



# CONNECTING TO CREATE CHANGE

## ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

Dear Friends,

With your support, EmbraceRace accomplished a lot in 2024!

We launched **Season 1 of the EmbraceRace podcast**, complete with discussion questions for every episode. We expanded our **learning groups**, introducing new topics, formats, and training tools on how to use resources such as the **Color-Brave Caregiver Framework** and the **Drawing Differences** art program for kids. The Mead Museum at Amherst College even organized an art exhibit inspired by Drawing Differences!

We connected families with leading researchers through our **Rapid Response Research (R3) Network**, ensuring the development of promising antiracist interventions for the families who need them. And, recognizing the importance of measuring our impact, we engaged a top-notch evaluation team to assess our readiness and design a plan for rigorous evaluation in 2025 and beyond.

That's just a glimpse of what we accomplished together! You'll find more information in the following pages.

As we shape our work for the year to come, we do so knowing that the most vital challenges we face as residents of the United States are shot through with ideas and attitudes about race, crosscut with other identities—nationality, immigration status, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, religion, and more. The times we live in make our work—including our efforts to recruit more caregivers, organizations, and resources to that work—absolutely crucial.

With a renewed sense of urgency, we are forging ahead in 2025. We'll launch **Season 2 of the EmbraceRace podcast**, pilot the first of our race-specific parenting toolkits, disseminate our Ages & Stages guide to children's racial learning, and offer expanded **community support** for caregivers and educators. And this spring in Chicago, we'll bring together a Who's Who of national, regional and local partners for the **first-ever National Convening on Children's Racial Learning**, designed to help fuel a movement for children's healthy racial development.

**Join us!** The need for this work has never been greater. Growing this movement requires more caregivers, organizations, and resources.

**Spread the word. Stay connected. Support the work.**

With gratitude,



*Melissa & Andrew* *A*  
Melissa & Andrew

We organize our work around three pillars—resource building, community building, and field building.



### RESOURCE BUILDING

The evidence-based resources we create, typically in partnership with others, offer caregivers actionable advice about how to nurture children who are thoughtful, informed, and brave about race.

- The EmbraceRace Podcast
- Drawing Differences Art Program for Kids
- Ages & Stages Guide

**123K+**

resource downloads



### COMMUNITY BUILDING

The communities we create, facilitate, and equip help members engage and support each other in their color-brave caregiving practices.

- Communities of Learning & Practice cohorts
- Drawing Differences at the Mead Art Museum
- Unitarian Universalists Embrace Racial Learning

**5,500**

visitors saw the Mead Museum's exhibit based on Drawing Differences in its first four months



### FIELD BUILDING

In our field-building work we aim to spark more attention and bigger investments in racial learning as a crucial part of child development.

- National Convening on Children's Racial Learning
- Rapid Response Research (R3) Network

**14**

organizational partners co-designing our 2025 national leadership convening



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

Our community is finding our resources on social media.



**1M+**

TOTAL EMAIL OPENS



**200K+**

WEB USERS

# Re/Presenting

ART BEYOND THE COLOR LINE

## DRAWING DIFFERENCES

### Collaboration with Mead Museum

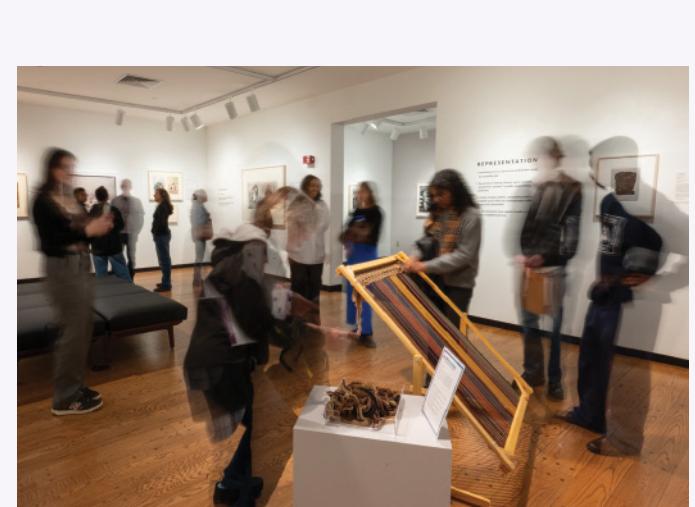
Our **Drawing Differences** Art Program for Kids supports children to draw a diverse set of characters and have helpful conversations with adults about race and difference. Curators at the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College approached EmbraceRace about a collaboration to bring the benefits of Drawing Differences to their visitors.

