

UNITED WAY OF GREATER GREENSBORO 21-DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE AT-A-GLANCE

Creating meaningful engagement

- 21 daily emails
- Thought provoking content that includes local and national resources that will explore topics like structural racism, segregation, privilege, gender, and LGBTQ rights, and allow participants to discover how they can be champions of equity in their personal and professional lives.
- Three challenge videos – UWGG Board of Directors Chair, Kim Gatling and Board Member, Brian Pierce will offer their own insights and experiences and encourage participants along the 21-Day Challenge (welcome, midway check, and final day wrap).
- Participants will be encouraged to share reflections on social media using the hashtag #EquityGSO and tag @UnitedWayGSO.
- Participants will be encouraged to complete an anonymous survey on Day 20 to share their goals and plans.
- Participants will be invited to attend a virtual meeting that will allow them to learn even more and share their experience with others after completing the challenge on April 16, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

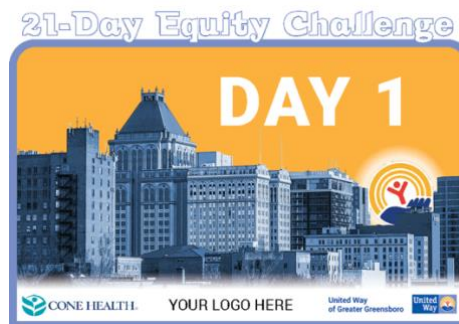
Rollout

- March 1-10: email sign ups
- March 11-31: daily emails sent
- TBD: one to two more rollouts in 2021

Sponsorship

- Seeking five \$10,000 sponsors
- Sponsor logos will be featured in the footer section of each email
- Sponsor logos will be featured in social media posts, correspondence and press releases
- Invited to speak during Zoom follow up/wrap up meetings

Email and social post image examples



Email Content Examples:

DAY 1: Social and Personal Racial Identity

Welcome to United Way of Greater Greensboro's 21-Day Equity Challenge.

Throughout the challenge, your daily email will contain links to local and national organizations, videos and articles, and will offer two challenges to choose from that will further your engagement and self-reflection.

We will explore difficult topics, like structural racism, segregation, and privilege, and discover how we can be champions of equity in our personal and professional lives.

We know you're busy, so go at your own pace. Expect to spend as little as 5 to 10 minutes, or as much as 20 minutes per day – it's totally up to you! We also encourage you to create a journal of your reflections during the challenge.

So let's begin... Start by watching a welcome video from United Way of Greater Greensboro Board of Directors Chair, Kim Gatling and Board Member, Brian Pierce. They will offer their own insights and experiences to equity training and will encourage you a few times along the way. [After you watch the video](#), come back to this email and begin your journey.

“Not seeing race does little to deconstruct racist structures or materially improve the conditions which people of colour are subject to daily. In order to dismantle unjust, racist structures, we must see race. We must see who benefits from their race, who is disproportionately impacted by negative stereotypes about their race, and to who power and privilege is bestowed upon – earned or not – because of their race, their class, and their gender. Seeing race is essential to changing the system.” - Reni Eddo-Lodge

We cannot cease in confronting our country's history and relationship to identity. It is time for us to take a closer look at the inequities that are deeply rooted in our systems and institutions and work together to create an America where every individual has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, (dis)ability, political affiliation, relationship status, profession, or socioeconomic status.

According to Cathleen Clerkin, of Center for Creative Leadership, a worldwide leadership training institute based in Greensboro, [many inequities are deeply rooted in the labels that we all use to identify ourselves as members of specific groups](#). We are born into some of these identities. Others are chosen or forced upon us. Social identity is an important concept to understand for addressing equity.

[Please RSVP here to attend a virtual meeting](#) on Friday, April 16, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. that will allow you to learn even more and share your 21-Day Equity Challenge experience with others.

Today's Challenge:

How do you think about your identity and its relevance to your work, volunteerism, or learning? Identity matters. Who we think we are and who others think we are can have an influence on all aspects of our lives. Think about the first time you became aware of your racial identity. What comes up for you?

Option 1: Reference this document to view how people of color [develop their racial identity](#).

Option 2: Watch one or more of the [short videos and reflections from the New York Times](#) on racial identity in America.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 2: Understanding and Reflecting on Our Bias

“Worse than being less than you, is if you are perceived as a threat” - [john a. powell](#)

[We all have bias](#). But often, we are not aware of the biases that we subconsciously hold. Research shows that years of structural and cultural constructs have deeply embedded stereotypes into our culture, and consequently into our own subconscious.

For example, [according to a recent study](#), companies are more than twice as likely to call minority applicants for interviews if they submit whitened resumes than candidates who reveal their race.

