P R E S S K I T

A COVID-19 Prevention, Risk Communication and Risk Reduction Initiative

URU
THE RIGHT TO BE. INC

OUR HUMANITY

This is a fight for our lives. This is a fight for our humanity. Together we can fight back against COVID-19.

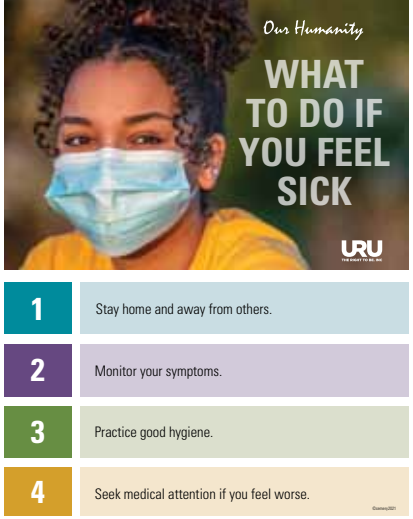
Our Humanity is a groundbreaking, nationwide COVID-19 prevention, risk-communication, and risk reduction initiative led by the Connecticut nonprofit URU The Right to Be, Inc. Across the United States, Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, facing disproportionate infection and mortality rates as well as extreme economic hardship. The enormous risks posed by the coronavirus are compounded by an "infodemic" of false and misleading information about the virus that often drowns out crucial health and safety information. To address the myriad challenges of this moment, URU has established Our Humanity, a **multifaceted approach** to slow the spread of coronavirus in Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities. Our Humanity **works directly with affected communities** to assess and provide the most urgently needed resources, such as expanded COVID-19 testing, influenza vaccinations and PPE distribution, as well as tailored trainings for community leaders, culturally sensitive risk communication visuals, virtual Town Hall events and an engaging social media campaign.

Collaboration is at the core of Our Humanity. The initiative brings together a diverse array of partners, spanning sectors, including medicine/health, government, religion, community service and activism, to develop and implement interventions to meet the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leveraging **the power of collective impact**, we are slowing the spread of the coronavirus, strengthening communities and saving lives.

COLLABORATION IS AT THE CORE OF OUR HUMANITY INITIATIVE.

OUR HUMANITY

Our Humanity utilizes a robust and multifaceted approach to combat the complex threat that the COVID-19 pandemic poses to Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities.



We believe that in order to be effective, we must bring a diverse array of stakeholders to the table, ranging from faith-based organizations, public housing authorities and other community entities to hospital systems, state government and national organizations. This unprecedented partnership network empowers Our Humanity to implement a set of innovative, collaborative initiatives designed to strengthen our communities against COVID-19. Working together in concert, we can leverage the power of collective impact to protect and uplift our communities through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

PARTNERSHIPS

Our Humanity enlists a wide range of national and local partners to fulfill its mission. Our partners span a wide range of sectors, including:

- Nonprofit
- Media
- Medicine
- Public health
- Public housing
- Religion/Faith-based organizations
- Science and academia
- Social justice

RISK COMMUNICATION VISUALS

Our Humanity's wide array of tailored and culturally sensitive visual communication materials includes:

- An online catalog of video messages and print materials – accessible to all registrants
- Large posters – to be displayed on location in frequently visited community spaces
- Customized flyers – to be utilized and distributed by partner organizations with contact information for each organization
- Wallet-sized tip cards – with COVID-19 education and prevention including safety measures, protocols and reminders for community educators and members
- Social media visual materials – posts, videos and messaging

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OUR HUMANITY

TRAINING MODULES

Our Humanity*'s* training modules are designed to prepare community organizations to implement COVID-19 prevention, risk communication and risk reduction interventions for their constituents, as well as to educate individuals about COVID-19 and what each person can do to slow the spread. Our Humanity has distinct training modules specifically designed and tailored for:

- Organizational leaders – Clergy, residential housing council members, organization directors
- Community educators – Identified members of communities that serve as in-organization educators and mobilizers
- Members of the community, who will participate in small group discussions

COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTREACH

Our Humanity community health outreach efforts are accomplished in partnership with local medical and health entities. These efforts are designed to reach into communities that have been severely impacted by COVID-19 but lack sufficient access to necessary health resources, and include:

- COVID-19 testing
- Influenza vaccinations (to protect individuals from the flu and reduce the burden of flu illness on health infrastructure, freeing up medical resources to battle COVID-19)
- PPE distribution
- Education about COVID-19 vaccines

RISK REDUCTION AND EDUCATION

Our Humanity utilizes a range of tactics to engage communities in COVID-19 risk-reduction and education:

- Virtual Town Halls: weekly Town Hall meetings, alternating in English and Spanish, featuring medical doctors and open to all.
- COVID-19 vaccine education workshops: Workshops on COVID-19 vaccines and their rollout, featuring medical professionals and open to all.
- Newsletters with COVID-19 updates: distributed to community educators, clergy and organization leaders
- Wall of Truth: online forum comprised of videos of members of the community sharing their experiences with COVID-19

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Our Humanity*'s* social media campaign includes:

- Instagram Live weekly sessions featuring thought leaders, influencers, medical experts and community activists
- Consistent public health and COVID-19 education
- Community-strengthening communication

OUR HUMANITY

Press Release

CONNECTICUT DIRECTOR TAKES HELM IN FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

Dr. Joycelyn Elders, Mayor Toni Harp and Dr. Camara Jones among notables joining Crystal Emery and Our Humanity's new faith-based collaborative mobilizing churches to fight coronavirus in BIPOC communities.

