

YWCA Announces Second Round of Racial Justice Program Sessions

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ALTON - YWCA is a recipient of a Healing Illinois grant from the Illinois DHS. YWCA recognizes the community need for dialogue & education about racism and equity and has developed several programs to generate deeper healing & transformative interactions among races. As the legendary civil rights activist Rep. John Lewis said, “We’ve come too far; we’ve made too much progress to stop or pull back. We must go forward. And I believe we will get there.” YWCA Healing Grant activities propel us one step closer to getting there.

YWCA invites the community to begin or continue their journey with us during our Awareness Sessions, DiverSTORY Times, and CommUNITY Healing Circles. All virtual events are free to the public.

An Awareness Session titled White Privilege and Power is scheduled for Saturday, January 9 at 2 pm via Zoom featuring Minister Joyce Elliott and Ruth Meyer, local racial justice advocates. We will discuss the historical context and our current individual expressions and reactions to privilege as it relates to race. We will have conversations building our understanding in ways to eliminate the inherent bias that comes from privilege. The link to register is <https://tinyurl.com/y6wvcpqk>.

The CommUNITY Conversation Circle is scheduled for Sunday, January 10 at 2 pm via Zoom. YWCA CommUNITY Conversation Circle will create a safe and accepting space for participants to discuss topics that can be complex and emotionally charged. Participants will embark upon a journey of self-discovery about the concepts of race, ethnicity, and identity. By listening and speaking with intention, we will unite to achieve the ultimate goal of healing our community. The first 20 Participants in the first Circle will receive free copies of the best-selling book *Caste: The Origins of our Discontent* by Isabel Wilkerson. Through dialogue and reading, we will explore our identities and answer some of life's most important questions: *Who am I? Who are we as a nation?* and *How did we get here?*

The CommUNITY Conversation Circle will last approximately sixty minutes with follow-up book talk meetings for those who are interested. The Circle format is not a lecture or presentation and attendees must be prepared to engage in safe, healthy and respectful dialogue. To register for the CommUNITY Circle, please use the following link <https://tinyurl.com/ybg4x49c>.

DiverSTORY is a session where children and their grownups come together to listen to a children's story about diversity and engage in guided conversations about diversity, inclusion, and race. Sessions will include an interactive learning activity where families practice race-conscious conversations and ask questions of facilitators in a safe, respectful space. Our DiverStory Time is scheduled for Saturday, January 16 at 10 am on ZOOM. The theme is "How We Talk-Respecting Everyone's Story." This session will feature the following books: *Let's Talk About Race* by Julius Lester and *Skin Again* by Bell Hooks. YWCA will provide copies of the two books and learning activity materials to the first 10 families who register for this event. To register for DiverSTORY, please use the link <https://tinyurl.com/yxum6a6q>.

It is also possible to register for these events by calling YWCA at 618.465.7774 or emailing us at info@altonywca.com.

Established in 1918, YWCA of Alton tailors programs to meet the unique needs of our communities, as aligned with three key national platforms: racial justice and civil rights, empowerment and economic advancement of women and girls, and health and safety of women and girls. YWCA of Alton is proudly sponsored by Alton Memorial Hospital, Meridian-Centene Health Care, Morrissey Contracting Company, Inc., and Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery.