

COMMENTS from BRIDGE BUILDING TO EQUITY WORKSHOP- November 11, 2017 held at Community Church of the Monterey Peninsula, Carmel, CA

The most valuable part about this workshop was the openness of the participants. I felt safe. Well done! Trudy S.

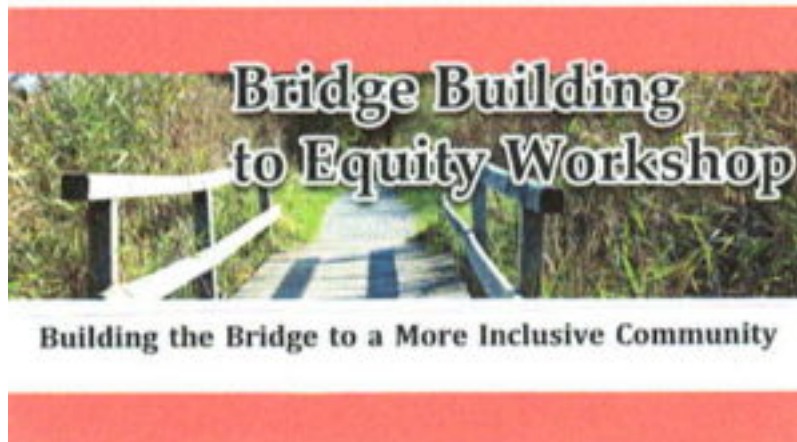
I liked the visual of the Bridge Building example and the “inclusive” lunch. It allowed us to get to know each other better and continue with the workshop conversations.

Thanks for the great experiences. It was a lot of fun and hearing some other views from other people. Great job! L.H.

Thanks for your exclusive research and efforts. Your energy is spreading throughout the community and the area and the world!

The dialogue, connection, and education were most valuable about this workshop.

I enjoyed breaking up into small group work and got a lot out of it. Well Done!



Comments from the June 2, 2017 Workshop held at the Monterey Peace & Justice Center, Seaside, CA

"Exploring Tools to Help Dissolve Racism & Other Discriminations"

This was a unique event and I appreciate how much preparation was involved. The careful and thorough planning made for an effective, flowing and valuable learning experience- not to mention getting to meet lots of new people who are struggling to end racism. Well done. Thank you! Catherine Crockett

Nice balance of activity, lecture and video. Karen Lehman

I love the variety of teacher methods used. Some are visual and easy to remember. The video clips are great. Sylvia Shih

Very good workshop. You could do this workshop at CSUMB or other places. Persay Bryant

Great job LaVerne! The projects you had us to do really influence the brain and what I was able to bring into greater understanding because of the kinesthetics. You've tackled a huge arena and you've done a very thorough coverage with a tapestry of elements that work together so beautifully. Rita Thangaraj

Thank you so much for organizing and delivering the workshop! I really enjoyed the day and appreciated the opportunity for community building around such an important and (unfortunately) relevant topic in today's culture. NN

**Comments from San Benito County CalRTA (California Retired Teachers Association)
10/4/17 held at San Juan Oaks Golf Club, Hollister, CA**

We cannot allow racism to continue "today" as in the past. The world needs more peace more than ever.

As a current educator, I teach children of all races. I'm proud to say, in my eyes, there is no difference in the children. Also, I see the acceptance of the children by the other.

This presentation spoke to me because I know not everyone feels the same way but I believe children are the future of ending racism. Beth

I grew up in the mid-west and this brought back the memories of that time. This was quite dramatic and brought home all those memories.

Your presentation reminded me of how far we have come and how far we have to go. Geoff Holland

Thank you for your presentation! Wishing peace and love for all people!

Love is the answer. Terry

Brought back many memories having lived in the south until I was 10 years old.

Very engaging presentation. It helped me think of love and peace and how much we need this today!!!

I was a good way to help us feel how "the other" (Black people of color) are treated different (discriminated against). These can help us feel more compassion and understanding the frustration of another. Thank you for your bravery. C. Ponce

Moving presentation that brought back many memories of my teenage years. Loved the music piece and I can't wait to read the book.

Your ability to play the different characters was very interesting. It made the whole idea come to life. Thank you for being here today.

The times we live in and the DACA, dreamer, the haters that don't want to see love and peace but we shall overcome today one person at a time. Very enjoyable and timely presentation. Ann

Very important message for our time. E.Y.

**Comments from Carmel Valley Community Chapel- book presentation attendees
September 28th, 2017**

It was important to see the colored/white separations in the bus experience through the eyes of an innocent child. A hard education for her to see that honoring one's elders did not cross color lines. CY

You made it real for me. For me, I could feel the frustration and confusion of that little black girl- her first realization that the world is not fair! Thank you for your passion. Nancy R

Your presentation was very powerful. I didn't grow up in this country. I wasn't exposed to discrimination in my country as I only saw it on tv and in the movies. To see you evoke what your experience was like makes it real for me.