The result is *Re-Presenting: Art Beyond the Color Line*, an 80-work art exhibit that opened at the Mead in November of 2024 and runs through July 6, 2025.

The exhibit engages the central themes of Drawing Differences—looking closely, seeing color, seeing individuals, and feeling seen—and delivers an experience that has attracted an enthusiastic, multi-generational audience.



The Mead is hosting student groups and offering programming related to the exhibit in 2025. The two organizations will continue to partner on programming in Amherst, Massachusetts and online.



*I can only imagine the incredible impact this [Drawing Differences] 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



## Unitarian Universalist Collaboration

In 2024, we worked with staff at several Unitarian Universalist (UU) churches to create a robust racial learning curriculum tailored to the UU community.

Thirty-seven Directors of Religious Education participated in the fall 2024 pilot program. Participants praised the practical tools and frameworks included in the 12-hour, discussion-based curriculum and welcomed its alignment with stated UU values like “justice and inclusion.” The Directors were very excited to bring the program to their own congregations in 2025.







**With more than 1,000 UU congregations across the U.S., we anticipate widespread adoption of these resources within the network.**

**We see this effort as a promising model of how to scale our impact through partnerships with large regional and national communities, both faith-based and secular.**

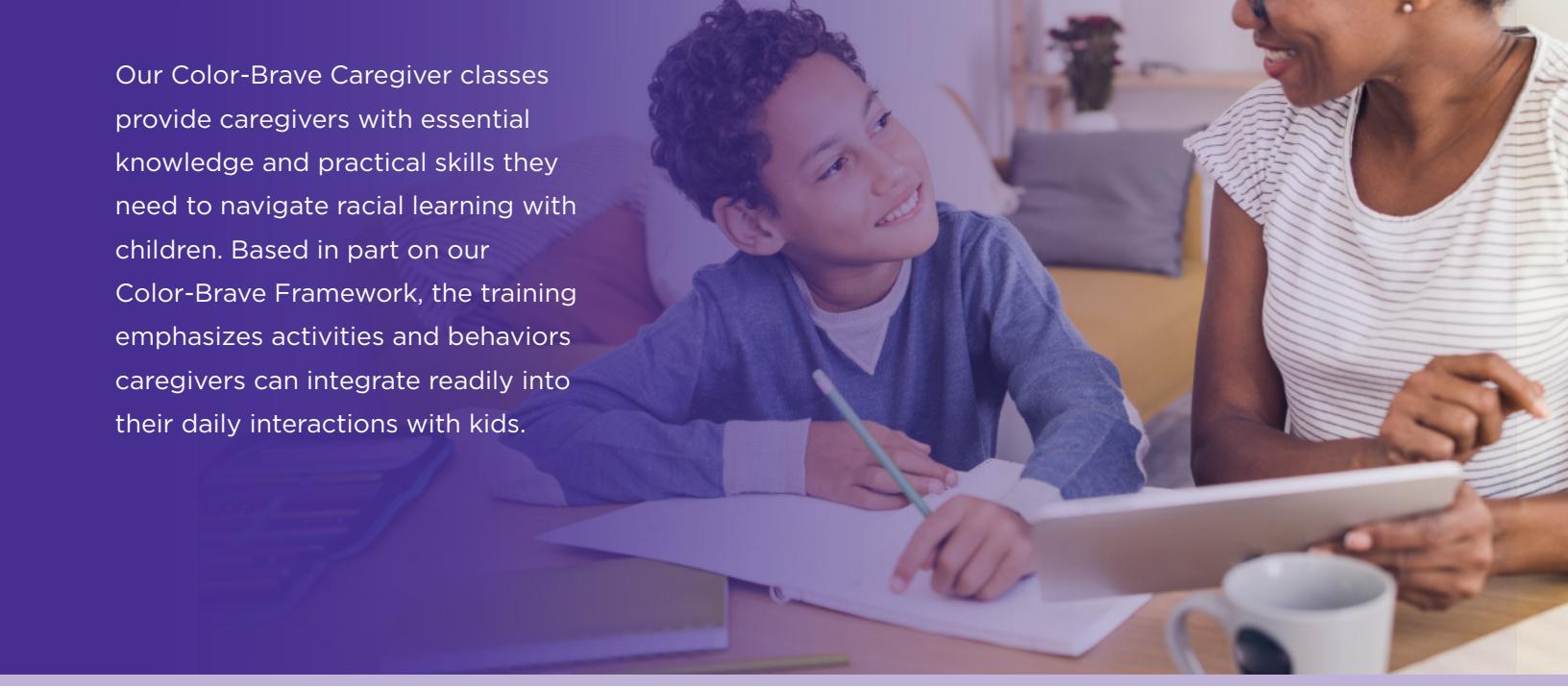
**“**

**I sometimes think that our congregations are “good” and don’t need classes or workshops like this because we’re the people who “get it”, but then I give a class on something like racial bias and I realize how much work we actually have left to do. I think this class will be very beneficial for my congregation.”**

**— UU Director of Religious Education**

## Color-Brave Caregiver Foundations Courses

Our Color-Brave Caregiver classes provide caregivers with essential knowledge and practical skills they need to navigate racial learning with children. Based in part on our Color-Brave Framework, the training emphasizes activities and behaviors caregivers can integrate readily into their daily interactions with kids.



