



2014-2021

Creative Reaction Lab Program Case Studies

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Creative Reaction Lab 24-hour Challenge

IN 5 SECONDS

A 24-hour design challenge addressing St. Louis's racial divide.

YEAR

2014

SUMMARY

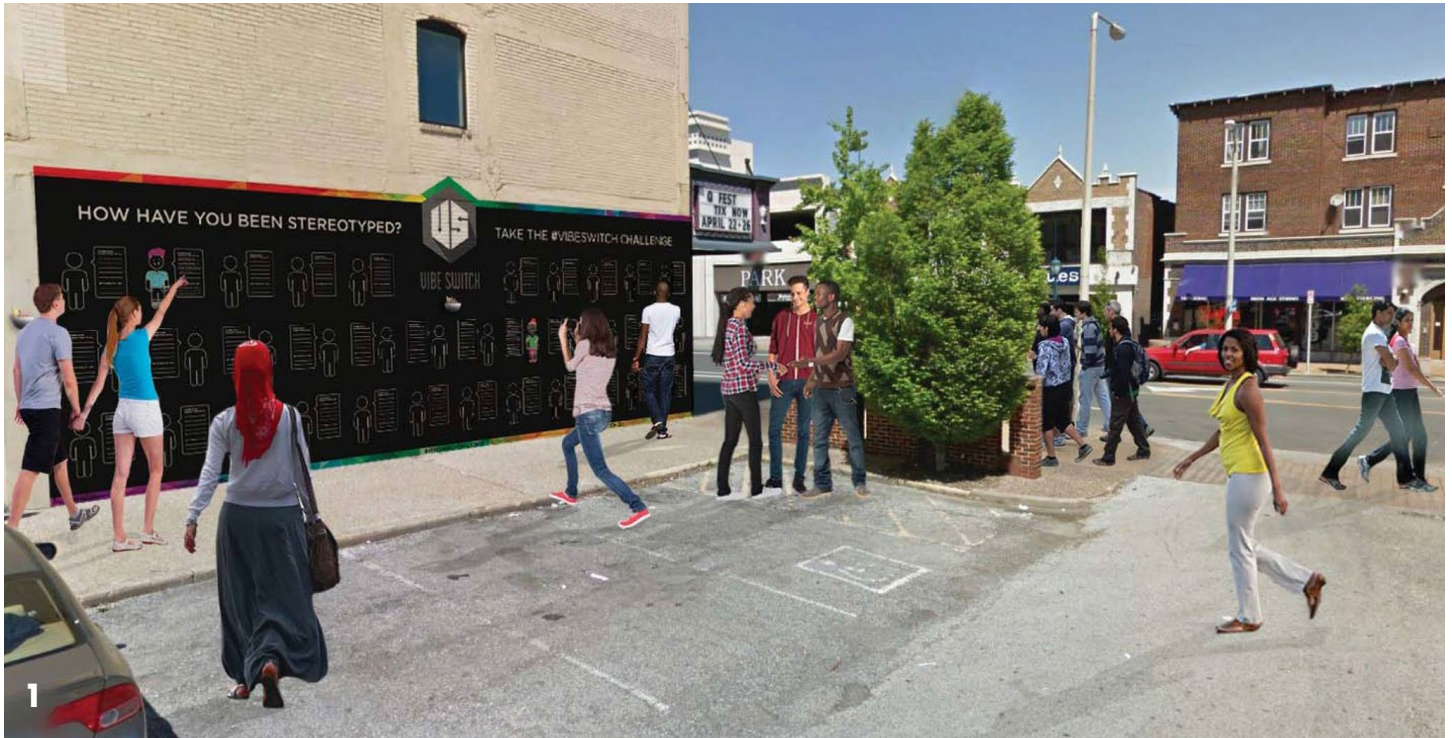
In 2014, Creative Reaction Lab was founded in response to the unrest in Ferguson. Our Founder, Antionette Carroll, was a former resident of Ferguson and Michael Brown Jr.'s death amplified her frustrations regarding systemic racism and the lack of community voice when responding to civic issues. During this time, Antionette was head of communications at a local nonprofit called Diversity Awareness Partnership, and she noticed that even D&I organizations continued to

perpetuate the "top-down" mentality conveniently falling into the trap of calling the "experts" to the table. With the consequences of systemic oppression and the lack of community input rearing its head through riots and city division, she saw the need for a space of inclusion, creativity, and action. Due to this, Creative Reaction Lab was created.

In 2014, Creative Reaction Lab was not an organization, but rather an event. This challenge

brought together designers and activists for a 24-hour ideation session to look at sustainable approaches to systemic racism, Saint Louis' racial divide, and police brutality. Over 60 ideas were initially pitched at this event, ranging from storytelling initiatives highlighting the historic "talk" of safety and survival within Black families to educational programming addressing the bias within media framing of unarmed victims of color.

