



January 2017

Newsletter of Initiatives of Change

Issue No. 41

Greetings!

A few months ago, I was able to experience my first climb up the mountainside to the Initiatives of Change conference center in Caux, Switzerland, where I shared ten memorable days with extraordinary people from all over the world. The complexity of our collective backgrounds, the solidarity and deep commitment to improving our world reflected amongst my fellow attendees, the stories of tragedy, resilience and hope, the other-worldly beauty of the surrounding landscape, at times overloaded my senses and mind. I was warned ahead of time that the experience might provoke much within. In fact, my days often ended with me replaying in my mind the stories I had heard, the challenges that were raised, and the many questions that perplexed me.



The one question that has most prominently stuck in my mind since descending from Switzerland's alpine air, is how does IofC USA ensure in 2017, and beyond, that its deep tradition of caring for and accompanying people through the "mountaintop" and "valley" moments of their lives continues to be impactful and sustainable? Our noble spiritual movement is rooted in inspirational standards for personal and societal integrity, which are consistently checked and reinforced within us through the discipline of quieting and listening. Is this enough to say with certitude that we are meeting people where they are? In other words, by proclaiming ourselves to be a movement centered in the "heart of community" we are committing to walk with people in a place that is often one of immense pain, brokenness and loss. Are we sufficiently equipped in skill, spirit and knowledge to help lift these burdens? Is our understanding of the individual and communal wounds, sobered and technical enough to truly grasp the depth and breadth of such need?

Neither our IofC USA team, nor any one organization or ministry, has all the required capacity, perspective and skill to fully understand and respond to such need. We may not even be aware

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of the manner in which our efforts to facilitate nonviolent change and healing from historical traumas can manifest as secondary trauma in our own lives and organizations. As Father Henri Nouwen boiled it down: "who can take away suffering without entering into it?"

These are complicated dynamics and I'll avoid pretending to have crisp answers in hand for them. What has steadied my mind since Caux has been my reflection on IoC's esteemed tradition of relationship building which has enabled it to establish an extensive and animated web of people and institutions who collectively hold the expertise, will and integrity needed to help us answer many of these questions. It is through these partnerships that we'll be able to continually offer communities something that is creative, exceptional and resilient, while also strengthening the health and sustainability of our own organization.

Sincerely,  
**Jake Hershman**  
*Executive Director*

## Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation

### More than a vision, an imperative

By Rob Corcoran

Healing the racial divide is "the most important thing any of us can be involved in," said former Mississippi governor, William Winter, at the start of a Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) Summit in December. A multi-sector group of 16 Richmond leaders took part in the summit held in Carlsbad, California, at the invitation of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The delegation convened by Initiatives of Change, included representatives of Richmond City Council, the city's Office of Community Wealth Building, the Police Department, Bon Secours Health Systems, Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the American Civil War Museum, Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, the University of Richmond, and the Richmond Hill retreat center.



"In Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation the power of love is leveraged to transcend the power of fear," said the visionary leader of this initiative, Dr. Gail Christopher, senior advisor and vice president at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The Richmonders joined 580 participants from advocacy groups, faith-based organizations and local governments, as well as from academia, philanthropy, business and the arts. All are working on visions and strategies to develop new historical narratives, processes for racial healing and steps to building healthy, equitable communities. Groups came from Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Buffalo, Dallas, Washington, DC, as well as regions of

## Trustbuilding Forum

### Journey to Equity Closing the racial equity gap benefits all

Wednesday, February 8, 2017,  
8:00-10:00 am

**Location:** University of Richmond  
Jepson Alumni Center, 49 Crenshaw  
Way, Richmond, VA 23173

**Welcome:** Dr. Ronald A. Crutcher,  
President of the University of  
Richmond

**Remarks:** The Honorable Levar M.  
Stoney, Mayor of the City of  
Richmond



**Keynote:** Reverend Alvin Herring is director of racial equity and community engagement for the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. His work advances the foundation's mission to support children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success in school, work and life. On an enterprise level, he actively guides the integration of community engagement and racial equity. As a much sought after speaker on campuses and in corporate board rooms, Reverend Herring has been described as a "messenger" of hope and inspiration.

