



# Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge (EPEP) Backstory - Executive Director

Now 10 years with Eastside Pathways Backbone, I can personally say that as a white woman my learning and understanding of racial equity has been a constant evolution. Listening, practicing, failing, succeeding, listening, practicing succeeding, failing, and so on. This forward and backwards pathway to understanding racial equity continues today. I know this is true for many others in our Partnership as well.

For me, the Summer of 2014 was an inflection point which impacted the Partnership and my life forever. A dozen or so individuals representing Eastside Pathways Partners, the Backbone, and community individuals attended the Pacific Educational Groups' (PEG) Regional Conference in Portland, Oregon. It was the starting point to the afore mentioned cycle and the beginning of striving towards intentional and inclusive conversations for the Partnership. Today, we find ourselves at another inflection point to do what we do best... come together and grow in our collaboration.

Since that time, other instrumental events have influenced the racial equity journey of the Backbone and Partnership. The Eastside Pathways 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, the national and global reckoning of the impact of racism, conversations with other StriveTogether communities from across the country also doing this work, and guidance from leaders of color in Eastside Pathways, along with the Board to name a few. This has moved racial equity from the fringes of what we do, to more at the center. Instead of working towards outcomes with an equity lens, we work on beginning with racial equity and then adding the lens of systems change (policies, power shifts, practices, etc.) to improve how we work together resulting in better outcomes for children, youth, and young adults.

We want to normalize conversations about race and be able to reflect together more deeply on its impacts on our work, community, us as individuals, and our children. The Equity Pledge and the accompanying Continuum are meant to be a public commitment and guide for that collective learning and growth.



  
Stephanie Cherrington  
Executive Director

"Start somewhere and follow it anywhere."

—Donella Meadows