

# Big View Community Engagement

Hosted by Circles of Support

## *Race, Privilege & Criminal Justice*

**Race:** A social construct that divides people into groups based on factors such as physical appearance, ancestry, culture, history, etc.; a social, historical and political classification system.

**Racism:** A system of oppression involving systemic subordination of members of targeted racial groups by those who have relatively more social power. This subordination occurs at the individual, cultural, and institutional levels.

**Privilege:** Systemic favoring, enriching, valuing, validating, and including of certain social identities over others. Individuals cannot “opt out” of systems of privilege; rather these systems are inherent to the society in which we live.

**White Privilege:** Institutional set of benefits, including greater access to resources and power, bestowed upon people classified as white.

**White Supremacy:** The assumption or theory that whites are superior to all other races and should be in power and control. A structural system built into the founding of our nation and still in place.

**Criminal Justice:** The delivery of justice to those who have committed crimes; the procedure by which criminal conduct is investigated, evidence gathered, arrests made, charges brought, defenses raised, trials conducted, sentences rendered and punishment carried out.

**Social class:** Defined as upper class, middle class, lower class, and working class. Refers to people’s socio-economic status, based on factors such as wealth, occupation, education, income, etc.

**Inclusiveness:** A commitment to foster a climate that represents and values members of diverse social identity groups. Inclusive practices occur at the individual, cultural and institutional levels, creating a culture where all members feel that they are welcome and belong.



OVERCOMING RACISM  
The Facilitating Racial Equity Collaborative



## BIG VIEW event descriptions:

### **JANUARY 29<sup>th</sup>**

#### **JOHN LEWIS: GET IN THE WAY**

#### **Film & Discussion**

The film is an inspiring portrait of one man cast into extraordinary times and his unhesitating dedication to seek justice for the marginalized and ignored. The son of sharecroppers, Lewis grew up in rural isolation, seemingly destined to a bleak, segregation-imposed future. But his fate took a different turn, and Lewis rose from Alabama's Black Belt to the corridors of power on Capitol Hill, his humble origins forever linking him to those whose voices customarily go unheard.

**11:00 – 1:00 pm** Grand Rapids Library Pizza provided

This meeting is free and open to the public. Register at 218-999-5883 or michellet@kootasca.org

### **February 4<sup>th</sup>**

#### **THE BAIL TRAP: American Ransom**

#### **Film & Discussion**

Money bail is one of the main causes of mass incarceration in the United States. Yet, few people know what the money bail system is, let alone how it all works. The reality is that 70% of people in jail are there for one reason: living in poverty. Low-income Americans are sitting in jails for days, months, and even years simply because they can't afford to pay high bail amounts. All the while, private companies are profiting in the billions each year.

**11:00 – 1:00 pm** Grand Rapids Library Pizza provided

This meeting is free and open to the public. Register at 218-999-5883 or michellet@kootasca.org

### **February 12<sup>th</sup>**

#### **JUSTICE IN CRISIS: Mass Incarceration in America**

#### **Film & Discussion**

The film explores America's prison system as modern-day debtor's prisons affecting primarily low-income communities who struggle to pay traffic fines. Racial disparities are exposed in a compelling dissection of drug-related incarceration rates and how societal fears exacerbate the system. Promising and less expensive interventions to roll back mass criminalization and reform the criminal justice system are featured.

**11:00 – 1:00 pm** Blandin Foundation Pizza provided

This meeting is free and open to the public. Register at 218-999-5883 or michellet@kootasca.org

### **February 25<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Breaking the Cycle of White Supremacy**

#### **Donte Curtis: Catch Your Dream Consulting**

#### **Workshop**

This interactive workshop invites attendees to explore the ways that white supremacy is harming us and the work that we do. Attendees will reflect on how the dominant culture shows up in us (White Folks and People of Color) and will be given tools and strategies to break the cycle. This workshop uses collective wisdom in the room to foster new ideas and think about what is possible when we all do our internal work.

**1:00 – 4:00 pm** Blandin Foundation Pizza provided

This meeting is free and open to the public but pre-registration is required for admittance. Register at 218-999-5883 or michellet@kootasca.org by providing names of each attendee and contact information. Space in this workshop is limited. Early registration is encouraged.

March 9<sup>th</sup>

Workshop

**Humanize My Hoodie Ally Workshop**

**Jason Sole: Hamline University Professor of Criminal Justice**

**Andre Wright: Born Leaders United Fashion Designer**

This workshop is designed to help white people identify their *implicit biases*, become more culturally competent, challenge the perceptions of their friends and family members, and reduce threat perception of Black men in hoodies. Allies and accomplices are essential partners in the movement for black lives. Racial justice and liberation only happens when truth plus accountability meet love. White folks who want to do the work often don't know where to start or are worried they'll do it wrong.

Participants will gain valuable insight in identifying systemic oppression, generational trauma, recognizing white supremacy in the 21st century, and how the criminal justice system works as a more sophisticated form of slavery. The senseless killings of Black people at the hands of police officers have exposed a horrendous truth of our society: If you are Black and wearing a hoodie, you are considered a threat. For white people, a hoodie is a fashion statement. For Black people, it is probable cause.

Participants will leave with an ally hoodie.

**9:00 – 1:00 pm**      Blandin Foundation      Pizza provided  
**COST: \$80**              3.5 CEU's

Payments can be made by mail or in person at: 811 NE 4th Street, Grand Rapids.  
Checks should be made out to: "Circles of Support - Kootasca".  
Contact Michelle Toven at 218-999-5883 or michellet@kootasca.org

Space in this workshop is limited. Early registration is encouraged. **Registration for this unique opportunity ends on February 26th.**

---

*Individual notices for each event will be provided.* Certificates of attendance for continuing education hours can be provided for any of the events. Please request certificates upon registration and they will be prepared and available for pick up at the event. Feel free to share these events with your contacts who may benefit from these learning opportunities. *Thank you.*

“Our success in creating organizations, schools, and communities in which everyone has access to the opportunities they need to thrive depends on our willingness to confront the history and impacts of structural racism, learn how bias (*implicit and explicit*) operates, and take action to interrupt inequitable practices at the interpersonal, institutional and structural level.

***We believe the work we need to do begins on the inside*** — inside of ourselves, inside of our own organizations, and in our own communities.” *Jason Sole & Andre Wright*