There is no charge for the continental breakfast. Registration required by Friday, February 3, 2017. [To register](#)

## Caux Scholars 2017

### Be part of the 2017 class!

The Caux Scholars Program teaches students to analyze conflicts, to understand the factors

Mississippi, New Mexico and Michigan.

"Our beliefs are shaped by the stories we hear," said Gail Christopher on the first morning. "Today is about stories...When we form a circle we suspend the hierarchy...we are not here to judge but to create a safe and sacred space." Essential to the healing process is overcoming false narratives that define us. Experienced practitioners facilitated healing circles where participants shared personal stories about times when they challenged and perhaps changed a false narrative about themselves or their identity group. Such healing sessions are powerful experiences that one practitioner describes as a process of slowing down, of showing up as your authentic self, and of deep listening and being listened to without judgement.

Day two focused on healing the wounds of our society that result from our belief in a racial hierarchy. David Williams from Harvard's School of Public Health shared data showing the devastating impact of racism on health outcomes for people of color. In a presentation entitled "the house that racism built" he called residential segregation America's "most successful political ideology." It impacts schools, employment, transportation, public safety - all of which impact health. "It is a truly rigged system based on skin color." In a city like Richmond, Virginia, there is a 20-year difference in life expectancy between some neighborhoods. Studies show that ending residential segregation would result in the elimination of disparities in educational achievement, employment, and health, and would reduce by two-thirds the number of births by single mothers.

The final day began with a presentation by Manuel Pastor who directs the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration at the University of Southern California. By the end of the decade minorities will be a majority of the workforce, but Pastor says "racial anxiety is strongest in regions where demographic change is not happening," e.g. the Rust Belt. There is also a growing social distance. Racial segregation has decreased in urban areas but income segregation is increasing. Cities are becoming whiter, while suburbs are more diverse but they don't have the necessary social service infrastructure. Another factor is the racial generation gap. The median age for Latinos is 27 compared with 56 for whites. "Whites don't see themselves in this younger generation," says Pastor.

Pastor also notes that regions that work toward equity have stronger and more resilient growth for everyone. "For example, San Antonio introduced a sales tax to support pre-K education for disadvantaged kids. The leaders of the Chamber of Commerce supported it because they saw it as an investment in the future."

City and regional teams met to explore how the TRHT principles might be applied in their communities. These guiding principles include a commitment to an accurate recounting of history, which has been told largely by dominant groups. An atmosphere of forgiveness must be cultivated where people of all backgrounds are encouraged to tell their stories without fear of recrimination. True healing requires the building of trust. We need a fully inclusive process that reaches out to non-traditional allies, and the transformation should reflect reparative or restorative justice and policies that foster systemic change. "It is a vision, but more a vision it is an imperative," said Dr. Christopher, noting that Kellogg

that create and sustain conflicts, and provide practical understanding of approaches to resolving conflicts  
- conflict prevention, negotiation and transitional justice.



Twenty students from around the world are selected for this four-week course held in Caux, Switzerland, during the Initiatives of Change global summer conferences.

**Language:** English

**Program Fees:** US \$3800 (covers tuition, meals, lodging)

**Location:** Initiatives of Change conference center in Caux, Switzerland

**Dates:** June 26 - July 24, 2017

**Participation:** Limited to 20 students

**Application deadline:** February 17, 2017

[Apply now! More information](#)

## 2017 Caux Conferences

Plan on visiting Caux this summer!



**June 30, 2017**

Official Opening

**June 29-July 2, 2017**

Ethical Leadership in Business

**July 4-9, 2017**

Just Governance for Human Security

**July 11-15, 2017**

Caux Dialogue on Land and Security

**July 17-21, 2017**

Addressing Europe's Unfinished Business

**July 23-26, 2017**

Towards an inclusive peace

**July 29-August 4, 2017**

Children as Actors for Transforming Society

and 130 partner organizations committed to a long-term national process have a combined reach of more than 200 million people.

