



www.racialunityteam.com
racialunityteam1@gmail.com
P.O. Box 101, Stratham, NH 03885
501(c)3 nonprofit organization

Contact: Joy Meiser Mendis
Secretary, Board of Directors
joy.racialunityteam@gmail.com
231-519-2611

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Racial Unity Team Announces New Board Members

The Racial Unity Team (RŪT) is pleased to announce the election of three new members to its Board of Directors for three-year terms beginning January 1, 2023.

Terry López Burlingame of Gilmanton Iron Works in Belknap County is *National Education Association National Director NH* and represents 17,000 members in advocacy with federal representatives. She is also a National Facilitator of *Leaders for Just Schools*, which helps NEA leaders learn to cultivate a just and equitable school environment for all students. Terry is a Spanish/ESOL educator at Gilmanton School.



Kristen DeShaies of Exeter in Rockingham County has been a Racial Unity Team member since 2021. She is the owner of KLD Strategy Marketing, has 25 years of brand and business management experience, and serves on the Board of Directors for *Seacoast Eat Local*. Kristen serves on the Racial Unity Team's Strategic Planning Committee where she assists in meeting the needs and challenges RŪT's work addresses.

Mark Whitney of Newfields in Rockingham County joined the RŪT Board in October 2021 to complete Rev. Robert Thompson's vacated term ending December 31,

2022. At the recent annual meeting, Mark was voted to serve his own three-year term on the Board. Mark has served on the Strategic Planning Committee, **Art & Poetry Challenge** project and Program Committee. At Exeter Health Resources as Vice President of Strategy, Community Relations and Advancement he also brings board experience from the KEY Collective and United Way. Mark has expertise that will help the Racial Unity Team further advance its mission in New Hampshire.



Board Chair Ken Mendis of Stratham commented, “The addition of Terry Lopez Burlingame, Kristen DeShaies, and Mark Whitney to our Board affirms our commitment to ensure that DEIJB education for New Hampshire children and adults is one of our major priorities. It confirms our full commitment to address the rapidly growing demands we face to support K-12 public educators in the challenges with which they are confronted. We are committed to work with the SAUs to assure that every student receives a public education that will prepare them to reach their full potential as productive and contributing citizens and help them meet the opportunities presented by a rapidly diversifying New Hampshire population. The diversity and expertise of our Board of Directors highlights the Racial Unity Team’s commitment and models the changing demographics of New Hampshire. We look forward to utilizing all our Board members’ deep and wide experiences to make a positive influence in the state.”

Leaving the Board after fulfilling their terms are Founding Member and Board Secretary, Joy Meiser Mendis of Stratham, and Board Member Dr. David Ryan of Hooksett, Superintendent of SAU 16. Continuing Board members are Jonathan Ring of Exeter, Sylvia Foster of Durham, Dr. Lowell (Chris) Matthews of Manchester, and Kathleen Blake and Dr. Cora Quisumbing-King of Dover.

The Racial Unity Team is a 501(c)3 non-profit New Hampshire charitable organization that supports a vision that New Hampshire becomes a state where everyone feels they belong and a mission that advances relationships among people of different racial identities, increases understanding, and reduces racial bias in our communities. The current demographic composition of the Board is 45% White, 22% Asian, 11% African American, 11% Latino, and 11% Native American.

The work of the Racial Unity Team is supported by Kennebunk Savings, Cambridge Trust Charitable Foundation, NH Charitable Foundation, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, The William H. Donner Foundation, Granite United Way, NH State Council for the Arts, and donors like you. For more information about the Racial Unity Team and how you may help the non-profit reach its 2023 fundraising goal, visit their website at www.racialunityteam.com.

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