

Fall 2020

# TRINITY

# Stories

**You never really understand a person  
until you consider things from his  
point of view...until you climb into  
his skin and walk around in it.**

**To Kill a Mockingbird**



**trinity | camp hill**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH



# Gratitude

*“You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.”*

*2 Corinthians 9:11*

# Thankfulness

*“I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you....”*

*Philippians 1:3-4*

# TRINITY Stories

Trinity Stories is published by the Publicity & Communications Team of Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, for our members and friends.

Our intent is to focus on one topic each issue - for example, our ministries, our music program, our people, a current topic of concern. Suggestions are welcome. This premier issue focuses on the topic of race and racism and is intended to stimulate thought, self-reflection, and discussion.

Watch for future issues as budget and time allow.

Editor: Stephanie G. Maurer  
stephanie.maurer@trinitycamphill.org



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- ▶ *We believe that God creates and loves all humans.*
- ▶ *We commit to being bridge builders by listening, sharing, and learning how our life experiences may be different from those of others.*
- ▶ *We grieve actions of violence and commit to being peacemakers in the name of Christ.*

*--Statement of Trinity Council and Staff*

Usage note: Trinity Stories has followed the Associated Press style guide that was changed in June of this year to capitalize the "b" in the word "Black."

## Editor's Note



Stephanie Maurer

When Congregation Council approved Trinity's statement on race and racism (pp 1, 23), we acknowledged the importance of putting our words into practice. To that end, the stories that follow allow us to learn "how our life experiences may be different from those of others."

Producing this magazine was not easy. It took months to conduct interviews, write the stories, confirm the info, review and make edits, get photos, and organize all for transmission to our patient and professional printing company. We think the result is worth the time.

I am especially grateful to those who consented to have their experiences shared in the five featured stories. To Kellie and Ryan Argot, Debbie Balasundram, Jamien Harvey, Yvette Kane, and Kate and Adrian Murray: thank you for digging deep to answer my countless questions. You spoke with honesty and grace, and I learned much from you.

Thank you equally to those who contributed to "Trinity staff members start conversations...." Each story is different, and each one resonates. ◀

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## Connect With Us

 2000 Chestnut Street  
 Camp Hill, PA 17011

 717.737.8635

 [trinitycamphill.org](http://trinitycamphill.org)  
 Check website  
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   @trinitycamphill

## Welcome from Pastor Jack Horner:

### *Rural, urban, or suburban — people can learn and grow*



Pastor Jack Horner

Having lived the first 18 years of my life in small town and suburban communities in south central Pennsylvania, I can't explain why I felt drawn to urban ministry. But I was.

The first congregation I served was in Queens, when cities were struggling. I believed that the gospel of Jesus Christ could make the church a place of hope, healing, and grace.

I went house to house, a 26-year-old smiling pastor from a small Pennsylvania town knocking on doors to invite the neighborhood to church.

Sometimes I was met by a slammed door, but most people were pleasant. Queens Village had a plurality of Irish, Italian, and German backgrounds, along with Latino, American, and Caribbean Blacks, and a growing Indian

Guyanese population. But our membership included only three families of color.

We delivered doorknob hangers, sponsored block parties, held a day camp for neighborhood kids, and more. We lived the call to make disciples of all nations and to affirm our catholic, or universal, faith. Ultimately, our membership grew to reflect more fully our diverse community.

The potluck dinner on my final Sunday included foods that represented the diversity: tuna noodle casserole, Swedish meatballs, baked ziti, carne asada, curried chicken, naan--and, yes, Jello with fruit. What a delight to see the different people come together for the love of God and each other. There was laughing, singing, eating, and even some occasional fighting. That's what families do. We were a neighborhood church sharing God's love with the people around us!

I pray that every congregation works to be a neighborhood church, however they define their parish. The context in which we do ministry matters.

Camp Hill is not as diverse as Queens was, but it's also not completely homogenous. In our confession to be catholic/universal, we want no one to feel excluded because of race, gender, sexuality, social class, or political views. We want diversity not for diversity's sake, but to be witnesses to the unifying love of God in Jesus Christ. Our witness is most effective through God's power to bring different people together to love and serve their neighbors.

Welcome to *Trinity Stories*, where we see God's power right here in our community through the eyes and experiences of others. By learning their stories, we can grow into even better people—and better listeners—just as God intended. ◀

***In Trinity Stories, we see God's power right here in our community through the eyes and experiences of others. By learning their stories, we can grow into even better people—and better listeners—just as God intended.***



**MEET THE  
MURRAY FAMILY:**

*Trinity members  
and  
gracious speakers  
about race*

*Kate and Adrian Murray at home in Camp Hill  
with their sons (l-r) August, Noble, and Kian.*

Adrian and Kate Murray and their three young children live in the Camp Hill Borough, a block away from the church. August is 11 and in grade 6; Kian (KYE-in) is 9 and in grade 4; Noble is 6 and in kindergarten.

The Murray family had been members of a nearby Presbyterian church until they joined Trinity in February of this year. They were impressed by the breadth and quality of programming Trinity had for young families, and their sons had wonderful experiences at Trinity's preschool.

Adrian Murray is a Black man of West Indian descent; his wife, Kate, is white. As an interracial couple, Adrian and Kate were glad to have a candid conversation about their personal experiences and perspectives on race for *Trinity Stories*.

## West Shore meets New York City



Kate was raised in Camp Hill. Adrian was born in Trinidad and Tobago and grew up in New York City and its suburbs. The two met in 2000 while serving with the AmeriCorps' City Year program in Philadelphia, where young adults put in a demanding year of full-time community service, akin to a domestic Peace Corps. Kate was 20; Adrian was 22. The two were married in 2006.

The couple lived in New York City for a decade and started a family there. In 2013, Kate and Adrian decided to move to Camp

Hill to raise their family. Life in Camp Hill is very different from the New York area. Where before they were in a large racially and culturally diverse city, they were now a minority in a predominantly white suburb.

## So how has the move worked out?

Kate and Adrian enjoy life in Camp Hill as do their three boys. Like the neighborhood, the school district is also predominantly white, including the board and its teaching staff.

"We have a great life here," said Kate. "Our kids are still young, but they have not had any negative experiences due to their race. We have been fortunate that our boys are with a great group of kids. We have friends whose biracial kids have experienced bullying, harassment, and name calling because of their race, but so far our kids have been shielded from that."

## Adrian's Experience

"My family and I are West Indian, from Trinidad and Tobago," said Adrian. "I grew up in a culturally diverse area of New York with a good deal of minority representation." Adrian did not grow up experiencing many overt acts of racism, but he said he has had to deal with implicit biases against people of color.

"As a Black man I grew up understanding that I would have to act differently because I'm a person of color," he said. "I understood the stereotypes I

would face and that I would always have to be at the top of my game to compete. I always had to quell any doubt that I belonged where I needed to be. I was always at the top of my class."

"I have to do things preemptively to make people think I'm a safe person. I'm very conscious of how I dress and how I present myself," he said. If he visits one of his boys' schools, for example, he is aware that the students and teachers may not have had many interactions with Black men. "My hope is that the positive experiences that the kids have with me extend to their initial impression they have of other men of color."

Kate echoed him. "People of color feel they need to represent their race at all times. As a white woman, I have never felt that responsibility."