Richmond has already taken important steps to acknowledge its racial history and to engage a wide range of citizens in honest dialogue. A network of individuals and institutions is rooted in relationships of trust. The Richmond delegates to the summit believe the time is ripe for another major step forward that would enable the community to overcome persistent structural inequities. In the coming weeks they will be consulting with key stakeholders to develop a plan of action.

## National Day of Healing



With racial divisiveness rising across America, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), together with more than 130 organizations is committed to an emerging [Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation](#) (TRHT) enterprise. Communities across the country came together to celebrate a National Day of Healing on January 17, 2017. The goal was to spur efforts to heal the wounds created by racial, ethnic and religious bias and to build an equitable and just society in which all children thrive.

Richmond, VA, is fortunate in having many groups committed to justice and reconciliation. [Hope in the Cities, Richmond Hill, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, and the Richmond Peace Education Center](#) convened an interfaith gathering on January 17 to bring a different tone to the public discourse. People from all over the metropolitan region came together as part of the National Day of Healing. Events and proclamations were taking place in cities across America: Montgomery and Selma; in San Francisco and Los Angeles; Phoenix and Denver; Atlanta, Chicago and New Orleans; Boston, Detroit and Minneapolis; Buffalo and Portland; Charlotte and Greensboro; Salt Lake City and Washington, DC.



Together they committed to these 10 things to help heal the community:

## [More information](#)

### 2016 Caux Report



Exploring the Human Factor in Global Change  


The 2016 Caux Report is now published online. Hard copies will be available from our office.

### CTF Alum

#### [Healing the social ecosystem](#)

By John Taylor

Last summer Duron Chavis (CTF 2015) was hired by the nationally renowned Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, VA, as its first Community Engagement Coordinator. In this new position Duron is chiefly responsible for the Garden's outreach and relationship-building across a diverse community, expressly to foster greater collaboration and facilitate neighborhood-based urban greening and beautiful place-making initiatives.



Duron, who is a native of Richmond, graduated from Virginia State University, where over the past two years he has served as project director of the Harding Street Urban Ag Center, an indoor farming incubator funded by the US Department of Agriculture. He is known nationally for his leadership in urban agriculture and is an

1. Talk with your neighbor; or someone of a different racial, religious, or political background.
2. Refrain from re-posting partisan social media posts.
3. Recognize your own biases - we all have them! Try taking the [Harvard Implicit Bias Test](#).
4. Focus on *what* is right rather than *who* is right.
5. Resist stereotyping and look for the good in each person.
6. Learn about our racial history: walk the historic Slave Trail and visit the many museums that tell Richmond's story.
7. Read a book about the legacy of racism in this country, e.g. *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson; *When the Fences Come Down* by Genevieve Siegel-Hawley; *Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County* by Kristen Green; *Trustbuilding* by Rob Corcoran; *Richmond's Unhealed History* by Benjamin Campbell, and other books.
8. Start a small dialogue group in your neighborhood, organization or workplace, and honor the life story that each person brings.
9. Analyze the racial diversity within your neighborhood, workplace, local school, house of worship, etc., and initiate conversations about where and why there might be lack of inclusion.
10. Imagine what a healed Richmond metropolitan community would look like and commit personally to work for racial healing and equity; volunteer with organizations that focus on healing and equity such as [Hope in the Cities](#), [Richmond Hill](#), [Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities](#), [Richmond Peace Education Center](#) and others.

## Caux Scholars Program in India

### A sense of responsibility beyond their years

*Patrick McNamara, PhD (CSP 1996) has worked locally and internationally with universities, corporations, governments, NGOs, and foundations for 30 years. He is the Director of International Studies for University of Nebraska at Omaha. He currently serves as Vice Chairman of the Board for Initiatives of Change-USA.*

The 2017 class of the Caux Scholar Program - Asia Plateau (CSP-AP) was an impressive group. This is the second year I taught in CSP-AP and I was left convinced that the program and the participants will have an impact when they return to their communities. The group bonded more quickly than in the first year I taught and had a sense of responsibility that was beyond their years.