CREATIVE REACTION LAB 24-HOUR CHALLENGE



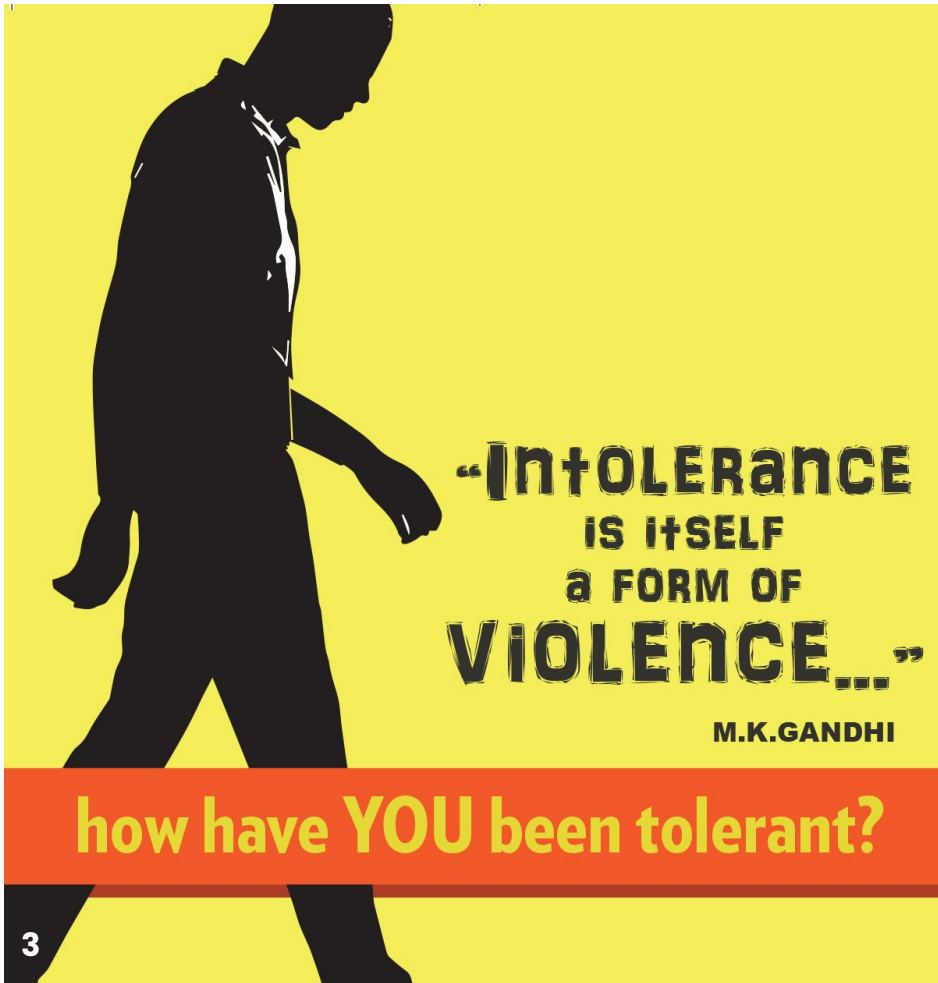
IMPACT

Ultimately, five ideas were prototyped (with digital renderings and project plan development), with all five projects being activated throughout the Saint Louis region within the year. These projects were [Cards Against Brutality](#), [Connected for Justice](#), [Look Beyond Your Fear Guerrilla Art Warfare](#), [Vibe Switch Campaign](#), and [The Red Table Project](#). These projects ranged from public art efforts to online civic action tools. Almost five years later, two projects are still active, one has evolved into a framework, and one was embedded into the curriculum of a local high school.

IMAGES

1. Digital rendering of the Vibe Switch public art installation located on the Delmar Divide.

2. Vibe Switch Challenge, a traveling interactive art exhibit, website, and social media campaign aimed at deflating “race and gender stereotypes targeted at ages 14-25.” Those participating are presented with a picture of a minority population and a host of stereotypes and are asked to “switch it up” to see alternative futures. The creator of this platform created it to “overcome all of the hype and prove that people are more than what others make them out to be.” This photo was taken at the exhibit event “Impact x Design” in 2015.



IMAGES

3. Cards Against Brutality, one of the five ideas chosen from the lab to prototype, is a card game (an antithesis to “Cards Against Humanity”) “around addressing media narration and framing of victims of police brutality and preserving their humanity.” The purpose of this game is to elicit discussions about police brutality in communities. This is one of the discussion cards used in the Cards Against Brutality deck.