Designed for a variety of caregivers—including parents, educators, daycare providers, and social workers—the program also supports adults across racial identities and lived experiences. The training offers clear, evidence-based frameworks and lots of interactive learning opportunities.



Participants found the framework useful for assessing their own growth and development. Many expressed enthusiasm for the actionable guidance provided and activities suggested, identifying them as valuable tools in their own racial learning.

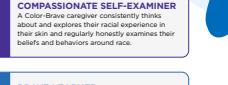
The curriculum will remain a cornerstone of EmbraceRace’s training efforts. With it, alongside other resources and programs, we aim to further embed racial learning practices into everyday caregiving and educational spaces.

**COLOR-BRAVE CAREGIVER | “WAYS OF BEING”**

These four “Ways of Being” express our aspirations as Color-Brave caregivers who are both direct sources of beliefs, values, and information about race for children AND active guides in helping children process messages about race from other sources. Which of these are strengths for you, and which are opportunities for growth?



**STEADFAST GUIDE**  
A Color-Brave caregiver makes space for a child’s respectful curiosity about and understanding of race and racism, and consistently demonstrates that they are open and there for the child and will be there again and again and again.



**COMPASSIONATE SELF-EXAMINER**  
A Color-Brave caregiver consistently thinks about and explores their racial experience in their skin and regularly honestly examines their beliefs and behaviors around race.



**BRAVE LEARNER**  
A Color-Brave caregiver is grounded in an anti-racist, brave, and courageous approach to their own learning and models this approach with children.



**ANTIRACIST ADVOCATE**  
A Color-Brave caregiver recognizes that antiracist talk and thinking must be paired with action and that action must be collective—in order to achieve racial equity.

## National Convening on Children's Racial Learning

Since November 2023, EmbraceRace has led the preparations for the *National Convening on Children's Racial Learning*, scheduled for May 2025 in Chicago. This landmark gathering of leaders will foster relationship-building within and across several critical areas of work, begin to establish priorities for the emerging “field” of children’s racial learning, and elevate the racial literacy of children as a key developmental domain in an increasingly multiracial United States.

