



County Of Dane
Office Of The County Executive

Joe Parisi
County Executive

October 21, 2021
Contact: Ariana Vruwink
608-267-8823

Dane County Awards \$105,000 for 2021 Partners in Equity – Racial Equity & Social Justice Grant Recipients to Seven Organizations

Seven local agencies have been selected to receive the Tamara D. Grigsby Office of Equity and Inclusion's 2021 Partners in Equity (PIE) Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Grants, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi announced today. The grants are intended to address systemic racial inequities in the criminal justice system.

"Dane County is committed to partnering with local organizations to help address racial inequities for communities of color," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "Congratulations to this year's recipients of the Partners in Equity—Racial Equity and Social Justice Grant. Their efforts highlight that, by partnering together, we can work to ensure opportunity for all in our community."

"The Equity and Inclusion Advisory Board congratulates the seven recipients of the Partners in Equity grant. We applaud their service to the community by implementing solutions to systemic problems rooted in racial inequity and exclusion," said Office of Equity and Inclusion Advisory Chair Greg Jones. "The Board stands ready to support all of the proposed action plans approved for 2021."

The 2021 PIE-RESJ Grant recipients include:

100 Black Men -- Project SOAR Internship Program -- \$20,000

Project SOAR (Student Opportunities, Access and Readiness) is designed to provide sustained mentoring and wrap-around support services that result in constructive development and positive outcomes of those served. The Project SOAR Career Academy endeavors to expose students' (12 to 18 years of age) experiences, which will expand their career aspirations and goals. Information/background regarding the fields of construction, education, medical and legal services, police science, information technology, fire science, entrepreneurship, accounting, dentistry, armed services, transportation, and fine arts occupations are covered.

Boys and Girls Club -- Youth Leadership for Social Change (YLFSC) -- \$14,900

The YLFSC program is completely centered around and committed to disrupting racial inequity. By examining, analyzing, and discussing the ways that social justice movements are advanced through social media platforms, the program aims to support students, predominantly students of color, in finding the tools to create content around issues that matter to them, as a means to actionably disrupt inequities in

their lives and surrounding communities. Youth leadership is part of the youth development process and supports the young person in developing:

- (a) the ability to analyze his or her own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem, confidence, motivation, and abilities to carry them out (including the ability to establish support networks in order to fully participate in community life and effect positive social change).
- (b) the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinions and behaviors of others, and serve as a role model.

Cultural Connections -- Club Express -- \$10,000

Cultural Connections is a growing organization in its fourth year running Club Express for youth affected by incarceration that aims to de-stigmatize their experience, create trust and improve future life outcomes to end the cycle of familial incarceration. The funds will support operational costs behind Cultural Connections' partnership with the Goodman Community Center, where they will aim to serve over 60 children. Incarceration disproportionately affects communities of color. Club Express serves a majority population of children of color throughout Madison. Club Express provides youth with a role model who looks like them. Aside from hands-on art-making, the youth follow a culturally responsive program framework (curriculum) based on the Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards. Through videos and literature, the students are introduced to social and racial justice concepts and how to weave messages into their art. Focus is on the issues they define as affecting them the most and introducing to youth to the idea of "Just Art" and using it as a form of self-expression. Their works are exhibited to raise awareness around the effects of incarceration on children, the need to end cycles of familial incarceration, and to create equity and access for all.

Midwest Mujeres Collective -- Be Bold and Network Pilot Program -- \$10,000

The program focuses on education, employment, and mental health. This project is dedicated to criminal justice for re-entry work for women who were formerly incarcerated and will provide services to address maternal mental health and wellness in the workplace. Midwest Mujeres will work with women whose annual income is \$35,000 or less, women who may have a hiatus in their employment history, or women re-entering the workplace post-incarceration to develop a plan of action of one tangible goal in one of the three areas of focus. The goal is to reduce poverty and income inequality and/or inequality of opportunity, by supporting underrepresented groups and micro-businesses.

Rape Crisis Center -- Multicultural Women's Education and Outreach: Black and Latinx Community Support Groups -- \$15,000

The program focuses on areas of health and education for Black and Latinx women in Dane County. This a continued effort for the RCC to become an immediate resource for marginalized and historically underserved groups in Dane County, as well as improve trust between the organization and these communities. Multicultural Community Outreach Specialists (MCOS) focus on reaching out to Black, African American, Hispanic, and Latinx individuals and hosting Community Health Support Groups. Each group includes weekly sessions that provide information and facilitate discussions of general health and abuse, reaching issues of healthy relationships, sexual violence, as well as health issues such as the importance of breast cancer screening and mental health support. Through the support groups, the RCC's goal is to provide access to important health information and create a strong relationship with the Black, African American, Hispanic, and Latinx communities of Dane County.

Simpson Street Free Press -- \$15,000

The Dane County PIE-RESJ grant will help address an ongoing education crisis caused by the pandemic. Students will receive individualized language arts instruction through an intricate writing-for-publication

process. They will undertake STEM projects that build literacy skills and bolster academic confidence. Students will conduct research in authentic 21st century newsrooms (online and in-person). Students will acquire transferable academic strategies and encounter predictable connections to the school day. To sustain success, SSFP uses Science of Reading principles. High school students work as assistant editors and book club captains. They mentor younger SSFP students. College-age editors (SSFP graduates) and credentialed volunteers provide expert oversight. The program empowers young people and sparks change.

YWCA Inc. and Warner Park Community Recreation Center -- \$20,100

This program will deepen and expand restorative justice practices and services for youth—specifically Black/African American youth—in the 53704 zip code and/or on the Northside of Madison in order to address the extreme racial disparities within the youth justice system. In partnership with Warner Park Community Recreation Center, YWCA Madison seeks to meet the healing and relational support needs for BIPOC youth on the Northside of the City of Madison through deepening and expanding Restorative Justice practices. The goal is to disrupt the pipeline to the criminal justice system for BIPOC youth with a two-pronged approach:

- (a) lessen the contact between young people and law enforcement by providing restorative justice education and consultation to young people, community members, families, and youth-serving organizations to build trusting relationships and skills to resolve conflicts and harm that happens at home, in schools, and in the community, instead of using police, punishment, and exclusion.
- (b) For young people who have law enforcement contact, to maintain the diversion program which receives referrals from law enforcement for young people alleged to have violated a municipal ordinance. The program will seek to provide developmentally appropriate responses to youth conflict and harm and capacity building to support the relational needs for Black/African American youth in the Warner Park and Northside community through education and consultation.

To learn more about the Office of Equity and Inclusion and its mission, please visit: <https://oei-exec.countyofdane.com/>.

###