4. The Cards Against Brutality logo.

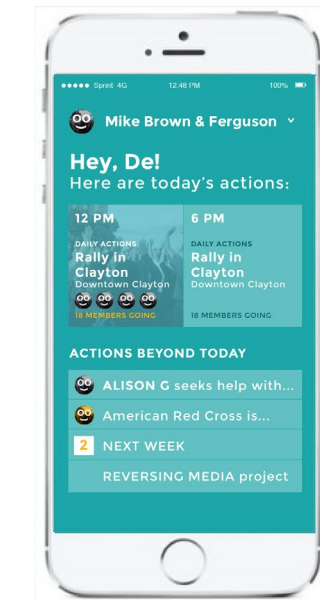
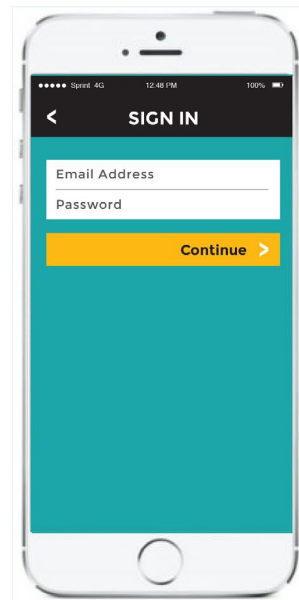
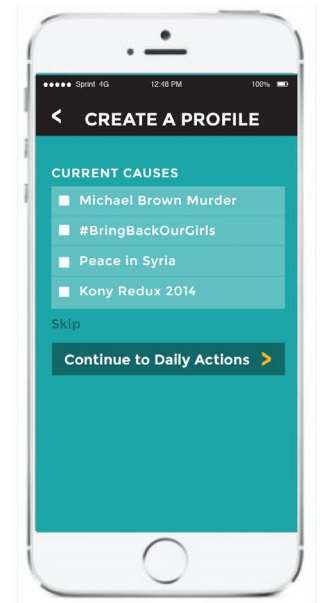
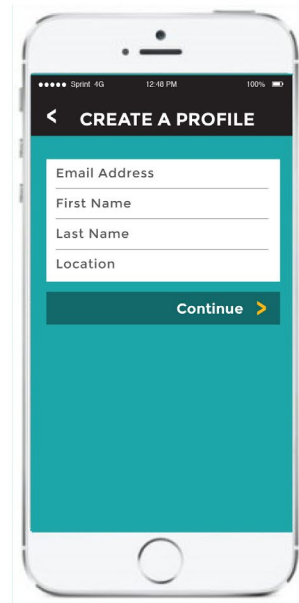
CREATIVE REACTION LAB 24-HOUR CHALLENGE



IMAGES

5. The Red Table Project was an intervention that would allow those from different perspectives to sit down and have some hard conversations over a meal. This image is a mock-up website for the project.

6. App prototype for Connected for Justice (formally Beyond Today), the app was focused on civic match-making with community members who want to volunteer on racial justice projects in St. Louis.



6

PROJECT 2

Equity-Centered Community Design Framework

IN 5 SECONDS

A tool for problem solving with equity, community leadership, power-shifting and history and healing in the center.

YEAR

2017-Present

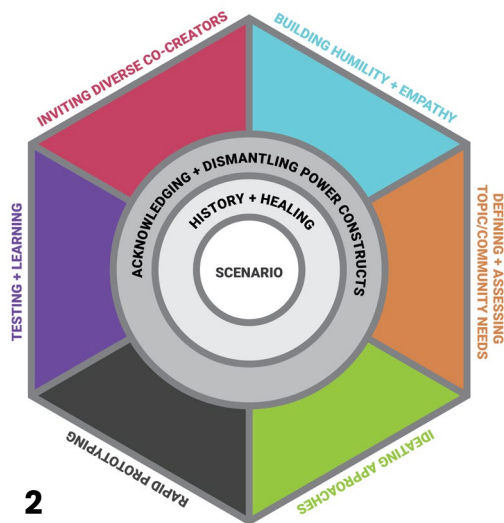
SUMMARY

Equity-Centered Community Design (ECCD) is a unique creative problem solving process based on equity, humility-building, integrating history and healing practices, addressing power dynamics, and co-creating with the community. This design process focuses on a community's culture and needs so that they can gain tools to dismantle systemic oppression and create a future with equity

for all. Creative Reaction Lab's goal is to share equity-centered community design to achieve sustained community health, economic opportunities, and social and cultural solidarity.



1



2

IMPACT

To date, over 8,400 copies of our ECCD field guide have been distributed to people around the world, with a reach of over 600,000 shares. In the last year, we have run monthly webinars teaching the foundations of ECCD to designers, educators and learners all over the world.

IMAGES

1. ECCD is distributed through a pay-what-you-can field guide.
2. Our ECCD framework diagram that highlights how this design process is based on equity, humility-building, integrating history and healing practices, addressing power dynamics, and co-creating with the community.



The ECCD Field Guide has been a great starting point for me to recognize how I am complicit in the systemic inequity in our educational system and how and why I would begin to apply equity-centered design thinking to my classroom. I could no longer see myself as a teacher-designer; I needed to see myself as an equity designer if I am going to be successful in disrupting the racist status quo in public education.

Anonymous



EQUITY-CENTERED COMMUNITY DESIGN FRAMEWORK



IMAGES

3. Young leaders in Mission, TX collaborating on a prototyping activity as part of a 2019 ECCD workshop in partnership with the Mission Economic Development Corporation.

4. Participants of the 2019 Equity by Design Immersive Series in New York City collaborating to practice prototyping interventions using the ECCD framework.

5. Our Founder, President & CEO, Antionette Carroll, facilitating an Equity-Centered Community Design learning engagement at Bowling Green State University.



The ECCD Field Guide offered some tangible suggestions for framing and engaging with my local community on a downtown park project. It provided helpful language when advocating to city officials for an inclusive process. Thank you!

Anonymous



Artwork for Equity Campaign: Ancestor's Vote

IN 5 SECONDS

An art campaign aimed at raising consciousness around voter suppression within Black and Latinx communities.

