

## Facilitator's Report

San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity

Racial Justice Conversation

December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### Agenda (10 AM – 3 PM)

- I. **Prayer**
- II. **Introductions:** “What are you interested in hearing about at this workshop?”
- III. **Racial Justice: understanding race, class and privilege**
  - a. “Game of Households”
- IV. **Breakout Groups: Break into three groups-**
  - a. Complete activity as described
- V. **Report Back to Group**
  - a. “Actions Speak Louder than Words” exercise
- VI. **Presentation:** Gretchen, presentation on “Racial Justice training 101” in Colorado
- VII. **Presentation:** Chef Karlos from Ute Nation- Racial Justice and Indigenous Foods
  - a. Question and Answer
- VIII. **Evaluation Form**
- IX. **Closing**
- X. **Adjourn Workshop**



**Summary:** On Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Ms. Hazel James, coordinator for San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity, hosted a “Racial Justice Conversation” workshop facilitated by Janene Yazzie. There were over 32 participants (some individuals forgot to sign in), representing what one participant called, “the four colors of humanity”. This report covers give an overview of the process that was carried out, evaluation results, and recommendations for next steps. Overall the workshop was successful and informative for both the participants and the organizers. The feedback that was offered will be used to develop future workshops that delve deeper into the conversation of what racial justice looks like, how to combat implicit bias, and how to develop and share strategies and tools for meaningful action to foster racial justice in our communities. The workshop brought together a network that transcends the state lines of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Navajo, and Ute Nations, promising to work as an actual region rather than by politically defined areas. Specifically the workshop has led to a promising opportunity to bring together the San Juan team with Colorado groups, as well as folks from Somos Un Pueblo Unido. We will continue applying racial justice strategies using a Diné research and Evaluation lens that will help nurture a holistic and inclusive approach to understanding both the causes and experiences of racial injustice and the ways we can address inequality as an inclusive community.

## The Process

The event started with a prayer, followed by introduction of all participants and sharing around the questions “What are you interested in hearing at this workshop?” and “What does Racial Justice mean to

What are you interested in hearing about at this workshop?  
(What does racial justice mean to you?)

- how to teach youth from different backgrounds how to interact w/ each other (teaching understanding)
- Food justice
- learn what we can do as a community to combat racial justice
- to have equity + inclusion → have basic human rights recognized
- environmental justice
- learn from one another, build bridges, nurture harmony
- learn from hate + keep our kids safe
- get practical steps + ideas to help solve the problem

- overcome our own racism
- shooting in Aztec → provide tools + understanding for our youth
- food justice – access to homegrown + healthy foods
- learn how to deal w/ racial injustice
- learn how to challenge implicit bias
- challenge internalized racism/prejudice
  - ↳ deconstruct sup. policies, ideologies + philosophies
- hate prejudice, disparity + lack of resources in the community
  - ↳ want to be part of the solution not react in anger
- deconstruct the term “race”, ethnocentrism
  - ↳ build collaboration
- President wants assimilation into white as norm

- we need truth + reconciliation
  - ↳ dev. common language, methods, processes
- learn to help other people
- advocate for immigrant rights
  - ↳ combat violence, build understanding w/ in justice sys or protection from it.
- help families, childrens feel safe in interacting w/ other + the outside world without feeling scared or judged.
- Create safe space to amplify the voices of those most impacted to shift power → challenge the status quo
- economic justice
- expose abuses of local law enforcement
  - ↳ hold them accountable
  - ↳ build coalitions + meaningful civic engagement
- Stop racial profiling

Facilitator notes on participants responses to opening questions

you”. The main themes that came from participant feedback were about learning and developing tools and strategies to deal with racism, prejudice, and implicit bias (attitudes and stereotypes that affect our actions unconsciously) so that we could help those who needed it; creating safe spaces for our friends, neighbors and loved ones; and passing down these lessons to the youth to teach inclusion, justice and how to build bridges to nurture harmony. This exercise was conducted to ensure that with the limited time we had for the workshop, that we would be aware of what was most important to the group so that the conversation would be informative and sensitive to the needs of the participants. This is part of decolonizing our facilitation practices by challenging our assumptions of the groups’ priorities and experiences and working WITH the participants instead of assuming we know what they will find meaningful and important. It was also an opportunity for everyone to get a chance to hear from the people around them and what drew them to that space to spend their Saturday afternoon.