But, [research also shows](#) that we can actively rewire these neural associations by being more intentional about acknowledging our biases. Today’s focus is on personal reflection - taking the time to uncover some of our own biases and reflecting on how we take control of these unconscious constructs.

Did you know that Greensboro-based Racial Equity Institute is a world-renowned leader in helping people and organizations understand how racism has been woven into the fabric of everyday systems for centuries? Their trainings are offered year-round, and virtual options are available – [learn more about this local resource](#).

Did you know that the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) was founded by a minister, rabbi, and a priest in response to a wave of religious intolerance sweeping the nation? Locally, the NCCJ has expanded to address all forms of bias, bigotry and racism – [learn more about this local resource](#), which includes the youth focused program, ANYTOWN.

Today’s Challenge:

OPTION 1: Go deeper and take [Project Implicit's Hidden Bias tests](#), created by psychologists at top universities, to uncover some of your own unconscious biases. *TIP: Proceed as a guest to access their library of tests and find out your implicit associations about race, gender, sexual orientation, skin tone, and other topics.*

OPTION 2: Read one or more of the compelling personal stories featured in the Speak Up Handbook by the Southern Poverty Law Center. We would like to point you to page 19 titled ["What Can I do About My Own Bias?"](#) but feel free to use the table of contents on page 2 to explore other topics that interest you.

Share your reflections on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 3: What is Privilege?

Privilege is the unearned social, political, economic, and psychological benefits of membership in a group that has institutional and structural power. There are many types of privilege that different groups have in the US.

We commonly hear about privilege because of race or gender, but privilege also exists for different groups based on religion, sexuality, ability, class, education level. Read more about [5 common types of privilege](#).

Having privilege can give you advantages in life, but having privilege is not a guarantee of success. And certain privileges haven't been legally available to people of color for as long as others.

On February 1, 1960, four local Agricultural & Technical State University students sat down at a lunch counter at the Woolworth's in downtown Greensboro, where official policy was to refuse service to anyone but whites. They were denied service but did not give up their seats. Their actions sparked the national sit-in movement and fueled the success of the Civil Rights movement. [Check out this History Channel video to learn more](#).

Today's Challenge:

OPTION 1: Take this eye-opening [privilege self-assessment](#) by BuzzFeed to discover where you are on the spectrum.

OPTION 2: Watch this short, powerful BuzzFeed [video featuring a privilege walk](#). See how privilege shows up differently for this group of co-workers. *Note: this video may be triggering for some people of color.*

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 4: Talking About Race Is Challenging for Some

Talking about race can be a difficult subject for anyone, but when it comes to overall understanding and community building, considering someone else's experiences and perspectives is critical. [The National Museum of African American History & Culture](#) says, "By considering each other's lives and experiences, and perspectives, we allow a community to be not only about what we have in common but what makes us different."

Discussing commonalities and differences can be especially difficult for white people. In Emmanuel Acho's [Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man](#) video series, he tells Matthew McConaughey, "You have to acknowledge there's a problem, so you can take more ownership of the problem."

Have you heard of the term "White Fragility?" For white people, "White Fragility" refers to their discomfort and avoidance of racially charged stress, which perpetuates racial inequity. Many people of color, multiracial, and Indigenous people are familiar with this concept, but may not be familiar with the term.

[Dr. Robin DiAngelo](#) describes white fragility as a state of being for white people in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves can include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors shut down conversations, and inhibit actions which, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

Today's Challenge:

OPTION 1: [Take a quick quiz](#) from the publisher of "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism," Robin DiAngelo, PhD, to see if you exhibit "White Fragility" traits. Want to dive in further? Read a [short article by Dr. DiAngelo](#) that unpacks how we continue to reproduce racist outcomes and live segregated lives.

OPTION 2: Review this list of [28 common racist attitudes](#) and behaviors that indicate a detour or wrong turn into white guilt, denial or defensiveness.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag [#EquityGSO](#) and tag [@UnitedWayGSO](#).

DAY 5: The Impact of Racial Trauma on Black, Indigenous and other People of Color

“It took many years of vomiting up all the filth I’d been taught about myself, and half-believed, before I was able to walk on the earth as though I had a right to be here.” — [James Baldwin](#)

On October 12, 2019, [Atatiana Jefferson](#), a black woman, was murdered by a police officer in her home and in front of her nephew, while playing video games with him. A welfare check up, requested by her Black neighbor, was the impetus for the call to police. Weeks after her death, her father died of a massive heart attack.

Whether you agree or disagree with the actions of the responding police officer, news like this is traumatizing and re-traumatizing to people of color. It is like a wound that never heals. On May 25, 2020, the killing of George Floyd ripped this wound open in communities across the world and [caused spikes in depression and anxiety among black Americans](#).

Research has linked racism to psychological distress, physical health problems, depression, anxiety, and trauma. The internalization of bias and oppression can cause great distress to minds, bodies, and spirits.

