



Parrott Creek Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism Strategy

Parrott Creek is committed to pursuing policies, institutional strategies and program development that promote equity, inclusion and anti-racist practice in all our work. We are committed to identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism in our society.

To Parrott Creek, anti-racism¹ is an active way of seeing and being in the world so that we can do our part to transform the systems, organizations, policies and practices that govern our lives. We ground this approach in our daily work to look at:

- How racism affects the lived experience of people of color and Indigenous people;
- How racism is systemic, is part of many foundational aspects of our society throughout history, and can be manifested in both individual attitudes and behaviors as well as formal (and "unspoken") policies and practices within institutions;
- How white people participate, often unknowingly, in racism.

Our ethos and work has always been founded on the principle that youth and families are the experts in their lives and lived experiences. They should be fully involved in creating individualized goals for themselves, to best meet their needs, in equal partnership with staff. However, we recognize that while the aim of our work is to support individuals to develop skills and resiliency, much of this work is dominated by a white, middle-class professional sector. So, even as Parrott Creek works with an intentional focus on reducing bias and disproportionality, we can still fail to root this in a family or child's own culture, language, faith, identity and/or belief systems. As hard as we try, we know that we will not always get it right and ask our participants and communities to let us know each and every time that we don't.

While we feel that we have a good foundation of diversity to build from, we are firmly committed to meeting four overriding objectives:

1. Ensuring that our programs, services and "how we work" are culturally responsive and anti-racist
2. Recruiting, retaining and promoting staff and board members who reflect the communities and backgrounds of those whom we serve
3. Developing strong community partnerships where we enter the relationship asking, *"What can we do for or with you to strengthen your community and combat racism and inequality in all its forms?"*
4. Embedding an anti-racist ethos across the organization

Current Demographics

- Approximately 60% of our staff comes from diverse backgrounds: 27% represent a community of color or are bicultural; 33% represent the LGBTQI community; 1% live with a disability; 15% care for a disabled child or parent in their home and 66% are first generation college graduates.²
- This compares to a client demographic³ that is approximately 62% Caucasian, 23% Hispanic, 11% African American, 2% Native American and 2% Multi-racial.
- The vast majority of our participants come from low-income families and communities, have high levels of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences, face substance misuse and/or mental health challenges and increasingly struggle with housing insecurity and homelessness.

¹ Credit: Alberta Civil Liberties Research Center

² Data from 2019 anonymous staff survey

³ Data drawn from our case management system.

- Our Trustee and Advisory boards comprises approximately 40% women, 10% people of color and 40% individuals with lived-experience of the issues we focus on, including former service users.

Our Objectives

Subsequent to a strategic planning retreat in early 2018 and the recruitment of our new Executive Director⁴ later that year, Parrott Creek embarked on a process of assessment and immediate action on issues of equity and inclusion. These objectives were further updated in light of horrific murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police. Over the next two years, our learning and growth priorities to advance equity are:

1. Ensuring that our programs and services are culturally responsive

Through our research and outreach, we have embraced a definition of **Culturally Responsive Services** that is adapted from *Mi Hermana's Keeper Toolkit: Promising Practices for Juvenile Justice Prevention Programs Supporting Latina Youth*, 2017.

To us, culturally responsive services are defined as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of [participants or service users] to make learning more relevant and effective for them” (Gay, 2002). Youth and families want programs and services to be interesting, relevant, and comfortable, such as incorporating relatable aspects of their communities and daily lives into curricula and design (Rajagopal, 2011) and having cultural practices embedded within program materials and support structures (Simpkins et al., 2016). Lastly, being culturally responsive includes having bilingual staff where and when appropriate.

We are developing our skills, staff and program design to ensure that we:

- Speak to young people and families in preferred language whenever possible
- Learn about family and community cultural values and discuss these in service and case planning
- Incorporate cultural heritage into our curricula, programs and service content
- Factor in each young person's, and their families', strengths and characteristics
- Train staff to uphold key cultural values of different ethnicities
- Ask youth and/or families how they want to be respected and validated
- Support staff in validating the opinions of both children and families
- Help participants access essential resources in the community
- Support open discussions on family matters between youth, their caregivers and/or extended family
- Provide services with a relational-cultural lens that upholds their community values
- Partner with community stakeholders and other agencies to advocate for culturally supportive institutional cultures, active parent involvement, and appropriate programs for minority youth

Key Actions

1. Q4 2018 - Q2 2019: Cultural sensitivity audit of all programs and service models - **completed**
2. Q1 2019 - Ongoing: Management team implicit bias self-assessment & reflection process - **completed**
3. Q2 – Q3 2019: Development of program/service adaptation action plans based on cultural audit – **completed and ongoing action**
4. Q1 2019 - Q1 2020: Peer coaching of on-the-job skills in culturally responsive staff-to-client interactions and services – **ongoing action**
5. Q1 2020: Creation of a Youth Council to inform program and service design - **completed and ongoing action**

Key Target: All programs and services are culturally responsive by Q4 2020 – **ongoing action**

⁴ Simon lead the development of an agency-wide equity framework for the Oregon Youth Authority in 2017-18.