After a brief reflection on what was shared with people’s responses we went into our first exercise called “Game of Homes” which was an interactive exercise to look at the intersections of race, class and privilege. This exercise quantified self-reported scores based on statements about safety, health, well-being and economic security. The categories covered related to the experience of each person in relation to the spiritual, the individual, the community, and the environment/natural world and are reflective of using an Indigenous research and evaluation lens that looks at quality of life from a holistic perspective. Traditional indicators of a good and stable quality of life are usually determined based on economic and physical safety measures and are also included in the analysis and format of the statements posed to the group. If they answered “Yes” to the statements, meaning the statement applied to them, then they would count it as one point (+1). If they answered “No”, indicating they did not relate to a statement, then they would subtract one point (-1). In review of the results it was noticed that many did not perform the math correctly and added up only the positive points without subtracting the negative, leading to higher scores. It was important to take away points whenever a statement

didn't apply to a person because security is measured by vulnerability to socio-political stresses and when a person has a vulnerability in one area—let's say religion and home life experiences some form of insecurity—then the gross economic security can be negatively impacted or made more susceptible to negative change because of these risks. This is because the statements were about the freedoms and the quality of life and security it afforded a person when they possessed it, and the challenge it posed when they didn't. Meaning not only do you not have the freedom/experience/quality of life, but much of your energy, state of being, and opportunities could be negatively impacted by it. From a Diné research lens this is translated into analyzing your quality of life as it relates to a state of balance. In this lens the state of balance is known as *hózhó* and it is our ultimate state of being. Due to the interconnected realities that comprise our life experiences, disharmony in one area impacts other areas of your life and well-being. An example of this are professionals who may be undocumented may have advantages in education and economic capacity but would be unable to fully realize that potential. Another example are Native professionals who follow and adhere to traditional Indigenous values may have economic security but may not be able to build the spiritual or home life reflective of their traditional values in the open ways they desire.

*Sample Questions/statements:*

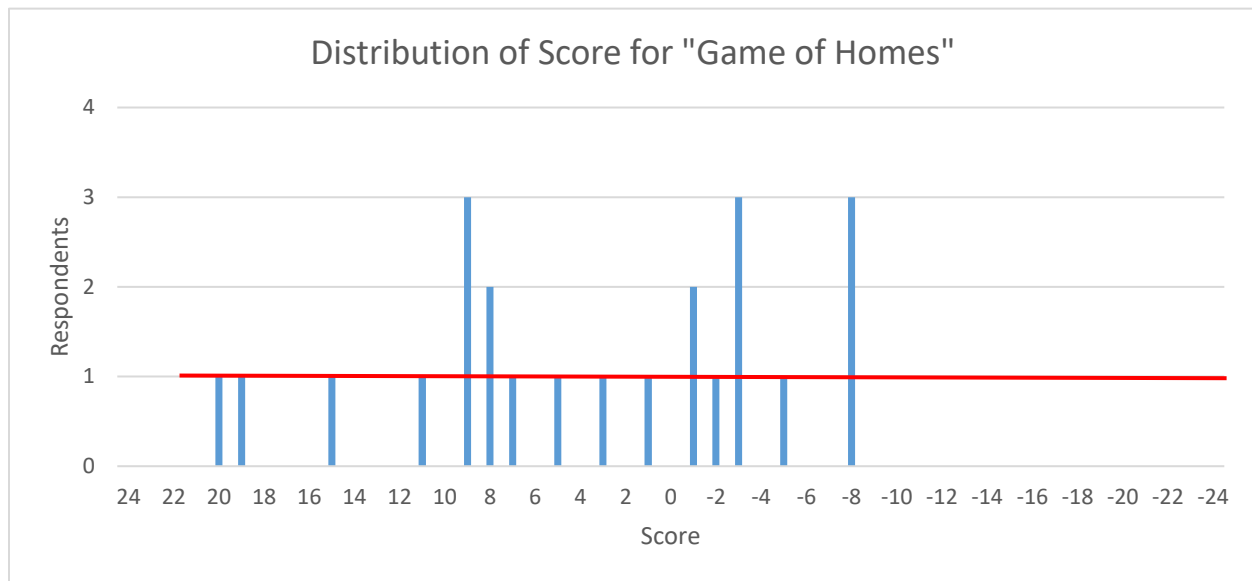
1. *(spiritual) I have never felt afraid to pray in public.*
2. *(individual) I have had the opportunity to gain a college education.*
3. *(economic) I have access to healthy foods.*
4. *(environment) I have never had to worry about chronic toxic exposure.*