YEAR

2020

SUMMARY

Despite making up 13.4% of the U.S. population, Black designers make up only 3% of professionals practicing in the field.

Additionally, Latinx communities make up 18.5% of the U.S. population, yet only make up 8% of professionals practicing in the field. With this important need in mind, Creative Reaction Lab's Artwork for Equity Advocacy Campaign was launched in 2017 in recognition of the United Nation's *International Day of*

Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In support of our work for racial and health equity, Artwork for Equity selects young Black and Latinx designers and artists (26 and under) to produce original images in the form of posters promoting inclusion, equity, liberation, and justice for all races.

The topic of the Artwork for Equity 2020 Campaign was Ancestor's Vote, aiming to raise

consciousness around historical and contemporary forms of voter suppression impacting Black and Latinx communities in the United States, while also highlighting resistance movements and achievements in reducing inequitable access to voting. Selected artists received a \$500 stipend for their work, and we had 13 talented Black and Latinx youth artists submit 19 pieces of original art for the 2020 campaign.



IMPACT

Artwork for Equity (A4E) is a part of a movement in creating Redesigners for Justice™—youth leaders who are actively addressing inequities in their communities. Since its inception, our Artwork for Equity Campaign has served 50% Latinx youth and 50% Black youth. These youth are immersed in the process of improving their cultural competency to inspire their minds, and provided funds to foster innovation, creativity, and engage their minds in a non-traditional form of education. To date, we have reached almost two dozen youth artists through our campaign, with an estimated 20K community members viewing and purchasing the youth’s art.

IMAGES

- 1. Original work “Don’t Silence Me” from Destiny Kirumira contributed to the Artwork for Equity Advocacy Campaign.
- 2. Original work “Las Mujeres” from Sara Bermudez contributed to the Artwork for Equity Advocacy Campaign.



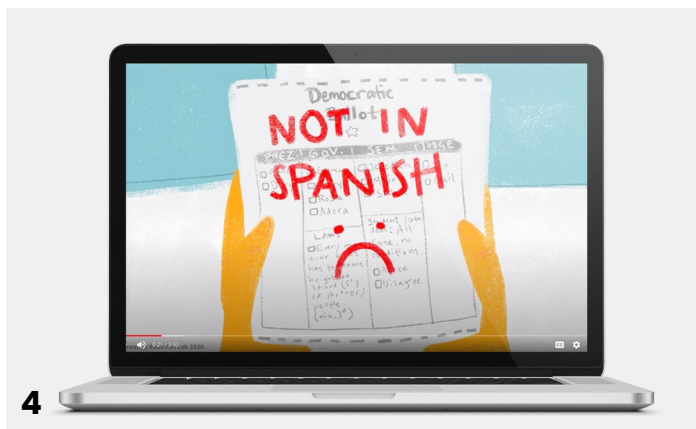
I feel validated as an artist. I have greater confidence to be vocal about the meaning behind my artwork because there are people out there who care.

This opened opportunities for me to participate in other programs, I had an increase in sales, and it made me proud!

Sara Bermudez, 2020 Artwork for Equity Campaign Artist



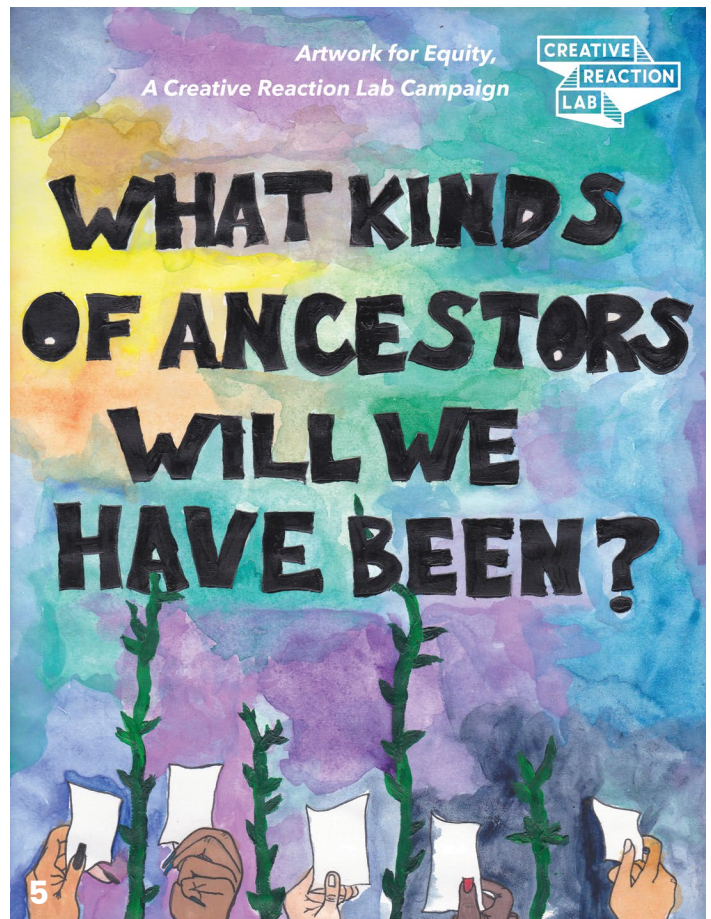
ARTWORK FOR EQUITY CAMPAIGN: ANCESTOR'S VOTE



IMAGES

3 & 4. Snapshots of our [Ancestor's Vote animation](#) which aims to raise consciousness around historical and contemporary forms of voter suppression impacting Black and Latinx communities in the United States.

