ACHIEVING RACIAL JUSTICE ACROSS THE DCF SYSTEM is the operational strategy designed to address disproportionality and disparities within the context of DCF's continuum. Each region, division and facility was asked to reflect on the last 5 years to bring attention to the impact of race and racism on the families we work with. Objectively responding to racial inequity takes many forms. This series will capture the deliberate attention to this work taken by each area office through collective regional, central office division and facility responses.

- **Representing**: The Mighty Region 6
- Leadership forward: Over the last several years Region 6 has embraced the value of reducing disparity and disproportionality in our system and aligned with the philosophy of Racial Justice. Our staff have contributed to DCF becoming a Racial Justice organization both within the region and statewide through active participation in the statewide Racial Justice workgroup and subcommittees since its inception. We understand that learning how to practice Child Welfare through a Racial Justice lens can be difficult however the underlying principle of fair and equitable treatment is simple. Striving toward Racial Justice is a personal and professional journey. Region 6 is committed to working together to create a safe space for healthy inquiry and continuous learning. We pride ourselves in providing opportunities for growth, self-reflection and occasions to get to know one another better.
- What have we done? Our region has maintained active Diversity Action Teams in both offices as well as a Regional Racial Justice Workgroup. The DATs and RJ workgroup have offered a variety of cultural celebrations and events, including "pizza and a flick," the DAT newsletter interviews, and a book club that encourages courageous conversations with thought-provoking books including "The New Jim Crow." We have offered learning forums to assist staff with understanding racial inequity and implicit bias. Some of our efforts have included training sessions on the Color of Justice and exercises such as the Walk of Privilege. We have availed ourselves to all technical assistance offered and beyond.
  - Joyce James helped us understand the importance of community partnerships and assisted us with kicking off our Network of Care meetings by sharing a Racial Equity Groundwater Analysis.
  - o Dr. Dejesus provided Cultural Humility training in each office.
  - o **Susan Smith** helped us understand "Who is better off" by providing a permanency profile of our youth in care by race and ethnicity.
  - o Dr. Schultz facilitated discussions on Global Stress and Race Relations.
  - o **Adam Foss** provided the keynote address at our most recent Relationships Matter Conference where our overall theme was Racial Justice. At this conference, **Jen Agosti** introduced the Racial Justice agreements that we adhere too.
  - o **Jen Agosti** most recently introduced safety culture concepts and language to our regional leadership team. We learned that there is a natural intersect between safety culture and racial justice.

We recognize the importance of transparency and partnership, and in 2018 a few of our provider partners and a RAC parent have joined our Regional Racial Justice workgroup.

What's our planned next steps? Our region has remained focused on improving disproportionality and disparity at every decision point, including achieving preferred and timely permanency for ALL of our youth through improved assessments and teaming practices. We believe this can be done by ensuring all aspects of our work is done through a Racial Justice lens. We have incorporated Racial Justice guidance in Permanency Round Tables and developed questions for supervision. To further our efforts to provide tangible tools for staff our Racial Justice workgroup is in the process of developing a ½ day learning forum titled "Racial Justice Everything." The learning forum will include a video segment starring R6 staff designed to use their actual experiences as a way to enhance transfer of learning.

INSPIRATION: We understand that this work is not only about individual biases but also systemic factors that encompass more than Region 6 or DCF. However we remain hopeful that any one step in the right direction will be of benefit to all of the children and families we serve.

