

The Rite Aid Foundation Launches Racial Equity Awareness and Action Initiative
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Foundation investing \$2 million to advocate for meaningful progress and sustainable change in U.S. communities

As America grapples once again with profound issues regarding race, justice and the treatment of people of color in the wake of tragic events in recent weeks, The Rite Foundation commits to combat racism and foster more diverse, inclusive and equitable opportunities in communities by launching a Racial Equity Awareness and Action Initiative that seeks to drive meaningful progress and sustainable change at this critical juncture.

The initiative will invest in organizations, networks and programs that spark renewed dialogue, courage and action across many voices, stakeholders, sectors and communities. The Rite Aid Foundation will provide initial funding to two organizations, EmbraceRace and United Way, each with a mission, focus and reach that can accelerate progress in key areas, through grants of \$1 million to both organizations.

"Racism, injustice and intolerance have no home in the Rite Aid organization or in our communities," said Heyward Donigan, President and CEO of Rite Aid. "We are committed to reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve. While this is a profoundly sad, difficult and important moment in our country, we also believe hope and progress is possible – one voice, one person, one family and one community at a time. Rite Aid can and will play an important role in the healing process through our support and involvement, and this initiative is the first step toward that goal."

Throughout this journey, Rite Aid and The Rite Aid Foundation commit to be involved in the response; partner with and learn from leading organizations and voices; create or support forums for real, honest and critical dialogue; bring compassion, understanding and empathy, plus civility and humanity to the process; advance the conversation and galvanize action; and prepare for a new tomorrow. The company and foundation will do so with purpose, resolve and urgency in collaboration with other companies, civic institutions, community leaders and nonprofit organizations such as EmbraceRace and United Way.

EmbraceRace supports a diverse and fast-growing community of parents and other caring adults striving to raise a generation of children who are thoughtful, informed and brave about race. Its work reflects the conviction that the struggle to create systems of authentic racial inclusion and belonging in the United States must begin in our homes, schools and communities.

With a National Advisory Team focused on civil rights and social justice, EmbraceRace provides parents, grandparents, teachers and other caring adults the strategies and resources they need to develop affirmative, race-conscious practices that nurture children with the tools and sensibilities to help end our racial divide, rather than reinforce it.

"The work of realizing the true promise of multiracial democracy in the United States, where everyone feels they belong and where real opportunity exists for all, must start at the youngest ages with our children," said Andrew Grant-Thomas, co-founder of EmbraceRace. "Children begin to develop their racial sensibilities at birth, with continued critical development during the early childhood and elementary school years. Our goal is to scale the strategies, resources and partnerships that enable our families and our nation to raise a generation of children who are thoughtful, informed and brave about race."

United Way advances the common good in communities around the world and works closely with business, government, the nonprofit field and faith-based community to address societal issues and drive community change. Its far-reaching presence in urban, suburban and rural locations in the U.S., coupled with its ability to serve as a convener and catalyst for change, along with its civic engagement platform for individuals to give, advocate and volunteer, provides breadth, depth and expertise to the initiative.

By bringing together diverse stakeholders, United Way has a history of spearheading both process and progress that generates change. United Way recently released its Equity Framework to advance equity through data, community mobilization and engagement; communications and awareness building; fundraising, resource allocation and grant making; policy and advocacy; and local capacity building.

“There isn’t a more important or urgent issue than dealing with institutional racism in America right now at this very moment,” said Brian Gallagher, CEO of United Way Worldwide. “United Way will work tirelessly across our network and our partners to pursue real reform and cultural change. Our belief is that community challenges are sustainably solved when all parties come together. Achieving that goal requires everyone to act united.”

Rite Aid will also engage with its diverse associate family, customers and business partners to foster change throughout the communities it serves.

“This is just the beginning of this conversation, and we pledge to listen more than we speak,” Donigan said. “We recognize our important role and purpose to care for the health and well-being of individuals and families of all ages, races, ethnicities, religions, socioeconomic status and backgrounds. Only through open and honest conversations with our community – everyone in our community – can we truly drive the change necessary to eradicate racism and ensure we all thrive together.”

About The Rite Aid Foundation

The Rite Aid Foundation is committed to creating meaningful and lasting change for children, families and communities. With a network of nearly 500 supported charities and signature partners, the foundation focuses on making local, regional and national impact in key fields.

About Rite Aid Corporation

Rite Aid Corporation is on the front lines of delivering healthcare services and retail products to more than 1.6 million Americans daily. Our pharmacists are uniquely positioned to engage with customers and improve their health outcomes. We provide an array of whole being health products and services for the entire family through over 2,400 retail pharmacy locations across 18 states. Through EnvisionRxOptions, we provide pharmacy benefits and services to approximately 4 million members nationwide. For more information, www.riteaid.com.

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