5. Original work "Untitled" from Erika Valenzuela contributed to the 2020 Artwork for Equity Advocacy Campaign.



IMPACT

For the 2020 Campaign surrounding voter suppression, we also co-created [animated videos](#) providing explanations for what voter suppression is and showing examples of present and historic voter suppression. The video has gained over 200 views on youtube and continues to be shared on CRXLAB's social media platforms, reaching individuals in CRXLAB's community beyond the duration of this year's campaign.

The artwork from the 2020 campaign is also currently on display at the Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis, MO as part of an exhibit titled [Collective Impact](#). This exhibit includes a selection of posters by young Black and Latinx designers and artists who participated in the A4E program and is on view in the Education Galleries between March 12th and May 23rd.

Youth Creative Leadership Fund: COVID Response

IN 5 SECONDS

A COVID-19 rapid response fund for Black and Latinx youth providing microgrants for personal needs and creative projects.

YEAR

2020-2021

SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted social norms and exposed the deep-rooted inequities that permeate the sectors of education, health & healthcare, government & public service, and media & technology. In response to COVID-19 Creative Reaction Lab started the Youth Creative Leadership Fund to financially assist youth, their families and their community

members that were disproportionately affected by the pandemic. We provided over \$41,100 to 365 Black, Latinx and Indigenous youth between the ages of 8-26 across the U.S. and Puerto Rico with the funds to relieve personal needs, creative projects, to support their communities, or to pass it on.



IMPACT

We were able to provide over \$41,100 to 365 Black, Latinx and Indigenous youth between the ages of 8-26 across the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

IMAGE

1. De'Ana Brownfield received funds in the Creative Expression for Community Support category. The goal of her project was to showcase "the beauty and resilience of African/Black people. This epidemic as well as institutional racism has created more barriers for marginalized people, so for my art I like to embody joy & the importance of spirituality in order to endure these times."



Because of COVID-19, my mental health really declined, my hours at work got cut in half and I was both mentally and financially struggling.

Feeling stuck and alone with little to no help. Over time this took a toll and I didn't even want to start school online last semester...Because I was granted the YCLF fund, I was able to put the funds towards groceries and buy clothes for a job interview. I got the job and am now able to support myself better since I was cut back hours at my other job due to Covid-19.

*Jacqueline B, YCLF Fall 2020
Self-care + Personal Finances Fall award recipient*





THREE
ROUNDS

ONE
WINNER

VIRTUAL / MOBILE

CONNECT FOUR TOURNAMENT

* MUST HAVE GAME PIGEON *

MAY
30
2020

5PM

DM/TEXT TO SIGN UP
@MRGSNYC

LET'S DEFEAT COVID-19

By following these steps we will be able to overcome this pandemic and become stronger as a community:

- Regularly wash your hands
- Distance yourself socially
- Try and remain positive

Siguiendo estos pasos podremos superar esta pandemia y fortalecernos como comunidad:

- Lávate las manos regularmente
- Distanciarse socialmente
- Intenta y sigue siendo positivo

See a doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Repeated shivering with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Call COVID-19 hotline (833) 422-4255

mir a un médico si alguno de los siguientes síntomas

- Fiebre
- Tos
- Dificultad para respirar
- Resfriado
- Sacudidas repetidas con escalofríos
- Dolor muscular
- Dolor de cabeza
- Dolor de garganta
- Nueva pérdida de sabor u olor.
- Congestión o secreción nasal.
- Náuseas o vómitos
- Diarrea

llame a la línea directa de covid (833) 422-4255

Derrotamos a COVID-19

IMAGES

2 & 3. Project of Monnero Guervil who received funds in the Creative Expression for Community Support category and his project's goal in response to covid-19 was to "bring back smiles on peoples faces through play. We all love fun and one of the ways most youth have fun is through competition. So I hosted multiple games to bring the spirit of fun and competition back and I succeeded."

4. Brandon Ramirez received funds in the Creative Expression for Community Support category in which he created this graphic in response to covid-19 to make people "more aware of what's happening, to teach and to inform them of the symptoms, and to let them know that they are not alone." Brandon also used funds to help distribute face covers, gloves, food and hand sanitizer to those less fortunate.



I have been able to purchase groceries and medications with the funds awarded to me by the YCLF. Hence, I was able to return to my art with a clear mind...I have seen more smiles and laughter from my parents and that has lifted a burden off my heart. I was also able to buy needed art supplies.

*Melly Sterling, YCLF Winter 2021
Self-care + Personal Finances award recipient*



Community Design Apprenticeship Program

IN 5 SECONDS

A 9 month apprenticeship mobilizing Black youth impacted by the criminal justice system to address food apartheid in the St. Louis Promise Zone.

