



EMBRACING THE POSSIBLE

RAISING A GENERATION OF CHILDREN WHO ARE
THOUGHTFUL, INFORMED AND BRAVE ABOUT RACE

2023 IMPACT REPORT



Looking back on 2023, one word powerfully encapsulates the year we had: momentum.

The partnerships and collective action that grew out of the turmoil and challenges of 2020 and 2021 have blossomed into innovative programs, a thriving community, and numerous fruitful collaborations.



Every year, our Impact Report is an opportunity for us to reflect on and share the tremendous work underway—by parents, caregivers, educators, librarians, pediatricians, researchers and others—to support children to be resilient, inclusive and empathetic, and to think and act critically in the face of injustice.

In 2023, the EmbraceRace community grew on many levels. Not only did the community of people using EmbraceRace tools and discussion spaces increase, but our small but mighty core team also grew—from five to seven fantastic full-time team members. We also added new facilitators to our Early Childhood Community as more and more eager caregivers and educators signed up to participate. And, we continued to add contributors and partners to our ranks.

Also in 2023, EmbraceRace released some innovative and very promising new tools and programs that we'd been working on for several years, including the Color-Brave Caregiver Framework and Practices, the Drawing Differences art program, the Reflections on Children's Racial Learning report and the Rapid Response Research (R3) Network.

And guess what? 2024 promises to be even BIGGER for the EmbraceRace community. Not least of all, The EmbraceRace Podcast is coming in February 2024!

We hope you'll get even more involved with EmbraceRace—and help us continue on this path of growth by inviting your friends and family to join the community.

In gratitude for your support and with excitement for the work ahead,

Melissa & Andrew



THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RACIAL LEARNING

The challenges around us are significant, and include ongoing efforts to ban books, weaken public education and remove so-called “divisive concepts” from the classroom. These efforts will only deepen the divisions in our communities and undermine our efforts to raise a generation with healthy attitudes about race and other differences. **But there is good news. When it comes to race, most parents of kids 0 to 13 want to raise children who are racially thoughtful and literate.**

Together with Breakthrough Research, EmbraceRace conducted a nationally representative survey in December 2022 which revealed that large majorities of parents are very open to supporting their children's racial learning and interested in supportive resources to help them. The findings offer a counternarrative to political rhetoric positioning “parents’ rights” in direct opposition to open and honest teaching and learning about race.

The survey also highlighted the gap between parents’ attitudes and their actual practice with their children, suggesting that additional support and more resources are needed to help align parents’ behaviors with their beliefs.

EmbraceRace stays focused on filling this gap.

84% of parents are *extremely open or very open* to helping kids learn about race*

At EmbraceRace, we have continued to create, and will continue to create, the resources and community spaces that best support caregivers to engage deliberately and constructively with the kids in their lives around race and racism.

We will continue to bring together multi-sectoral coalitions to respond to the needs caregivers are identifying.

We will continue our efforts to raise a generation of children who are thoughtful, informed, and brave about race, with the knowledge that millions of parents, educators, and other caregivers share this aspiration.

Since 2016, EmbraceRace has supported parents, guardians, educators, and other caregivers working to raise children who are thoughtful, informed and brave about race. We identify, organize, and create the tools, resources, discussion spaces, and networks to:



Nurture resilience and joy in children of color



Nurture inclusive, empathetic children of all stripes



Raise kids who think critically about race and racial inequality



Support a movement of kid and adult racial justice advocates for all children





350%

increase in website clicks

2023
AT A GLANCE

65%

increase in
engagement across
social media

80%

increase in
reach across
social media

MEET THE SMALL, BUT MIGHTY EMBRACERACE TEAM:



Co-founders & Co-directors, Melissa Giraud and Andrew Grant-Thomas, partners in life and in work, started EmbraceRace in 2016 to create the community and gather the resources they needed as parents striving to raise children in a world where race matters. Melissa has held racial equity at the center of her work, including as a former radio producer, educator and education strategist. Andrew is a longtime racial justice researcher and advocate.



Andrea Huang, **Community Building Manager**, former university chaplain and experienced racial justice facilitator, manages EmbraceRace's facilitation team and leads cohorts of learning and practice for the Early Childhood Community.



Christina Rucinski, **Senior Research-to-Practice Program Manager**, uses her PhD in Applied Developmental Psychology, and experience as an early childhood educator, to translate insights from scientific research to inform caregiver and educator practices.



Darcy Heath, **Early Childhood Community Facilitator**, is a former classroom teacher, instructional coach, organizational consultant, and professional learning facilitator working with families and educators of children of color.



Maryam Zahid, **Senior Communications Manager**, has wide-ranging U.S. and international experience in youth development. She grounds her communications work in relationship building and empathy.



Nicol Russell, **Early Childhood Community Facilitator**, leverages her EdD in Educational Leadership, and long list of professional leadership roles with and on behalf of young children, to be a voice for BIPOC children.



Robin Deutsch Edwards, **Director of Philanthropic Engagement**, leverages 20+ years aiding purpose-driven organizations to steward strong relationships with the hundreds of individuals and institutions supporting EmbraceRace.



Tamara Montes de Oca, **Senior Communications Associate**, draws on her experience as a first-generation immigrant and on her professional training to grow the EmbraceRace community through social media.

EMBRACERACE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY

The EmbraceRace Early Childhood Community offers parents, educators, and other caregivers to young children (0-8 years) opportunities to learn with and from each other, creating spaces for adults to practice implementing their knowledge of children's racial learning. Our Foundations of Color-Brave Caregiving series offers introductory-level training on race, racism, and children's racial learning, while our Communities of Learning and Practice (COLP) provide space for caregivers to reflect on their own experiences and challenges raising children to be thoughtful, informed, and brave about race. Participants meet for multiple sessions over the course of several weeks to support each others' learning and practice.

TOPICS IN 2023 INCLUDED:

Communities of Learning and Practice

- Growing Healthy Racial Identities in Young Children of Color
- Building Strong Relationships Among Children of Color
- Organizing in Defense of Early Racial Learning in Our Schools and Communities

Foundations of Color-Brave Caregiving

- Why and How to talk about Race with Young Kids
- Racial Learning and Unlearning: Growing Our Understanding of Race and Racism in the U.S.

“The most profound thing about the COLP meetings is the time and safe space is being created, facilitated and nurtured. It is an excellent learning environment. There were many takeaways and opportunities to share one's own experience.”

— Participant in a 2023 COLP

364

parents, caregivers and educators took part in our programming

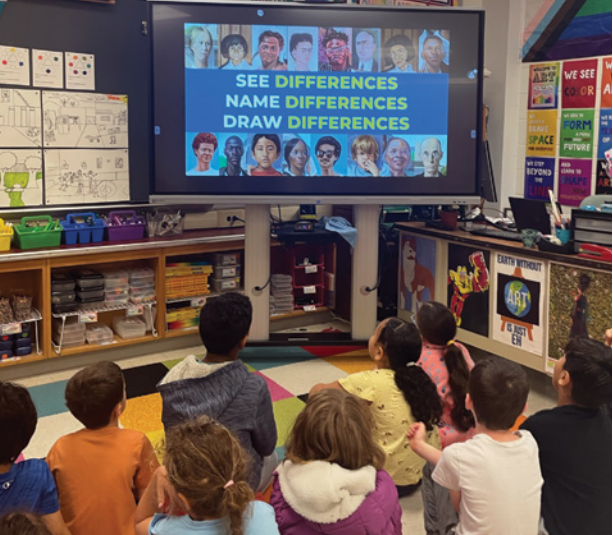
36%

of participants were people of color

FIRST-EVER SPANISH-LANGUAGE FOUNDATIONS — A SUCCESS!

In 2023 seven participants from various professional backgrounds completed the first-ever Spanish session of Foundations. There was widespread appreciation among participants for having a space to express their experiences about race in their native language. Two of the participants are planning to provide support and guidance to their peers at a Spanish and nature immersion preschool in Atlanta, Georgia.





OUR PROGRAMS

DRAWING DIFFERENCES

Following a successful pilot in schools and libraries, **Drawing Differences**—an art program for kids and their adults—launched in November. The program is designed for 8 to 11-year-olds (but adaptable for younger and older kids) and the lessons can be used at home or as part of a classroom, library or afterschool program.

There is quite a bit of anecdotal evidence to suggest that children and adults raised in the U.S. are much more likely to draw White characters than characters of color—even with the increasing and welcome attention to the importance of diversifying our book collections.

The lessons in Drawing Differences give children the encouragement and tools to observe, discuss and draw across racial difference. Each activity cultivates close observation, conversations, and appreciation of the mix of skin colors, hair textures, facial features, and expressions that make individuals unique.

Together we can paint a world where every face, every feature, and every shade is seen and celebrated.



I can only imagine the incredible impact this would have if offered in every classroom and public library across the country, and the expansion of beauty, connection, and worthiness that would inevitably result.”

— Clare Brown, Youth Services Coordinator, Jones Library

50+

portraits created in the Drawing Differences pilot sessions!



COLOR-BRAVE CAREGIVER FRAMEWORK

In a successful back-to-school email and social media campaign, EmbraceRace introduced our brand-new Color-Brave Caregiver Framework. The framework was passed around and read by thousands in the initial months after it launched and hundreds of community members took a pledge to use it.



A Color-Brave Caregiver is someone committed to raising children who are:



resilient and joyful in their own racial identities



inclusive and empathetic across racial lines



critical thinkers about racial inequity



and who will be racial justice advocates for all children

The Framework outlines the important roles we caregivers can play in helping kids develop healthy racial attitudes. The framework breaks Color-Brave Caregiver work into two parts:

1 Ways of Being

Four dispositions we need to learn and grow into in order to fulfill the roles of a Color-Brave Caregiver:

- Steadfast Guide
- Compassionate Self-Examiner
- Brave Learner
- Anti-Racist Advocate

2 Practices

The intentional steps we take for and with the kids in our lives to support their healthy racial learning.

By actively and intentionally engaging children in ongoing learning about race and racism, Color-Brave Caregivers help shape children's values and beliefs AND help them critically process what they see and hear from other sources.



RAPID RESPONSE RESEARCH NETWORK

EmbraceRace's Rapid Response Research Network (R3 Network) enjoyed a successful launch in the spring and quickly began expanding. The R3 Network is a national research database for families—adults and kids—interested in participating in research to test and identify practical antiracist tools and interventions.

Thus far, the R3 Network has supported several research studies that aim to expand knowledge about how to support parents' antiracist caregiving. One study supported by R3 network families examined children's reasoning about police brutality toward Black people in response to different messages conveyed by parent characters in a storybook. Another study evaluated White mothers' racial identity development and communication about race as levers for intervention to lower their children's racial bias.

Researchers have responded to the prospect of recruiting families via the R3 Network with great enthusiasm, and community members who have participated in previous EmbraceRace-supported research have reported very positive experiences. We have begun outreach efforts to partner organizations to help spread the word about the R3 Network among families, and we look forward to increasing the size and impact of the network in 2024.

Help us reach
our goal of
3000+ families!

EmbraceRace supports the development of more antiracist interventions. You can help, too, by joining our secure network of adults and children interested in taking part in fun, educational anti-racist research. Your participation can help promote healthy racial learning and positive racial identity for all!

www.embracerace.org/research



OUR SUPPORTERS

Institutional Donors in 2023*

Act One Fund
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Sheetz
The Hershey Company
The Sky Foundation
The Wayfarer Foundation

* Institutional gifts greater than \$500 received between January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023.

Individual Donors

EmbraceRace is grateful for the hundreds of individuals who donate to support our work. We appreciate the support of our monthly donors, who have chosen to invest in a sustained way in EmbraceRace's work and for the creative ways that so many in our community tap into their own talents and networks to fuel our efforts.

Earned Revenue Pilot Efforts

As EmbraceRace grows, we're constantly experimenting to find the best ways to meet the growing demand for resources. In 2023 we piloted two sources of earned revenue with initial success. We implemented a sliding-scale fee structure for participants in our Early Childhood Learning Groups. We also worked with employee affinity groups at Toyota and other companies to deliver sessions on how to talk to kids about race.



The coming year promises to be even bigger for EmbraceRace. We are very excited about continued growth in our early childhood community and the widespread dissemination and use of our many resources. We're also going live with two brand-new programs.

THE EMBRACERACE PODCAST

Each episode features a conversation exposing misinformation and focusing on how and what kids **ACTUALLY** learn about race.

In this inaugural season of the EmbraceRace Podcast, we expose persistent myths about race and kids! We also provide evidence-based guidance about how to support healthy, developmentally appropriate racial learning in light of how kids actually learn about race.



READING RACE IN PICTURE BOOKS

A free video-based curriculum to help adults use picture books to nurture young children (0-8 years old) who are thoughtful, informed and brave about race.

The video guides and supplements center on four big questions and include actual readings of picture books appropriate to children of different ages, in different settings, and with different types of books.



**I love the work you are doing.
It's inspiring in these times just
to open your emails. You guys
are the best.**

— A donor, parent, and an award-winning documentary writer, producer, and editor



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