As Dr. Monnica Williams of the University of Connecticut has written: “What we really need is a large-scale shift in our social consciousness to understand the toll this takes on the psyche of victims so that even small acts of racism become unacceptable. We need those who witness racism to speak out and victims to be believed.”

Today’s Challenge:

OPTION 1: We invite you to read this [short article by Dr. Williams](#) to better understand the effects that racism can have on your mental health.

OPTION 2: Read this list of [8 ways to practice self-care](#) to support you and your loved ones when you are personally affected by racism.

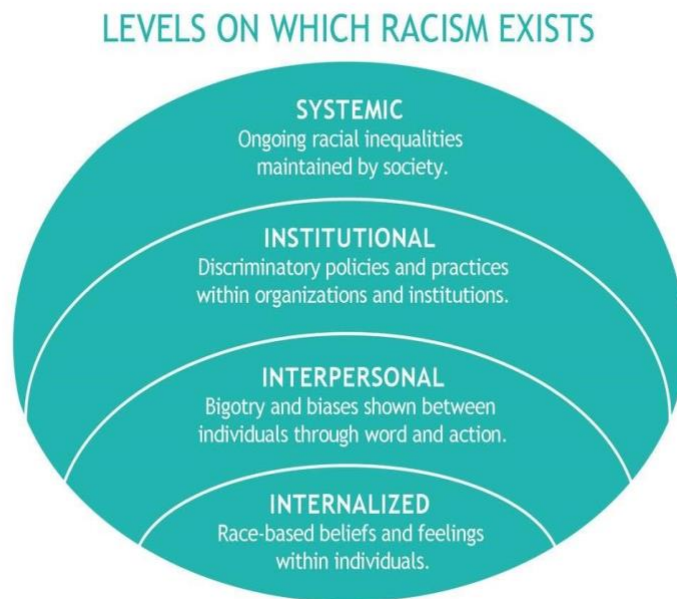
Share your reflections on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 6: Levels of Racism

“Americans believe in the reality of ‘race’ as a defined, indubitable feature of the natural world. Racism—the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them—inevitably follows from this inalterable condition. In this way, racism is rendered as the innocent daughter of Mother Nature, and one is left to deplore the Middle Passage or Trail of Tears the way one deplores an earthquake, a tornado, or any other phenomenon that can be cast as beyond the handiwork of men. But race is the child of racism, not the father.” - [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)

As our first week comes to an end, we hope you have taken the opportunity to look inside yourself and expand your mind through the different challenges offered. As we move into week two, prepare to shift your focus from the personal reflection that we have been exploring to a broader view of racial equity and social justice.

Are you seeing and addressing how racism operates at different levels? [Dr. Camara Jones](#), Senior Fellow at the Morehouse School of Medicine, says that in order to address racism effectively, we have to understand how it operates at multiple levels. Often what people think of first and foremost is interpersonal racism. Only seeing this level means that we fail to see the full picture that keeps the system of racism in place. The graphic below illustrates all [the domains in which racism operates](#).



Today's Challenge:

OPTION 1: Check out this [short video from Race Forward](#) about the levels and the importance of looking at systemic, not simply individual, racism.

OPTION 2: Review the [Talking About Race Toolkit](#) from the Center for Social Inclusion because how we talk about race matters and impacts our ability to work against systemic inequities.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 7: Opportunity in Guilford County

A family of four (two adults and two kids) living in Guilford County is classified as living in poverty when the household makes a combined \$26,200. That same family would have to make over \$60,000 in order to afford basic needs without public or private assistance.

That's a big gap, and in Guilford County over 85,000 people are living in poverty. In Greensboro, nearly 20% of people are living in poverty. This means thousands of our neighbors are making trade-offs between necessities like rent or stocking the refrigerator, or some may be going without healthcare to ensure their child has access to preschool.

Filling this opportunity gap requires more than an education and higher paying job. That's why United Way of Greater Greensboro partnered with United Way of North Carolina to conduct a [statewide study](#) that shines the light on this often unknown struggle many families face.

Did you know?

[The Self-Sufficiency Standard Report for Guilford County](#) shows the level of income families need to be economically self-sufficient depends both on family composition—the number of adults, the number of children, and the children's ages—and where they live. Table 1 below illustrates how substantially the Standard varies by family type by showing the Standard for four different family configurations in Guilford County.