***"We have to make the effort to hear from people whose experiences are different from our own. When people know better, they can do better."***

Other examples where Adrian is conscious of how his actions may be perceived in a predominantly white area are these:

"If I'm driving down the street and playing music in my car, I'll lower the volume just so I don't

heighten suspicion or bring up red flags. If I'm walking and there's a white person approaching, I always smile to convey the impression that I'm friendly," he said.

One time, friends of the Murrays wanted to give them bunk

report what may look to them as a robbery in progress.

"People of color are constantly being asked to police their bodies," said Kate. "For example, Adrian doesn't run after dark in our neighborhood or get things out of

"What sport did you play?"

No, Adrian was not accepted to Princeton to play sports. He was accepted on a full academic scholarship to that prestigious Ivy League university with its high acceptance standards, and he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. Not easy.

### Are we too late to the table?

The Murrays believe that we all need to be actively engaged in conversations together about race; they know there is much that hasn't been taught or discussed. They also know that there have been too few opportunities for these discussions in racially homogenous Camp Hill.

"It's never too late to have the conversations," said Kate. "I think there's a shift that's happening now. People are starting to ask questions and have conversations. No one should be embarrassed or ashamed to talk about race. Conversations are important to hear another point of view. We have to make the effort to hear from people whose experiences are different from our own. When people know better, they can do better."

The couple said it's very frustrating when conversations are shut down because someone feels uncomfortable or wants to deny the role race has played in our society. They cited comments like "I don't see race," or "I don't see color," or "I have a Black friend, so



*At Princeton for Adrian's 20th college reunion*

beds for their boys. The friends told Adrian that he should go to their house while they were at work and load up the furniture. Adrian declined the offer and found a time when the friends were home. He knew it would be far too risky and dangerous for a Black man to walk into someone's home when the residents aren't there and carry off their furniture. The fear is that a neighbor would call the police to

the car late at night. It doesn't feel safe."

These are the kinds of experiences and microaggressions people of color experience daily, explained the Murrays. Microaggressions are indirect or subtle acts that convey derogatory or negative attitudes. Another example would be when people learn that Adrian is a graduate of Princeton University and then ask,

I can't be prejudiced," or "Just because I'm white doesn't mean my life has been easy."

Kate and Adrian explained that such sentiments come across as a way for someone to essentially wash their hands of deeper conversation.

## Where to from here?

The Murrays are patient. They have learned to navigate the world, and they are willing to talk about their experiences. They have experienced blatant racism as well as microaggressions. The microaggressions, whether intentional or unintentional, verbal or behavioral, are hurtful. Think about the assumption—whether implied or stated—that Adrian was accepted at Princeton University primarily to play sports.

"We try to be proactive," they both said. "Race is something we think of every day." It is not offensive for them to be asked a question or to engage in a conversation. They are sincere when they say they appreciate knowing someone is curious and is taking the time to get to know them.

"We have ongoing conversations with our kids about race. When they are curious and want to know more, they will ask," said Kate near the end of our interview. *Trinity Stories* encourages adults to take the same approach and ask questions. Kate and Adrian will welcome the conversation. ◀



*They are sincere when they say they appreciate knowing someone is curious and is taking the time to get to know them.*



## MEET DEBBIE BALASUNDRAM:

*“You need to have empathy and show kindness”*

Debbie Balasundram has been a Trinity member since 2004, along with her husband, Reuben. The Balasundrams have four children, also Trinity members. Miriam is 24, Benjamin is 22, Elizabeth is 19, and Leah is 11.

Debbie was born in Sri Lanka; she grew up in India as a Roman Catholic. Reuben was born in India and grew up there. The two met in college at the teaching hospital in India, Christian Medical College and Hospital, where they were studying to be occupational therapists. That is their occupation today.

Reuben came to the United States in 1992 and settled in Florida. Debbie came in 1993 and worked in Arkansas. (Her parents remained in India but in 2011 moved to Australia, where her mother still resides. Debbie’s father died there this past January.)

By 1994, Debbie and Reuben were married. At the time, they lived and worked in Missouri. Their work required them to live in various places, so they moved often for short periods. Their longest stay was in West Virginia when they were waiting to become naturalized American citizens. It was there where their three oldest children were born.

In 2002, the Balasundrams made the move to Mechanicsburg for its greater diversity. Daughter Leah was born here in 2009.

### **Mixed experiences with racism**

When *Trinity Stories* interviewed Debbie in early September, she relayed mixed experiences but overall was positive.

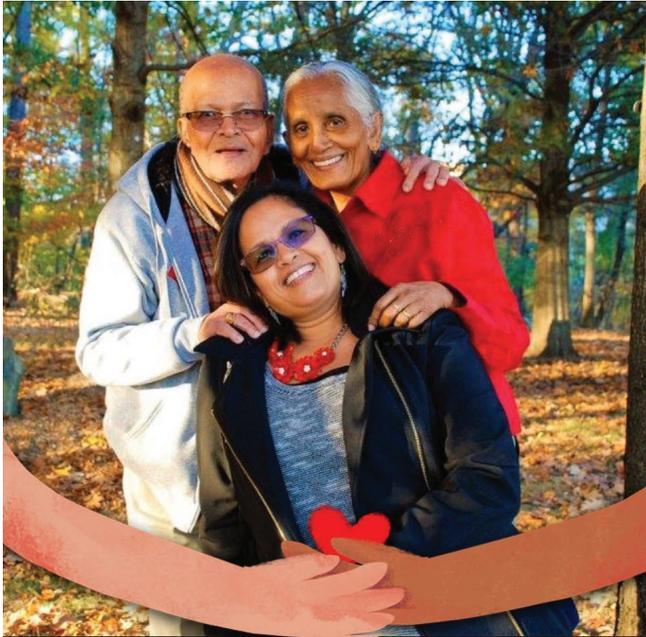
Had she experienced racism? “In subtle ways, yes,” she said. “My first encounter was in Arkansas in this little facility where a man with dementia called me the N word,” she remembered.

A colleague immediately chastised the man, and Debbie didn’t take the name-calling personally. She reasoned that the man was over 90 and had dementia.

When living in West Virginia, she felt on several occasions that store employees seemed to be following her. She wondered if they were expecting her to shoplift.

“But looking back,” she said, “maybe they were just in the same aisle.”

“I’ve never felt racism personally in terms of people saying something to me directly. No one has done that to me.”



Debbie in 2016 with her parents when they came to visit; her father died this past January.

## Debbie wonders what people think of her race

“I always wonder what people think I am,” she said. “Some people think I’m Filipino. Some people think I’m Hispanic. No one knows I’m Indian. In a way I think it’s because I’m fluent in English. Or maybe I’ve integrated myself better. But I don’t really know what they might be saying.”

Sometimes people say negative things to her about “colored people,” comments like “You know the colored people,” or “Oh, he was colored.” Debbie sometimes thinks, “Okay, what ‘color’ are you talking about?”

It’s clear to her that the “colored” remarks represent a code for Black people and, at the same time, that the commenters are signaling to Debbie that they don’t see her as a person of color.

“I want to ask if they know what they’re saying,” she said, “because, yes, I too am a person of color. Do they think I am just a tanned white person? Is it just that I’m not the right shade of brown?”