The class was made up of mostly 20-somethings from Asia and Africa. This group was incredibly engaged and already had great experience. Many were young professionals or advanced students

advocate for community-designed solutions to local challenges. He is a graduate of Hope in the Cities' Community Trustbuilding Fellowship program (2015) and Leadership Metro Richmond (2011); and is a certified Alternatives to Violence Project conflict resolution trainer.

Duron has been hard at work to design and develop the new Ginter Urban Gardener Program. Dozens applied for 14 spots for the 12 week training program that is teaching sustainable agriculture, urban greening and the important work of community building within and around the Richmond metro area.

The Ginter Urban Gardener training not only teaches participants the intricacies of how to garden, but also how to lead large-scale projects and coordinate volunteers. Most importantly, the training serves as personal development for citizens to learn how to work with the community, not just for it. Hope in the Cities facilitators Rob Corcoran, Tee Turner, Joshua Ballew, and John Taylor have adapted the HIC/IofC's principles, training and tools to assist the trainees with this aspect of the program.

Randee Humphrey, the Director of Education at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, has an ambitious vision for the program: "The Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens aims to become the center for collaboration, advocacy and action on local greening activities."

Chavis states that the Ginter Urban Gardener program is an example of Lewis Ginter's evolving presence as a force for a more equitable and just community. "As the Garden expands beyond its walls and deepens its commitment to the Richmond Region by connecting people through plants to improve communities, it becomes ever more clear that racial healing and racial equity are part of the social ecosystem of individuals, institutions and government

who were looking for something more than the day-to-day work they were doing. Some examples include:

- **Sahar** from Afghanistan who was a journalist and filmmaker who was working on women's empowerment. She had made a short documentary about harassment of women on the streets of Kabul that won critical acclaim in her country, but also put her at great risk.
- **Shiv** who works in Corporate Social Responsibility for Tata Steel. He is from a tribal group himself, so shares a common perspective with the communities he is serving. This was difficult because balancing the personal and professional was particularly difficult for him.
- **Oksana** who works in Ukraine using theater as a means for social engagement. Her family conflict paralleled her country's conflict and was particularly poignant in her "Conflict where I come from" presentation that all students were required to do.
- **Tiffany** from Philippines talked of her human rights work which, in light of the new President Duterte's policies, has become even more difficult in recent months. She feared that Duterte's killing squads might strike her or her community.
- **Ali** from Lebanon who worked for an NGO serving refugees. He was particularly committed to seeking an end to the war in Syria in order to stop the suffering which results in refugees to his country.

The program grows out of the model in Caux, Switzerland. But this is more focused on the Asia and Africa context.



I feel honored to teach these young leaders. They were particularly appreciative of the more interactive presentation style that we use in the West. Role plays provided opportunities to apply theory to practice. And

self-reflection exercises and morning quiet time was a rich experience to bring people to listen to their inner-voice.

I come away inspired by the young people who choose to participate in this rich learning experience. Our IofC-India team was a great partner in our teaching program and Asia Plateau provides a wonderful environment for learning.

## Washington, DC, workshop

### Cultivating cultural agility

By Kathy Aquilina

We are shaped by culture. The context of our personal identity is the culture we swim in. We are not often aware of this until we encounter those who are different from us, who are not part of our in-group. By meeting and understanding individuals from other cultures, we can gain an important understanding of our self, as well as the other.

agencies.

"Racial healing and the road to equity is long and must be deliberate. I find a no more relevant parallel than that of our work as gardeners and in growing food. What was once fertile ground may now be contaminated by lead, arsenic or other heavy metals that are harmful to human beings. If we can imagine racism as a toxic choice that has tainted our human ecosystem, we must imagine that the creation of sustainable solutions will also take time and there is no shortcut."