Table 1. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Select Family Types*
Guilford County, NC 2020

	1 ADULT	1 ADULT 1 PRESCHOOLER	1 ADULT 1 PRESCHOOLER 1 SCHOOL AGE	2 ADULTS 1 PRESCHOOLER 1 SCHOOL AGE
MONTHLY COSTS				
Housing	\$751	\$865	\$865	\$865
Child Care	\$0	\$817	\$1,351	\$1,351
Food	\$250	\$379	\$572	\$769
Transportation	\$275	\$283	\$283	\$540
Health Care	\$169	\$596	\$614	\$666
Miscellaneous	\$144	\$294	\$369	\$419
Taxes	\$302	\$655	\$856	\$942
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Child Care Tax Credit (-)	\$0	(\$50)	(\$100)	(\$100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	\$0	(\$167)	(\$333)	(\$333)
SELF-SUFFICIENCY WAGE				
Hourly (per adult)**	\$10.74	\$20.87	\$25.43	\$14.54
Monthly	\$1,891	\$3,673	\$4,476	\$5,118
Annual	\$22,688	\$44,081	\$53,715	\$61,415
Emergency Savings Fund	\$177	\$470	\$699	\$282

* The Standard is calculated by adding expenses and taxes and subtracting tax credits. The "Taxes" row includes payroll and sales taxes plus federal income taxes.
 ** The hourly wage is calculated by dividing the monthly wage by 176 hours (8 hours per day times 22 days per month). The hourly wage for families with two adults represents the hourly wage that each adult would need to earn, while the monthly and annual wages represent both parents' wages combined.
 Note: Totals may not add exactly due to rounding.

We know that where you live and where children are raised can have a strong influence on opportunity. We also know that when these factors are combined with race, people of color are disproportionately impacted. Over the next few days, we will be exploring how Self-Sufficiency Standards, race, and other factors impact a person's housing, health, education, financial stability, and more.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Read the Self-Sufficiency Standards report for [North Carolina](#) and dig down further into [Guilford County](#).

Option 2: Read about [Raj Chetty](#), a Harvard economist committed to showing how zip code shapes opportunity. Dive into his research through the [Equality of Opportunity Project](#).

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 8: Segregation in Guilford County

Institutional Racism is defined as “the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color.” -- [Solid Ground](#)

When you hear the word segregation, what do you think of? Many of us think back to the Civil Rights Movement. Yet, American cities and neighborhoods continue to be highly segregated. Why? The fact is that policies and institutions established segregation and many structures were built around these practices.

After the [1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision](#), segregation of neighborhoods, schools, theaters, restaurants, and transportation were even more intentional and planned.

In Greensboro, racial segregation caused whites to gravitate west and north of the city, and blacks to relocate to the east and south. As with cities throughout the South, in the first half of the twentieth century, Greensboro practiced strict segregation in public spaces as well as through [restrictive covenants in exclusive white neighborhoods](#). This developed a clear pattern of racially-based neighborhood development that remains visible in the city’s landscape even today.

Did you know that the [GI Bill, which was created to help World War II veterans, largely excluded black veterans?](#) The GI Bill was intended to help establish hospitals, make low-interest mortgages, and granted stipends to cover tuition and expenses for college or trade schools. Equity in healthcare, homeownership, and education are critical components in advancing and uniting communities. Yet, while thousands of veterans benefited from this legislation, it is yet another reason the lines of segregation can still be seen today.

Today’s Challenge:

Option 1: Explore the [Racial Dot Map](#) created by the University of Virginia, which uses colored dots to visualize how racial segregation appears in our communities. We encourage you to zoom into North Carolina and Guilford County to see how it plays out in our backyard. Read more about the methodology [here](#).

Option 3: Fifty years after Martin Luther King’s death, our nation is still divided. [Read more from The Economist about how segregation](#) exists today in cities across America and the costly impact it has on the future of our communities.

Share your reflections on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag [#EquityGSO](#) and tag [@UnitedWayGSO](#).

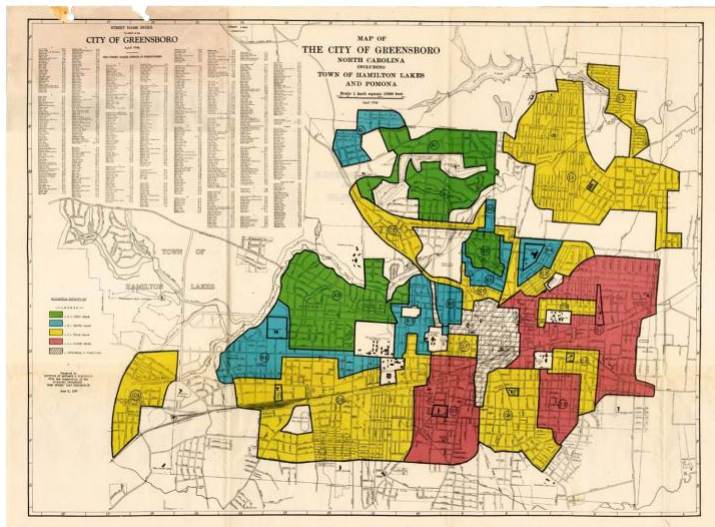
DAY 9: Housing Inequity in Your Backyard

You may be wondering what housing has to do with racial equity. The reality is that housing affordability and who experiences homelessness is largely influenced by our country's history of racism, and Guilford County is no exception.