“Even though I don’t get open remarks on my race, do I feel really accepted amongst everyone here? No, not entirely. You can tell that some people are truly not comfortable being around people who are different.”

Debbie has found that even at church it’s hard for people to reach out. “I have noticed that

some folks don’t make an effort to get to know you.” It has occurred to her that although it could possibly be based on race, it’s more likely based on Trinity’s large membership and—before COVID—the fact that Trinity had so many services.

## A few of Reuben’s experiences

Reuben, she explained, may be more likely to attribute his experiences to race. Debbie believes it’s because of his skin color. “He is darker than I am, and he feels that people might be looking at him differently. For a long time after 9/11, he wouldn’t even go to the store without me. In stores, sometimes he feels he’s being watched as though he’s going to steal something.”

Even now, however, Reuben has had white coworkers mimic and intensify his accent, presumably as a joke. But it’s not funny to him, to his family, or to others in that situation.

Debbie recalls a time even at Trinity when Reuben and Leah came out into the Gathering Space after attending worship and overheard some people talking openly about Hispanics and immigrants. Father and daughter were not sure what to think but remember being disconcerted.

***“Even though I don’t get open remarks on my race, do I feel really accepted amongst everyone here? No, not entirely. You can tell that some people are truly not comfortable being around people who are different.”***

She can also think of assumptions made not just about Reuben but about any of the Balasundrams. One assumption is that, because they are Indian, they must know all other people of Indian descent in the area, Debbie said. “But obviously we don’t know all Indians whether here or elsewhere in the country.”

When Reuben and Debbie first came to America, they believed experiences like these were something they simply had to go through as immigrants. Yet over the years they have come instead to see their experiences through new eyes, and through the eyes of their children, and have come to understand that those behaviors are considered forms of racism.

**Speaking of the children...**

Several years ago when Leah was on a field trip, a classmate made this comment: “If Abraham Lincoln didn’t end slavery,

you wouldn’t be here.” A camp counselor who heard the comment took no action, despite looking uncomfortable. Debbie noted that it would have been the right time for the counselor to take the moment to educate the group since the remark might have reflected the influences of others.

In Lizzy’s case, she had become used to certain behaviors in high school that she did not realize were racist, even if not intentional. One example was when friends seemed to suggest that she would be interested in dating only an Indian classmate. “Oh, look at him—he’s so cute, why don’t you date him?” they might say.

More often, there was banter—including jokes about Asians, speech that mimicked accents, requests for her to imitate Indian or Asian accents, and more. Lizzy may have laughed or gone along because she felt that was expected of her, she recalled, but

*“You can have empathy and show kindness even if you can’t walk in someone else’s shoes.”*

the banter really did hurt. Yet she was reluctant to say something for fear of not fitting in.

When Lizzy went off to Temple University in Philadelphia, she began to understand her prior experiences differently. With its greater diversity, the population at Temple had a greater appreciation of other cultures, as well as a greater knowledge of what racism looks like. Lizzy became aware of what she had felt but had not expressed: specifically, the jokes and the banter had been demeaning, derogatory, and simply wrong. She said that no one—including herself—should have normalized such behaviors. Her realization was eye-opening.

Miriam, too, experienced microaggressions, however unintentional they may or may not have been, even in church. With the awareness that now appears to be emerging nationwide, she hopes that people in all communities—large and small, urban and suburban and rural—will recognize and appreciate cultural differences.



*The Balasundrams at Miriam’s graduation from Elizabethtown College in 2017. Left to right Reuben, Ben, Miriam, Lizzy, and Debbie, with Leah in front.*



Leah in August on her first day of middle school.

Overall, Debbie said, there's no question that the family feels positive about living here. They hope the experiences they discussed in *Trinity Stories* will help others to understand differences and to talk about the effects of those differences.

Both Debbie and Reuben feel strongly that it's also important to talk to their children.

"We have taught all our children from a young age to obey rules," said Debbie. "If it's a stop sign, you stop. If it's a red light, you stop. If you see an ambulance, you pull over. Those are the laws. There's a reason for them. The laws are there so everyone has a guideline. Maybe Reuben and I are different. If I got stopped, we would discuss what I did. Education is important."

"Our son could pass for being Black," said Debbie. "We're telling him all the time to be careful—if you're pulled over, put your hands on the wheel. He will question authority. We tell him repeatedly you'd better be good, you'd better listen."

"We've had a lot of conversations about all the things that are going on. It's also nice that we know we can talk to our pastors about it."

### Why speak out if most of Debbie's experiences have been positive?

"Some of my closest white friends have not ever come up to me directly to have a conversation about how I feel about all these things that are going on," said Debbie. She thinks maybe it's because she speaks so well and they see her as confident and easygoing. Regardless, she'd like very much to have the conversation about race.

"It bothers me not to be engaged in those conversations," she said. "It could be my child that bad things are happening to, and it's helpful to talk."

"You can have empathy and show kindness even if you can't walk in someone else's shoes," Debbie said.

Recently when some people from Pakistan moved into the Balasundrams' mostly white neighborhood, some of the neighbors kept referring to the newcomers as "the Pakistanis." Debbie said in response, "You know us as Reuben and Debbie, so why don't you say their names?"

Regarding statements about racism, "It's nice to have all those fancy statements, but you need to be enlightened. At church we talk about opening up and reaching out to people of color. Are we doing that?"

"Although I am grateful that I have not had any direct racial attacks, it doesn't mean that I should not speak up about it. You have to stand up against injustices."

She concluded with an analogy: "It's like domestic violence. You need to speak up even if you haven't experienced it." ◀



Lizzy in 2019 with a friend at their graduation from Cumberland Valley High School.



## MEET JAMIEN HARVEY:

# Executive Director of Camp Curtin YMCA, a Trinity-supported ministry

“Do you know what some white people think when they see someone like me in this position?” asked Jamien Harvey.

Jamien is Executive Director of the Harrisburg YMCA’s Camp Curtin branch. *Trinity Stories* interviewed Jamien on one sweltering afternoon in July. The heat outdoors couldn’t penetrate the spacious, neat, and comfortable air-conditioned office where shelves were filled with his commendations, certificates, and awards.

“Umm, no,” responded the *Trinity Stories* interviewer. “What do some white people think?”

“They think I’ve infiltrated the system,” he said with quiet dignity. “They think I should be in jail, or should have been into drugs, or should have shot and killed someone.”

Whoa. Is that something that any of us in our mostly white congregation would actually think, however privately? And if we say

no, not me, not for a minute, can we be sure that no one thinks it, whether here or elsewhere?

For now, let’s not speculate. Instead, let’s reflect on the life experiences of Jamien Harvey, as a person of color, and compare them to our own experiences.

### Crossing the Susquehanna

As one of Trinity’s supported ministries, the Camp Curtin Y is a beneficiary in several ways. Jamien is thankful for our help, whether in the form of financial gifts such as donations from our Christmas in July Giving Tree, or a table in our name at the Y’s annual dinner.

Trinity member Cheryl Akers has been on the Camp Curtin Y board of directors for almost as long as Jamien has been the executive director, and she has served on our Community Outreach Team (formerly Social Ministry) for nearly as long. It was through Cheryl that Trinity added the Y to the ministries supported via our Outreach team, and she and Pastor Liz are the primary



One of Jamien’s many awards

liaisons. Jamien speaks highly of Cheryl and Pastor Liz, and of anyone else from Trinity with whom he's come in contact.

