



WALKING THE WALK: MORE THAN 5,000 ACCEPT THE 21-DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE

At United Way for Southeastern Michigan, we know it's critical to address systemic inequities to create stable households where children can thrive. Our first ever **21-Day Equity Challenge** took place **this spring**, offering an opportunity for individuals and organizations to expand their knowledge and understanding of the historical and persistent inequities that impact the social and economic landscape here in Southeastern Michigan.

For Methodist Children's Home Society (MCHS), it could not have come at a better time.

Following the death of George Floyd, the human services agency assembled a diversity, inclusion and race equity (DIRE) task force. Although they made progress in setting goals and building awareness, the team knew it needed to do more.

"Talk is cheap," said Carolyn Watson, chief advancement officer at MCHS. "We want to walk the walk, and that means showing action. The Equity Challenge offered us a framework to do that."

Participants received an email every weekday with articles, videos, charts, infographics and points of reflection on issues related to equity. If you missed out, you can find the content at UnitedWaySEM.org/EquityChallenge.

I am committed to
DECONSTRUCTING racism,
CONFRONTING bias and
CREATING a more just
and inclusive community.

TAKE THE 21 DAY #EQUITYCHALLENGE:
UnitedWaySEM.org/EquityChallenge



A LEARNING JOURNEY

With nearly 50 business and nonprofit partners, it's clear that community support for an initiative like this is at an all-time high as well.

Local municipalities including Oakland County and the city commissions for Royal Oak and Huntington Woods have committed to the challenge. Livonia's human relations committee is also on board.

"When we take it upon ourselves to educate ourselves – to learn, grow and then educate others – we're doing our part to build a better future for our entire region," said Andre Ebron, senior director of diversity, equity and inclusion at United Way for Southeastern Michigan.

Even as a 100-plus-year-old organization with deep ties to the community and a mission rooted in equality, we understand that true change takes time and ongoing commitment.

"It will take time – maybe generations – but we can begin today to build a world where every ethnicity is appreciated and not just tolerated; where people are seen, heard and valued; where they're judged by the content of their character; where privilege is leveraged for the greater good," Andre said.

Stephanie Ralls, manager of diversity, equity, inclusion and engagement at United Way for Southeastern Michigan, is up for the challenge.

"We talk a lot about **ALICE** (asset limited income constrained, employed) households – the nearly 40 percent of households in our region that can't afford their basic needs like food, housing and child care," Stephanie said. "It's our mission to provide opportunities where these families can thrive. But first, we have to understand our history and what drives the disparities we're looking to solve."