



**Building a Loving Community from the Ground Up:
Doing Racial Justice Work with Children and Families
Showing Up for Racial Justice: Southern California Summit
February 4, 2017**

In this hands-on workshop, members of the Ladera Ranch Social Justice Committee will model strategies for using children's literature to promote social and racial justice in local communities. After a brief introduction to the LRSJC, an all-volunteer, parent-led initiative in South Orange County, facilitators will guide participants in thinking strategically about grassroots organizing, capacity-building for parents, and building partnerships with local schools. Participants will work together to examine a diverse array of justice-oriented children's books, and begin framing activities for use in their home communities. Participants are encouraged to bring their favorite multicultural or antiracist children's book to share with the group; the facilitators will also bring a collection of books for use throughout the session. *Presenters: Alison G. Dover (Cal State Fullerton) & Vanessa Santos, Founding Members, the Ladera Ranch Social Justice Committee.*

Welcome & Introductions

- As you enter, choose a book that appeals to you
- Introduce self & why you chose that book

About LRSJC

- Founded in September 2016 after Alison's conversation with a school principal
- Began with 6 moms, now includes almost 300 households
- Goals:
 - Create community among families interested in social & racial justice
 - Provide support to marginalized kids and families (families of color, LGBT families, non-Christian families, immigrant families, etc.)
 - Increase conversations about social & racial justice in schools & community...and capacity of parents & educators to facilitate those conversations
- Unique context of Ladera: 77% White, affluent, prides itself on family/community-orientation

What we've learned so far

- Strategy and context matters
 - Start where you (or they are)...but don't stay there (check out [Richard Milner IV's book](#))
 - Take the time to build relationships and internal capacity
 - Strategic, multifaceted approaches are useful
- Draw upon your collective strengths
 - Skills & social location: We are parents, professors, activists, authors (check out our own [Shereen Rahming!](#)), etc
- Allies are important
 - Library, teachers, PTA, after-school programs
- Social media can be useful, and also distracting
 - If you are going to use it, figure out how to do so effectively

Example of the work: David Shannon’s “A Bad Case of Stripes”

- Rationale for text selection & activity design
- [LRSJC Resource guide](#)
- Led to schoolwide adoption as part of “kindness week”

Putting it into Practice

- Step 1: Evaluate your context and goals
- Step 2: Select a text or other resource to guide discussion
 - See Derman-Sparks, L. (2013). Guide for selecting anti-bias children’s books. *Teaching for Change*. Available at <http://www.teachingforchange.org/selecting-anti-bias-books>
- Step 3: Identify “jumping off points” that can fuel justice-oriented discussions and action
- Step 4: Develop activity ideas
- Step 5: Plan for implementation

Additional Resources:

- Parenting for Change LA (www.facebook.com/ParentingforChange)
- The Early Childhood Assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English features a comprehensive collection of resources to support parents and families in talking about race with young children.
 - Available at <http://www.earlychildhoodeducationassembly.com/resources-for-educators-focusing-on-anti-racist-learning-and-teaching.html>
- usingtheirwords.org: Curriculum & reviews of justice-oriented children’s books
 - Click on “Children’s Literature” to find annotated reviews of books
- Gorski, P. (2016). Rethinking the role of “culture” in educational equity: From cultural competence to equity literacy. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 18(4), 221-226. Available at <http://www.edchange.org/publications/Rethinking-Culture.pdf>
 - Risk of letting “appreciation for diversity” serve as a substitute for “equity and justice”
 - Framework for “equity literacy” as including the ability to recognize and respond to inequity, redress equity in the short and long term, and sustain efforts over time.
- Resources on lrsjcommittee.weebly.com including Teaching Tolerance (tolerance.org) and Teaching for Change (teachingforchange.org)

Contact Information:

- Ladera Ranch Social Justice Committee: lrsjcommittee.weebly.com
- Alison Dover (adover@fullerton.edu), Dept. of Secondary Education at Cal State Fullerton & Co-founder of LRSJC
- Vanessa Santos, Co-founder of LRSJC
- Email the LRSJC at lrsjcommittee@gmail.com

Putting it Into Practice: Action Planning

What are your goals?

Consider things like the topics or content you want to teach, why you want to teach them, and your hopes for your community

What contextual factors make your community or target audience unique?

Consider age of children, fluency in social & racial justice, demographic & ideological diversity, specialized needs or skills, and other contextual factors

Book possibilities

Choose a book you might want to use with your group. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this text? Be sure to evaluate the illustrations, storyline, characterization, insider/outsider perspectives, author & illustrator expertise, and relative emphasis on ideas like tolerance, inclusion and justice-oriented action.

Activity ideas

How might you use this book to spark discussions? What kinds of before, during, or after reading activities might be useful for your group? How might you address any of the limitations you noted above? Think about the nature of your group, the age and “wigglyness” of children, readiness for high/low risk conversations, and how much time people will likely engage with your activity.

Necessary resources: *What kinds of resources might you need to do this work successfully? Think about space, teachers/helpers, materials required, etc.*

Next Steps: *What do you need to do to turn this idea into action?*