After the Civil War, as the Jim Crow era began with laws codifying discrimination and segregation, separate districts for African American cultural and social organizations and businesses grew in Greensboro and other communities in the area.

Deed restrictions and racially restricted covenants were used to enforce racial segregation. This racially-charged practice has become known as "Redlining".

Redlining was a systematic denial of various services through government-sponsored Home Owners' Loan Corporation based on community racial composition. [As an example depicted below](#), in Greensboro when redlining was practiced, most of Nocho Park, Clinton Hills, and surrounding neighborhoods were shaded yellow or red and deemed "definitely declining" or "hazardous" for investment.



In fact, in many ways, East Greensboro is still trying to recover from a lack of economic development. [East Greensboro Now](#) is working to promote minority entrepreneurship, community development and economic development.

When communities promote development and growth in historically underserved areas, it's also important to consider, and avoid, [the impacts of gentrification](#) which can increase urban poverty and disproportionately impacts Black and Latino communities.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Check out a [graphic on national data](#), that shows that even when controlling for poverty, African Americans are dramatically more likely than whites to become homeless.

Option 2: Watch this 5-minute [video from the Urban Institute exposing how housing discrimination](#) against racial and ethnic minorities occurs today.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 10: How Your Race Affects Your Health

You may have heard about the wealth gap, but have you heard about the wealth-health gap? According to the NY Times 1619 Project, “[racial health disparities are as foundational as democracy itself.](#)”

In 1906, [W.E.B. DuBois](#) noted social conditions, not genetics, impacted the health of black people and caused disparities in mortality rates. To this day, what is known as the [Social Determinants of Health](#) are clear indicators and predictors of overall health and wellbeing, and more recently, racial inequity [increased the risks](#) of getting sick and dying from COVID-19.

In a recent United Way of Greater Greensboro Lunch & Learn hosted by African American Leadership, attendees learned communities of color, especially those living in poverty, are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. In fact, since the pandemic began, the national life expectancy of African Americans has been reduced by 2.6 years, as compared to a 1-year reduction in all other populations. You can [watch the entire lunch and learn, featuring local Cone Health experts here.](#)

[A study](#) by the American Bar Association notes that the poverty in which black people disproportionately live, cannot account for the fact that black people are sicker and have shorter life spans than white people, and goes on to find racial and ethnic minorities receive lower-quality health care than white people – even when insurance status, income, age, and severity of conditions are comparable.

Today’s Challenge:

Option 1: Hear Dr. Camara Phyllis Jones explain social determinants of health through her [analogy of the “cliff of good health”](#) in a video collaboration with the Urban Institute.

Option 2: Check out this [Fact Sheet from the American Psychological Association](#) exploring the compounding impact of socioeconomic status and race on health.

Share your reflections on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 11: What is Environmental Justice?

Before you continue with Day 11, we'd like you to take a moment to watch another quick video featuring United Way of Greater Greensboro members Kim Gatling and Brian Pierce. They'll continue sharing their own reflections on equity and encourage you to continue the challenge. [After you watch the video](#), come back to this email and continue your journey.

Social equity, a concept also known as [environmental justice](#), is the fair treatment and involvement of all people and communities - regardless of race, gender, national origin, or income level - in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

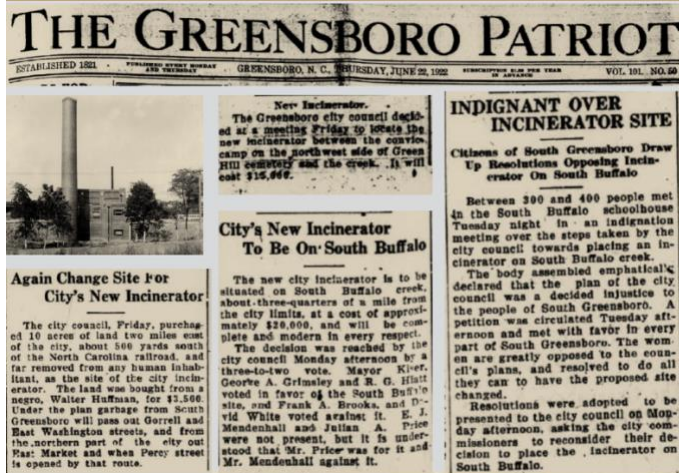
Despite wanting the best for their families, people with limited means are often less geographically mobile and have fewer affordable choices when deciding where to live.