The Y is located in the North Sixth Street Historic District of Harrisburg, where the long two-story building takes up the entire block.

Jamien has been executive director since November 2011, coming up on nine years. We asked to hear his story—what life experiences brought him to this point, how his experiences shaped him, and how he applies them to his job and to those with whom he interacts daily.

We also asked if he'd share what it is that we as Trinity members can do to build bridges between the Camp Curtin neighborhood and the West Shore neighborhoods where many of our members live.

Speaking of bridges, it's interesting to note that crossing the Susquehanna River via the 0.8-mile Harvey Taylor Bridge from the West Shore to the East Shore is sometimes viewed as representing way more than a mile. Trinity members who live in Harrisburg-area communities can attest to the curiosity expressed by some of their West Shore friends: "You live on the East Shore?" or "You come all the way over here to Trinity?" or "You drive through the City?"

## Coming from "The Zoo," he said

Here's part of Jamien's bio:

- ▶ Master's degree, Alternative Education, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania
- ▶ Bachelor's degree, Health/Physical Education/Sports, Indiana University of Pennsylvania (full scholarship)
- ▶ Started his college studies at West Virginia University until transferring to IUP
- ▶ Varsity Football Coach, Offensive Line, Bishop McDevitt High School (2009-10)
- ▶ Varsity Football Coach, Offensive Line, Trinity High School (2010-11)
- ▶ Middle School Tutor, Harrisburg School District (2009-11)
- ▶ CEO/President, Big Boys in Training Standing Tall and Raising Self Esteem (2009-11)
- ▶ Married, three sons (19, 16, and 12) and a stepdaughter (21)

What's not on Jamien's bio is his middle-school education at the now-defunct Harrisburg Middle School. Jamien distinctly remembers that it was known as "The Zoo" by many, including the media.

The student body came from two different neighborhoods, Uptown Harrisburg and Allison Hill, and they were not at all compatible. Jamien does not have fond memories of his time there.

"The school was out of control. There were fights and violence. If you walked to school, you never knew what might happen, or what you might see. I did not have the experiences of students in, say, the Camp Hill or Cumberland Valley school districts."

Unlike his time at middle school, Jamien does have fond memories of high school and the teachers and mentors who helped him realize his potential. In particular, he cited Coach Bill Owens, who required a commitment to mental discipline and respect.

## Black versus white: Didn't notice until teen years

Jamien didn't notice race as a young boy. He and his family and friends tended to stay in their Allison Hill neighborhood, or "The Hill." He doesn't remember a single white person living there.

What about stores? Or TV shows? Didn't he make comparisons in those situations?

*"When I got to college, I could barely read or write. I had to sit in a room with a mentor or counselor who helped me. I had come from a place where I was used because I could play sports, both football and basketball. But I didn't figure that out until I got to college and saw that my white counterparts had been well prepared."*

Jamien says he did not. As a child, he didn't venture into white neighborhoods. About television, he noted that "even back then there were a lot of Black TV shows to watch."

The race difference struck him later when, as a talented athlete, he saw that the races were compared.

“When we played suburban schools, we may have been athletic, or strong, or fast,” he said, “but we could hear the kids and the coaches saying that we were ‘dumb.’ Games between the Harrisburg School District teams and some of the districts on the West Shore were heated. Black versus white was what it was about for a long time.”

Looking at conditions today, Jamien has seen a noticeable improvement resulting from a greater diversity in suburban schools. Even so, he believes that, among some, the perception may still exist.

### Jamien is definitely not “dumb”

No, Jamien is not “dumb,” as he remembers being called. But his education at “The Zoo” didn’t give him the best start when the quality there was subordinated in the face of fights and violence. “Black schools from urban areas did not prepare us for college,” he said, “not just me, but many Black students.”

“When I got to college, I could barely read or write. I had to sit in a room with a mentor or counselor who helped me. I had come from a place where I was used because I could play sports, both football and basketball. But I didn’t figure that out until I got to college and saw that my white counterparts had been well prepared.”

It wasn’t for lack of trying. Jamien took the SAT a total of nine times. He entered West Virginia University via an NCAA regulation, Proposition 48, that made him eligible to play sports provided he met certain academic requirements. He subsequently transferred to IUP, where he earned a bachelor’s degree, and then earned a master’s degree from Lock Haven State University.

He now puts his education and entire life experiences to use for others. Jamien summarized it this way: “No matter what, I am proud to be a Harrisburg High graduate, and at this point I can work to change the cycle. My experiences made me who I am, and they gave me a skill set that can never be taught in any book.”

### So what goes on at the Y?

The Harrisburg Area YMCA comprises five other locations besides the Camp Curtin branch:



*The Y offers a variety of programs, including sports*



- ▶ East Shore YMCA, Front St., Harrisburg
- ▶ YMCA Center for Healthy Living, also in Harrisburg
- ▶ West Shore YMCA, Camp Hill
- ▶ YMCA at Northern York, Dillsburg
- ▶ Northern Dauphin County YMCA, Elizabethville

Once again in his quiet dignified voice, Jamien noted that the Camp Curtin Y is often called the “Black Y,” despite its diverse membership, while the Harrisburg Front Street Y is known as the “White Y.” That branding can be discouraging. What’s especially demoralizing to the Camp Curtin staff is when people visit and are visibly surprised at the facilities: very clean, well kept, and up to date. It feels to staff like people are saying, “How do you pull this off?”

No matter. Jamien works hard to prove that the negative preconceived notions are wrong. “I don’t have an issue there. I love working here. We’re doing it for a good cause, for this community and for its boys and girls.”

Seeking to provide a safe haven for youth to engage with their peers, broaden horizons, and get healthy, the Y offers fun and rewarding seasonal

programs such as summer camps, winter basketball leagues, spring lacrosse, and fall flag football. There's a gym, a computer lab, and a library. There's also SAT prep, mentoring, and chess.

All activities, whether sports, music, or arts, engage the participants physically, mentally, and spiritually. In sports, for example, the basic fundamentals of fair play are emphasized. But whatever the program, youth are encouraged to be caring, honest, respectful, and responsible, and all participants are nurtured to reach their potential. Friends are made to last a lifetime.

Regarding membership, the goal is to turn no one away. Membership rates are based on household income, and many programs are free. Most activities are youth oriented, but adult/family engagement is encouraged. The Y believes that communities are successful only if they give everyone the opportunity to be healthy, confident, connected, and secure.

Jamien explained further that the Y is a trauma center for the local community, where counselors are on staff to help people with everyday challenges, including job placement, education, clothing, and emergency needs like housing, domestic issues, or personal tragedies. There's also an alternative program for juveniles in trouble, where the staff works with the juveniles on life skills, including anger management. The program provides family meals and recreational opportunities, too, to create a positive atmosphere with successful outcomes.

To help the community with affordable housing, Jamien noted that the Y is building four new three-bedroom houses across the street after successfully applying for grants totaling \$1.2 million. Equally notable, as a USDA distribution site, the Y provides 1,000 meals every weekday at no charge for anyone who needs breakfast and/or lunch.