YEAR

2020

SUMMARY

Creative Reaction Lab created the Community Design Apprenticeship Program (CDAP) to educate and train Black and Latinx youth who have been directly impacted by the criminal justice system to become civic leaders addressing hyperlocal racial and health inequities. Creative Reaction Lab believes that the voices of these youth have too often been erased from discussions around social

justice, community development, and civic engagement. From February to October 2020, the selected 6 Community Design Apprentices addressed the challenge of food apartheid in the Normandy and Wellston areas within the St. Louis Promise Zone. During this 9 month-long program, Apprentices are trained in Creative Reaction Lab's

Equity-Centered Community Design and Community Organizing frameworks, provided funding and a supportive community to design and implement a civic intervention in collaboration with community members.

COMMUNITY DESIGN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



IMAGES

1. From Left to Right: Hannah Price, Ashley Coleman, Kristin Brown, Reina Stovall, Deja Brown, and Robert Beckles: the six 2020 Community Design Apprentices at the first weekend-long secession in Wellston, MO.

2. Apprentices finish preparing their intervention, Blessed and Highly Flavored Food Boxes, a few days before distributing them in Normandy.

IMPACT

The interventions that came about were the Blessed and Highly Flavored Healthy Food Boxes with recipe cards that the apprentices distributed in the Normandy and Wellston areas. The community intervention was held on October 5th, 2020 and engaged 24 community members between 1:45 PM – 4:45 PM CST. Twelve community members were from the 63121 area zip code, which includes a large majority of the Normandy neighborhood and directly adjacent to the Wellston area. Of the 24 healthy food boxes distributed, 12 were delivered through walk-ups and 12 through drive through. Community members heard about the intervention through neighbors, family members and promoted it through social media.



CDAP has helped me see myself as someone with creative talents and helped me connect those talents to my broader purpose — a purpose that’s rooted in my identity and my life experiences as a Black queer man from Ferguson. Just in general, I think I am so much more confident in my ability to work with others and to be productive in creating change after this experience — that confidence comes from graduating on its own, but it’s also from experiencing the long, challenging, “not-overnight” process. That experience helps me be more accepting and patient with all the other processes happening around me.

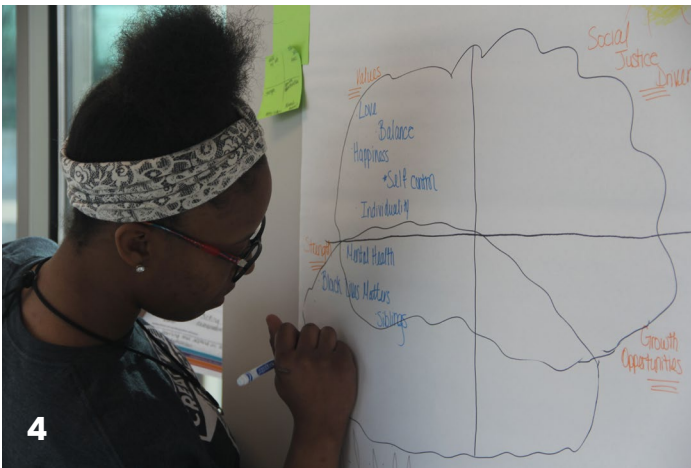
Robert Beckles, CDAP Apprentice 2020



COMMUNITY DESIGN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



3



4



5

IMAGES

3. To understand more about their leadership strengths and areas for growth, Apprentices participate in a scavenger hunt which was followed by a debrief on different types of leadership styles.

4. An Apprentice draws her Personal Crest which aims to illustrate individual skills, passions, strengths in their path of becoming a Redesigner for Justice.

5. After conducting a first round of community research to learn about local residents' experiences around access to healthy food, the Apprentices reconvene at Creative Reaction Lab's space to identify and cluster their observations into insights.



6

IMAGES

6. Our apprentices, Ashley Coleman (left), Robert Beckles (center), and Kristin Brown (right) at the pop-up event where they distribute Blessed and Highly Flavored Food Boxes to community members.

7. Apprentices Reina Stovall, Deja Brown, and Kristin Brown with a local resident who picked up the last box at the pop-up event where they distributed Blessed and Highly Flavored Food Boxes to community members.



PROJECT 6

Redesigners in Action Webinar Series

IN 5 SECONDS

International virtual learning experiences building participants consciousness around racial equity, white supremacy and community design.

YEAR

2020–Present

SUMMARY

Through the Redesigners in Action Webinar Series, Creative Reaction Lab is exploring and amplifying opportunities for application of equitable practice. This series is a public-facing virtual learning opportunity that brings together people from across the world who are looking to increase their capacities for cultivating mindsets that produce action grounded in

equity, inclusion, and justice. Our most popular webinar, “How Traditional Design Thinking Protects White Supremacy” explores how white supremacy and its values have been historically constructed into the social, political, and economic landscape of the world, seeping into professional norms—including those found in design thinking and other forms of creative problem solving.

Examining the realities of white supremacy beyond ideology and overt acts of hatred, participants explore how white supremacy is upheld in the ideologies and practices of “traditional” design thinking, and examine how we might collectively shift design mindsets to be more equitable, diverse, and inclusive.