Partners include Morpheus Youth Project, Redstone Collective, The I Am Academy, Native American Youth & Family Center (NAYA), the Oregon Youth Authority's Office of Inclusion & Intercultural Relations, Friends of Tryon Creek, Safe Kids Coalition of Clackamas County. Other consultancy support will be sought as needed.

2. Recruiting, retaining and promoting staff and board members who reflect the communities and backgrounds of our client population

As stated above, while we feel that we have a strong foundation of staff diversity to build on, our board can and should be more representative and more inclusive. Not only is achieving diversity and inclusion imperative from an equity and social justice perspective, it will also ensure that the broadest spectrum possible of ideas, backgrounds, life experiences, skills and cultural perspectives form part of our organizational DNA and are present within our governance and leadership.

Key Actions:

1. Q4 2018 - Q2 2019: Comprehensive skill, representation and diversity audit of board and staff - **completed**
2. Q2 – Q3 2019: Development of staff and board recruitment and retention action plans - **ongoing**
3. Q2 2019 – Q4 2020: Board & leadership implicit bias self-assessment, facilitated training and/or coaching – **partially completed and ongoing action**
4. Q1 2019 – Q4 2020: Targeted recruitment of staff, board and volunteers based on action plans – **partially completed and ongoing action**
5. Q1 2020: Creation of a Youth Council to inform overall leadership of the organization by participation on the Board of Directors – **completed and ongoing action**
6. Q1 2021 – Q4 2021: Participate in Transforming White Organizational Culture Training and implement action plan – **training completed/implementation ongoing action**
7. Q1 2021 – Q4 2021: Launch internal “DEI Challenge” of articles, videos and other resources with leadership and management – **ongoing action**

Key Targets:

1. Minimum of 35% diversity representation within board and leadership by Q4 2020 -
2. Youth and families see their cultures, backgrounds and experiences represented in the demographic of those that support them.

Partners include the Restorative Justice Coalition of Oregon Equity & Inclusion Sub-Committee, the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Affinity Group and other external experts as identified.

3. Developing strong, mutually supportive community partnerships

Parrott Creek has always had a commitment to building equitable and inclusive communities. However, it is clear that while this has always been our desire, we have not always acted with enough focus and intention in this area. At the same time that we work to ensure that our programs are culturally responsive and that our staff and board are truly representative, we are also committing ourselves to working collaboratively to build communities where every individual feels included and valued, believes that they have skills and knowledge to contribute and is supported in achieving their true potential.

Key Actions

1. Q4 2018 – Q2 2019: Mapping our community partnerships, networks and key stakeholders to identify who we are not talking to and who we don't support – **completed and ongoing action**
2. Q1 – Q3 2019: Develop outreach and engagement plans for the communities we do not know – **completed and ongoing action**

3. Q1 2019 - Ongoing: Contact, support and partnerships with Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color and elected officials – **ongoing action**

Key Target: To be known, recognized and respected as a collaborative, humble and inclusive community partner by Q2 2019 and ongoing...

Partners include Morpheus Youth Project, Redstone Collective, The I Am Academy, Todos Juntos, Clackamas Women's Center, Clackamas Children's Center, Native American Youth & Family Center, Friends of Tryon Creek, True Housing, Northwest Family Services, Northwest Housing Alternatives, CASA of Clackamas County, Latino Network, Portland Parent Union, the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs, the Oregon Youth Authority's Office of Inclusion & Intercultural Relations, Clackamas County Continuum of Care, Clackamas County Juvenile Services and the Oregon Department of Human Services.

4. Embedding an anti-racist ethos across the organization⁵

Taking an anti-racist stance is part of our commitment to transforming the systems, organizations, policies and practices that govern all our lives. To achieve this, we will look at and address:

- How racism affects the lived experience of people of color and Indigenous people;
- How racism can be manifested in both individual attitudes and behaviours as well as formal (and "unspoken") policies and practices within institutions;
- How white people participate, often unknowingly, in racism.

Key Actions:

1. Q2 2020: Develop an understanding of what it means to be anti-racist - **completed**
2. Q3 - Q4 2020: Embed anti-racist practice and reflection in all staff, management and leadership meetings – **completed and ongoing action**
3. Q2 - Q4 2020: Enhance influence with key law enforcement agencies in our communities, including the Clackamas County District Attorney, Clackamas County Sheriff, Multnomah County District Attorney and local police departments – **ongoing action**

Resources

- ACLU: <https://www.aclu.org/>
- Community Justice Project: <http://communityjusticeproject.com/>
- Color of Change: <https://colorofchange.org/>
- Equal Justice Initiative: <https://eji.org/>
- NAACP: <https://www.naacp.org/>
- Government Alliance on Race & Equity: <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/>
- White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism, by Robin DiAngelo
- Critical Race Theory, by Delgado & Stefancic
- Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others, by Burk & Lipsky
- The Age of Overwhelm: Strategies for the Long Haul, by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

Videos

- Deconstructing White Privilege: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwIx3KQer54>
- The urgency of intersectionality: https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en
- You and Your Racist Brain: The Neuroscience of Prejudice
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SwOEcJL_mA (short)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3N88xIWuJE> (full lecture)

⁵ This objective was added in June 2020