



OP-RF EQUITY DIRECTORY

Equity Efforts in Oak Park & River Forest

There have been many efforts over the years to address diversity, inclusion, and equity in the communities of Oak Park and River Forest. The following is a listing of groups currently working to address equity, specifically, with respect to children/youth. In this case, groups that are included are those with the expressed purpose of creating change in systems to insure fairness and access, particularly with respect to race and income, and improve outcomes for children/youth that are not reaching their full potential.

Although they may be involved in multiple areas of activity, the following coding is used to highlight the top two core competencies of each group – what they do most and best. Any additional areas of activity are listed under “Additional”.

Advocacy – actively providing public support for or recommendations of changes that will lead to increased equity

Community Outreach – connecting in the community to identify local needs and issues and to inform people of events and resources

Funding – providing financial resources to increase equity

Dialogue/Education – engaging parts of the community for the purpose of increased knowledge of issues, opportunities, and resources associated with equity




Direct Service – providing direct service to children/youth and/or their families for the purpose of increased equity

Policy & Research – engaged in work to apply social scientific findings to the solution of problems related to equity

Activism/Direct Action/Disruption – recommended by a participating organization to denote more active and immediate systems change

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|--|--|---|--|
|  Advocacy |  Community Outreach |  Funding |  Dialogue/Education |
|  Direct Service |  Policy & Research |  Activism/Direct Action/Disruption | |

Community Efforts

Success of All Youth (SAY)   Additional: 

Affiliation: One of (3) Communityworks priority areas; anchored by the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation

Website: <http://www.sayopr.org/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/SAYopr/>

Main Contact: Linda T. Francis, lfrancis@oprpcf.org; sayinfo@oprpcf.org

Mission: The communities of Oak Park and River Forest will engage youth, families, and community partners to coordinate and align priorities, efforts, and resources to empower every child/youth to reach her/his full potential



Change/Improve: (10) indicators reflective of Social & Emotional, Health & Safety, and Cognitive/Academic outcomes for OP-RF children/youth ages 0-22

Oak Park Call To Action (OPCTA) ● ●

Affiliation: NA

Website: OPCTA.org

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/oakparkcalltoaction/>

Main Contact: Lisa Pintado-Vertner, lisa.e.pintado@gmail.com

Mission: OAK PARK CALL TO ACTION is a growing and diverse network of concerned neighbors in and around Oak Park. We are organizing to defend freedoms and build a system that works for all.

Change/Improve: Racial and economic justice

Oak Park Regional Housing Center (OPRHC) ● ● Additional: ●

Affiliation: NA

Website: <https://liveinoakpark.com/>

Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Rob Breymaier, rbreymaier@oprhc.org

Mission: Achieve meaningful and lasting racial diversity

Change/Improve: Involve youth in integration and inclusion efforts

Multicultural Behavioral Health Advisory Commission (MBHAC) ● ●

Affiliation: Collective action with participation from multiple community partners

Website: NA

Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Linda Francis, lfrancis@oprhc.org; Lisa DeVivo, ldevivo@cmhb-oakpark.org

Mission: MBHAC confronts historical practices that produce inequities in mental health services, and transforms the behavioral healthcare system to create appropriate and equitable access to services and opportunities for youth of color and their families.

Change/Improve: We envision a diverse community in which:

- All youth live in supportive families and all families are connected to the community.
- All youth are empowered to learn without limits and strive to reach their full potential without stigma.
- All academic achievement gaps have been closed.
- All stigmas associated with mental health have been eliminated.
- All people receive coordinated and culturally competent care.

Village of Oak Park - Community Relations Department ● ●

Affiliation: Village of Oak Park

Website: <https://www.oak-park.us>

Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Cedric Melton, Director of Community Relations, cmelton@oak-park.us 708-358-5407 / Cassandra Hurt, Community Relations Coordinator churt@oak-park.us 708-358-5408

Mission: The Community Relations Department monitors and enforces the Village's Fair Housing and Public Accommodations ordinances. It also provides a wide range of services to the community to enhance the overall quality of life and promote diversity.