Although there are different ways to analyze the results we did the simplest analysis which was the overall sum total score to all the statements that were evaluated (other analysis could assess the scores based on the different categories). Laying out the results in order from least to highest helped paint a picture of the overall “security” (defined as “quality of life” as well as economic security) of the participants in relation to each other. The exercise was meant to stimulate critical thinking about the prevalence and the impact of systemic racism and injustice, and the barriers to economic and social advancement.



*Examples of Participant Drawings and scores for "Game of Homes"*

## Results:



The exercise elicited an interesting conversation about assumptions and realities as a few Indigenous women found themselves at the higher end of the spectrum of security, whereas some of the white participants found themselves at the lower spectrum. In discussions it was shown that at least one of the Indigenous women at the higher end of the spectrum recognized she was the beneficiary of at least two generations of struggle for individual and family advancement beginning with a grandfather who did well for himself. Whereas one of the participants at the lower end of the spectrum was working as a teacher in a reservation community because it was meaningful to her but led to a lot of insecurity because of the many risk factors impeding her ability to foster a stable quality of life. The facilitator encouraged everyone to understand that systemic racism doesn't create clear and consistent realities along a binary, but rather, creates barriers, both overt and subtle, that severely limit a person's ability to change their situation or circumstances to build the life they desire, with a spectrum of impacts. The facilitator also shared that those that enjoy every level of security covered by the prompts make up an estimated 10% of the US population and experience little to no risk in terms of loss of that security they enjoy. These would be the people that can answer yes to all prompts and live with relative wealth, freedom of religion, mobility, and opportunities to seek and build the quality of life that they desire while being relatively insulated from changes in market, policy, or other conditions. That doesn't mean that only black people or people of color suffer from injustice and insecurity, or that only white people succeed no matter what they do. It does illuminate how racism, internalized racism, and biases work to continue to divide many of us who are pursuing the same thing; improvement in the quality of our lives in pursuit of well-being, safety and opportunity for ourselves and our loved ones. In future workshops we will delve into these things much deeper and discuss the manner in which we are spread across the spectrum is based on our adherence to heteropatriarchal and religious values and norms that are reflective of the dominant powers. More work in breaking down and understanding these nuances is needed to help people better understand how systemic racism can and does exist in a democracy, and how fear, bigotry, and prejudice can prevail in a country that considers itself a champion of "freedom" and where some people have real, meaningful experiences of changing their personal circumstances without it leading to real changes in the overall form and prevalence of racial injustices.

The next exercise was also interactive. We split the group into 2 smaller groups to spend 40 mins responding to the following prompts: (1) Give an example when you feel you have witnessed/experienced racial injustice; (2) Give examples of internalized racism\*; (3) What does racial justice look like to you?

*\*The question on internalized racism was added because of things brought up in conversations about being ashamed and taught to look down on cultural or ethnic values and practices of one's own heritage. However not everyone in the room understood what internalized racism was or could define it which is why it became part of the group discussion.*

The group was informed that each group would be tasked to act out the selected response to the third prompt (what racial justice looks like to them). They were given the liberty to tie in responses from the other prompts to contextualize their scene but they had to present a resolution of the issue that would show what racial justice would look like in the given situation. This was meant to encourage group collaboration and critical thinking through peer-to-peer learning. One of the questions that kept coming up was a desire for practical tools so it was the organizers' intent to encourage the collaborative development of solutions based on the skill sets, experiences, and access to resources of the participants. This is something that will be continually explored and built upon in more detail in future workshops.