Trainees will envision projects and learn how to develop and maintain them. Graduates of the Ginter Urban Gardener training will then have the opportunity to submit proposals to Beautiful RVA, a regional coalition, to fund their urban greening and beautification projects.

### Trustbuilding now in paperback



*Trustbuilding*  
by Rob Corcoran



Read Rob Corcoran's latest blog  
[With malice toward none](#)

On December 16, the DC Interfaith Network, supported by Initiatives of Change, held a workshop on "Cultivating cultural agility" in Washington, DC. The workshop was led by Julia Gaspar-Bates, Professor at George



Washington University and President and co-founder of Intercultural Alliances (ICA). A group of 4 IofC US staff and one Board Member joined 28 participants from the Washington, DC, community to discuss culture, bias, and how we can reach across cultural divides to better understand each other.

But first, we have to determine: what is culture? It is our shared values and assumptions, the way we think, act, do and learn. Culture can often hide more than it reveals; it's a kind of code that outsiders can be puzzled and marginalized by. And what we see - behavior - is just the tip of the iceberg.

After discussing and defining culture within the group, we moved on to discuss how we could cultivate empathy to create a more inclusive environment in your work and community. "Reach out to others with a sense of curiosity," offered one person. "Having a better understanding of systemic structures, developing that awareness can help," stated another.

This discussion of empathy also touched on the need to listen with complete attention - listening not only with ears, but as the Chinese word ting represents, with the mind, eye and heart as well. That takes growth and mindfulness, moving forward in our own inner journey. We can make the choice to be empathetic. One young woman shared that she is tired of dealing with having people stereotype her and her people. She often has made the decision to "breeze through life." She told us that she wanted the courage to speak up when necessary.

It is hard to respond with empathy when you are also feeling triggered. One person discussed that her sister surprised her by making a sweeping political statement that led to an argument. After stepping back and thinking about it, she was struck by how easy it is for messages to divide even the closest of friends and families. Learning and using less attacking forms of communication - such as sharing one's own interpretation through "I feel" statements - can go a long way. This takes grounding, breath, perspective and practice - all of which was not available in this short one-day workshop, but is the personal work that is so needed at this moment.

## Commentary

### Time for a reset

*Dick Ruffin* was executive director of Initiatives of Change USA for 23 years. His work in the late 1980s led to the creation of the International Council, the change of name to Initiatives of Change

## Rajmohan Gandhi

### A passion for economic justice and peacebuilding

By Charles Aquilina

Rajmohan Gandhi, who served as President of Initiatives of Change International from 2009 - 2011, was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities by President Lou Anna Simon of Michigan State University on December 17 of last year. The citation read in part, "For more than half a century, you have been associated with Initiatives of Change, a group committed to trustbuilding, reconciliation and democracy."



Rajmohan Gandhi, noted author, statesman and scholar, was a Distinguished Hannah Visiting Professor at the University during the fall semester. He first became involved with the work of Initiatives of Change, (then Moral Re-Armament, MRA) in 1956, when he was an apprentice at a newspaper in Scotland. Gandhi, who has focused much of his writing on building greater understanding and bringing reconciliation between Hindus and Muslims on the Indian Subcontinent and between many groups in conflict around the world, was also cited in the award for his "passion and commitment to education, civil liberty, tolerance, economic justice and peacebuilding."

In his acceptance speech Gandhi said, "As I respectfully accept the honor, I know I must not let MSU down in what remains of my life. The students graduating today will walk into a future that contains its share of uncertainty, but all of us will be shielded by MSU's diploma

*and the founding of IofC International, of which he was Executive Vice President for eight years.*

America's nightmare is over. Or is it? Toxins infused into the body politic through a protracted and horrific campaign are not easily purged. It was not only the candidates who flaunted basic values of honesty, respect and decency, abetted by a rating hungry media. We, voters and non-voters alike, were complicit, either by our silence, or by what we said or passed on or simply by the relish with which we watched the debacle, like kids at a food fight.