Across key sectors like parenting, education, and children’s media, momentum is building to improve how and what children learn about race, racism, and racial justice. With this convening we want to start converting that energy into more purposeful, collaborative, and effective action.

The *National Convening* brings together 250 leaders to participate in the community-building and planning that will help transform public understanding of what it means to raise children with healthy racial attitudes and mindsets and why it is so important that we do.

Preparations for the convening have been led by a steering committee of 15 organizations, chaired by EmbraceRace. Members include such national organizations as Zero to Three, The National Association for the Education of Young Children, FrameWorks, and the National Museum of African American History & Culture.



### Convening Goals

- To begin to develop meaningful new relationships among a diverse group of local, state, and national leaders.
- To identify priorities within and across key sectors as a key step toward creating a shared agenda.
- To sow the seeds of fruitful working collaborations.
- To begin to establish the National Convening as a signature event.

**This is an unprecedented gathering, one that will break open huge new possibilities to reshape the racial learning environments for millions of US kids. Look at the headlines! This event is happening right on time.”**

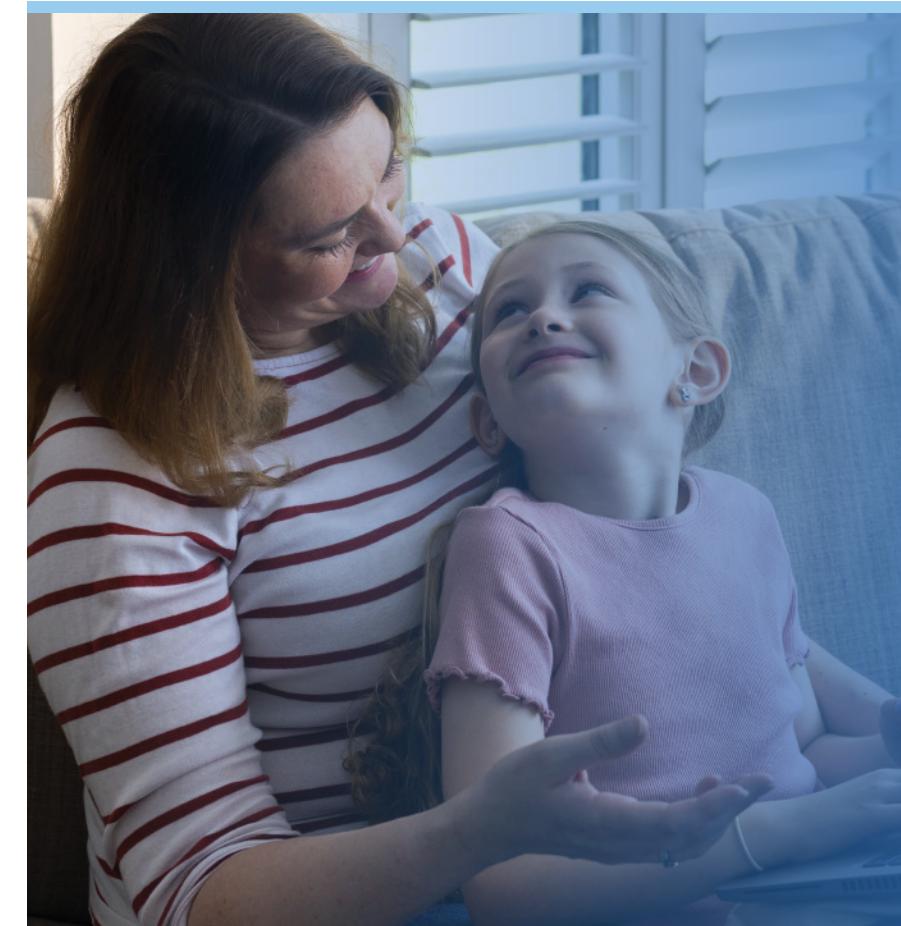
— Andrew Grant-Thomas, EmbraceRace

## Rapid Response Research (R3) Network

The R3 Network is a “bulletin board” for families interested in participating in antiracism research. Parents and children in the R3 Network supported eight research studies in 2024.

The studies focused on topics that included Black families’ perspectives on training for early childhood educators, discussions of police violence with kids, antiracist parenting for White families, and learning about racism and xenophobia.

The studies were conducted by research teams from Stanford University, University of Michigan, and Wake Forest University, among others. Participants who voluntarily shared their feedback with us reported very positive experiences.



R3-supported studies have led to the development of new EmbraceRace resources, including:

- A summary of findings on children’s understanding of police violence
- A companion guide to explaining the roots of police violence
- An action guide for antiracist parenting in White families

In 2025 we'll be working to grow the R3 Network so we can keep supporting antiracist research.

**JOIN US at**  
[embracerace.org/community/research](https://embracerace.org/community/research)



**As a family who's been involved in EmbraceRace since its inception, we were really thrilled to be able to join the R3 network and be part of research studies that help deepen our understanding of anti-racist parenting and to see what impact it's making for the community to be able to benefit from.”**

— White mom of a 4-year-old and 2-year-old in Minnesota

## PODCAST: How Kids ACTUALLY Learn About Race

Our community has been asking for a podcast and in 2024 we delivered!

The first seven-episode season of the EmbraceRace podcast examined "How Kids ACTUALLY Learn About Race."



The response to the podcast has been phenomenal, providing a strong foundation for future seasons.

### 10K+

downloads of the first 7-episode season

### 80%

average listen-through rate for the episodes

## How Kids Actually Learn About Race



Featured on popular podcasts Tonya Mosley's (of NPR's Fresh Air) Truth Be Told, The Fabulous 413 and Top of Mind podcasts.

Throughout the season, we countered widespread myths and misinformation with conversations about what research and experience indicate about how kids develop their racial attitudes and beliefs.

We explored how and when children learn about race, whether younger generations are more racially enlightened than older ones, whether talking about race "makes you racist," and how to guide children in their racial learning.

In Season 2 we will continue to bring valuable information and instructive stories to support the efforts of adults and institutions in children's lives. We are also working with Bumper Media to strengthen our podcast and media network and to deliver the podcast to more caregivers where they listen.

## LOOKING AHEAD

## Evaluation Work

In 2024, EmbraceRace partnered with an evaluation team from the Center for Educational Assessment at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The team helped us clarify the logic of our Resource Building, Community Building, and Field Building areas of work and provided helpful recommendations about how to improve our ability to conduct rigorous evaluations and use evaluation results effectively. The team also prepared a strong plan that will include evaluation of the field-building event we convene in May.

The evaluation work has already provided actionable insights both for the work we do and how we organize ourselves to do it. We look forward to the insights to come in 2025 and beyond!

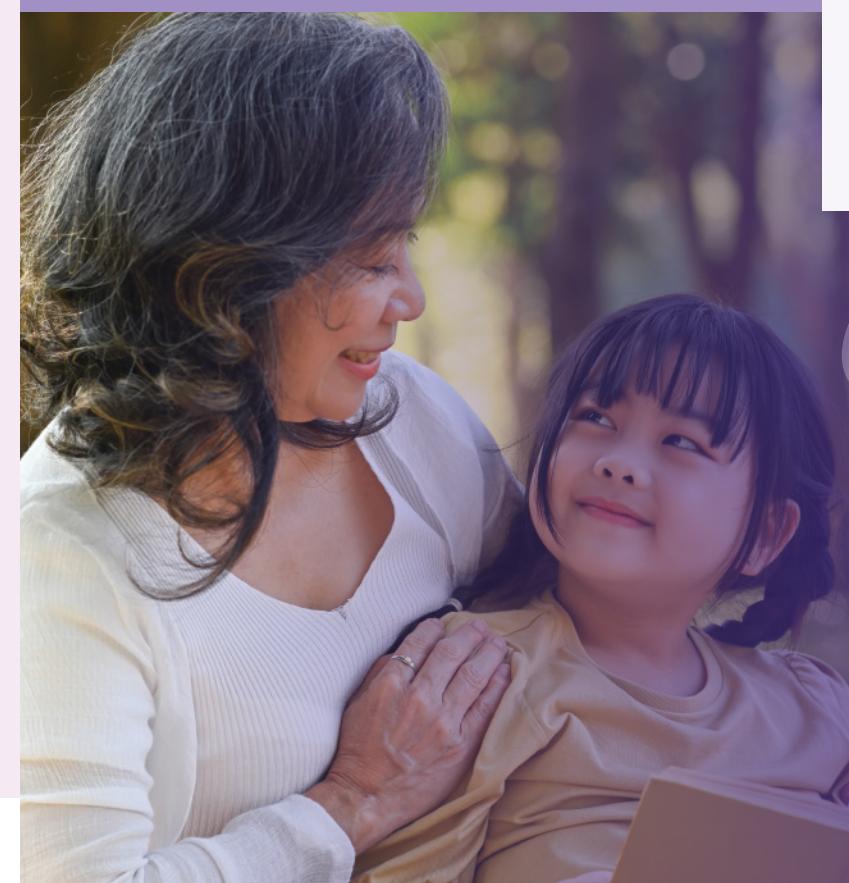


## Toolkit Preview

Until recently, we designed most EmbraceRace resources to apply to kids and families across identities and backgrounds. We did so because much of the guidance we can offer about raising children who are thoughtful, informed, and brave about race applies to all children.

However, we know that children from different racial and cultural groups, and those with different intersectional identities, are likely to have dissimilar experiences that call for differentiated approaches.

So EmbraceRace is working with others to assemble tailored sets of resources for caregivers to children with specific racial identities. In May 2024, we gave our community a sneak preview of the toolkit for caregivers to Asian American children. In 2025, we will launch that toolkit and start to develop others.



*“Thank you so much for the important, comprehensive and thoughtful work you do. I look to your site for information, ideas, and inspiration often (and refer others to your site as much as I can).”*

- Sally Battle, youth programming librarian



## OUR SUPPORTERS

### 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 work and for the creative ways that so many in our community tap into their own talents and networks to fuel our efforts.

### Institutions that Donated in 2024

CNG Holdings, Inc.	Oxholm Family Fund
Combined Food Services of Virginia, Inc.	Price Chopper/Market 32
Edwards Deutsch Family Fund	Richard Allen Fund
Heising-Simons Foundation	Sheetz
Klimczak Family Fund	The Hershey Company
Matthews International	The WayFarer Foundation
Mertz Gilmore Foundation	Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst
New World Foundation	

### Our Staff

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Melissa Giraud  
Co-founder & Co-director

