of critical community issues, build relationships, and raise profile) and
8. *Take Risks* (be open to mystery, follow doors that open, celebrate what emerges).
9. *Beyond the Common\** (building things that support everyone requires sitting with complexity/diversity of needs, dreams, limitations, and boundaries).
10. *Generative\** (work together to create a woven ecosystem that allows all to evolve and grow in the ways they need and desire).

Notable successes have included **Gentrify: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (2016)**, **Powerful Conversations on Race (2017-2018)**, **Community Innovation Lab (2017-2018)**, **Corona Dialogues (2020-2022)**, among many others that center the needs of community and engage under-appreciated and oppressed audiences at all levels.

### 2021 PLANS:

Spirit & Place will build upon these successes with both external and internal systems level work intended to deepen our own anti-racism efforts and also strengthen community capacity for anti-racism and equity discussions. Our specific equity goals are to use our civic tools—the arts, humanities, and religion—to:

1. Strengthen community capacity for race-centered dialogues.
2. Grow the pool of individuals who can facilitate race-centered dialogue.
3. Discover our niche and devise a strategy for engaging diverse faith communities at all levels.
4. Transform key systems and barriers in Spirit & Place that uphold white supremacy and structural racism.
5. Weave new partnerships that support BIPOC/ALAANA<sup>1</sup> serving and/or led organizations.
6. Increase engagement of BIPOC/ALAANA individuals at all levels of Spirit & Place.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the terms BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)/ALAANA (African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, Native-American) so that readers with various understandings can discern our meaning. However, we do NOT use these labels in daily practice or publication because community labels are complex and should be self-determined, and not presumed by Spirit & Place. Additionally, inaccurate use of these terms, e.g. using BIPOC when Black is intended, results in erasure.

We will:

1. Begin to evaluate our work through the “Continuum for Becoming a Fully Inclusive Arts & Cultural Organization (see last page).” Through an adaptive process we will identify where we are in the continuum, as well as next steps needed to move to the next level. The continuum was published by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (Cleveland, OH), created by Crossroads Ministry, Chicago, IL, and adapted from original concept by Kathy Hsieh for the Racial Equity Arts Lab Forum (REAL Forum).  
Completion by Dec. 30. **u**
2. Evolve **Powerful Conversations on Race (PCR)** into a rich ecosystem of dialogues that offer multiple entry points and levels for race-centered dialogue. This work was built on funding provided by Indiana Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities and continues with support from The Indianapolis Foundation (a CICF affiliate) and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church.
  - a. Re-launch the original series (monthly series) using the *Charleston Syllabus: Readings on Race, Racism, and Racial Violence in the U.S.* as the humanities source, supported by additional arts and humanities materials. **Launched in July 2021. o**
  - b. Launch “**Race & ...**” (monthly series) on topics requested by community including issues relating to Indiana history and contemporary perspectives, e.g. Critical Race Theory, Education in Indianapolis, American Myth & Race, and more. **Launched in July 2021. o**
  - c. Launch “**Racial Trauma and Healing**” (4 week intensive), led by veteran PCR facilitator Dr. M. Hamilton Abegunde (first round for PCR facilitators only). **✓**
  - d. Partner with St. Paul’s Episcopal Church to explore ways that PCR can benefit their congregation. **u See 10(d).**
  - e. Design white privilege series for launch in 2022. **Deferred to 2022 due to limited capacity.**
3. Evolve Corona Dialogues Phase I discussions (focused on 1941 FDR speech and “Four Freedoms” visual art by diverse artists) to be an on-ramp for race-based dialogues in community organizations. This is systems-level work and can serve as a baseline conversation for those engaging in DEI, anti-racism, or multicultural work. **✓**
4. Explore Civic Reflection Dialogue facilitation for corporations and community organizations as a way to bring race-centered conversations to wider audiences. **✓ - Facilitated dialogues for faculty of IU College of Arts and Sciences (Bloomington) and the Arts Council of Indianapolis, which hosted sector-wide dialogues.**
5. Embed and grow the pool of **Civic Reflection Dialogues (CRD)** facilitators (with race-centered training) in Indianapolis. This work was built with funding from Indiana Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities and continues thanks to support from The Indianapolis Foundation (a CICF affiliate).
  - a. Train three Spirit & Place staff members and selected community facilitators to train new facilitators in CRD, the facilitation methodology used for Powerful Conversations on Race and Corona Dialogues. The methodology was created by the Center for Civic Reflection (Salisbury University, MD) and adapted by Spirit & Place for race-focused dialogue. **✓**
  - b. Offer semi-annual trainings on our race-centered CRD method. This will populate our city with skilled facilitators who are capable of navigating difficult dialogues across numerous civic or social issues, carrying these skills back into their neighborhoods, congregations, and more. (Trainings attached to immediate practice in PCR.) **One training in 2021; second one deferred due to insufficient staff capacity. Two are currently scheduled for 2022, one for community and one for youth-service workers.**

6. Track the work of trained facilitators and how they carry the work into other settings. o
7. Complete **Corona Dialogues** discussion series on disparate impacts of COVID-19 and write a community-centered Pandemic Plan for Change. Results will be tracked through March 2022. This work is supported by Indiana Humanities with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Indianapolis Foundation (a CICF affiliate), Asante Children’s Theatre, Community Action of Greater Indianapolis, and Medical Humanities & Health Studies Program at the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. u **Pandemic Plan for Community to be drafted in 2022.**
8. Reduce barriers and increase incentives and opportunities for Spirit & Place Festival participation. This work is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.
  - a. After testing in 2020, permanently eliminate application fees so that under-funded and oppressed individuals and organizations have increased access to the Festival platform. ✓
  - b. Increase the Awesomeness Award winner from \$1,000 to \$1,500 and offer up to (for the first time) two runner-up prizes of \$500 each (total of \$2.5K) ✓ - **One runner-up prize was available in 2021.**
  - c. Explore how we can engage more individual artists / creatives, particularly from communities of color. u
  - d. Expand training for festival partner organizations around accessibility, storytelling, etc. ✓ **Offered a workshop on storytelling aimed at festival partners and open to public and published an event design toolkit on newly designed website.**
  - e. Continue offering one-on-one coaching, connections, and staff support to help diverse Spirit & Place partners achieve their program goals. o
  - f. Continue to encourage festival participation as a space for challenging topics and discussions, many of which are rooted in systemic racism. Reinforce the complexity and messiness of the work (using our own programs as examples), as well as its central importance to systems change. o
9. Livestream key Spirit & Place events (opening festival event, annual public conversation, spring faith event, Civic Saturdays) with live-captioning and ASL services (tested in 2020), when feasible. ✓ **ASL services for the Public Conversation were cancelled at the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances.**
10. Research needs and devise a strategy for better serving the diverse faith communities of Central Indiana, especially those that are under-represented. This work is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.
  - a. Engage support of CIC’s Interfaith Enrichment Corps (an AmeriCorps program) for implementation support. ✓ - **AmeriCorp member was not able to complete term due to unforeseen circumstances.**
  - b. Interview 25 diverse faith representatives (40 completed plus 200 public surveys). ✓
  - c. Engage researcher to identify themes from interviews and surveys. ✓
  - d. Pilot congregational work with St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. ✓ – **Facilitated a dialogue between members of St. Paul’s and St. Phillips Episcopal Conversations. St. Paul’s also hosted and sponsored the Public Conversation on the legacy of white supremacy in American Christianity.**
  - e. Draft faith strategy plan for review and comment by community. u – **Delayed due to loss of AmeriCorps support person.**

(✓ = completed / u = underway / o = ongoing)

11. Work with an ad hoc community-based committee to re-imagine Spirit & Place advisory system to increase accountability to and representation of the community, particularly for those that have historically felt unwelcome in Spirit & Place due to race/ethnicity, religion, income, age, geography, ability, etc. u – 3 of 4 meetings held; delayed due to increased faith interview workload and heavy fall program calendar (Powerful Conversations on Arts, Arts-Based Community Development Training, Racial Trauma and Healing Workshop and the Spirit & Place Festival.)
12. Implement community-centric fundraising principles.
  - a. Require new fundraising staff position to attend “Interrupting Racism” training, attend Powerful Conversations on Race, read Decolonizing Wealth and generally be well versed in systemic oppression, equity, wealth disparity, intersectionality, etc. ✓
  - b. Attach our systems-level anti-racism plans and/or include a summary of it in all grant proposals to hold us accountable and signal to grant-makers the central importance of equity. ✓ (when optional attachments are permitted)
  - c. Ask all grant-makers about their equity rubrics in grant evaluation and encourage them to develop if none exist. o
  - d. Continue with Spirit & Place friends list (tested in 2020), which includes an alphabetical listing of donors, volunteers, partner organizations, advisors, foundations, and more without reference to or ranking of gift size. This equally values gifts of time, talent, space, and money. ✓
  - e. Support the establishment of a local community centric fundraising learning cohort. Deferred until new staff position (our first full-time fundraiser) is well-established.
13. In our community engagement efforts, focus on making the unseen seen and building partnerships across geographic and institutional silos. o
14. Serve on the IU School of Liberal Arts DEI Strategic Planning committee to integrate with the school’s community engagement effort and support systems change within the school. ✓
15. Serve on and connect with key community groups such as the Race and Cultural Relationships Leadership Network (GIPC), Arts & Equity Taskforce (Arts Council of Indianapolis), Reconnecting our Waterways (ROW), MusicCrossroads Advisory Board, among others, where we will advocate for systems changes that address racism. o

## 2021 Equity / Anti-Racism Plan & Report

### Continuum on Becoming a Fully Inclusive Arts and Cultural Organization

Racial & cultural differences seen as deficits		Tolerant of racial and cultural differences		Racial and cultural differences seen as assets	
<p><b>1. Exclusive Segregated Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latina/os and Asian Americans</li> <li>Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution</li> <li>Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings and decision-making on all levels</li> <li>Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups, such as women, people who are disabled, elderly and children, people who identify as queer, immigrants, etc.</li> <li>Upholds a White Supremacy culture</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Passive Status Quo Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tolerant of a limited number of People of Color (POC) with “proper” perspective and credentials</li> <li>May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies</li> <li>Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings and decision-making on all levels of institutional life</li> <li>Often declares, “We don’t have a problem” or is fine with having an all-white or predominantly white organization</li> <li>No outreach at any level to diversify the organization is done</li> <li>Programming is centered on white artists, Western European art-forms and white cultural values</li> <li>The inclusion of POC artists is perceived as lowering the quality of the art</li> <li>POC audiences aren’t viewed as worth the effort either because they wouldn’t “fit” or might make the regular patrons feel uncomfortable or even scare away the long-time supporters</li> <li>Fear that the inclusion of POC art will result in a loss of support from their donors</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Symbolic Multicultural Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has public statement committing to diversity, equity and inclusion but hasn’t implemented changes embodying aspirations</li> <li>Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting “someone of color” on committees or staff</li> <li>Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups, such as women, people who are disabled, elderly, children, LGBTQ, etc.</li> <li>Might see themselves as “color-blind” in hiring, programming, marketing</li> <li>Marketing materials and website include higher % people of color than exist in organization</li> <li>Primary strategy for reaching communities of color is offering discounted opportunities or scholarships</li> <li>Primary strategy for hiring is to include a statement about encouraging POC to apply</li> <li>Can’t understand why POC haven’t responded to their efforts</li> <li>Possible White-Savior complex - the organization feels like they’re helping POC by offering them opportunities</li> <li>POC still perceived through a deficit-framework</li> <li>Sees itself as “non-racist” institution – “We’re open to all people,” but . . .</li> <li>“Not those who make waves”</li> <li>Little or no contextual change in culture, policies and decision-making</li> <li>Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control</li> <li>White cultural norms are centered</li> <li>White fragility shows up when POC share about their experience</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Evolving Anti-Racist Institution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity</li> <li>Develops analysis of systemic racism</li> <li>Board/staff participate in on-going anti-racism training</li> <li>New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege</li> <li>Develops intentional identity as an “antiracist” institution</li> <li>Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities</li> <li>Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage, but . . .</li> <li>Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched</li> <li>Those in decision-making positions may still be predominantly white even if more of the artists and supporting staff include POC</li> <li>Programming includes one or two annual “diversity” slots</li> <li>Double standards in how people of color and their artwork are viewed, marketed and included</li> <li>POC might be gaining more access to the organization but micro-aggressions against them still exist</li> <li>Organization still functions on White cultural norms so POC have to code switch to be perceived as “professional” enough</li> <li>POC feel like they need to navigate the unpredictability of an organization striving to be “woke” but not actually there yet so when an invisible line is crossed it’s usually the people of color who have to back track rather than the non-POC willing to lean in</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Structurally Changing Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based on anti-racist analysis and identity</li> <li>Audits and restructures organizational culture to ensure full participation of POC, including their worldview, culture and working styles</li> <li>POC are included in all levels of the organization from board to staff (including leadership positions) and as artists</li> <li>Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision-making and other forms of power sharing at all levels of the organization</li> <li>Commits to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities</li> <li>Reaches out to involve POC communities for all programming, not just the racially specific ones</li> <li>Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset</li> <li>Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments</li> <li>Seeks deeper awareness in contributing to a more racially equitable work place</li> <li>Acceptance of honest and direct feedback while holding compassion for each person</li> <li>POC staff, board members, artists and supporters are valued for the expertise they share as full human beings and not just for their race</li> <li>Collaborates with POC-led groups in an equitable way, centering their voices, leadership, ideas, and needs in the process</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Inclusive Transformed Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transformational Relational Culture rather than Transactional Individualistic one</li> <li>Collaborative org structure</li> <li>Full participation and shared power with people across all social spectrums in creating, deciding and implementing its vision, mission, values, structure, constituency, policies and practices</li> <li>Functions from an asset-based framework</li> <li>Instills a sense of joy, trust and gratitude among all</li> <li>Inspires growth and learning</li> <li>Adaptive and continually evolving</li> <li>A place of possibility</li> <li>Each person involved with the organization (board, staff, artists, supporters, collaborators, audience) has agency and feels welcomed, included, seen, heard and valued for the full spectrum of their humanity</li> <li>Everyone is able to show up authentically and allowed to work to their fullest potential</li> <li>Every person feels alive and transformed</li> <li>Shared sense of community, trust and mutual caring within the organization and its broader community where everyone has each other’s back</li> <li>Audiences see themselves reflected in the work and feel humanized by the depiction</li> <li>Artistic work involves those being depicted in a creation and a decision-making level</li> <li>The public feels collective ownership in the organization and is able to voice authentic feedback that is truly listened to and taken into consideration for future planning</li> <li>Organization allies with others in creating true liberation for all people</li> </ul>