



No Timetable to Achieving Racial Integration and Diversity

The Supreme Court's decision to abandon the consideration of race in the admissions process sounds an alarm for all who work to achieve racial justice. The South Orange-Maplewood Community Coalition on Race is an intentional racial integration nonprofit organization whose mission is to build and sustain equity, integration and inclusion in all aspects of community life. Today's decision, while specific to the college admissions process, threatens all efforts to achieve equitable outcomes in society through racial consciousness.

We're often asked, "What would it take for you to consider your mission to be complete?" In 2003, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor proposed a time frame in *Grutter v. Bollinger*: "We expect that 25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary to further the interest approved today," she wrote.

Many challenge our intentional equity and integration mission in the same way: *When will you be done? When the schools are integrated? The neighborhoods?* The Community Coalition on Race just passed the 25-year point and we've made progress in school and residential integration only because we have been intentional and race-conscious. But as long as deeply rooted systemic racism, overt racism, and unconscious bias exist (which the Court obviously ignored), we cannot for one moment take our eyes off the mission. Doing so risks backsliding into an even more severe state of separation and inequity.

We fear the Supreme Court's decision leaves our race-conscious approaches to equity and integration vulnerable. For example, we use a race-based loan program as one component of achieving stable racial integration. This pro-integrative strategy is an unsecured, no-interest loan that is available to Black and Brown first-time homebuyers — a population that has been historically disadvantaged in the homebuying process. The rejection of affirmative action in the admissions process jeopardizes all efforts to account for racial disparities and injustices and puts our mission at risk.

The flip side of the question is, "What would the community look like without your work?" We know what happens to communities that gain diversity without doing the work of intentional integration. At best, people of different races tend to live, go to school, and socialize in isolation from one another. At worst, the community loses its diversity altogether. We fear that today's decision will undo the modest results achieved by affirmative action.

The passing of a quarter century cannot magically dissolve all the inequities accrued by people of color on the path to higher education. A single policy or an arbitrary timeframe can't resolve the pervasive societal impact of racism which transcends hundreds of years. Color blindness is the opposite of intentionality. We won't stand for it in our work because we see such efforts result in benefits for all. We shouldn't stand for it in the college admissions process. We must be persistent in fighting for policies and laws that repair centuries of racial injustice and ensure we will never go back.

Juneteenth Event Brings Hundreds Out to Learn & Celebrate

It was a beautiful day on the grounds of Durand-Hedden House in Maplewood to listen to music, watch historical reenactments, and walk through the museum to see the informative exhibit on the history of slavery in New Jersey. With growing interest in Juneteenth since the signing of the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law in 2021, this educational event is intended to enlighten people about its meaning. We are grateful for the work that Durand-Hedden House and the Coalition on Race volunteers put in to make it possible. [See the day in pictures here.](#)



SOMA Housing Town Hall with Village President Sheena Collum and Mayor Dean Dafis

Maplewood completed its most recent master plan this year and South Orange adopted theirs in 2021. A master plan helps guide community leaders in the areas of development, land use, zoning, and more within balanced economic, social, physical, environmental, and fiscal planning guided by community engagement. Members of our Residential Committee will be in conversation with our town leaders about master planning progress, development, zoning, affordable housing, neighborhood issues, and more this fall.

Date: September 14, 2023, 7:00 pm

Virtual: check our [website here](#) in August for the registration link!



Promoting Integration at the Local Level: Nancy Gagnier Moderated Panel Presentation

The Coalition Executive Director spoke with people who work on racial integration in NJ at the **2023 New Jersey Planning and Redevelopment Conference** hosted by New Jersey Future and APA New Jersey. "Most places will tend toward segregation (or re-segregation) without actions to ensure communities remain open to everyone." [Read more here...](#)



Integrated Art Circles Continue—Register Today!

Reserve your spot for the June and July Circles today! Future monthly Art Circles include mosaics, theater, murals, shekere percussion, and more. [For details on each circle and to register, click here.](#)

Learn to Juggle with artist Sandra Leith begins July 6th

Here's your chance to release that inner child and learn the most basic circus trick of all-- juggling. We will focus on juggling patterns, and touch on the history of juggling and how it happens in different countries. Our class will end with a group showcase, demonstrating team and individual juggling skills.

Public Murals with artist Roberta Melzi begins September 16th

Build connections as the group formulates a shared vision and decides which materials work best for the mural that will be created, and then publicly displayed in the SOMA/MapSo community. No experience is necessary—only enthusiasm, collaboration, and a willingness to learn.

Integrated Art Circles 2023



The Maplewood Community Board on Police Needs You

We are asking our supporters to consider applying for a seat on the Community Board on Police to represent our mission. The Board is comprised of nine voting members, including one Maplewood resident appointee from the Community Coalition on Race. If you are interested in being nominated by the Community Coalition on Race to fill this important seat, please reach out to us at

SOMA@communitycoalitiononrace.org. To learn more about the board, [visit here](#).



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