

# WHAT'S GOOD?

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF IEESJ



## INLAND EMPIRE EDUCATORS for SOCIAL JUSTICE

### WHAT IS IEESJ?

What is the Inland Empire Educators for Social Justice (IEESJ) network? IEESJ is a network of educators from across the IE who have come together to do anti-racist work. We support anti-oppressive, democratic education and seek to engage educators of all kinds to co-create intellectually rigorous curricula based on an ethic of care.

### WHAT TYPE OF WORK WE DO

IEESJ members come together to form Inquiry-to-Action-Groups (ItAGs) to explore issues related to education and justice.

#### What's an ItAG?

An Inquiry-to-Action-Group, or ItAG, is a study group that comes together around a social justice issue or topic. ItAGs are usually small groups of educators, parents, students, activists, teaching artists, and community members. The goal of the ItAG is to pursue a common inquiry on a social justice topic and create an action around this area of study. The group decides the focus and structure of the meetings.

# HAPPY FALL!

**MIKELA BJORK**

Happy Fall from the members of the Inland Empire Educators for Social Justice! (IEESJ) We hope this newsletter finds you well, and that you are easefully navigating your work-life balance as we slowly come out of quarantine and venture back into "normal life."

The steering committee of IEESJ



Steering Committee meetup in August: (Left, Kristine & Lilyanna Specht pictured above, Martyne Tolbert, Temika Morris, Eva Morales, Brian Charest)

has been meeting virtually about once a month to discuss ItAG (inquiry to action groups) topics, potential collaborations, and where we will meet for our face to face social on November 5th. We hope to see you at 5 pm in Redlands at J. Riley Distillery! Located at 420 Oriental Ave, Redlands, CA 92374.

## THE NEW BIZ

**BRIAN CHAREST AND MIKELA BJORK**

will be leading a book study through Wellness 4 Educators, beginning in November. Charest and Bjork will be working with educators across the country, as we engage with two books: Tyrone Howard's book, *All Students Must Thrive* and Marc Brackett's, *Permission to Feel*. We are always interested in collaborating with local schools and educators... whether it's a book study, an anti-racist workshop, or something specific that you or your school are interested in discussing.

Please spread the word and reach out with any ideas or questions you have related to facilitated discussions and workshop availability!

ItAG feat.

## EDUCATING EDUCATORS

### OUR AMBITION IS:

To provide educators with a safe space (a network) to have much needed conversations about race and racism in their schools. Through reflexivity and critical analysis, educators will work towards building their capacity (i.e., tools) to both disrupt and challenge ideologies that perpetuate race and racism in their schools. This safe space will allow:

1. Educators to critically examine their beliefs, opinions and attitudes towards race and racism
2. Educators to critically examine the role, the purpose and the function of schools (specifically for Black children)
3. Educators to be "re-educated" in ways that are culturally humane and inclusive of Black children

"...we believe the first step towards implementing anti-racist work is to understand your school, your community, and the people you serve."

-Emma Rumpf-Snavely

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**SOCIAL HOUR 4 SOCIAL JUSTICE!**

**WHEN: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2021**

**WHERE: J. Riley Distillery**

**420 Oriental Ave, Redlands**

**TIME: 5 PM**

**RSVP: <https://forms.gle/xMB5Sb85iSyNpVdy7>**

# BACK ISSUE

MIKELA BJORK

Last Spring, three members of IEESJ—Brian Charest, Temika Morris and Mikela Bjork--engaged with educators in the Redlands Unified School District (RUSD) to discuss what it means to be an "agent for change" and how we, as educators, can have uncomfortable conversations safely with our colleagues, students and administration. We partnered with the organization: Wellness 4 Educators (<https://well4edu.org/>)

and started one of our workshops with a guided meditation.

The workshops were a success and we look forward to partnering with RUSD and other local schools/ districts in the future!



(Photo by Greta Jursch)

## GRASSROOTS TEACHER ORGANIZATION

IEESJ members led a K-12 panel discussion for the virtual Center for Justice Annual Conference hosted by University of Redlands this past summer.

Among those who involved were: Brian Charest, Aliea Coston, Temika Morris, Margartia Ramirez, Emma Rumpf-Snavely, Kristine Specht and Martyne Tolbert. The K-12 Panel Discussions were: Teaching Toward Justice Educators Making a Change, followed by K-12 Workshop: Reviving Communities and Revitalizing our Democracy: Teaching and Organizing for More Justice, and the final K-12 panel discussion was on Grassroots Teacher Organizing: Inland Empire Educators for Social Justice (IEESJ).

**IF YOU MISSED THE SUMMER CONFERENCE, VIDEOS ARE AVAILABLE AT:**

[HTTPS://VIDEO.REDLANDS.EDU/MEDIA/CEJ+2021-TEACHING+TOWARDS+JUSTICE+AND+LIBERATION/1\\_2NC L21G7](https://video.redlands.edu/media/cej+2021-teaching+towards+justice+and+liberation/1_2ncL21G7)

[HTTPS://VIDEO.REDLANDS.EDU/MEDIA/CEJ+2021-GRASSROOTS+TEACHER+ORGANIZING-THE+IEESJ/1\\_YN9B3CII](https://video.redlands.edu/media/cej+2021-grassroots+teacher+organizing-the+ieesj/1_yn9B3CII)


### SHOUT OUTS:

- Shout out to Kristine Specht and Lucas Spenser, hired as GAs to assist administratively and with general organization for IEESJ. They are both assets to IEESJ team!
- Shout out to Brian Charest, who has continued to organize monthly meetings with IEESJ during a global pandemic!

## GET INVOLVED

If you would like to get onto our email list, please fill out the following form:

<https://forms.gle/TUsCvAUoj4EWhVfH6>

Follow us on:  @ie.educators4sj