REDESIGNERS IN ACTION
WEBINAR SERIES

How Traditional Design Thinking Protects White Supremacy

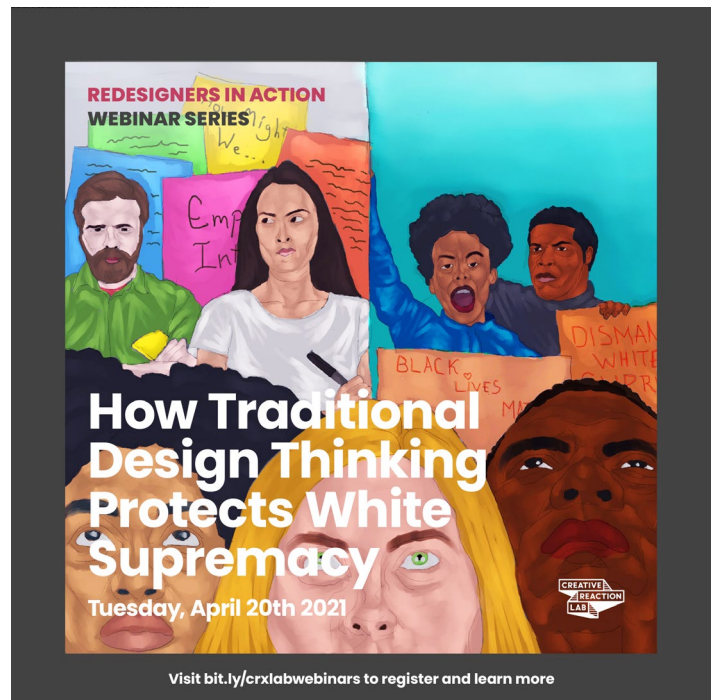


IMPACT

Over 4,300 adults and youth have attended our webinar series since it began in June 2020. Our most popular webinar—"How Traditional Design Thinking Protects White Supremacy"—launched in the summer of 2020 and was designed to be a one-time event. The webinar garnered so much traction that we have run this webinar monthly ever since, and it frequently sells out.

IMAGES

1. Eventbrite header for our webinar "How Traditional Design Thinking Protects White supremacy." Illustration by D'Juane Sargent.
2. Promotional graphic for our webinar "How Traditional Design Thinking Protects White supremacy" posted to instagram. Illustration by D'Juane Sargent.





This workshop made me more aware of how white supremacy shows up even in inclusive, participatory, and anti-racist design work. Our firm will have better practices of shifting and sharing power with co-designers as a result.

Mer Joyce, How Design Thinking Protects White Supremacy webinar participant





I have started challenging my own assumptions about design methods and tools and spread these to my network of designers. I have also joined a community of women of colour to start challenging ourselves to change the mainstream, euro-centric/white-centric design scene in my city (Toronto, Canada). We just started, but we've found each other, and that was a great start...

*Anonymous, How Design Thinking Protects White Supremacy
(three months post-webinar)*



Heartland Education Action Summit

IN 5 SECONDS

A three-day virtual summit where participants built their capacities around anti-bias and anti-racists practices and worked to develop interventions to address inequities in education.

YEAR

2021

SUMMARY

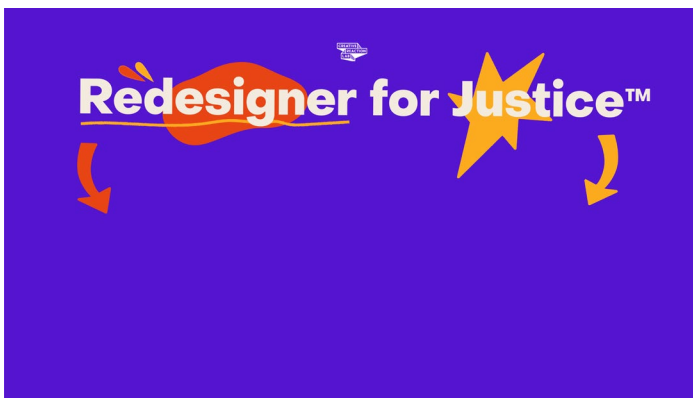
In 2019, Creative Reaction Lab and partners City Garden Montessori and Noble Network of Charter Schools were selected to host a regional Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Convening for educators in the United States Midwest region. Combining Creative Reaction Lab's Equity-Centered Community Design (ECCD) framework and City Garden's focus on Anti-Bias/Anti-Racist (ABAR) practices and curriculum, the convening

aimed to center racial equity in education as a long-term outcome. In February, Creative Reaction Lab virtually hosted the Heartland Education Action Summit. This summit was a three-day convening where educators engaged in interactive activities and practiced developing prototypes to address inequity in education.

SEL, ABAR, and ECCD center the importance of advancing toward racial equity and the social and

emotional well-being of youth who hold historically underinvested identities within education. A central objective of the Heartland Education Action summit was for students, educators, and administrators to be prepared to implement these frameworks in learning spaces across the nation; and thus moving our nation toward racial equity in education.

HEARTLAND EDUCATION ACTION SUMMIT



IMAGES

1. A photo capturing our Zoom summit and Heartland attendees.
2. Zoom backgrounds for participants to use throughout the three-day summit.

