

Racial Equity Statement

Art with Heart was founded on the core principle that art is transformative and healing. It elevates and connects individuals, societies, and worlds. While our purpose is to bring the healing power of art and creative expression to kids facing trauma and adversity, we recognize the systems and structures of historical racism, inequity and inaccessibility in the arts and mental health.

While 35 million American kids are facing trauma and adversity, kids of color disproportionately experience traumatic and adverse experiences at a higher rate. Art with Heart wishes to make art and healing a possibility for all, and in doing so, means we must become more culturally responsive. We recognize the social systems that have put black and brown children at a disadvantage and are committed to help close the gap. While we recognize the inextricable intersections of identity that together contribute to social-systemic inequities (ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, age, class, ability), we are currently focusing on racial justice explicitly, but not exclusively. Building tools for racial equity first, allows us to subsequently and collectively address other important areas of identity.

Moving forward, we at Art with Heart intend and are working to be more racially equitable and culturally fluent, so that communities of color, and all underserved groups are able to find healing, safety, and life in art.

We strive to find and prevent structural and social barriers in our practice and organizational framework. Our commitments to racial equity are:

- Fostering a spirit of belonging, so that any person or group knows that art, healing, and creative expression is possible for them.
- Practicing our values of transparency, cultural responsiveness, and accountability by deeply looking at our policies, procedures, and practices.
- Bringing in and engaging communities of color and our stakeholders in decision-making, programs, and leadership while forming deeper relationships so that we may work together to recognize barriers and needs.
- Training and building a staff, volunteer network, and board with an racial equity lens, so that we can actively challenge ourselves, create consciousness, and seek educational ways to build towards justice.
- Creating formal impact assessments in our schools and communities about our therapeutic activity books, curricula, and trainings so that we may develop and modify our resources to be engaging and culturally responsive.

In an effort to create an equitable process and outcomes for all, we invite members of the community to engage with us, teach us, and push us toward breaking barriers and making art and healing possible for all.

In the spirit of learning, we'd welcome your input: relevant thoughts, engagement, feedback - we want to hear from you. Email us at info@artwithheart.org.

