

Furthering the Work of the Peace Table - June 5, 2020

This has been a challenging week at the end of an unprecedentedly disrupted and difficult spring for our country and its people, and indeed around the world. The most recent incidents of racism and police brutality have made many of us anxious, pensive, heartbroken, and wanting to do more. At a predominantly white school in a predominantly white state, the negative impact of racial bias is not something that many of us are forced to deal with on a daily basis, while our parents, students, and staff people of color do.

We as a society have a great deal of work to do to address systemic racism, and the Montessori community is no exception. Many Montessori organizations, including [MPPI](#), [AMS](#), and [AMI](#), have been acknowledging the ways that they have participated in upholding systems of oppression and racism and their plans for actions moving forward.

While the Peace Curriculum is an integral part of Montessori philosophy and practice, it is not enough to combat racialized violence. These lessons need to be rooted in a value system and understanding that addresses the white privilege and systemic racism that exists in our society and in our school. This can be difficult and uncomfortable work. The "Peace Table", for children and adults alike, is not always an easy or comfortable place to be, but is an important place of learning and growth.

We are committed to looking at the ways that we contribute to systemic, institutional, structural, and interpersonal racism, and learning how we can disrupt and uproot these systems from our school and our community. We have had members of our staff and family community who have been incredibly helpful in moving us forward, and I'm extremely grateful for their work with us. And, we cannot rely on only affected factions of our community to do the work for us. It is the white members of the Hilltop community that need to be doing active anti-racism work, both within the school and within ourselves. While we recognize that many have been actively engaging with Hilltop on these issues, we also all need to acknowledge that this work is not over and we must continue this work with humility, honesty, and appreciation. We also invite parents and HMS community members to participate in Hilltop's Anti-Bias and Equity Workgroup, whose work will resume with the next school year. This is an all-inclusive group whose role is to advise on specific changes which Hilltop can make within our own community to dismantle racist and anti-equity structures, and make our community safer and more supportive for everybody.

We want to support our community and are invested in learning and growing together. In our school lending library we have the following resources that can support families who are interested in learning more, please contact the [Front Desk](#) if you would like to borrow one, and we can arrange for a pick up:

- *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menaken
- *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo
- *What If All the Kids Are White?: Anti-bias Multicultural Education With Young Children And Families (Early Childhood Education Series)* by Louise Derman- Sparks
- *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria: And Other Conversations About Race* by Beverly Daniel Tatum
- *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor* by Layla F. Saad
- *This Book is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell (who did training with us two summers ago)
- *Waking up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving
- *Raising White Kids: Bringing Up Children in a Racially Unjust America* by Jennifer Harvey and Tim Wise
- *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin J. DiAngelo and Michael Eric Dyson

We need to draw on the many resources available to us to combat the prejudice around us and in us, including keeping dialogs open, despite the difficult nature of this work. There is still so much we can do personally, as an organization, and as a society.

For parents who are interested in help with talking about race with your children, and working to raise anti-racist children, we believe these resources for parents (some are specifically written for white parents), can be helpful:

- [How to Talk with Kids About Racism and Racial Violence](#)
- [Talking to Kids About Racism, Early and Often](#)
- [Compilation of Anti-Racism Resources](#)
- [How White Parents Can Use Media to Raise Anti-Racist Kids](#)
- [Your Kids Aren't Too Young to Talk About Race: Resource Roundup](#)

Children's Book Lists

These lists of children's books, compiled by a variety of sources, have themes that aim to accurately reflect the many people, cultures, and traditions of our world; help dispel myths and biases; and promote peace and understanding.

- [Books for Littles](#)
- [Act For Social Justice: Awesome Social Justice Books for Kids](#)
- [26 Children's Books to Support Conversations on Race, Racism, and Resistance](#)
- ["Books for Peace: An Annotated Bibliography,"](#) from AMS's *Montessori Life* magazine, Spring 2016
- ["Power Picture Books: Tools for Teaching Peace,"](#) from *Montessori Life*, Winter 2008 – 2009
- ["Children's Books That Tackle Race and Ethnicity,"](#) by Maria Russo, from the *New York Times*, September 23, 2016
- [LGBT Books for Children](#), by the Bank Street School of Education, is sorted by category: picture books, juvenile fiction, juvenile nonfiction, children's poetry, young adult fiction, and juvenile biography.

- [See What We See](#), a coalition of writers, scholars, educators, librarians, and activists who believe that what we read can help shape our attitudes and actions, has created this guide for selecting anti-bias books for children.
- [We Need Diverse Books](#), a grassroots foundation that invites us to "imagine a world in which all children can see themselves in the pages of a book," offers suggestions of books for children of all ages.
- This [Social Justice Book List](#) is an initiative of the National Network of State Teachers of the Year.