This has led to residents with low incomes, and often also people of color, living in areas with high rates of air and water pollution, such as in industrial areas, near highways, or in close proximity to toxic waste sites.

As we learned on [Day 8](#) of this challenge, segregation forced people of color into particular areas of Greensboro. As far back as 1922, many of those areas were being used in ways that compromised the environment.

As depicted in the local newspaper scans below:

- 1922: City Council of Greensboro announced its plan to construct a new incinerator on the South Buffalo Creek.
- 1922: South Greensboro petitioned against the decision, 300 to 400 people, mainly women, met in local schoolhouse to oppose
- 1925: Incinerator begins operation, and the ash is buried in a landfill along the creek
- 1930s-40s: Footprint of a landfill expands as City acquires additional land. Area begins to become more settled as subdivisions are created next to landfill. Incinerator stops being used in the early 40s, converting to a solid waste disposal only.
- 1953: The landfill was closed with materials simply being covered over with soil.



Pollution and particulate matter exposure have been linked to asthma, low birth weights, high blood pressure, and other adverse health outcomes.

In recent years, many large textile-based companies have created strong sustainability programs to reduce the impacts of their industry on people and the environment.

Locally, Kontoor, which owns global brands Wrangler and Lee, launched a program in 2020 to address the environmental and social impact of their operations, supply chain, products, and people. [Visit their website to learn more about their program, which aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals.](#)

Before you choose which challenge(s) you would like to complete today, if you haven't already, [please RSVP here to attend a virtual meeting](#) on Friday, April 16, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. that will allow you to learn even more and share your 21-Day Equity Challenge experience with others.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: [Discover 8 ways](#) you can start informing yourself about environmental racism.

Option 2: [Have you heard of environmental racism? Watch this 3-minute video](#) on how numerous systemic issues contribute to differences in exposure to potentially harmful environmental conditions.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 12: The Racial and Gender Wealth Gap

Guilford County is the home of [nationally recognized colleges and universities](#), and many [well-known companies](#) call the county home, but these excellent educational and employment opportunities do not tell the real story of what it's like to live in Guilford County.

Residents are leading very different lives: Out of 100 counties across North Carolina, Guilford County ranks 44th in [Social and Economic Factors](#), and in terms of income inequality, there are significant disparities between the top and bottom quintiles of incomes. [Median income](#) for black households is \$34K compared to \$58K for White households.

As the [income gap](#) continues to grow in America, working households are struggling to meet their daily needs and find it difficult to build wealth through savings, investments, or home ownership.

Additionally, [women continue to face a wealth gap](#), as compared to men, when it comes to annual income. This gap has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused an [inequitable increase in responsibilities](#) in household settings. The same inequitable household impact applies to [same-sex couples with children](#).

Did you know locally, United Way's [Women United](#) affinity group is comprised of community leaders who are focused on empowering and inspiring women to lead community-wide change that ends poverty?

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Hear from Ruth, an immigrant from Honduras, on how the 'toxic stress' of poverty and financial insecurity is impacting her and her children in this [10-minute PBS News Hour special](#).

Option 2: Listen to this [30-minute interview with Dr. Donna Beegle](#) on how she broke the cycle of generational poverty in her family and is now working to help others do the same through the consulting firm she founded.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 13: Behind the Starting Line- Racialized Outcomes in Early Childhood

“We must acknowledge the broader diversity in and of the African American experience and celebrate that all Black children are born geniuses. Black students continue to pursue educational excellence despite the many unnecessary obstacles they face due to constructions and perceptions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientations in America.” — [David J. Johns](#)

From infancy through high school, children's educational outcomes are dependent on the quality of their learning experience. A quality early childhood education in particular, has been shown to have a significant positive effect on future success, because brain circuits are developing actively then.

In fact, 85% of the brain's development happens before a child enters kindergarten. This is why United Way of Greater Greensboro promotes its [Thriving at 3 initiative](#), which promotes early learning and reading.

Despite early learning efforts, racial disparities can still be a large factor in determining future success. As indicated in [this article](#), “black and white boys who grow up on the same city block and attend the same school still have very different outcomes in adulthood.”

Social and emotional health are also key to children’s development, we know that poverty, trauma and other [adverse childhood experiences \(ACES\)](#) can have sustained, negative impacts on children’s ability to succeed.

[Dr. Roy Wade](#) notes that “We see higher levels of childhood adversity among minority populations, but we need to acknowledge the role that historical inequities and disenfranchisement play in creating the environment in which such traumatic experiences are more likely to occur.”

Today’s Challenge:

Option 1: Learn about United Way of Greater Greensboro’s Thriving at 3 Initiative by [watching this video](#).

Option 2: Read [this U.S. News article](#) on how ‘Education Inequality Starts Early’ for children in households with low incomes.