### **Working on relationships with the police**

"If you ask any kids in this building about how they feel about cops, they have concerns because of things they are seeing," explained Jamien. Last spring, after a spate of nearby shootings left members understandably nervous, the Y contracted with officers to be on site and visible. But Jamien was disappointed when some of the officers seemed to

make no attempt to cultivate relationships. It was a missed opportunity.

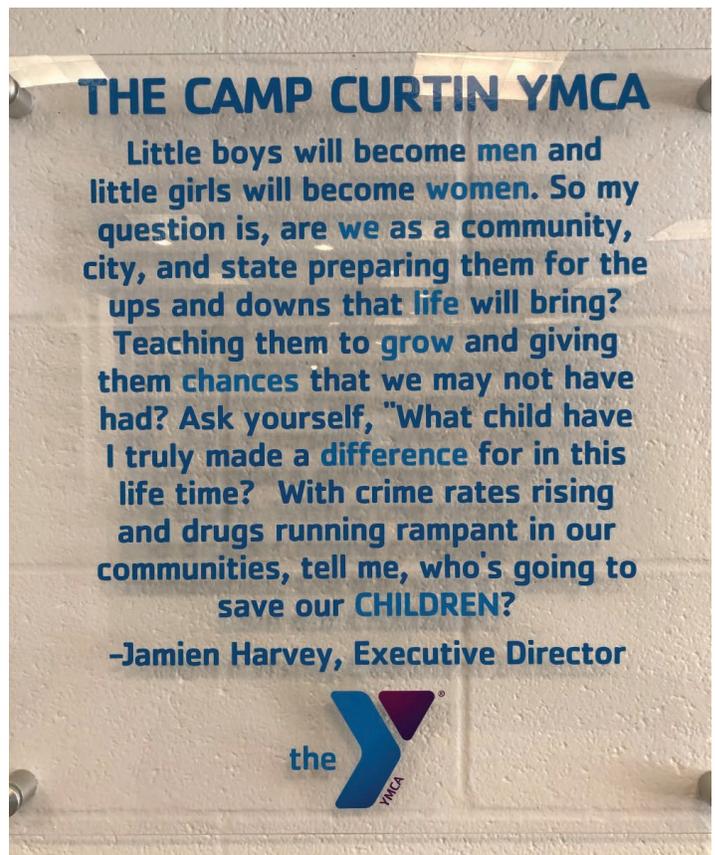
"We're trying to figure out ways to build relationships with the police," he said.

### **Going forward**

Asked what we at Trinity can do to build bridges between our West Shore neighborhoods and the Camp Curtin Y, Jamien looks forward to our continued support. He wants Trinity to know how much our support is appreciated by him, his staff, the board—and most important of all—by the community members they serve.

Asked more specifically what we at Trinity can do regarding his concerns about race, Jamien's answer was simple, sincere, and direct: "People just need to have hard and open conversations."

In that regard, we thank Jamien for beginning the conversation with *Trinity Stories*. ◀



*The plaque as you enter the Camp Curtin YMCA*

## MEET YVETTE KANE:

### *Trinity Member, Federal Judge, Founder of C.A.R.E.*

Federal Judge and Trinity member Yvette Kane believes that breaking racial barriers requires us to get close and dig deep to build personal relationships and foster trust. She cites Bryan Stevenson, founder/director of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama, who urges getting “proximate to the problem.”

“We need to get proximate,” she said. “Interacting closely with people of color is the best way to build relationships and trust.”



#### **History of public service**

Judge Kane has a long history of public service. Prior to her 1998 appointment to the U.S. District Court’s Middle District, she served as Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Previously, she practiced law with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Colorado Attorney General’s Office, the Denver District Attorney’s Office, and the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office. She was also Chief Counsel of the Pennsylvania Independent Regulatory Review Commission.

She’s seen the justice system up close, whether from on or off the bench, for matters both civil and criminal. In short, she knows what she’s saying.

#### **C.A.R.E. program launched in 2009**

In 2009, Judge Kane launched the Court-Assisted Re-Entry Program, known as C.A.R.E. A majority of high-risk offenders returned to prison within six months following their release, and Judge Kane wanted the court to take a visible role in mentoring and supervising offenders as they left prison.

This story is not only about how C.A.R.E. works, but also about its impact beyond the courtroom.

“We touch only a small number of people in C.A.R.E. directly, most of whom are Black offenders in Dauphin and York counties,” she said. “But I hope we are reaching the wider Black community indirectly as its members hear about friends, neighbors, and relatives who have participated in C.A.R.E.”

Besides Judge Kane, Trinity member Karen Snider was also active in C.A.R.E. as we explain later in this story.

### How C.A.R.E. works

Unlike Pennsylvania’s state prison system, there is no parole—or early release—from federal prison. Instead, federal offenders complete their full sentences, after which they undergo a term of “supervised release” monitored by the U.S. Probation Office.

Offenders who complete the C.A.R.E. program can have their terms of supervised release reduced by one-third. That potential reduction used to be the driving incentive for offenders to apply to participate; they were weary of reporting to authorities and wanted to be “off the papers.” However, according to Judge Kane, C.A.R.E. applicants now are more likely to cite another reason for joining the program.

“Offenders recognize they are coming out to a lonely world,” she said. “They want to be part of this little family that they’ve heard will support and acknowledge them. Their own family members may have moved on or even stopped contact.” She explained that offenders can also be daunted by technologies such as cell phones and other electronics that have passed them by during their incarceration. Transition is not easy.

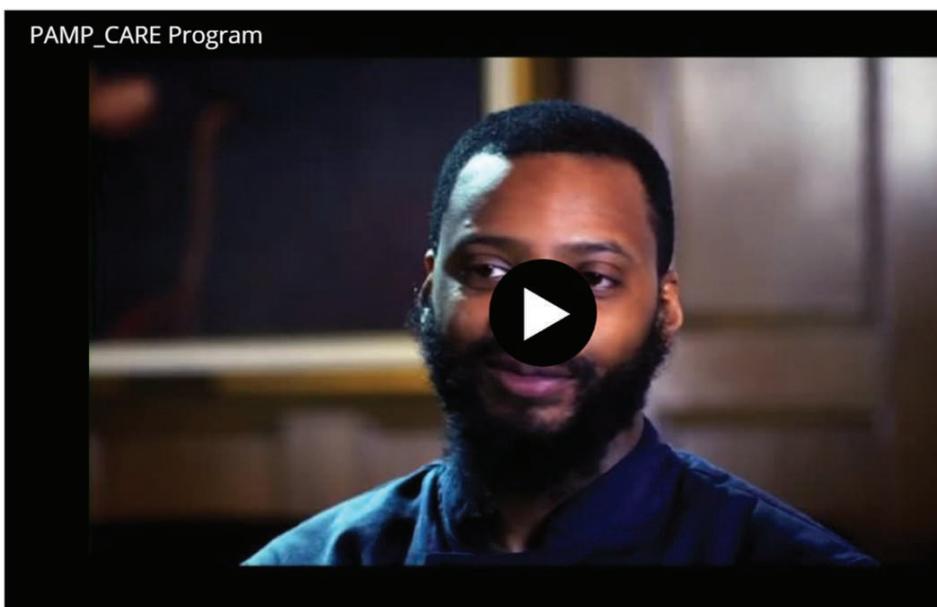
Incarcerated offenders must apply for C.A.R.E. and meet eligibility criteria. For example, they must agree to participate voluntarily and follow all requirements, achieve satisfactory scores on risk-assessment instruments, and cannot have committed a violent crime or any sexual offense. The majority of C.A.R.E. participants are offenders who received lengthy sentences for dealing drugs.