IMPACT

We had 81 people from all over the country and continent attend our virtual summit. Our Creative Reaction Lab team felt that the weekend was a success and the educators agreed! Educators noted that they felt empowered to share power and lead differently after the summit and that they were both challenged by and enjoyed ideation and prototyping a tangible idea (and working collaboratively in groups to do so). Many educators also appreciated how we worked to center youth voices throughout the entire learning engagement, especially noting that our youth living expert panel was effective and powerful. On a scale of 1-100, survey respondents (16% of registrants) said they would be likely to recommend the Heartland Education Action Summit to a friend / acquaintance with an average of 95.7 out of 100.

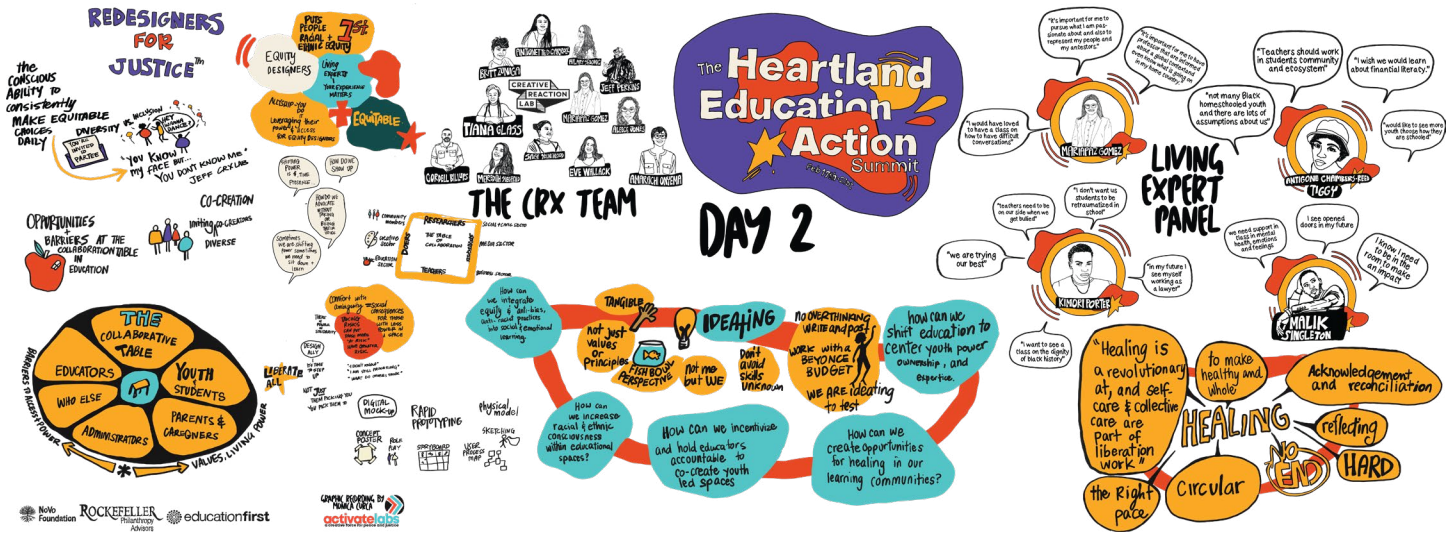


The summit served as a reminder that while educators are facing seismic shifts and setbacks, creativity and collaboration allow us to innovate to better serve our students of color. I know this is no small feat to move virtual and while I know there were in the moment challenges, your organizations grace, real time adjustments, and joy were felt tangibly throughout. Looking forward to continuing to engage in the future!

Samantha Siros, Heartland Summit Attendee



HEARTLAND EDUCATION ACTION SUMMIT



The Heartland Education Action Summit
Feb 19th-21st

Today Is The Day!

The first day of the Summit is here! Below are a few quick reminders to get you all set up.

Zoom Links

Join Mighty Networks

Mighty Networks

If you have not done so already, please make sure that you have accepted the invitation to the Mighty Network and that you can access it. We will be using this online platform for community engagement, resource sharing, reflections and discussions. This is where you will have access to materials that you'll need for activities and discussions during the sessions. The Mighty Network is also the place where all the Zoom links for this event will be located. Please ensure that you are connected and ready to go for today!

Schedule

Our Summit has been designed intentionally as a comprehensive 12-hr experience and to get the most out of the Summit we highly encourage attending all of it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

"IMPACTFUL QUOTES"

HEARTLAND EDUCATION ACTION SUMMIT

NEXT STEPS

NOTES

IMAGES

1. Image created by Monica Curca, our Sketchnotes artist for the virtual event
2. Email promotion offering support and information to attendees pre-summit.
3. Digital coloring sheets for summit attendees.



Thank you! Antionette & the CRXLAB staff!
So appreciate the labor and genius being shared and done by CRXLAB. I particularly enjoyed engaging with the CRXLAB youth in all the different roles that they showed up in...The Youth Panel will forever propel me to continue being proactive in support of our BIPOC youth. Thank you for the opportunity to join this amazing gathering and community

Ann DeVere, Heartland Summit Attendee