What struck me tonight was the tragedy of a child who knows nothing of bigotry and prejudice being taught to know her "place" in a white racist society. The violence done to a young, energetic, curious and innocent spirit is appalling. No child should ever have to "learn" that he or she is less than. Rick

I appreciate the interactive nature of your presentation. The "stage setting" and rows of pews helped bring reality to the bus situation. Susan

LaVerne's dramatization gave me a multi-dimensional feeling more of my senses than reading the book myself and it was a conversation between my eyes and my brain. So much more feeling as each character is experienced more vivid, more felt. Ellen

My heart is sad because I grew up in the south and experienced all of this that you spoke about- a lot of the sadness and unfairness. Linda Montenegro

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS & REMARKS from Dramatic Author/Lecture Presentation
held at Esalen Institute on August 23, 2017**

I appreciated the dramatization versus just talking. Well done! Seeing things like discrimination from the perspective of a child was helpful.

Ms. McLeod, I would like to acknowledge you for providing us an opportunity for empathy to arise inside of an immersion experience of racism, separation and degradation. Your work is of value. Thank you! K. Elder

That presentation touched me very deeply. I was moved to tears and my heart felt deep pain. JL

Thank you for reminding me to be awake, aware and alert. It was also very helpful to send love to the perpetrators of violence and racism. I shall carry that with me and use it on my journey. Thank you again.

The presentation aroused deep grief for our history and desire to not repeat the past. Ben Red

Prejudice is real and there are all kinds. Things are at times very subtle. More awareness is needed. TP

People are different in many ways. If we are aware of this in life, we can appreciate our world and fill our world with love. If we are not full of love for our self, it will be hard to find love for people that have differences. ML

I was struck by how our society allowed systematic psychological traumatization to be perpetrated every day. JH

Love in the beginning. Love in the end.

This brought up humiliation. Feeling helpless against societal norms even though I don't necessarily agree. Carlos

The presentation brought up the memory of my father explaining to me about the different drinking fountains as we drove through the south in the 50's. Vicki

We must stay AWAKE and COMPASSIONATE. We are not separate from this reality- HOPE & ACTION. PD

Thank you for your courage and inspiration. I pledge to build bridges to equity. The word UNIOPAN means one of all. We need a vision of where we are going. Simple vision like, all are fed. All are safe. It really is simple. Let's make this one planet a garden.

This presentation is the profound tragedy of racial initiation and bigotry to a 6-year old girl.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS from Dramatic Author/Speaker Presentation at Whites for Racial Equity on August 17, 2017 held at Unitarian Universalist Church, Carmel, CA

A powerful presentation, brought to life by including the participation of the audience.

I was holding back a flood of tears and was surprised at the depth of pain I contacted.

An emotionally moving and intellectually stimulating evening- Thank you so much for opening my heart and mind.

Please do as much live dramatization as possible. We grew up being told nothing only “black people can’t swim in the swimming pool” for example. The best education ever! Your special gift touched my heart.

Thank you LaVerne for asking us to attempt the very difficult by sending love to those who hate.
TA

This presentation does so much to visualize what it was like growing up in 1954. This shows all kind of people from all walks of life should and must be viewed as equal human beings. Please do more of these presentations that shape the world you desire to be.

Thank you for writing the book and sharing an evening that took us into the book at such a pivotal moment in history. Bob Sadler

It was heart-breaking to witness the little girl- excited, open & curious- being shamed and overpowered by the brutal and inhumane system of racism.

You did well. Got to keep hearing, “treat everyone the same.”

How can I feel or express love for those who hate and hurt others? It is a challenge that I continue to struggle with.

My favorite part was the interaction between mother and daughter on the bus. Powerful demonstration about the institution of racism.

Although the word “RACE “is commonly used to differentiate between colors, cultures, ethnicities, religions and classes of our human family. The reality is that we are all one RACE- the HUMAN RACE (which first emerged in Africa!). Thank you for your presentation.
Katharina Harlow

I grew up in Claremont where Merlie Evers brought her family after Medgar was killed. They were the first black family in my hometown. Her daughter Rene was in my girl scout troop. I found myself reflecting that Rene may have probably had an experience like the one you dramatized. Ann McDowell

Reminded me of being in Florida by ship from Australia and traveling from Ft. Lauderdale to NYC by Greyhound bus. I was shocked and appalled to see the signs for bathrooms, water fountains, etc. as well as the attitude towards African Americans who were people just like us.
Pauline

I was born far away in my country never had racial issues, though the lack of interracial co-existence may speak about it. Humanity gets their ways to express fear. I am sorry for the history today and from my foreign eyes seem surrealistic that these issues exist. I embrace the pain and love of this presentation. Thank you LaVerne. Liz V.

I was taken by the little girl's confusion about why there were so many signs in so many places that were labeled "white" and "colored"- how the two words seemed new to her from her pronunciation to spelling of them. I really loved her chatter, trying to figure all of this out- to make sense of it somehow when in reality there was no sense to it at all.

Great presentation and bringing us to do some real thinking!

I was most impacted by the way white and black expected the young black girl to learn and fall in line with "the system" for very different reasons. Your enactment of each character was enlightening. Thank You.

LaVerne makes the reality of racism come alive to educate and open our hearts.

