

Racial Equity Dialogue Panelists

Aug 25th – Systemic Racism and the Impact on Homelessness

Teresa Robinson, MSW:

Job Title and Agency:

PRC Coordinated Entry Lead, Community Link

Areas of Expertise:

I earned a bachelor's degree in Public Health from the University of South Carolina. After graduating, I worked on research projects focused on positively impacting communities. These populations had varying needs but were all impacted in some way by their socioeconomic status. From there I made the decision to continue my education with a graduate degree in Social Work. With several internships I was able to expand my knowledge on working in communities and understanding how non-profit and city leadership works to impact populations in need. I was brought on at Community Link to further develop our Coordinated Entry system. My work involves leadership, community outreach, analyzing data and developing and evaluating process and procedure while partnering with stakeholders to strive toward ending homelessness.

Vision for Ending Homeless or Ending Racism? Why is it important to you?

My vision for ending racism is through education and legislative reform. There were specific policies put in place to uphold racist and discriminatory ideals in America. This is important to me because no one deserves to be negatively impacted by acts or decisions made by someone in power who perceives them as less than. My vision for ending homelessness would start with ending generational poverty. People need a hand up more than a hand out.

Connection to North Carolina?

My connection to North Carolina is my work with Community Link. I found out early on when meeting with partners in the state that I needed to clarify my school, "Carolina," as the school in the south and not the north.

Deena Fulton, MPH

What is your job title, and agency?

Programs Director, North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence

What are your areas of expertise and how are you able to use those to end homelessness/DV?

My work has focused on preventing domestic violence by changing the community and societal influences that make violence more likely to occur in the first place. This has included changing

institutional policies to be more supportive of gender and other forms of equity and more responsive to the impacts of trauma on children and adults. It has also included work with various systems, including the homelessness services system, to make resources and opportunities more accessible to survivors and their children to help interrupt generational cycles of violence.

I was also one of five co-founding members of NCCADV's internal Equity Team, helping to build intentional structures for the team to operate on a consensus model, with majority representation of people of color on the team, white team members playing active but supporting roles, and intentional representation of other identities and axes of power among team members. This team selected and worked with outside anti-oppression consultants in a year-long process to assess NCCADV's culture, practices, and policies to identify ways to become more equitable. The team has also managed the ongoing work toward the goals identified in that process and additional goals that have arisen since.

What is your vision for ending homelessness/DV or ending racism? Why is it important to you?

We cannot end domestic violence without ending homelessness and vice versa. And we can't end either of these without ending racism. Financial barriers, specifically as they relate to securing safe housing, are among the most often cited reasons that survivors stay in abusive relationships longer than they'd like to.

In responding to this question, I started to write out all the theoretical and practical connections between racism, DV, and homelessness, which are very important, but the core of my vision and why this matters to me is that I believe freedom from violence, a safe, stable place to live, and equal access to opportunity are basic human rights and real possibilities for our world. This country (at least) and white people in particular have a lot of work to do to repair the immense harms we have caused over centuries and generations. DV work and its connections with racism and homelessness are the niche in which I have some influence and can personally contribute to that repair.

What is your connection to North Carolina?

Though I was born in Maryland, my family moved to Charlotte when I was seven years old. I grew up in Charlotte, went to UNC for both my undergraduate and graduate degrees, and have always known North Carolina is my home. I feel so lucky to have been able to put down roots in Durham; I love it here. North Carolina is a complex and diverse state, with incredible strengths and deep challenges. I'm glad to be a part of its fabric.

Dr. Latonya Penny

What is your job title, and agency?

Executive Director Family Abuse Services of Alamance County, Inc. and Pastor of New Mount Zion Baptist Church in Roxboro, NC

What are your areas of expertise and how are you able to use those to end homelessness?

My areas of expertise is working with marginalized populations who have a higher chance of experiencing homelessness. I am able to assist those experiencing intimate partner, family, dating and elder violence in securing housing away from their abusers. I also serve as an advocate for persons who

are differently abled in many capacities, one of which is securing housing. As a pastor I aid congregants in locating shelter and services when they need them.

What is your vision for ending homelessness or ending racism? Why is it important to you?

It is important to me because I know the difficulties of living life in black skin. My vision is to educate people regarding the reasons for homelessness and encourage them to see beyond the stereotypical reasons and see that homelessness can happen to anyone. In both homelessness and racism, education makes the difference.

What is your connection to North Carolina?

Born in Danville, Virginia only because that was the closest hospital to Caswell County, NC. Raised here, attended colleges here and proud to be a pastor here.

Tambra Chamberlain

Tambra Chamberlain has an extensive career in Human Services that spans over 30 years. For the past 15 years, Tambra Chamberlain has worked for Moore County Schools as a Licensed School Social Worker and currently the Lead Homeless Liaison for the Moore County School District. Tambra Chamberlain is also serving on the Board of Directors for the National Association for the Education of Homeless Youth and Children (NAEHYC) and Leads the Youth Committee for Region 7 of the NC BOS COC. Mrs. Chamberlain seeks to educate and mobilize communities, and advocate on behalf of families and youth experiencing homelessness in rural areas. Tambra Chamberlain serves on Racial and Gender Identity Equity Committees to educate others and create meaningful dialogues to end racist and oppressive behavior towards others.