Share your reflections on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 14: Education & School-Aged Children

Earlier this week, we explored how segregation persists in American communities. Our economically and racially divided neighborhoods are leading to inequitable educational environments and adverse academic outcomes for our youth.

[Studies show that children from families with low incomes](#) enter high school with literacy skills 5 years behind and are over 4 times more likely to drop out than those from high-income families.

Students of color, who are more likely to attend under resourced schools than their white counterparts, suffer because of teachers working in under resourced school environments and large classes sizes, which when controlling for socioeconomic status, almost entirely explain [disparities in academic achievement](#) according to Brookings.

Like we learned yesterday, United Way of Greater Greensboro is increasing the likelihood that students receive the early foundations of educational success through Thriving at 3. In addition we create many [education-focused](#) partnerships, and also promote Mentoring Matters, which pairs local youth with a caring adult mentor who, in some cases, [will support them from elementary school to college](#).

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Watch [Boston teacher Kandice Sumner on the TED stage](#) discuss the disparities she sees in her classroom every day because of segregation in our school systems.

Option 2: Listen to the [This American Life two-part podcast special](#) on how integration is needed to close the achievement gap.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 15: Adverse Childhood Experiences

In order for children to meet developmental milestones, learn, grow and lead productive lives, it is critical that they be healthy. Good social-emotional and mental health is a key component of children's healthy development. Poverty, trauma, and many other factors have been shown to have a sustained, [negative impact](#) on children's social, emotional and mental health.

Unfortunately, racism is now recognized as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) - a toxic source of stress with the potential to disrupt a child's ability to learn, relate, grow, play, communicate, and problem-solve. [ACEs disproportionately impact children of color.](#)

This is a downstream impact of the toxic environments created by institutions and systems that shape our lived experience in Guilford County. (e.g. the justice, education, and healthcare systems). Healthy school, community and home environments are critical to preventing children from experiencing ACEs and appropriately supporting students living with chronic stress, so that it does not get in the way of them achieving their aspirations.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Go deeper and [assess your ACEs score](#) to see how childhood trauma may be impacting your life. Then, assess your resilience score and explore resources on how to support yourself and others by [building resilience](#).

Option 2: View this [info-graphic that explains how ACEs affect our lives](#) and society and summarizes findings from a landmark Kaiser study that looks at the link between ACEs and long-term well-being.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 16: Equity & The LGBTQ Community

Imagine not feeling accepted at home, in your community or at school because of your gender identity or sexual orientation. Like race and socioeconomic status, inequities for people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) can be seen across many dimensions, including healthcare, education, and in the workplace. Research from the [American Progress Institute](#) shows that LGBTQ individuals experience widespread discrimination, often manifesting itself as getting passed over for promotions, being bullied in schools, being refused healthcare, or being denied equal treatment at a store or hotel.

The intersectionality of race and sexual orientation and gender identity also has compounding effects on individuals' well-being and personal safety, despite race – however, black transgender people are discriminated against at [even higher levels](#).

Locally, Guilford Green Foundation & LGBTQ Center (GGF) creates unity through programming and philanthropy that advances equality and inclusion for LGBTQ communities. [Learn more about their local efforts](#).

Also locally, NCCJ seeks to inform the community on LGBTQ issues, [including why pronouns matter](#).

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Watch Ashlee Marie Preston on the [TEDx stage discuss effective allyship](#) and intersectionality from her perspective as a black transgender woman. She discusses when and how to speak up, and what it truly means to be an ally.

Option 2: Read this [article exploring how schools are struggling to support LGBT students](#) and how we can work to create safe spaces for youth to thrive.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 17: Building a Culture of Equity in the Workplace

“And I saw that what divided me from the world was not anything intrinsic to us but the actual injury done by people intent on naming us, intent on believing that what they have named us matters more than anything we could ever actually do.” - [Ta-Nahesi Coates](#).

Every day in the workplace, individuals face challenges being their authentic selves. As leaders and colleagues, we each have a role to play in creating inclusive workspaces. Diverse perspectives enrich our workplaces, and [studies are showing](#) that involving diverse voices improves performance, problem solving and decision making.

Yet, people of color and women are drastically underrepresented in C-Suite, upper management, and Board roles compared to their representation in the overall working population. In fact, of the 279 executives listed at the 50 biggest companies in the S&P 100, 274 are white/Hispanic/Asian or other, [compared to 5 that are black](#).

Additionally, while there has been some positive movement in recent years, women and minorities are still underrepresented on [Fortune 500 Boards](#).

Today’s Challenge:

Option 1: Watch this [3-minute video](#) which highlights common struggles people face bringing their authentic selves to the workplace.

Option 2: Read the Building a Race Equity Culture in the Social Sector [2-pager](#) or download the full report entitled [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture](#).