Stupendous one-woman, one-act tragic soliloquy about many voices

Thank you for this powerful presentation-very moving. Brought up a lot of disturbing memories of traveling through the South with my family as a child in the 50's.

Loved being able to stand together and sing "We Shall Overcome."

AUDIENCE COMMENTS from Dramatic Presentation at The Breakthrough Men's Community & The Village Project on 4/2/17 held at Breakthrough Center, Seaside, CA

Acceptance without understanding is merely mental. Dialogue, literature, theatre and sharing experiences with people from different backgrounds and cultures and appearances is key to learning and understanding at the cellular and emotional level. Ellen Gannon

I was raised in a small west Texas town in the 1940's-50's that had sundown ordinances which required that African Americans leave the city limits by sunset. Seeing LaVerne's performance put me in touch with the mindset of whites of that era that considered such an atrocious perspective to be "normal." I didn't have the opportunity nor privilege of knowing an African American until I was in my 20's. Thank you LaVerne for the memory and for the important work you are doing. Bill Herr

Very moving- never seen an author act out their book. It was a lot of talent on display. The impact and persuasiveness of subservience – intergenerational trauma. Association of Black Psychologists

Thank you for the honest, thoughtful and thought-provoking (emotion-provoking) presentation. We are a multi-colored society, but it is truly the kids who tend to not see color!

Growing up in California, I had not experienced racism until I went to Alabama in 1971. It was then that I actually saw what I had read or been told about. Thank you for your presentation. I hope you take your play to schools. Nancy

Thank you for your great presentation. Keep up the good work! Miriam Low

Your book and your presentation are timely. More white people need more experience with people of color. What you are doing is ever helpful and needed. We all need to mix more. Your acting out of this is great. There are so many different situations in all of our many States. Judy

AUDIENCE COMMENTS FROM CaIRTA Division 29, February 15th, 2017 held at Rancho Canada Golf Club, Carmel, CA

LaVerne reenacted a scene from a snapshot of a life of a child in the 1950's. She made an emotional connection with her audience demonstrating how not to treat others. Indeed, all people deserve fairness and equality.

A brilliant and compelling evocation and synopsis of a child's experience confronting divided worlds. Thank You!

An inspiring one-woman show of history-from the eyes of prejudice and humanity. Paula Browning

A realistic sketch of a divided world back in the 50's. Good presentation for the schools and groups because today so many young people of color do not understand what their ancestors have gone through. Cheryl McGhan

Considering our current state of government, this book and author reminds people to remain vigilant. Thanks for your work!

Let's not go back [to those early times]. We are One people in love and compassion, we can heal ignorance.

LaVerne gave a moving presentation from an excerpt of her book about how racial prejudice affected a child in the 1960's. Very well done. A must read for all.

I enjoyed your presentation. Yes; we must stick together and stay positive and never let those times of segregation return.

LaVerne gives a lively and compelling performance in readings of her book, *Corn Hollow*. She gives an insight into the characters and a desire to read the whole story. Patricia Domingo

In LaVerne's expressive enactment of various characters in the deep south, my heart was most touched by her portrayal of a vibrant little girl confused by her initial awareness of scorn and rejection. Her natural, innocent curiosity perceived as offensive, is a sad stunting of a sense of wonder for any child, such a loss for all of humanity. Kudos to you, LaVerne for, with compassionate assertion deepening awareness, energizing the momentum of a movement to integrated peace. Vivian Danzer

I felt a lot of empathy for the Black child who just wanted to see the yarn and who was confused by segregation.

Timely. Racism was and is the result of categorizing a group of people as separate thereby making it easier to dehumanize them. I fear the same thing is occurring now with respect to labeling one another as conservative or liberal, Republican or Democrat rather than recognizing that we are all human beings deserving of love, kindness, and compassion. Katherine Malengo

Very good presentation-thought provoking-interesting.

Coming from the East Bakersfield High School which had about equal numbers of Blacks, Whites and Mexicans, I never thought there was any differences. Then I went to Nevada and Missouri and saw signs: Coloreds Only, Coloreds Not Allowed, Whites Only. Even folks from India could not be served in restaurants and hotels would not allow dark-skinned persons to rent a room. What a difference from Bakersfield!

Comments from Dramatic Presentation at the Carmel Woman's Club, January 16th, 2017, Carmel, CA

The dramatization of a chapter in your book helped see a glimpse of what it was like for a child growing up in the south and the injustice that occurred. J.M.

I enjoyed listening and watching you doing different roles. Loved it! Thank you so much for sharing your story with us!

Excellent. Brilliant. Timely. Channeled. The ten-minute question/comment section proved valuable with individual stories of personal experiences. I can see a follow-up of these stories, inspired by *Corn Hollow* and published. Thank you so much for doing this and being LaVerne. Much Love, Ellen

What a fitting day to honor Martin Luther King Jr. by somebody who'd live during the segregation. There is still a lot of work to do. M.

Excellent presentation. Thank You.

Thank you for manning all those memories current and timely. We can never forget.

Great dramatic presentation! I am looking forward to reading *Corn Hollow* to find out the rest of the story. Linda J.

A powerful book and presentation. Relevant to our times. Paul M. Finnegan