**Trinity member Karen Snider was an outstanding mentor**



It may take two years or more to progress through C.A.R.E.’s four phases, all outcome-driven. Offenders meet routinely with a team that assists them and evaluates their progress. The team includes the court, probation officers, other stakeholders, and mentors established in partnership with the Rotary Club of Harrisburg.

Mentors with their real-world experience are a distinguishing



Still shot of C.A.R.E. video.

Watch at [pamp.uscourts.gov/CARE/coming-home-care-program](http://pamp.uscourts.gov/CARE/coming-home-care-program)

part of C.A.R.E. These volunteers are often white retirees and thus may seem unlikely connectors. But the relationship that develops between mentors and “mentees” makes a lasting impression on both. Mentors establish regular contact and are available as frequently as needed to help with networking, family or health issues, and schooling. Offenders are grateful to be treated not as criminals but as people looking to better themselves.

Karen Snider, a Trinity member who died in January 2017 and whose husband, Jack, died in June of this year, was an outstanding mentor who was memorialized as a tireless advocate for human services. The KS CARE Fund was established after her death to seek donations for the extraordinary needs of C.A.R.E. participants as they re-enter the community. See more at <https://kscarefund.org/AboutKSCAREFund.html>.

**C.A.R.E.’s reputation spreads beyond program boundaries**

Word about the treatment and cultivation of C.A.R.E. participants has spread to the Black community, just as Judge Kane has hoped. It’s not easy,



Lamar Brown

she explained, for Black offenders to enter a judicial system and, more specifically, to walk into a courtroom in which the majority of those in charge are white. That visual imbalance by itself is enough to foster suspicion and mistrust, and to raise the question of whether a Black offender will be accorded the same treatment as his white counterpart.

C.A.R.E.’s reputation for building relationships and trust became evident in Judge Kane’s courtroom during an October 2019 hearing that had absolutely nothing to do with C.A.R.E. It was

a resentencing hearing for Lamar Brown, a man serving life without parole since 2003. His original sentence was based on federal guidelines after a third felony drug conviction, but changes in federal law made him eligible for the resentencing.

Mr. Brown’s prison time had been exemplary. Supporters who knew of his redemption filled the courtroom, and several spoke on his behalf. Many there had heard of C.A.R.E. and the way the program had worked hard to build relationships and foster trust. Judge Kane sensed an unusual atmosphere, not fear or distrust that court officials often sense. People were not afraid to enter the courtroom, and their faces showed both hope and respect.

Their hope was fulfilled when Lamar Brown walked out a free man.

**Getting “proximate to the problem”**

“No one should feel fear or intimidation in the courtroom,” said Judge Kane. “People of all colors should enter with the expectation that the system will be fair, whatever the outcome.” Unfortunately, the expectations of Black people have often been different, but the C.A.R.E. program is working hard to bring about change.

Getting “proximate to the problem” is a huge step. Judge Kane and those who administer C.A.R.E. are enthusiastic facilitators. ◀

To read more about C.A.R.E., go to [pamp.uscourts.gov/CARE/home](http://pamp.uscourts.gov/CARE/home)

*“We need to get proximate,” Kane said.  
“Interacting closely with people of color is the best way to build relationships and trust.”*



*Dr. Ryan and Kellie Argot with children (l-r) S, Z, and L in 2008: Trinity directory*

## MEET THE ARGOT FAMILY:

*Trinity members, all-American family, and (almost) typical Cumberland County residents*

Picture this scene.

A seven-year-old girl is in her second-grade classroom. Let's call her "Z." She's beautiful, with dark chin-length hair, dark eyes, and a ready smile, just like other girls in her class. Like them, she's also an American, in an American school, right here in Cumberland County.

"What's wrong with your nose?" asked a classmate. "It doesn't look right."

Z was devastated. Her nose? It didn't look right? What was wrong with it?

She told her mother about the comment as soon as she could, and for months afterward she begged to have her nose “fixed” so it would look like the noses of the other girls.

It was likely the first time Z noticed that people viewed her differently. She was a person of color. Up until then, she was just, well, Z, with hardly a care in the world, and innocent of race.



*Z in second grade*

### **Birthplace in Korea, home in America**

Z was born in Korea (2005). She came to her Cumberland County home as an infant and was adopted by Dr. Ryan and Kellie Argot, both white. Z is 15 now.

Z joined her older brother, “S,” also born in Korea (2003) and also adopted as an infant by the Argots. He’s now 17.

The youngest Argot child and their second daughter, “L,” was born in Korea, too, in late 2006. Like her siblings, she came to her home with the Argots as an infant, and they adopted her shortly thereafter. L is now 13.

The three Argot children have lived here almost since birth. This is their home. All three are American citizens.

And there is—and was—absolutely nothing wrong with Z’s nose.

### **Comments that Hurt**

Was the comment about Z’s nose racist? Or was it instead made innocently by a 7-year-old white girl who noticed that Z’s nose looked different from her own, and who intended no hurt?

Regardless, it did hurt. Based on her understanding of the context surrounding that comment, Kellie believes that the girl was being unkind deliberately. As young as she was, the girl could have been hearing things at home other than God loves all people of all colors, whether different from

us or the same.

Kellie has also heard derogatory remarks about the shape of her children’s eyes.

She’s even heard that some have taunted, “Go back where you came from.”

“White parents of non-white children,” said Kellie, “find it very hard to accept in this day and age that people think it’s okay not to accept someone based on skin color and to make disparaging comments.”

“The number of people who have committed suicide because of derogatory comments based on race is appalling,” said Kellie. But she said that reporting such comments to someone in authority—at school, for example—can make it worse for the child.



*S, Z, and L in one of Kellie’s favorite photos, 2009*

## Are they your children?

“I can usually tell if people are asking questions because they are honestly curious or if they are looking for gossip fodder,” Kellie said.

When out and about as a white family with non-white children, the Argots have been asked if the children are theirs. The question can seem intrusive rather than curious when asked of parents whose children are a different race. It sounds like an assumption: “These children don’t look anything like you, so can they really be yours?”

When white parents are asked the same question about their biological children, it likely sounds different: “These children look like you, so they must be yours.”

“We need to stop and think about our actions and what we say,” said Kellie, “and not react viscerally.” The Argots understand both curiosity and speculation, but they also understand that common courtesy requires a respect for privacy and boundaries.

## The Kellie and Ryan love story

Kellie volunteered to talk about the circumstances leading to the adoptions. *Trinity Stories* understands that not all parents with similar stories might want to talk as freely, and we thank her for sharing her experience so openly.

Kellie and Ryan met when both were volunteers in Columbia, Maryland, for the



June 12, 1999

Special Olympics. She grew up in Baltimore, and he in the Poconos. It was a relatively quick courtship: they started dating in February 1998 and were engaged that May. They married about a year later in June.

Prior to their marriage, Kellie and Ryan made plans to have both adopted and biological children. Accordingly, it was natural to turn solely to adoption when Kellie discovered she was infertile. Each of their families had adoption experiences; Kellie’s cousin, in fact, had adopted from Korea.