To complete this exercise the two groups situated themselves on opposite sides of the room in a small circle. Without further direction, both groups adopted a slightly different format for answering the questions. Group A seemed to favor an informal conversation where the note-taker presented the question and people took turns answering and speaking back to each other's points. Group B favored a more structured process with the note-taker posing the question and each individual getting an opportunity to respond one by one, going in a clockwise fashion around the circle. As a result Group A touched on some great points but continued to move the conversation forward at a faster pace, with one or two individuals not saying much. Group B had much slower progress as they got very involved in the first question and because they were very supportive towards each other's sharing of deeply emotional and heavy experiences with racial injustice. As a result Group B didn't get through all the questions but Group A did. Although there was a difference in efficiency Group B provided an opportunity for participants to bond on a deep level as many personal stories and vulnerabilities were shared and the group was excellent in maintaining an open and a supportive nature. This illustrated that in future workshops, questions that illicit personal responses and experiences need more time and people should be given the space and opportunity to share in turn (hence ask questions such as peoples experiences with inequality as a stand along exercise or as part of introductions when everyone gets to speak) and with other exercises, an informal response and conversation format would be favorable for efficiency and time constraints.

Due to the personal nature of the stories that were shared they will not be recounted in this report. However main themes were noted and are shared here based on the prompt that elicited the responses.



Prompt: Experiences of Racial Injustice

- Being treated suspiciously or witnessing a POC being treated suspiciously in public spaces, stores, and at events.
- Experiences of police harassment and/or violence
- Experiences of physically assault or abuse for being a POC or Native American
- Experiences of being treated poorly by medical professionals for being a POC or Native American and perceived as poor
- Experiences of fear for children growing up around hate
- Experiences of being ashamed of one's own culture and background
- Experiences of boarding school abuse
- Experiences of witnessing or experiencing micro-aggressions (rooted in racism) from one's peers, family, etc.
- Experiences of being treated as an outsider for being a POC or Native American (in communities that are predominately white) OR being a non-POC (in communities that have a larger minority population)
- Experiences of helplessness when witnessing an act of hate committed by a peer, friend or loved one.
- Experiences of confusion and helplessness when witnessing an act of hate between different groups of POC and/or Native Americans.

Prompt: Internalized Racism:

- Being told not to speak their language or that speaking the language not allowed
- Being made fun of or feeling ashamed for having an accent and/or practicing traditional customs
- POC perpetuating stereotypes against other POC
- Being perceived as part white because they're smart, attractive, and/or light skin (aka "passing" as white as preferable to being distinguishably minority)
- Passing these lessons down to the younger generation.

Actions Speak Louder than Words exercise: Group A went first in acting out their selected scene. They took the space in the middle of the room so that all participants could observe. They acted out a scene of a teacher telling students they can't speak their native language. Student persisted and got in trouble (racial injustice). They then showed the children growing up and teaching their children not to speak their language, talking down on them when they persisted (internalized racism). Then they showed a resolution of teaching and supporting bilingual education and equality in schools (example of racial justice).

Group B acted out a scene for promoting racial justice. They interpreted a movement as a flowing stream of water, starting out with one person who reaches out and helps another and so on, building a bigger and stronger flow. The main point was that we could all work to help one another understand systemic racism and racial justice, pulling more people into our movement so that we grow from being a stream to being a river of equality.

The facilitator gave the group time to process and respond to the scenes after they were acted out. This allowed the group to received feedback while also allowing people to process any feelings that were elicited from watching the two scenes or acting them out.