Change/Improve: The CRD provides a Summer Youth Skills Initiative training in which youth learn soft skills, resume writing, interviewing skills, employer expectations, assertiveness, job search techniques, career path development and effective communications skills.

Community Relations Commission (CRC) ● ● Additional: ●

Affiliation: Advisory Commission of the Board of Trustees, Village of Oak Park

Website: <https://www.oak-park.us/our-community/community-relations/dinner-dialogue>

Facebook Page: NA

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Main Contact: Karin Grimes, karingrimes@att.net

Mission: The Community Relations Commission was established to assure all residents of equal service and treatment. The Commission works to improve inter-group relations without regard to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status, disability, gender identity, gender expression

Change/Improve: Youth may attend the CRC's community forums and sign up to attend one of our Dinner & Dialogue events to gain a better understanding of others' perspectives and experiences regarding diversity, race and identity. The CRC has presented recommendations to the Village of Oak Park for using racial equity frameworks in governing, decision-making and budgeting.

Committee for Equity and Excellence in Education (CEEE)  

Additional:  

Affiliation: NA

Website: NA


Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: John Duffy, john20duffy06@gmail.com

Mission: The Committee for Equity and Excellence in Education (CEEE) is a multiracial group of Oak Park and River Forest residents that works to advance racial equity within Oak Park and River Forest High School.

Change/Improve: Expanding racial equity--in school curriculum, in school culture/climate/discipline, in recruiting, hiring, supporting and retaining more teachers of color, and in using a racial equity lens for educational decision-making

Pro Bono Network (PBN)  

Additional: 

Affiliation: NA

Website: <https://www.pro-bono-network.org/>



Facebook Page: [probononetwork](https://www.facebook.com/probononetwork)

Main Contact: Laura Hardwicke, hardwicke.probono@gmail.com; info@pro-bono-network.org

Mission: Pro Bono Network connects experienced attorneys to people in need

Change/Improve: Community education and awareness regarding the barriers and collateral consequences a juvenile (or adult) criminal and/or disciplinary record can impose for future educational, employment, and housing opportunities.

Oak Park Parent Empowerment Network (OPPEN)  

Additional:  

Affiliation: NA

Website: NA

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/OakParkParentEmpowerment/>

Main Contact: Qia Carswell, oprfaccess@gmail.com

Mission: A centralized touchpoint for matters concerning children of African descent, advocating for systemic change within the Oak Park school districts and community.

Change/Improve: The empowerment of families with Black children, building an informed, connected, present and vocal community, where all youth reach their full potential

Race Conscious Dialogues (RCD)  

Affiliation: discussing merge with Raising Race Conscious Kids

Website: under construction



Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Dot Roche, raceconsciousdialogues@gmail.com

Mission: Engage community members in conversation and exploration of whiteness, the intersection of identity & privilege, interrupting racism, and commitment of action to support equity initiatives

Change/Improve:

Providing tools for white parents to raise race conscious children, and to do their own work first to inform productive discussion with their families.

Raising Race Conscious Kids in and Around Oak Park  

Affiliation: discussing merge with Race Conscious Dialogues

Website: under construction

Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Andrea Kovach, andreakovach1@gmail.com

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Mission: To provide a safe and brave space for parents to discuss parenting in a race explicit way--one that motivates parents to take action against racism/ bias in their own hearts, home and community.

Change/Improve: We are trying to create a platform for parents who are ready and willing to take action against racism/ bias in their own hearts, home and community, which will in turn have a positive impact on their children to do the same

Collaboration for Early Childhood  

Additional: 

Affiliation: NA

Website: collab4kids.org

Facebook Page: [Facebook.com/collab4kids](https://www.facebook.com/collab4kids)

Main Contact: Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, cnewberry@collab4kids.org

Mission: We champion high-quality early childhood care and learning experiences, and support for families so all children develop their full potential.

