

ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY, & INCLUSION POLICY

Revised 11-9-2020 by the DEI Team of Spark Central's Advisory Board

OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to creating a space that recognizes the dignity of individuals, especially individuals who have experienced systemic exclusion, historical oppression, or marginalization. We exist to break barriers to creativity, including barriers of racial inequity and income inequity that affect the diverse West Central neighborhood we aim to serve. By providing no-cost youth programming and prioritizing the enrollment of West Central's low-income, Black, Indigenous, and children of color in our programs, we seek to level the opportunity playing field so that children of every race, ability, and gender identity/expression can pursue the future they imagine.

Through our station operations, programs, and events, Spark Central strives to be an anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive organization where people of all races, ethnicities, national origins, heritages, ages, gender expressions and identities, religious traditions, education levels, differing abilities, and other factors that make an individual unique are valued, included and celebrated. We pledge to model diversity, equity, and inclusion as a nonprofit involved in the literary, STEAM, and creative fields, and to maintain an inclusive environment.

We see diversity, equity, and inclusion as critical to our mission and to building a just and thriving community for all. Creating an inclusive environment requires our existing leadership to do the difficult personal work needed while at the same time challenging dominant structures of oppression and white supremacy. We are committed to doing this work, beginning with the following actions:

- Ensuring our programs are brave, welcoming spaces for Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, religious minorities, and other marginalized populations whose voices are too often silenced or de-prioritized;
- Listening to and learning from Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, religious minorities, and other marginalized populations about how to improve and adapt our programming to community need;
- Actively recruiting Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other marginalized populations to be instructors, volunteers, and leaders in our programs so the children and adults we serve have the opportunity to learn from role models of various races and from their inspiring stories and lived experiences, as well as to experience programming that reflects diverse cultures and histories;
- Actively recruiting Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other marginalized populations to hold leadership roles on our board of directors, advisory board, and to fill staff leadership positions when we hire; we are committed to a nondiscriminatory approach and provide equal opportunity for both employment and advancement; we realize creating an inclusive environment is complex and requires our existing leadership to do the difficult personal work needed while at the same time challenging the dominant structures of oppression;
- Seeking out and participating in ongoing anti-racism/cultural competency and trauma-sensitivity training with our staff, board, and volunteers *and* applying this training to our daily operations, policies, and programs;

- Continually diversifying our library collection with the voices of Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+ communities, and other historically underrepresented groups;
- Paying artists, vendors, and instructors of color for their work, as historically in our country, this was not the case;
- Finding ways to engage those who benefit from privilege in our community in the work of antiracism through creative programming that is geared toward education, introspection, action, and art;
- Intentionally partnering with cultural organizations that represent historically underrepresented groups to serve West Central youth;
- Acknowledging and dismantling any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and continually sharing our progress; this includes exploring underlying, unquestioned assumptions that interfere with inclusiveness;
- Assessing our organization using a racial equity lens, including (1) annual assessment and reporting on a racial equity matrix, (2) establishing benchmarks with input from our community by which we'll measure our progress, (3) ongoing board-level thinking about how systemic inequities impact our organization's work and how best to address these in a way consistent with our mission, and (4) exploration of assumptions about what it takes to be a strong leader at our organization, and who is well-positioned to provide that leadership.

MAINTAINING A SAFE SPACE FOR ALL

As a safe space for all, Spark Central does not tolerate or condone harassment of any kind or for any reason. Harassment includes but is not limited to stalking, verbal or physical intimidation, offensive verbal comments, physical assault and/or battery, harassing or non-consensual photography or recording, bathroom policing, inappropriate physical contact, or unwelcome physical attention.

Spark Central recognizes that reading, writing, art, and other creative activities, by their nature, include exposure to controversial and challenging ideas. Therefore, Spark Central does not consider harassment to include respectful disagreement or critique in good faith.

Any person who believes they have witnessed or been subjected to harassment or discrimination at Spark Central or during a Spark Central program should report it immediately to a Spark Central staff member or if the harassment is from a staff member, to the executive director (admin@spark-central.org) and/or our board president (board@spark-central.org) for investigation.

Spark Central reserves the right to revoke membership, registrations, or tickets (without refund) of any person not in compliance with this policy and the right to remove that person from our premises, events, workshops, or other programs per our Patron Conduct Policy.