

# NCHE Launches Landmark Activities to Honor the 8th Annual National Day of Racial Healing

Press Release | January 19 2024



*January 19, 2024 (Press Release)*

**WASHINGTON** – The [National Collaborative for Health Equity](#) (NCHE) celebrated the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Day of Racial Healing with groundbreaking activities, such as releasing a series of scholarly articles amplifying the value of connecting across racial, ethnic, and other perceived differences to embrace a shared humanity. And, working with publisher Mary Ann Libert Inc., NCHE also released a roundtable discussion on research showing that many Americans seek unity and want to embrace racial healing.

On January 16, an extraordinary day when more than 200 communities across the United States held National Day of Racial Healing events, NCHE continued its pursuit of health equity by emphasizing the need to eliminate racism.

“We recognize that health inequities and health disparities will only end when we end racism,” said Dr. Gail C. Christopher, NCHE’s executive director. “NCHE is expanding our mission to do just that, to work on ending racism in America. We recognize it requires comprehensive strategies that include healing from past injustices.”

While serving as vice president and senior advisor at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Dr. Christopher and others were catalysts for launching the National Day of Racial Healing, which has blossomed into a national event that unites people of all races, ethnicities, and religions in communities nationwide.

In October, NCHE released the results of its first annual Heart of America Annual Survey. As described by Dr. Christopher, “We looked at the major polls used to take the pulse of our country and realized that far too many are merely capturing and amplifying a dominant narrative about division and polarization. Yet our elections continue to show the general electorate is not so extreme or polarized. NCHE developed a survey to take the pulse of America’s readiness to do the hard work of healing, overcoming our legacy of racial division, and actualizing our core democratic ideals and tenets.”

[The survey](#), conducted by The Benenson Strategy Group, a premier strategic market research firm, found that almost a third (31%) of Americans want our nation to do the relational work that will enable us to see ourselves through a lens of shared humanity. Eight out of 10 respondents recognize that diversity in the workplace is an important requirement for us to overcome our differences, and they believe that teaching our nation’s history of racism in our school system is a necessary step in our healing and overcoming our historical divides. And more than 80% of the respondents want a leader that unites rather than divides.

“There is really a readiness in this country for us to put polarization and division behind us so that we can solve our collective and common challenges and problems,” Dr. Christopher said.

The wide-ranging discussion, which can be read by clicking [HERE](#), includes Dr. Brian Smedley, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute; former Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring; Dr. Susan Eaton, Professor of Practice & Director, The Sillerman Center, The Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University; Michael Winger, is a

Senior Fellow with the American Association of Colleges & Universities; and Heather McGhee, a renowned thought leader and author of an award-winning, New York Times Bestselling book, *The Sum of Us—What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*.

“The Heart of America Survey truly shows that a counternarrative exists to the dominant media attention on our political divisions,” said McGhee. “Yes, the Heart of America Survey says that four out of five Americans believe that the country is more divided now than ever before, but in that same survey, more than four out of five Americans are united on some of the most hot-button issues around race and our democracy, where there have been shocking decisions by state legislatures and by this conservative Supreme Court in the area of diversity policies and in the areas of book banning and censorship around our children’s freedoms to learn.”

Further, McGhee cites the “unprecedented last decade of movement building” among whites and people of color since the summer of 2020 in support of Black lives, women’s rights, and reproductive freedom.

“These movements speak to an enduring and, in fact, a growing understanding that our freedoms as Americans are secured by collective action, by people standing up for one another, by the kinds of forward progress that we can never take for granted, and there are demonstrable, quantifiable health outcomes for each of those movements’ successes,” McGhee said, noting the need for democracy to protect “our hard-won freedoms” that affect our health as well as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

As part of its commemoration of the National Day of Racial Healing, NCHE also released five scholarly articles on race and racial healing, which are important resources for leaders working to end racism and achieve health equity.

- *21st-Century Narrative Change with Focus on Social Media*, written by Amy Sprecher and Aaliytha Stevens, Co-founders Building CommUnity LLC
- *Facilitating Social Transformation Through Self and Collective Healing: A Collection of Insights, Resources, and Practices*, written by Colette Rausch, Director, Neuroscience

and Peacebuilding, Think Peace, and Laura Webber, Convener, Think Peace Learning and Support Hub

- *Toward Transformative Reparations*, written by Rob Corcoran, Program Design & Training Consultant, Initiatives of Change International, and Mike Wenger, Senior Fellow, American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)
- *Segregation Yesterday and Today: Exploring Possibilities for Systemic Change*, written by Susan Eaton, Professor of Practice & Director, The Sillerman Center, The Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University
- *The Economic Wellbeing of Black Americans and the Implications for Health Equity*, written by Darrell J. Gaskins, Ph.D., MS, William C. and Nancy F. Richardson, Professor in Health Policy and Director, Hopkins Center for Health Disparities Solutions, Department of Health Policy and Management, Johns Hopkins School of Management and Public Health.

“Every major social transformational era in our nation’s history has been associated with major innovations in mass media and communication,” said Dr. Christopher. “The abolition of slavery emerged as newspapers and telegraphic communication became available. The civil rights movement reached the hearts of millions through television. This current era of information technology, social media, and AI significantly impacts mass communication and subsequent understanding and perception of our country and humanity...

“At NCHE, we believe those who are committed to healing, unifying, and sustaining our democracy must become a counterweight to existing irresponsible, divisive, dominant media narratives. While the Heart of America Annual Survey is national in scope, we encourage local and elected leaders to use a similar strategy at local and state levels, and we’d welcome the opportunity to partner on such endeavors.”