Share your reflections on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 18: Being an Ally

“The Circle of Human Concern should include everyone, including those with whom we disagree,” he said. “We are all a part of each other. We don't like it, but we're connected.” – john a. powell

In a time when it feels like the world is becoming increasingly polarizing, powell asks, “How can we build bridges?” In his keynote at the [Othering & Belonging Conference](#), he says “We must hear other people's suffering and stories. Compassion means to suffer with others.”

What does it mean to be an ally? An ally seeks to understand what it feels like for another person or group to be oppressed, and despite knowing you will never fully understand how it feels, is committed to valuing and supporting people who are marginalized.

One local way you can seek to understand more is to visit The International Civil Rights Center & Museum in downtown Greensboro – housed in the historic Woolworth's building where the national sit-in movement began (remember Day 3?). Here you can take a [tour in person or virtually](#) to discover the raw truths of racial discrimination and learn more about the Civil Rights movement.

Remember, being an ally is not an identity, it is a continual process – something that you have to work at, be intentional about, and commit to day in and day out. Explore what active support looks like as an ally in Race Equity Tools' [Guidelines for Being a Strong White Ally](#).

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Read the [Do's and Don'ts](#) of Allyship that are important to know as you practice and evolve your role in supporting equity and inclusion.

Option 2: Read about how to be a better [ally in the workplace](#). Looking for a place to start? Take time to really listen to the experiences of those around you.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 19: Tools for the Equity Change Process

Over the past 19 days, we have learned how racial inequities permeate our communities on individual, institutional and systemic levels. We are all impacted by the system of racism in our country and therefore all responsible for dismantling the structures that allow it to persist.

Change is possible and there are many tools we can employ as individuals and organizations to drive individual and community transformation. We will highlight a few of these tools below, but encourage you to explore [Racial Equity Tools](#), a comprehensive site of resources designed to support learning, planning, acting, and evaluating efforts to achieve racial equity.

Additional [resources and equity tools](#) on gender, age, HIV/AIDS, disabilities, and indigenous and tribal peoples can be found here.

Creating equitable outcomes also requires that we change the way we talk about members of our community, focusing on their aspirations rather than their challenges. In practice, this is called asset-framing and uses narratives to change the unconscious associations ingrained in our society. The opposite practice of deficit-framing, or defining people by their challenges, encourages continued stigmatization of groups of individuals.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Read this [Beginner's Guide to Asset Framing](#), to learn more about why how we communicate impacts our ability to achieve racial equity.

Option 2: One of the best ways to continue to build empathy and learn about race is to start a conversation. Read Race Forward's [10 Ways to Start a Conversation About Race](#) to learn more about how to start a conversation with friends, at school, at work, and more.

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DAY 20: Reflections

Today's challenge is to take time to reflect on your experience.

Research shows that a critical component to learning is taking time to reflect or being intentional about processing the lessons being taught by your experiences.

Today's Challenge:



Reflection questions:

What are my identities and in what ways have my identities impacted my life? Are there identities of mine that have provided me higher social capital or privilege in certain environments, or vice versa?

What were some of my assumptions about race and racial inequity before I started this 21-day challenge? In what ways have these assumptions been challenged? In what ways have they been reinforced?

Where have I seen evidence of inequities and systemic and structural racism in my community?

What two to three shifts, changes or actions, can I take to create a more inclusive and equitable environment in my home, workplace, and community?

As you prepare to complete the 21-Day Equity Challenge, we encourage you to **write down a goal** you have moving forward. Research shows that when you write down your goals, you are more likely to commit to them and achieve them.

[Please share your personal goal\(s\) and what you've learned with us by answering a few questions – all goal\(s\) and comments are anonymous.](#)

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.

DAY 21: Take Action in Guilford County

Congratulations on completing your United Way of Greater Greensboro Equity Challenge.

Before you finish, we'd like you to take a moment to watch one last video featuring United Way of Greater Greensboro Board of Directors Chair, Kim Gatling and Board Member, Brian Pierce. [After you watch the video](#), come back to this email and continue your journey.

We are incredibly thankful you have come along this journey with us and made time to learn and reflect on topics of equity within our county. We know these conversations and the feelings they evoke are not always easy but making more space for brave dialogue is one of many steps we can take towards achieving equity in the greater Greensboro community.

We hope each of you will share your experience with a family member, friend or co-worker to continue the momentum from this challenge.

If you haven't already, [please RSVP here to attend a virtual meeting](#) on Friday, April 16, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. that will allow you to learn even more and share your 21-Day Equity Challenge experience with others.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Learn more about [volunteering with United Way in our community](#).

Option 2: Next time you are running errands or heading to the grocery store, if you typically travel by car, challenge yourself by taking the bus. [Find your route here](#).

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#EquityGSO** and tag **@UnitedWayGSO**.