Working with an agency

that handled both domestic and international adoptions, the Argots decided to proceed with adopting from Korea. Unlike some international adoptions, Korea ensured that adoptive parents would be provided with the child’s history. It also seemed prescient that Ryan had a black belt in Tang Soo Do, a Korean martial art similar to Tae Kwan Do.

## More race questions

Early on, the Argots learned to expect and to answer questions in addition to those already discussed in this story.

### “Do the children understand English?”

*Yes, they understand English. They’re Americans. English is the language they have learned and spoken since infancy.*

### “Do they eat American food?”

*Yes, they eat American food. They’re Americans. They eat the same foods as anyone else in America.*

### “Are they siblings?”

*Yes, the children are siblings. They’re all Argots.*

**“Christ wants us all to be better,” Kellie said, “and to treat people well no matter their race. We’re all sinners, but we can strive to be better. I think that’s the core of Jesus’ teaching.”**

**“Do they carry paperwork to keep them from being deported?”**

*No, they don't need to carry paperwork to keep them from being deported. They are official, full-fledged American citizens. Their citizenship was granted after Kellie and Ryan applied for it after the children's adoption. They have all the rights of any other American citizen. They cannot be deported.*

**Where to from here?**

It's too early to know what the three Argot children plan for their future careers. Oldest son, S, is still formulating his plan; daughter Z is thinking of medicine or maybe even fashion; daughter L is thinking a becoming a surgeon or possibly an actress.

The adult Argots have set fine examples; they are working parents who value education, independent thinking, social justice, and their Lutheran faith. Dr. Ryan Argot is with the West Shore School District as Director of Federal Programs; Kellie is with Boyer and Ritter, CPAs, as Executive Assistant.

The Argots have tried to incorporate the birth culture of their children as much as they are able, but the ultimate decision on the extent and intensity is left to S, Z, and L. Kellie and Ryan will follow their lead.

“I'm proud of our children,” said Kellie. “We love them. It's pretty awesome to be their parents—to

see what they are doing to change the world for the better. They're all Generation Z children, and GenZ is really good at getting things done.”

Regarding the Argot family's experiences with racism, Kellie is passionate about improvement. “Christ wants us all to be better,” she said, “and to treat people well no matter their race. We're all sinners, but we can strive to be better. I think that's the core of Jesus' teaching.” ◀

*The Argots understand both curiosity and speculation, but they also understand that common courtesy requires a respect for privacy and boundaries.*

*At Kellie and Ryan's request, and to respect the privacy of the Argot siblings, we used initials instead of full names, and we used older photos rather than current ones.*



*A fun family pic in Trinity's Fellowship Hall circa 2010*

## TRINITY STAFF MEMBERS

### *start conversations about race*

- ▶ *We believe that God creates and loves all humans.*
- ▶ *We commit to being bridge builders by listening, sharing, and learning how our life experiences may be different from those of others.*
- ▶ *We grieve actions of violence and commit to being peacemakers in the name of Christ.*

*--Statement of Trinity Council and Staff*

The statement above was approved by Trinity's Council over the summer. Organizations sometimes post such statements on social media or preach about them without taking further action. But shouldn't organizations do more than just state their position? At Trinity, unless we take the initiative to talk to people of other races, how can we possibly commit "to being bridge builders by listening, sharing, and learning how our life experiences may be different from those of others"?

The answer is that we cannot. Inaction is the very behavior that will defeat our bridge-building declaration.

To that end, in addition to developing the stories that precede this section, *Trinity Stories* asked Trinity staff to reach out to people of color or to those in relationships with people of color. We wanted to learn if our contacts had experienced racism, as well as when they first became aware of racial differences.

The process of starting such conversations was not easy. We grappled with self-awareness and self-examination. For example, some of us knew

no people of color except maybe in passing. Some of us knew people of color only as acquaintances and found the idea of reaching out to be awkward and uncomfortable. Some of us had friends of color but had never discussed race with them. Some of us were simply unable or reluctant to reach out for other reasons, or were declined. In whichever of those scenarios we place ourselves, this entire process became insightful and instructive.

The staff conversations are summarized in the pages that follow. They've taken some serious amounts of time to compile and complete—we've been working on these and the stories in this publication for months. But we are trying, and we encourage all people of Trinity to start or continue their own conversations as well.

*NOTE: Some of the people with whom we spoke asked that their names not be included in a public document—some not wishing to offend, others concerned about pushback from online trolls, some feeling they could be more direct anonymously. Trinity Stories respects those wishes and in such cases does not include names.*

**Tim Koch started a conversation with a well-known Trinity friend and outstanding tenor who is often a guest soloist here**

**Christyan Seay** cannot point to any life experiences of racism. He wondered if being in music and arts might make a difference. Regardless, he grew up in Steelton in a Black neighborhood, but his school was integrated and thus he did not stand out as being different.

Chris has heard stories from his mother about her experiences in the 1960s, but they were experiences that do not mirror his own. He knows that racism does exist, and he said that his “heart aches” when he hears about it. Still, he cannot point to a time when someone did not hire him because he is Black, or when

someone let him go because he is Black, or when someone said racist things to him when he was a child or in college. In fact, the few times he’s noticed a visible reaction to his race is on occasion when he’s been hired to sing, sight unseen, based only on a referral or recommendation. Upon meeting, he realizes that the person who hired him was expecting someone white. Chris might notice just a slight hesitation, but no hostility, and then it’s just like, “Hi, Chris, nice to meet you,” and he goes on to do the best job that he can do. To be sure, it’s the job and the voice that we at Trinity have always loved.

**Danelle Andrews started a conversation with Trinity members Adrian and Kate Murray and arranged for Trinity Stories to interview them.**

See “Meet The Murray Family” on page 4.



## Steve Kauffman started a conversation with a long-time Black friend from Harrisburg city



Steve's friend, **TB**, said she feels blessed that she never experienced racism on a personal level even though she has witnessed how racism has affected other people of color. TB was raised in a poor inner-city Philadelphia community where she

said the people were not taught to hate or to have a problem with the other race. "We were surrounded by our own kind and it worked for us," she said. "We were told that whites have it better, but that was about it." She added that, as a lighter-skinned Black person, she

would sometimes pass herself off as white. It was later in life that she saw some people express hate toward people of color, but that experience did not happen to her.

More recently, she witnessed a group of about 25 Black people (teens through mid-twenties) in a fight near her home in Harrisburg. Someone called the police, and she noted the different way the two responding officers handled the situation. The first white officer talked to the group, while the second white officer drove down the street very fast, stopped quickly, opened his trunk, and brought out a sprayer of some sort in a move she felt was intimidating. "This made me pause," she remembered. "It's hard to understand how someone could appear to hate a group that never did anything but try to overcome their own odds....Believe me, the Blacks and people of color are not trying to take over, just be seen as equal."

## Paul Hensel started a conversation with a young man who dated a Black classmate in high school

Paul Hensel spoke with a **young white man** who in ninth grade—nearly 20 years ago—dated a Black classmate for a short time. The two had started out as friends. Paul asked if the boy had experienced negative comments for dating a girl of a different race. The conversation was very short since, no, the boy had experienced no racist comments. The two remained friends until the girl moved out of the area.