NEW HAVEN, CONN. (December 16, 2020) — As COVID-19 cases and deaths reach alarming new highs around the country, filmmaker, author and health care advocate Crystal R. Emery is leveraging a vast network of partners ranging from policymakers to grassroots organizers in the fight against the deadly pandemic. Emery, the founder and CEO of URU The Right to Be, Inc. (URU) — a national nonprofit dedicated to creating a more equitable world through the use of media, technology, science and the arts — has created **Our Humanity**, a multimedia messaging initiative delivering crucial information on the novel coronavirus pandemic to Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities. Participants in the movement include former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Joycelyn Elders; actor Keith David (*Greenleaf; There's Something About Mary*); and former U.S. Surgeon General and President Joseph R. Biden's nominee to return to the position, Dr. Vivek Murthy. Recognizing that faith-based organizations have long served as trusted resources and social foundations in Black and Latinx communities, Our Humanity will launch its Faith-Based Collaborative in Connecticut on Thursday.

The Collaborative is designed to build the capacity of religious organizations in helping reduce the spread of COVID-19 through increased access to education on the virus and making community-wide risk reduction programs and community-based interventions such as COVID testing and flu shot distribution more readily accessible. Grounded in the public health sciences, the Collaborative is informed by a national advisory committee comprised of public health experts and faith leaders including Elders, Bishop Theodore Brooks, Meriden City Councilor Miguel Castro, the Reverend Kendrick Curry, Dr. Karen DuBois-Walton, New Haven Mayor Toni Harp, philanthropist William Graustein, the Reverend Abraham Hernandez, Dr. Camara Jones, philanthropist Roslyn Milstein Meyer, President and CEO of the Connecticut Association for Community Action Amos Smith, State Representative Charlie Stallworth, Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center CEO Michael Taylor and State Representative Toni Walker.

Established by Emery, a New Haven-area director and health care advocate triumphing over quadriplegia, Our Humanity strives to counter the paucity of COVID-19 information and messaging aimed specifically at BIPOC communities, which continue to be most severely affected by the virus.

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OUR HUMANITY (continued)

Press Release

CONNECTICUT DIRECTOR TAKES HELM IN FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

Uso correcto de máscaras faciales durante Covid -19

"While the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many longstanding historical injustices and inequities affecting BIPOC communities, it has also clearly brought to light the fact that if we within the BIPOC community don't work to address our needs, issues such as lack of access to health care, income disparity and racism will continue to bring devastation during future crises," said Emery. "With Our Humanity, it is my intention to bring BIPOC voices to the forefront in the battle to stop COVID, turning we who are often portrayed as inactive victims into the messengers of change."

Prominent epidemiologist and advisory committee member Dr. Camara Jones said, "Bringing together this collective of faith-based organizations is critical in mobilizing communities to take action against COVID-19."

Presenting information and news by experts from their own communities, Our Humanity and the Collaborative are dedicated to bringing information to Black, Indigenous and Latinx populations from those who speak their language and understand their cultures and historical sensitivities. As such, trainings designed and led by URU's team of public health experts and facilitators will reach members of congregations of participating churches, addressing topics such as preventing the spread of the virus; ways to combat misinformation that is rife within communities of color; and confronting vaccine distrust and the historic mistreatment of Indigenous, Black and Latinx communities by scientific and medical institutions. The initiative will also focus on providing Spanish language materials and open town hall conversations to serve the Latinx community, which is often not effectively reached with COVID-19 resources.

"It is very important that our people receive information they can trust in a way they can understand it. So much of what we are seeing with this pandemic doesn't include Spanish-speaking Americans. We are being left behind," said the Reverend Josué Rosado, Pastor of Oasis de Restauración in New London, Connecticut.

In addition to faith-based organizations, the effort will focus on providing resources and care within low-income public housing communities.

For more information on Our Humanity, its new faith-based collaborative, along with videos, downloadable infographics for community use and more, visit the URU website, www.urutherighttobe.org. Weekly conversations between Emery and participants in Our Humanity can be seen as part of the "Lunch and Learn" interview series held each Wednesday at 12 noon EST on Instagram Live at @urutherightobe.