Presentation from Gretchen Groenke “Racial Justice 101” in Farmington:

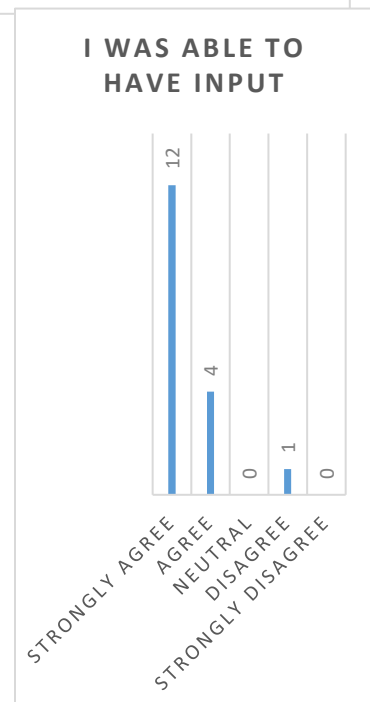
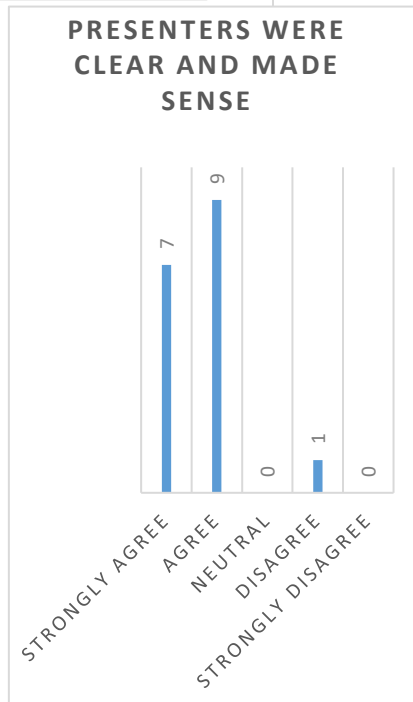
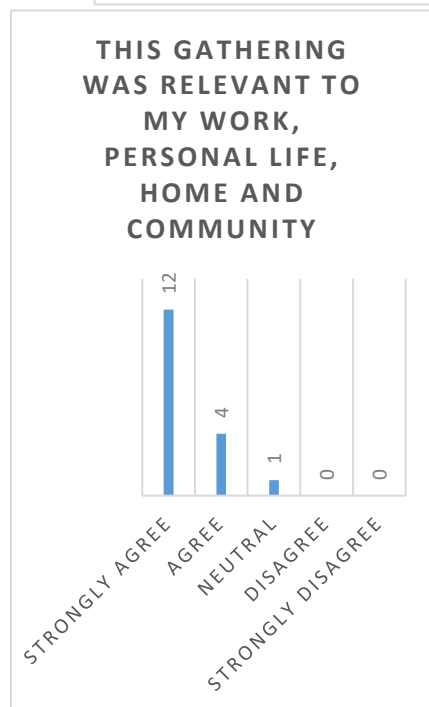
Gretchen presented on her racial justice 101 workshop. Many of the participants were also present for that workshop so she gave those attendees time to share their thoughts on their experience. Overall the experiences were good and the desire was strong to continue with these workshops to develop tools and initiatives that could turn the lessons learned into tangible actions to improve racial justice in Farmington.

Presentation from Chef Karlos, Ute Nation “Racial Justice and Indigenous Foods”

