



An open letter to the FLCT community:

Florida Children's Theatre commits to the active and ongoing work of anti-racism, and understands that means working differently and more swiftly to reach the goals we have set. As we collectively explore the complex role that racial equity plays in the fields of theatre and education, we pledge to be even more transparent and introspective. We care deeply about the feelings and experiences of every member of this community, and stand with a firm commitment to ensure that each student, family member, staff, volunteer and Board member feels welcomed, included, represented, and celebrated.

We hear and acknowledge the pain and frustration expressed by every person in our community who did not always feel valued or appreciated. We share heartbreak with anyone hurting in this community, and wanted to take the time to read and process the numerous comments shared on social media with a commitment to deep listening and complete openness before responding. With that understanding, there will always be disagreements between employees and employers, none of which we will address in a social media forum.

Current racial unrest and calls for action highlight the need for transformative, profound reflection and demand long overdue change in our communities, our nation and in the world. Difficult painful conversations and deep introspection are part of what is needed in order to move forward in a way that increases equity and representation. For the national call to action surrounding the horrific and all too common murders of George Floyd and others to finally be a tipping point to substantive change, FLCT recognizes the need to do more, both as individuals within the organization and through the organization as a whole.

Because members of our community asked for specifics as to our anti-racist initiatives, we share with you below some actions we have already taken and are planning to take.

- In May 2020, FLCT strongly affirmed that a budget is a moral document, which is why we continued to offer scholarships even through the pandemic and extremely limited enrollment opportunities over the summer, and even when it negatively impacted finances in challenging times.
- Since June 2020, FLCT held multiple conversations and planning meetings with community partners, additional to be scheduled, to see how current programs,

initiatives, and projects can be reevaluated and amended as needed to ensure an explicit anti-racist focus.

- Throughout June and July of this year, Board and staff members attended multiple local and national workshops and trainings on race and equity, in both the theatre and education arenas. Additional trainings will be ongoing.
- In early July 2020, FLCT explored multiple options and selected a comprehensive framework for self-assessment and guided pathways to utilize in the creation of an action plan focused on equity and closing gaps for historically marginalized populations.
- In mid-July, 2020 all Board and staff members enrolled in a mandatory anti-racism training that begins August 1st which also addresses racial identity, bias, privilege, and prejudice. The Executive Artistic Director already completed the training. FLCT also applied for unlimited access to the training with the goal of making it available to all of our FLCT families moving forward on an ongoing basis, and as part of the onboarding of any new Board or Staff members, and are waiting for approval on that. As part of the initial training, FLCT will hold supplemental workshops and discussions so that the information can be discussed and explored with a focus on how it can inform FLCT moving forward.

We recognize that the above is merely a starting point for ongoing work that connects to the bigger picture of social and racial justice, and any future initiatives need to include ways to address the warranted pain, anger, and frustration that comes from generations of oppression and inequality. We know that multiple points of views and opinions will be needed to create a concrete plan of action that addresses past concerns and acknowledges current challenges. FLCT pledges the time, the financial resources, the leadership, the wide representation, and the implementation of best practices to ensure the creation of a concrete equity action plan. Rather than presenting something for approval, we call upon every interested member of our community to participate in its creation over the coming months.

Please reach out to the Executive Artistic Director, Janet Erlick, at Janet@FLCTstar.org or to the Board Chair, Karen Ash, at <mailto:KarenAsh305@gmail.com> with any questions, concerns, or to express your interest in joining with the FLCT staff and Board of Trustees on these critical initiatives.

We appreciate and accept the call to be held accountable to the statements we make and the values that we share, and commit to the continual process of translating words into action.

-The Board of Trustees and Staff of Florida Children's Theatre