Andrew Grant-Thomas  
Co-founder & Co-director

Darcy Heath  
Community Facilitator

Andrea Huang  
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Tamara Montes de Oca  
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Christina Rucinski  
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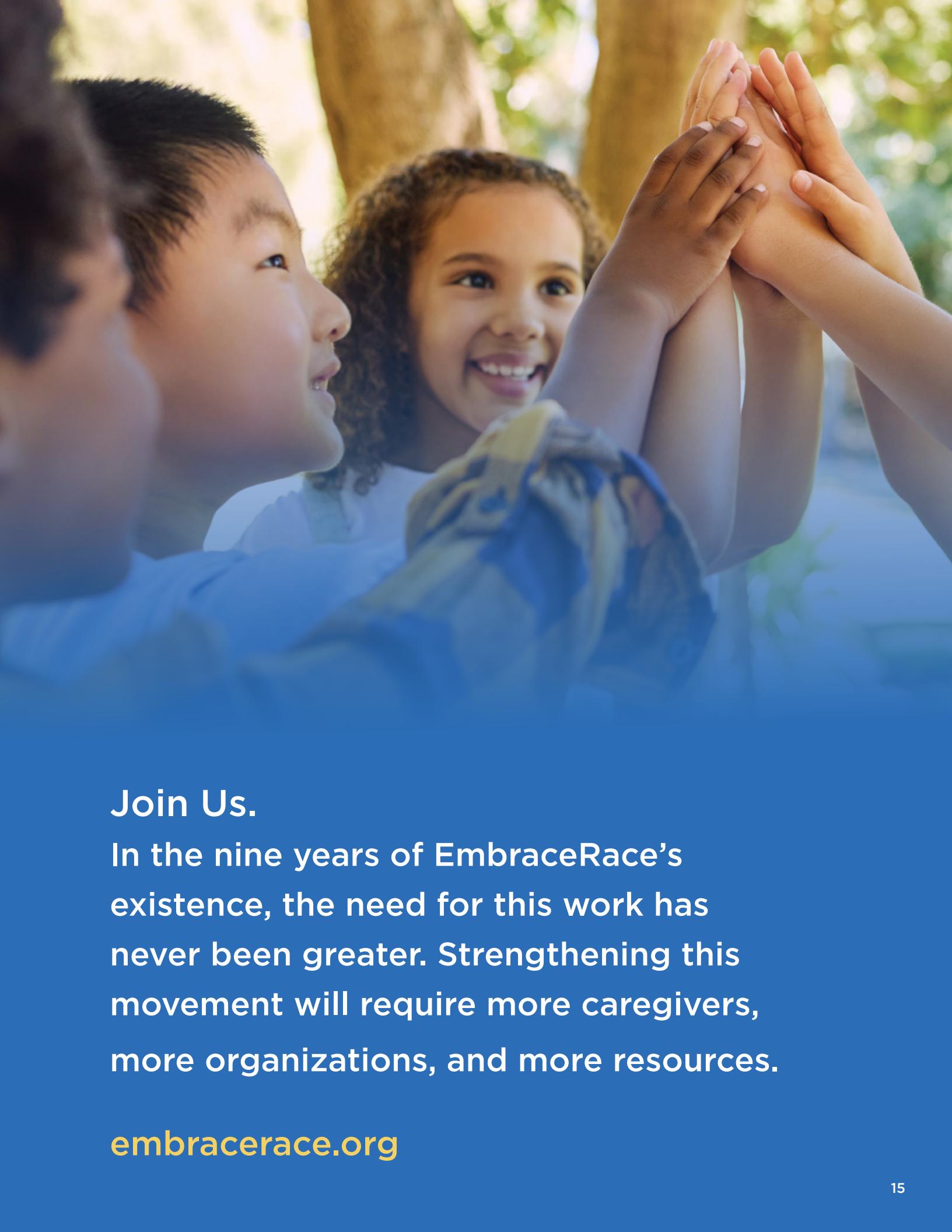
Nicol Russell  
Community Facilitator

Maryam Zahid  
Senior Communications Manager

**Welcome our new Director  
of Philanthropic Engagement,  
Nakia Alston!**



**Nakia Alston** recently joined EmbraceRace as our first full-time **Director of Philanthropic Engagement**. She is a seasoned nonprofit strategist with nearly 20 years of experience and has successfully developed and executed fundraising strategies that have generated over \$15 million. She specializes in equitable philanthropy, working to ensure that marginalized communities have the resources they need to thrive. Her leadership will drive strategic, personalized donor engagement, expanding our reach and ensuring long-term sustainability for EmbraceRace.



**Join Us.**  
**In the nine years of EmbraceRace's  
existence, the need for this work has  
never been greater. Strengthening this  
movement will require more caregivers,  
more organizations, and more resources.**

[embracerace.org](http://embracerace.org)



## JOIN THE EMBRACERACE COMMUNITY



Help us strengthen  
our work!



Sign up for our  
monthly newsletter.



Connect with our  
community on social.



Learn more at  
[embracerace.org](http://embracerace.org).