It would be both naive and irresponsible to expect the restraint of the President-elect, the Democratic opposition and the media to restore civility to our political life. The hurts are deep, the pains real and the benefits alluring. We should expect more provocations that mess with our emotions and release more toxins.

No, if the toxins are to be purged, it must be done by us, by citizens who choose to stop playing the game and accept responsibility for the mess. It means making a fresh start, resetting our inner clocks.

How do we do this?

Perhaps a first step is to pause and consider in the quiet of our own hearts how we might have behaved differently during the campaign.

Secondly, we could resolve to stop playing the blame game. Cease rehearsing arguments that demonize the "other." Turn off the hyper-partisan talk shows. Stop passing along social media postings that only raise blood pressure. Stop stereotyping and develop a healthy skepticism about what purports to be news.

Thirdly, let's start listening, especially to those with whom we disagree. Reach out to neighbors, workmates and those in our own families who think differently, and discover what are their real concerns. Read and reflect on varied viewpoints. Look for common ground and appreciate sensible observations from the other side. That's what problem solvers do, and we can do that. Fourthly, talk dispassionately about our genuine fears. This will not be easy, especially for African Americans, Muslims, the LGBTQ community and recent immigrants, or for those whose jobs do not in fact come back. We observed in the election that unexpressed fear was the elephant in the room. Yet when we bring our fears to the table, and take even a small step towards those we fear, we will discover that fear loses some of its power.

Fifthly, we can remind ourselves that American institutions remain sound. Our courts will not roll over. Congress will not become a cipher. A free press will continue to uncover truth. The non-profit sector will remain strong. Our political parties will take steps to broaden their bases. Business leaders will not tolerate a potentially disastrous trade war and corporations and communities will continue to take practical steps to mitigate the impacts of climate



or degree. Scientists analyze our changing world, but cannot predict what tomorrow will bring, not even what an election might bring.

"As we walk into the unknown future, we do so with the knowledge that no matter where we come from, we're all the same underneath, no matter how inadequate we may feel, each of us has a special part in the story of humanity and that every person I run into or learn about, whether similar or different from me, also has a unique part in our future story.

"I first came to Michigan in 1957 when I was approaching age 22 - to Mackinac Island [former MRA conference center], joining people who wished to change the world one life at a time. Now, when I am not far from 82, I am being given this extraordinary honor in Michigan. I am kind of bowled over."



**Initiatives of Change, USA**  
is part of a diverse global network with  
an 80-year track record of  
peacebuilding, conflict transformation  
and forging partnerships across divides  
of race, class, religion and politics.

**Our vision**  
We inspire a vision of community where  
a commitment to reconciliation and  
justice transcends competing identities  
and interests.

**Our mission**  
We equip leaders to build trust in  
diverse communities through a process  
of personal change, inclusive dialogue,  
healing historical conflict and  
teambuilding

**Our focus**  
We connect core values with personal  
and public action with a focus on racial  
reconciliation, economic inclusion and  
interfaith understanding.

For more information

change.

Finally, we can act together at the local level to address problems. This will involve robust debate, for differences are real. But if we focus on the problem and not on the politics, we can get things done that will benefit all, and set an example for a Congress that has excelled in stalemate.

If we citizens take these simple though challenging steps, we will gradually restore confidence in our capacity to engage the other and together solve some of the country's and the world's most intractable problems.

<http://us.iofc.org>

### Follow-up Links

[Initiatives of Change](#)

[Hope in the Cities \(HIC\)](#)

[Caux Scholars Program](#)

[IofC on Facebook](#)

[Trustbuilding on Facebook](#)

[HIC on Facebook](#)

[IofC on YouTube](#)

[IofC Vimeo film archives](#)

We hope you enjoyed this issue of *Trustbuilders*. Please share this newsletter with your friends and forward it to those you know have a passion for trustbuilding.

*Thank you!*

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