



Toward a Kinder, More Compassionate Society:
Black Lives Matter in Waldorf Early Childhood Classrooms and Communities

Keynote Speaker: Laleña García
Online Early Childhood Conference
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WECAN was formed as an association of colleagues in 1984. Since that time, to the great detriment of all, children, families and colleagues throughout our movement who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color and members of the LGBTQ+ community have not been fully seen, respected, welcomed and affirmed in our classrooms and communities.

The WECAN board acknowledges this harm, the loss it has caused, and the opportunity we are now afforded to honestly examine and renew the work of our organization. This will include examining our practices and biases, listening, inquiring, and growing into a fuller understanding of race, class and gender in North America in the 21st century.

Knowing better does not change what has occurred, but in awakening there is the possibility to participate in the more beautiful world we know is possible.

As the leadership of WECAN, we as board members take accountability for the pain that has been caused throughout our North American Waldorf early childhood community. We recognize that in order to fulfill the mission of Waldorf education in the next century, we must transform our practices out of an expanded awareness of bias in race, class and gender and the particularities of each child's and family's uniqueness.

In order to educate our children in and towards freedom we must understand not only the developmental needs of children but also the context of the society and structures that influence them and us.

Our acknowledgement of accountability is not done out of guilt, but out of our deep, ongoing commitment to children, families and colleagues and to the evolution of Waldorf Education as a force for social change. We take this step of accountability as a loving act towards self and community that allows for new courage and wisdom and honors our responsibility for one another.

To this end the WECAN board has committed to:

- ongoing personal and collaborative commitment to unmask and transform systemic racism and cultural, gender and class biases that impede our work
- diversifying the WECAN board and examining our board practices through the lens of white dominant culture
- expanding and activating our WECAN Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Committee, populated by Black, Indigenous, People of Color and White colleagues
- creating and implementing our WECAN Diversity Statement
- collaborating with other anthroposophical organizations on inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility within the movement
- reviewing and renewing our teacher training practices in the light of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access, and
- hosting and promoting professional development opportunities such as this conference and the activities that will take place afterwards to extend the learning that we are all engaged in.

As a board we see this as a living process, and we welcome your insights and reflections now and into the future.

As Waldorf Early Childhood practitioners, we are invited to develop the spiritual attributes of great-heartedness, humility, curiosity, interest, wonder and integrity. In these unique and challenging times, we are being asked to see clearly, without any veil of illusion, what influences us. We are being asked to be willing to change, to respond and transform.

This is potent, painful, powerful, essential work. With collaborative, sensitive and honest activity, we can go forward together.

Adrienne Doucette, Anjum Mir, Gabriela Nuñez-Plata, Heather Church, Holly Koteen-Soule, Keelah Helwig, Louise deForest, Magdalena Toran, Nancy Blanning, Ruth Ker, Sarah Arnold, and Susan Howard