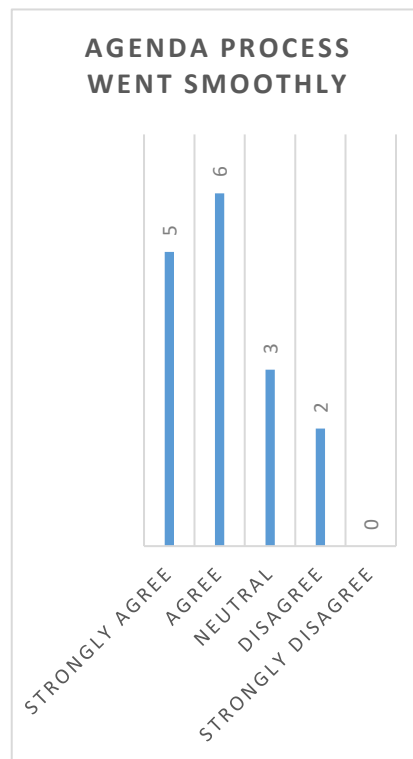
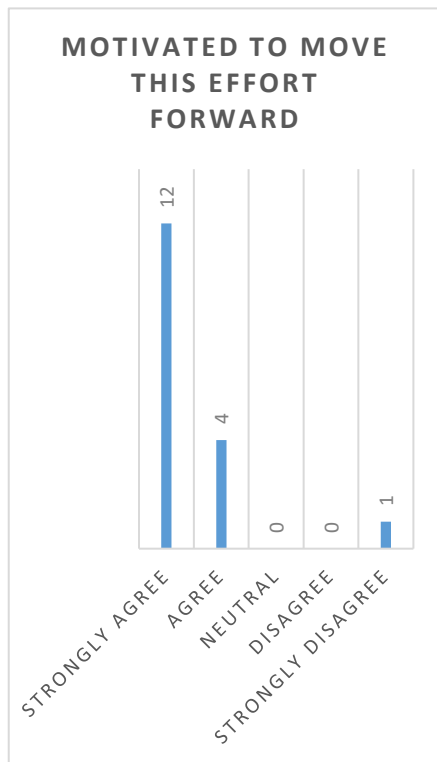
Chef Karlos gave us a brief presentation on his work to nurture food sovereignty by restoring Indigenous food traditions and access to healthy food. He shared his experiences with racial disparities and his desire to use food and access to healthy traditional foods as a means for promoting justice and cultural practices that have been severely impacted by colonization.

## **Evaluation Results**

<b>General Information</b>	
Elder	5
Adult	12
Youth	0
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>17</b>
Environmental Justice Organizer	1
Non-Indigenous Ally/Partner	4
Community Organizer	9
Researcher	0
Elected Official	0
Other:	5







#### **Suggested Future Topics:**

1. Any Topic
2. Skill building to address direct & indirect racism- peaceful, positive, education, etc., response(s).
3. Continuing this conversation
4. Direct Action/ Gender/ Patriarchy
5. Racial Justice 101
6. Planning for Action; Movement Building
7. Organizing for power; Coalition Building
8. Get to difficult convos around Racism & challenge thoughts
9. The importance of politics in the lives of those who experience racial injustice
10. Looking deeper at our own implicit bias and how we can deconstruct

### **Next Steps**

- Build Racial Justice curriculum around Food Justice as most participants addressed work in this area
- Formalize group exercises and develop worksheets with a Diné centered research and evaluation lens, so that participants have something to take home as a tool for guiding racial justice conversations with their families and peers that approaches the issue and solutions holistically
- Work together to develop list of priorities and goals for 2018 to create more meaningful workshops based on suggested topics- evaluate suggestions at each workshop to continue to build robust and in-depth training relevant to the participants and their communities
- Develop work groups or a committee with willing participants to help plan and carry out future workshops using a diversity of views and practicing inclusion and equality.
- Ask participants if their personal stories can be recorded and shared, either anonymously or with identifying information, as the stories carried potent experiences and lessons important for others to understand the realities of injustice faced by our neighbors and peers. Suggest the development of a social media page to share these stories.
- Introduce more racial justice tools and tools to deconstruct implicit biases and micro-aggressions
- Continue to refine and develop “Game of homes” as an analysis of race, class and privilege for better assessment of our shared experiences and vulnerabilities when it comes to our personal and collective security and as a means for introducing community-led data collection that can help expand and deepen our understanding of the realities of racial disparities.

**Thank you to WKKF Foundation and Santa Fe Community Foundation for supportive Contribution; thank you to participants, a special thanks to Janene Yazzie, facilitator. SJCHE Coordinator at [hjames@nmhep.org](mailto:hjames@nmhep.org); webpage: [nmhep.org/partners/san-juan-community-che/](http://nmhep.org/partners/san-juan-community-che/)**