**Peter Fox started a conversation with a biracial longtime Trinity Youth Group member who is now a sophomore at Millersville State University and a current teacher in Peter’s “Friends of Jesus” class**

**Jonice Storer** grew up in Camp Hill, where she was one of the few people of color in her school. “I’ve experienced more microaggressions and hesitant encounters more than actual acts of racism,” she explained. In high school, for example, she had people ask to touch her hair, or they just did it without asking. She shared comments that were made routinely: “You act so white” or “You’re the whitest Black girl I’ve ever met.” At the time, she simply shrugged off the comments and didn’t know what to say.

“I didn’t feel as though I could say something because I wasn’t fully Black,” she explained. “Being a biracial person, I always felt like I couldn’t really speak up about racial problems growing up. It wasn’t until I went to college where I really was surrounded by more people of color and could express my true feelings. I can’t pinpoint an experience of racism, but I feel as though I will always experience hesitation or looks from strangers at any given time.”

**Stephanie Maurer, who conducted the interviews and wrote the stories for this publication, also started a conversation with a friend of Asian descent**

**Hang Nguyen and her husband, Quy**, came to America from Vietnam in 2001. They became citizens in 2007 and live in the Harrisburg suburbs, where they have built a successful business. Their son, Kenny, was born in America. Hang, who goes by the name of Christine, has heard stories of racism and discrimination but says that her family has experienced neither racism nor discrimination here.

Christine cannot understand why it is that we all “don’t stand together and get along.” If the conflict were between two countries, she could understand better. “But we are the same country. I’m very lucky and very grateful to have come here and to live and work here.”

**Kelly Falck started a conversation with Trinity member Debbie Balasundram and arranged for Trinity Stories to interview her**

See “Meet Debbie Balasundram” on page 8.

## **Pastor Jack Horner started a conversation with a Trinity member of Chinese descent who served in the U.S. Navy**

**Rear Admiral (Ret.) Jonathan Alex Yuen and his wife, Sandra,** transferred to Trinity in 2004. They now live in Mountain View, CA., where they moved following Jon's 2018 retirement as Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command, headquartered in Mechanicsburg.

Reflecting upon their family experiences, Jon shared these thoughts:

"My life has been blessed by God, and our family has enjoyed the benefits of American life. Both Sandra's and my grandparents

immigrated from China because they saw a land with values that resonated with them. Their sacrifice and vision brought us to America to enjoy its blessings. One of those blessings is the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that individuals in our country contain. We have not been subject to the daily oppression of racism. But as members of the body of Christ, we know it is our task to listen with love to those who have."

"The Yuen family has witnessed great acts of love in our travels in the service. We have seen families form bonds from common ground with one another to help in times of need. God has blessed us with many friends and welcoming communities. Having been a stranger in many places has been one of the gifts God has bestowed upon our family. Having this experience, we reflect on who we might welcome as a stranger next."

## **Pastor John Brock asked his wife, Marianne Brock, to start a conversation with a Black ELCA minister who attended seminary with Marianne**

The **Rev. Timothy Taylor** serves a congregation in Fort Myers, FL. He grew up in Newark, New Jersey, and is a graduate of Susquehanna University and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Pastor Tim and his wife, Sharon, also an ELCA pastor, have been offering workshops and presentations on racial awareness and diversity for more than 30 years.

Marianne asked him if he is weary of being asked for his perspective and experience with racism as a Black man in an interracial marriage, especially in this time of nationwide unrest. His response was this: "No, because after 30 years, the conversations that we have been facilitating are still needed just as much. And I am encouraged, because this is the first time that people are asking, 'How can I be different?'"

Pastor Tim recorded a sermon in August that he encourages Trinity Stories to share. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/timothy.taylor.92/videos/10222505893452537>; the actual sermon begins at about the four-minute mark after prayer and readings. He talks frankly about his experiences in a style both unapologetic and non-confrontational. His descriptions are eye-opening.



**Pastor Liz Frey started a conversation with a Black friend with whom she attended high school**

**Pastor Liz's friend** wrote that he grew up in a predominantly white neighborhood and that school was difficult for a variety of reasons. The main reason, he said, was racism that he experienced daily. He identified two types of racism: blatant and subtle.

He described blatant racism as name-calling and other actions based on the color of his skin and coming from "people who absolutely hated me." He wrote that dog poop had been smeared on his backpack and that he was spit on and threatened. "I had jokes made about me," he remembered. "I was called the N-word, porch monkey, gorilla, among many other horrible disgusting names, I was yelled at and told I was going to burn on the cross. I was routinely left out of group activities whether in school or out of school, even finding a seat

on the school bus was difficult because no one wanted me to sit by them or near them."

The more subtle form of racism is what he now understands is microaggression, and it came from people who were supposedly his friends. Comments he heard routinely were these: "Of course you're a fast runner, you're Black," or "You're the whitest Black person I know," or "You're not like other Black people," or "You talk and act white," or "You're not really Black." He said that such comments, thought by some to be compliments, were "actually really hurtful and further pushed stereotypes and ideas of what they thought a stereotypical Black person was. Because I wasn't listening to rap music or sagging my pants and because I 'talked proper and like a white person,'

they differentiated me from my Blackness and didn't see me as Black, which was hurtful."

Only later in life did he come to know that he wasn't ugly, despite having been told differently throughout his school years, even by his friends. The people calling him ugly held a white standard of beauty, he said. "They didn't know anything else other than white features and white beauty—blonde hair, blue eyes, thin nose, white skin. So then when you have someone who looks like me, curly hair and black skin and a big nose, it's completely different than what they are used to." It was hard to seek support because he felt that faculty and staff held racist views, too. "I felt very alone and unprotected," he said. "I realize now that high school was just a small view, a microcosm for things I'd experience in the bigger world outside of high school."

Recently people from high school have reached out to apologize, recounting specific incidents and microaggressions, some of which he remembers "like it was yesterday" and others that he had forgotten simply "because there were so many." He is thankful to see growth and change, but he still feels deep emotional scars. "Time, forgiveness and prayer are the ways I'm healing from the hurt and using my platform and my voice to fight for equality and respect for everyone!"



# Update: Honor Our Past, Plan Our Future



**Thank you!** Your support has made our preschool more safe, secure, and refreshed. Demolition began late summer; preschool opened on October 5 with these improvements throughout the entire area:

- ▶ Fire protection with sprinklers and alarm
- ▶ Framing and security doors
- ▶ New ceiling tiles and paint
- ▶ Floors stripped and re-waxed
- ▶ Total cleaning, including carpets
- ▶ Reception counter and window in director's office

The next phase of **Honor Our Past, Plan Our Future** includes renovation of our library/family lounge, adjacent bathrooms, and hallway. Included are new floors, ceilings, and paint; new bathrooms, enlarged and ADA-compliant; and security doors.

**Your new and continued contributions are gratefully accepted and important to the project's success. Use the enclosed envelope, or give online via our website at "Donate."**

Stay updated at [www.trinitycamphill.org/planourfuture](http://www.trinitycamphill.org/planourfuture).



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*Investing in Trinity is a response to God - God who is at work in our lives and ministries, who has called this community into being, and who has promised us life eternal.*

*Investing in Trinity means pooling our resources of time, talents, and treasures to spread the word of God's great love and mercy as we worship, connect, and serve.*

*Your gifts allow more stories to be told and more lives to be transformed.  
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