Change/Improve: The Collaboration works to overcome the fragmentation and scarcity of services endemic to the early childhood field by integrating, increasing access and advancing quality in all of our community resources to better meet the needs of the youngest children and their families.

Diversity * Equity * Inclusion Standard Initiative  

Affiliation: NA

Website:



Facebook Page:

Main Contact: Robert Wilson, robert@deistandard.org

Mission: The establishment of a methodology for organizations to quantify their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Change/Improve: Greater correlation between minority teachers at D97 & D200 and the percentage of minority constituents in the community.

Youth Services, Oak Park and River Forest Townships  

Additional:  

Affiliation: Oak Park and River Forest Townships

Website: <http://www.oakparktownship.org/departments/youth>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/OakParkTownship/>

Main Contact: John FS Williams, jwilliams@oakparktownship.org; Gavin Morgan, gmorgan@oakparktownship.org

Mission: Support programs/services that prevent juvenile delinquency, address youth at risk of becoming involved in inappropriate/illegal activities, advocate for programs and services which enhance the social and emotional development of youth and their families and is committed to promoting opportunities for youth and their families to obtain needed services.

Change/Improve: Via Contracts and Program Development, Restorative Justice, Youth Development and Advocacy, Cargo Circles, and the Youth Interventionist Program we are trying to help youth identify their gifts, develop them, and become who they are in this world.

Better Out-of-School-Time Initiative (BOOST)  

Affiliation: SAY

Website: <http://www.sayopr.org>

Facebook Page: Success of All Youth

Main Contact: Linda Francis, lfrancis@opr.org

Mission: Community service providers working together to allow every OP & RF child/youth to have access to safe and productive experiences during their out-of-school-time, without cost or logistical barriers, which empower them to grow socially and emotionally and develop necessary skills.

Change/Improve: Increase the number of children/youth of color and children/youth of low income participation in out-of-school activities and programs

Youth Engagement Scholarship (YES) Fund 

Affiliation: Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation

Website: [https://opr.iphiview.com/opr/Donate/AccountInformation/tabid/495/dispatch/accountselection_id\\$52548_hash\\$4def170cfc6745392fae907f2eb6b380847a532a/Default.aspx](https://opr.iphiview.com/opr/Donate/AccountInformation/tabid/495/dispatch/accountselection_id52548_hash4def170cfc6745392fae907f2eb6b380847a532a/Default.aspx)

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Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Elizabeth Chadri, echadri@oprfcf.org

Mission: To engage the population of youth that are unengaged in opportunities to explore curiosities and develop skills under the leadership of caring, mentoring adults and in the context of positive peer networks.

Change/Improve: The Fund hopes to grow both the number of scholarship recipients and participating partners.

Excellence with Equity and Excellence (E-Team)

Affiliation: Oak Park Public Library

Website: www.e-teamoakpark.com

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/E-Team Oak Park/>

Main Contact: Frances Kraft, frk766@mail.harvard.edu

Mission: To bring families, educators, and community members together as partners to build school districts that are both excellent and equitable.

Change/Improve:

Suburban Unity Alliance (SUA)

Additional: 

Affiliation: NA

Website: <http://www.suburbanunity.org/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/suburbanunity/>

Main Contact: Anthony Clark, contact@suburbanunity.org

Mission: To promote unity through the realization of equitable community practices that showcase diversity. Our vision is that each member of a suburban community will have equitable opportunities and experiences no matter their demographic background.

Change/Improve:

gRaceful Connections

Affiliation: NA

Website: NA

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/274760436319111/>

Main Contact: Karen Thomas, karenthomas201@gmail.com

Mission: [support organization for transracial families]

Change/Improve:

School Efforts

Board of Education Equity Committee

Additional: 

Affiliation: River Forest District 90

Website: district90.org

Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Ed Condon, condone@district90.org

Mission: To inspire a love of learning and inspire educational excellence for every child

Change/Improve: Equity and excellence for all students through full access to educational opportunities, resources, and experiences, and supports.

Inclusiveness Advisory Board (IAB)

Affiliation: River Forest District 90

Website: district90.org

Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Stacey Williams, staceywilliams@district90.org

Mission: The IAB values and aspires to further become a school community that promotes a culture of individuals who are sensitive, responsive and inclusive of each other, nurtures, supports and educates every individual stakeholder –

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students, staff and families – to be intentionally inclusive, and holds in high regard, models and teaches important life-skills

Change/Improve: Inclusivity and engagement

PTO Diversity Council/Committees



Additional:



Affiliation: Oak Park District 97 PTO

Website: NA

Facebook Page: Oak Park PTO Diversity Committees

Main Contact: Venus Hurd Johnson, venhurdjo@yahoo.com & Makesha Benson, makesha.benson@gmail.com; d97.pto.divco@gmail.com

Mission: To support our schools and expand their efforts in creating a district that is welcoming, inclusive, and equitable for all families resulting in academic and social success for every student but with particular emphasis on brown and black students, students on IEP and 504 plans, and those students that are low income.

Change/Improve: We are focused on reducing the achievement gap and providing an equitable educational experience for all children in D97, with particular emphasis on black and brown children.

Senior Director of Equity



Additional:



Affiliation: Oak Park District 97

Website: <http://www.op97.org/>

Facebook Page:

Main Contact: Carrie Kamm, ckamm@op97.org

Mission: To create a positive learning environment for all students that is equitable, inclusive, and focused on the whole child

Change/Improve: To help all our students be known, nurtured and celebrated learners; be empowered & passionate scholars; be confident and persistent achievers; be creative critical thinkers and global citizens

Committee for Legislative Action, Intervention and Monitoring (CLAIM) – Equity Committee



Affiliation: Oak Park District 97

Website: <http://www.op97.org/boe/claim>

Facebook Page:

Main Contact: Lou Anne Johannesson, ljohannesson@op97.org

Mission: C.L.A.I.M. is a committee of the board that helps the district develop a legislative agenda to propose, support, oppose or monitor legislation impacting board priorities.

Change/Improve:

African-American Parents for Purposeful Leadership in Education (A.P.P.L.E.)



Affiliation: District 200 OPRFHS

Website: www.oprfhsapple.org

Facebook Page: oprfhsapple

Main Contact: Melanie McQueen, oprfhsapple@gmail.com

Mission: Parent Empowerment, Equity, Policy, and Student Advocacy

Change/Improve: Culture, Climate and Behavior that result in disparities among African-American Students

Increase scholarship options for African-American students

Increase the number of African-American teachers in D200 and D97

Culture, Climate, and Behavior Committee (CCB)



Additional:



Affiliation: OPRFHS District 200

Website: <http://www.oprfhs.org/board-of-education/Culture-Climate-and-Behavior-Committee.cfm>

Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Jennifer Cassell, jcassell@oprfhs.org

Mission: The Culture, Climate, and Behavior committee provides the Board of Education recommendations to create a welcoming environment where all students experience a sense of belonging and the expectation of excellence, and where student discipline rates are not predictable by race, socioeconomic factors, or special education status.

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Change/Improve: The culture and climate of OPRF to make all students feel welcomed

Community Council – Equity Committee

Affiliation: District 200 OPRFHS

Website: <http://www.oprfhs.org/parents/Community-Council.cfm>

Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Wendy Daniels, booksbywendy@gmail.com

Mission: The mission of the Community Council, established by Board of Education Policy 1420, is to encourage community and parent awareness and understanding of school issues and needs. The forum provides for an interchange of ideas between members of the Council and the Oak Park and River Forest High School administration. The council serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Education and is available to the Board for discussion and study.

Change/Improve: Advocacy for students

District Equity Leadership Team (DELT)

Affiliation: District 200 OPRFHS

Website:

Facebook Page:

Main Contact: Sheila Hardin, shardin@oprfhs.org

Mission: Established in 2012 and composed of administrators and faculty members, DELT's role is to guide the work of exploring the impact of institutionalized racism on student learning, create a vision for eliminating racial achievement disparities, and work to dismantle the barriers to academic success for all students.

Change/Improve:

Females Reaching for Educational Excellence (FREE)

Affiliation: District 200 OPRFHS

Website:

Facebook Page:

Main Contact: Latonia Jackson, LJackson@oprfhs.org

Mission: FREE is a female ONLY empowerment group. Our goal is to help students soar personally, socially and academically.

Change/Improve:

Motivational Mentorship

Affiliation: District 200 OPRFHS

Website: NA

Facebook Page:

Main Contact: Andrea Riles, ariles@oprfhs.org

Mission: A lunch-time mentoring program intended to help students navigate the demands of life, both inside and outside of school, to foster positive life choices and outcomes.

Change/Improve:

D200 Black Leadership Union (BLU)

Affiliation: District 200 OPRFHS

Website: NA

Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Tia Campbell, TCampbell@oprfhs.org

Mission: The goal of B.L.U. is to assist students in their scholarship potential by providing a support system of peers, faculty, and parents to motivate and maintain enrollment and successful achievement in regular, honors, and Advanced Placement classes. Through a variety of activities (cultural and social) -- and by providing ongoing positive peer reinforcement for academic achievement, excellence, and school participation -- students are able to maximize their full potential.

Change/Improve: Address marginalization of Black students

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ASPIRA

Affiliation: District 200 OPRFHS

Website: NA

Facebook Page: NA

Main Contact: Kelly Diaz, kdiaz@oprfs.org

Mission: OPRFHS ASPIRA is a school affiliate of a national organization devoted to the education and leadership development of Latino students. ASPIRA takes its name from the Spanish verb aspirar, "to aspire." Meetings and activities focus on helping students become educated, committed leaders for the community's future benefit.

Change/Improve: Education & awareness to take action

Qwest/MSAN

Affiliation: District 200 OPRFHS

Website:

Facebook Page:

Main Contact: Devon Alexander, DAlexander@oprfs.org

Mission: MSAN is a network of schools from around the country engaged in pursuing strategies for overcoming the achievement gap in schools. The student organization in the high school seeks to identify issues of racial inequity from a student-centered perspective. Identifying issues of racial inequity within the school community enables the students to develop action plans for addressing and overcoming these obstacles for students. This student organization is driven by students who hope to create a more equitable school environment for all members of the OPRFHS school community.

Change/Improve:

Students Advocating for Equity (SAFE)

Affiliation: District 200 OPRFHS

Website:

Facebook Page:

Main Contact: Jonathan Silver,

Mission: Give students a safe and open place to discuss school wide issues. Students run our club and have avenues to speak to so many different other groups. They have spoken at board meetings, met with the superintendent, and even visited the middle schools. The student experience is the general focus of our meetings and forums, but we delve into specific topics that include race, gender, relationships with staff, curriculum, and dress code.

Change/Improve: Issues of equity. Including more diverse curriculum, including a course that focuses on areas of history not typically included in curriculum. Incorporate the student voice more consistently and thoroughly throughout our building.

Tri-District Committee on Equity

Affiliation: District 90, 97 & 200

Website:

Facebook Page:

Main Contact: Ralph Matire, MartireR@district90.org; Katherine Murray-Liebl, kmurrayliebl@op97.org; Sarah Spivy, sspivy@oprfs.org

Mission: Committee with representatives from each of the (3) OP-RF Boards of Education created to better coordinate equity efforts.

Change/Improve: