



Cincinnati Waldorf School Antiracist Call to Action

"Strive to be a person who is never absent from an important act."

-Osage proverb

The Osage Nation is an Indigenous tribe of the Great Plains whose land we occupy.

We, the Cincinnati Waldorf School, recognize our profound obligation to speak out in support of justice and healing in our nation.

We, the Cincinnati Waldorf School, assert that the most powerful lens through which to examine injustice and inequity in our nation is that of racism and white supremacy.

Though our mission speaks to the education of our beloved student body, we recognize that our mission is betrayed when we fail to meaningfully confront and examine a world marked by racial injustice.

In a defining era of our nation's reckoning with the cumulative impacts of racism, many of us in the CWS community have been compelled to pull back the curtains and examine our own contributions, knowingly and unknowingly, to our system of racism. Indeed, the most worthy examinations begin and end with introspection.

Our school's introspection led us to undertake a serious study of Waldorf education founder Rudolf Steiner's writings, both those explicitly discussing race, and also those which expressly or implicitly uphold white supremacy. Having drawn insights from this ongoing study, one point is profoundly clear. Our commitment to racial healing and eradicating racism in our nation must include an ongoing, critical evaluation of Rudolf Steiner's writings and how ideas that uphold white supremacy manifest in our school culture, curriculum, and policy.

The Cincinnati Waldorf School and the Waldorf movement are not unique in this endeavor. Institutions across our society are grappling with founders who hold dual legacies. We recognize that Rudolf Steiner's contributions to the pedagogical world expanded our shared understanding of child development and educational practice. In this aspect, his contributions are immense and valuable.

However, we must also recognize that Rudolf Steiner was a racist who believed that Black people and people of color were inferior to white people. These facts are undisputed and must be acknowledged and addressed by the entire Waldorf community.

With such a stark awakening, what then is our responsibility to our current and future

students? How do we reconcile Steiner the insightful pedagogue with Steiner who assigned value by racial hierarchy? We can't be certain what the terrain before us holds. We will undertake steady and decisive work to guard against the uncritical veneration of Rudolf Steiner, the person, while preserving the best aspects of Waldorf education. We will commit to this vital step as the foundation of our responsibility to eradicate racism and white supremacy in Waldorf education and our world.

We consider our efforts as points on the long arc of history as it bends toward justice. Our work together is defined by a need to meet this moment but also hasten the racial healing within a Waldorf movement, country, and world in great need of healing.

We dream of a world where all of our children and students are welcomed, feel heard and valued, and have a deep, visible sense of belonging. We envision a system of Waldorf education consistent with antiracist understanding and values. Fulfilling this dream requires us to summon our bravest selves to speak the truth and act upon it with a sense of urgency.

The Antiracism Council, a representative cross-section of the Cincinnati Waldorf School community, will meaningfully engage our community so that together we can forge a pathway toward truth-telling, justice, and racial healing in our school, our community, and beyond.