END TO AN IMPACTFUL SUMMER

The end of August marks the beginning of a new academic year and the end to an eventful summer. At times, local and national news seemed relentless as we worked to reconcile life with twin pandemics: COVID-19 and structural racism. In the midst of much heaviness and grief, work continued at the Equity Center. Our Executive Director, Ben Allen, has been on the job for just 6 months and dove straight into important discussions in city, county, and UVA decision making. Our Faculty Director Barbara Brown Wilson served on a task force to make substantive and bold recommendations for healing hundreds of years of racial injustice at the University. In the following pages we highlight vital work accomplished by our passionate community partners and faculty directors. Please follow the links to read more about this important work in our community.

THE EQUITY CENTER GETS A HOMEBASE

The Equity Center has officially accepted a lease on the 4th floor of the Hotel Albemarle on W. Main St. in downtown Charlottesville. After some modest renovations, Equity Center staff hope to move mid-September and doors will be open to the public in October. This community-facing office will house the Equity Center Staff, Elizabeth Beasley (Director of Community Partnerships for UVA Health System), Carolyn Dillard (University-Community Liaison), and the Community Fellows-in-Residence. We will also have larger meeting spaces for community partner use.

WELCOME OUR NEW STAFF

Dr. Sherica Jones-Lewis started working August 1st as the Director of Community Research. A native of Charlottesville, VA, Sherica spent most of her formative years in Orange, VA before settling with her husband and three children in nearby Madison County. She has worked in area schools for the past 16 years as an elementary school teacher, middle school teacher, and a middle school assistant principal. Together with her husband she also co-
owns a small business called Out of Sight Events. Sherica prides herself on being active in her church and community, raising her children, and working hard for the common good.

PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

RACIAL EQUITY TASK FORCE REPORT RELEASED

In May 2020 university community advocates called for concrete and immediate action towards racial equity. EC Faculty Director Barbara Brown Wilson worked alongside Kevin McDonald, Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and Ian Solomon, Dean of the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy; to chronicle the current and past calls for change from leaders, students, faculty, staff, and other groups from across the University and weave together what UVA President Jim Ryan requested to be “thoughtful and bold” recommendations. The final report was released on August 10 and can be found at: https://tinyurl.com/RETFFinal

Equity Center staff worked concurrently with staff from the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and others to compile previous public demands for equity at the university and a visualization of those historic demands can be found at: https://voicesforequity.virginiaequitycenter.org

PROJECT PIPELINE ARCHITECTURAL SUMMER CAMP

Design-Thinking Professor and Equity Center Design Director Elgin Cleckley is leading the second annual Project Pipeline summer camp, virtually. Student design interns are producing community led design concepts for their own neighborhoods. Students began the program learning the art of collage following the work of African American artist Romare Bearden, followed by COVID safe interviews, discovering needs from friends, family, and local residents.

In the last week of August, students are meeting with Rhoadside Harwell, Ms. Joy Johnson, and Ms. Audrey Oliver (leadership of the Public Housing Association of Residents) to provide youth feedback on the Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan. The program culminates with presentations of the student’s community- led design ideas in mid September.

FRONTLINE WORKERS CHARTER

The Frontline Workers Fair Treatment Charter was developed as a collaboration between The Equity Center, Network2Work at Piedmont Virginia Community College, and the University of Virginia’s President’s Council which includes many Charlottesville region community leaders. The purpose of the charter is to ensure we are actively and appropriately valuing our frontline workers throughout recovery efforts. We recognize that the reopening of the economy will depend on the health, well-being and labor of frontline workers. Selections of this charter have been adopted formally by UVA, the City of Charlottesville, and Albemarle County.
CHARLOTTESVILLE EDUCATION EQUITY

In response to the extended school closure, The Equity Center is working in conjunction with Youth-Nex and the Madison House to create a resource hub for local families, university faculty and staff, students, and the larger community. Cville Equity Education is an evolving resource full of ways to give and get support during the school closure period.  
http://cvilleeducationequity.com

