



**The Center at Belvedere Presents**  
**“Building a More Inclusive Community: Local Voices on Diversity”**  
Speaker series aims to encourage dialogue and education  
around issues of race and ethnicity.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Charlottesville, VA, February 10, 2021** — The Center at Belvedere kicks off its spring speaker series, “Building a More Inclusive Community: Local Voices on Diversity” on Wednesday, March 3, from 5:30 to 7:00 pm.

An initiative of The Center’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the series was created as a way to contribute to a stronger, healthier community by sharing information and creating a safe place for open dialogue around historic problems of race and exclusion.

The series features presentations by local leaders who are helping to shape a culture of anti-racism and inclusion in Charlottesville. The livestreamed event runs for six consecutive Wednesdays. Programs are free and open to the public.

**About the programs:**

**March 3 — “What IS White Privilege,” Susan Bro, Co-Founder and President, Heather Heyer Foundation.** What IS White Privilege and Why should we care? How does White Privilege play out in our lives and in our communities?

**March 10 — “The Origins of Racial Categories,” Jalane Schmidt, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Religious Studies at UVA.** Race is a biological fiction, but a social fact. The notion of biological “race” is a relatively recent historical development that emerged in the supposed era of

Enlightenment which coincided with the transatlantic slave trade. Racial categories are socially constructed and mutable, and the perception of "race" is not an innocent abstraction, since the categories can be used to permit or inhibit access to political and material resources and confer social status.

**March 17 — "Getting Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable," Kaki Dimok, Director of Human Services, City of Charlottesville.** Building bridges with people across differences and divides, working to get to know someone in a real and meaningful way, taking social risks, holding yourself and others accountable, and growing requires willing engagement in feeling uncomfortable. This presentation will help you identify your discomfort with the concept of "white fragility" and identify ways to work through it.

**March 24 — "Do you Have Black Friends, or Do You Just Know Black People?" Allison Linney, Founder and President, Allison Partners.** The success of our efforts to build an inclusive community are dependent on our desire and ability to develop meaningful relationships. This presentation will cover learning how to explore privilege and bias and then transform that insight into a foundation for lasting friendships that can endure difficult moments, bring us joy, and support lasting change.

**March 31— "Leveraging White Privilege to Mend a Broken System," Charlene Green, Deputy Director, Piedmont Housing Alliance.** Is it possible to use white privilege as a way of addressing racial justice? What is the responsibility of whites to address racial justice? What is the responsibility of people of color? This session will build on what has been discussed in the previous talks to find actionable pathways to changing a broken social system.

**April 7— Post-Event Wrap Up: What have we learned, where do we go from here? Bob Garrity, Mediator and Restorative Practices Consultant.** Join us to discuss the presentations, provide feedback, and recommend action steps for The Center and the City of Charlottesville to take to address diversity, equity, and inclusion.

###

**Contact:**

Eileen Barber  
Marketing Coordinator  
The Center at Belvedere  
434.220.9749  
[eileen@thecentercville.org](mailto:eileen@thecentercville.org)  
[www.thecentercville.org](http://www.thecentercville.org)

**About The Center at Belvedere**

The Center at Belvedere is a nationally-accredited, award-winning nonprofit organization that creates opportunities for healthy aging through social engagement, physical well-being, civic involvement, creativity, and lifelong learning. For more information about our programs, visit our website at [www.thecentercville.org](http://www.thecentercville.org).