

WECAN's Work on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access: Our Path Forward Together

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As we continue our work together committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, Lynn and I want to share news, progress and next steps we have been involved with over the past few months. We certainly have had an exciting start to the New Year! Being able to connect again with our colleagues in person this February was inspiring and transformative. Our time together remains a beacon for so much more work to follow.

A wonderful resource, *Toward A Kinder More Compassionate Society - Working Together Towards Change, from the 2022 WECAN Early Childhood Educators Conference* with contributions from Meggan Gill, Keelah Helwig, Joaquin Muñoz, and others, edited by Susan Howard, moved us forward bringing a much-needed IDEA Waldorf Resource to our schools, classrooms and communities. Diving into this resource in January, the IDEA Committee hosted a WECAN community zoom event in which many colleagues participated in working together with concepts from the book. Upon reflection, it is clear that our diversity work in Waldorf Early Childhood remains community based and personal, as conversations are happening with more openness and trust which strengthens our will forces to learn, unlearn, grow and transform together.

The 2023 WECAN EC conference marked the third conference offering in the series focusing on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access. Together with WECAN IDEA Committee members and WECAN Early Childhood Research Group members, we welcomed colleagues again in Rose Hall on the grounds of Green Meadow Waldorf School and were so grateful to be among the keynote speakers for the weekend. It was a potent, powerful, and beautiful gathering that was so needed.

With winter coming to its natural close, we will offer more of our plans for the upcoming season of Spring. We look forward to hosting a late Spring zoom event focusing on *School Communities and Discomforts in Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access*. With that said, at times, the loudest question which looms in the forces of this work is, "Are we done Yet?" The answer is a resounding, no! We collectively understand that no person or group is immune from the negative effects of racism and implicit biases: unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect how we understand and act.

Let's embrace this ongoing work together and further our understanding of why and how this work matters - especially for young children! There is no opting out of our work together in all areas of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access. We continue to encourage all WECAN members to participate, grow and deepen their understanding in these areas.

Please email us both with your questions, reflections, and all inquiries. Thank you and blessings to all!

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