THE GIRLS ARE ALWRITE: 2ND ANNUAL SUMMER CAMP

Sonia Montalvo created “The Girls are Alwrite” program in 2019 after seeing a need for creative expression in her community. This year she hosted the second annual summer camp virtually. Rising 6th - 12th grade Black and Latinx girls joined Camp Coaches Sonia Montalvo, V the Writer, Tessa Thompson, and Brande Mccleese as they engaged in and created poetry, fiction, and nonfiction pieces.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL WITH EQUITY IN MIND

Kimalee Dickerson led a series of free professional development webinars for K-12 educators to gain advice and strategies to support mental health needs, create responsive learning environments, and center equity in your teaching practice. Videos and resources are available for free online: https://tinyurl.com/SchoolEquitySeries

THREE YEARS LATER, CHARLOTTESVILLE LOOKS TO EDUCATOR BENJAMIN TONSLER’S LEGACY

Equity Center leaders Nancy Deutsch, Bonnie Gordon, Ben Allen, and Kimalee Dickerson penned this Washington Post op-ed about the need to rethink what community support for education looks like in the time of COVID. “There’s a deadly paradox here. This virus is amplifying racial inequities with a disproportionate impact on the Black and Latinx communities, locally as well as nationally. To limit in-person school is to honor the health of the Black and brown community. But without radical thinking and quick action, we risk perpetuating educational inequities.”

UVA IDEA FUND ANNOUNCES MLM ENDORSED AWARD GRANT

The Equity Center has been selected as the recipient for 2020’s Marcus L Martin Endorsed Award from the UVA IDEA Fund. This award was given in support of the Equity Center’s work in coordinating wraparound services for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19.

A CONVERSATION ON RACIAL EQUITY AND TECHNOLOGY

Equity Center Lead Data Analyst Michele Claibourn discussed the Equity Atlas with Saif Y Ishoof, Vice President for Engagement at Florida International University, and Charlton McIlwain, Vice Provost for Faculty Engagement and Development at New York University.

CITY COUNCIL SIGNALS SUPPORT FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS

Charlottesville City Council has voted to endorse selections from the Equity Center sponsored “Frontline Workers Charter” to ensure that frontline workers are supported during the COVID-10 crisis.
The Racial Equity Task Force calls for the revision of our landscape to mirror what we value. Recommendations include the removal of all statues and plaques that honor the confederacy, eugenicists, and the violence depicted in the George Rogers Clark statue. Voices of the Native American community at UVA and across the state are highlighted to share their perceptions of the Clark statue in particular.

Out of Place: Socioeconomic Status, Use of Public Space, and Belonging in Higher Education
Lower-income, and Black and Brown students use public space on campus less than do higher-income, and White students. We find that use of public space on campus predicts and, in fact, leads to increased sense of belonging.
https://tinyurl.com/Trawalteretal2020

“Virginia Organizing is a non-partisan statewide grassroots organization dedicated to challenging injustice by empowering people in local communities to address issues that affect the quality of their lives. Virginia Organizing especially encourages the participation of those who have traditionally had little or no voice in our society. By building relationships with individuals and groups throughout the state, Virginia Organizing strives to get them to work together, democratically and non-violently, for change.”

Virginia Organizing Executive Director Brian Johns recently joined the Equity Center staff and faculty leadership to discuss taking up the charge to increase voter registration and turnout, including information about restoration of voting rights. The Equity Center stands with Virginia Organizing in their commitment to ensuring full enfranchisement and is ready to stand with them as part of a coordinated effort. If you wish to get involved in local get-out-the-vote campaigns, Virginia Organizing is planning local events, including virtual voter registration trainings. Check out this website for more details: https://virginia-organizing.org/register-voters/
WHAT TO KNOW FOR THE NOVEMBER ELECTION

- **DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN THE NOVEMBER 3 ELECTION IS OCTOBER 13**
  - Register online: [https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/voterinformation](https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/voterinformation)

- **REQUEST YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT BY OCTOBER 23**
  - Complete absentee voting request online or by mail [https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/)
  - Must be postmarked by 7 p.m. on November 3, turn in ASAP

- **VOTE 45 DAYS PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY WITHOUT AN EXCUSE (SEPTEMBER 19 - OCTOBER 31)**
  - Vote in person at your local registrar’s office