Our Humanity is made possible through support from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Roslyn Milstein Meyer and Jerome Meyer Foundation, the California Endowment, Alexion Charitable Foundation, and the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. Partnering organizations include A Kidd from New Haven, Black Public Media, the Divas with Disabilities Project, the Yale School of Medicine Minority Organization for Retention and Expansion (MORE), the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, the National Urban League, New York Women's Foundation, Medical Organization for Latino Advancement (MOLA), the National Minority Quality Forum (NMQF) and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

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ABOUT URU THE RIGHT TO BE, INC.

A 501(c)(3) organization, the mission of URU is to foster communication and understanding among diverse people by utilizing, discovering and applying tangible multimedia solutions at the intersection of the arts, humanities, science and technology. URU's goal is to move all stakeholders toward a more equitable and humane world. Because the human condition is complex, and people are multidimensional, it understandably takes a multimedia approach to engage them, especially given their constant bombardment with information. Through a unique approach that involves lowering peoples' defense mechanisms and meeting them where they are, URU continues to be successful in its mission to help people find their commonalities and work together.

WHY URU?

For 25 years, URU The Right to Be, Inc. has collaborated with organizations ranging from grassroots community organizations to the National Academy of Sciences and international corporations to weave a broad range of innovative programs and initiatives that together have touched over 14 million people worldwide. URU has a longstanding and robust record of grassroots organizing, establishing collective impact projects and mobilizing communities of color in addressing issues including education and public health. URU's broad and highly diverse network of relationships empowers us to lead collaborative efforts that cross multiple sectors. By bringing together organizations that normally operate in distinct spheres in the name of our shared goals and values, we will be able to slow the spread of the coronavirus and meaningfully support our communities through this unprecedented crisis.

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OUR HUMANITY

CRYSTAL R. EMERY

Producer | Director | Author | Activist

Crystal R. Emery is known for producing narratives aimed at creating a more equitable society. She is the Founder and CEO of URU The Right to Be, Inc., a nonprofit content production company that addresses issues at the intersection of humanities, arts and sciences. A director, author and STEM advocate, Emery is a member of the Producers Guild of America and New York Women in Film and Television, and an American Association for the Advancement of Science AAAS IF/THEN Ambassador.

Hailed as "inspiring" by the Los Angeles Times and as a "leader in science and technology" by Good Housekeeping in its feature story "50 over 50: Women Who Are Changing the World," Emery has a body of work that spans a broad range of topics, from diversity, inclusion and equity to children's literature, sociopolitical issues and STEM.

The author of *Against All Odds: Black Women in Medicine, Master Builders of the Modern World: Reimagining the Face of STEM* and the first two volumes of her *Little Man* children's book series, Emery has written for TIME.com, Variety, Ms.Magazine.com and HuffPost. In the National Academy of Medicine published an article she wrote on STEM recruitment. Emery has been a keynote speaker for distinguished institutions like the National Security Agency, National Institute of Health, National Organization on Disabilities, and RespectAbility and TedX Beacon Street.

She is the recipient of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust Leadership in Journalism Award, the BronzeLens Film Festival Spirit Award, the Trailblazer Award from the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. and the United Nations as part of the International Year for People of African Descent and the Yale University Seton Elm-Ivy Award. International fashion designer Rebecca Minkoff bestowed the title of RM Superwoman on Emery in 2018.

Emery's film *Black Women in Medicine* had its theatrical run in 2016 and later aired on public television. It was screened in Ethiopia and Germany in 2018 as part of the American Film Showcase, considered the premier American film diplomacy program in the world.

In 2015, Emery launched Changing the Face of STEM, an innovative national educational and workforce development initiative. Two years later, in conjunction with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, she introduced Changing the Face of STEM at the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in Washington, D.C. URU returning in 2019 to unveil the "You Can't Be What You Can't See" Virtual Reality Project, aimed at closing the identification gap for young marginalized students in STEM. In 2019, Crystal lead URU to become a programmatic partner of 100Kin10, an organization formed in response to President Obama's call during his 2011 State of the Union address to train 100,000 new STEM teachers in a decade.

Emery believes that perseverance, faith and trusting in a power greater than oneself comprise the road to success. She continues to shape a successful, fulfilling personal and professional life while triumphing over two chronic diseases as a quadriplegic. Recently, Crystal began production on "The Intersection of Crystal R. Emery," a podcast exploring her life as a Black woman, filmmaker, writer and member of the disability community.

A New Haven area resident, Emery received her B.A. from the University of Connecticut, her M.A. in Media Studies from The New School of Public Engagement, and an honorary Doctorate of Letters from UConn in 2018, on which occasion she spoke to an audience of over 20,000 becoming the first Black female commencement speaker at UConn's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

OUR HUMANITY

EVENTS

OUR HUMANITY TOWN HALLS

Monday, March 1 (English)
Tuesday, March 9 (Spanish)
Monday, March 15 (English)
Tuesday, March 23 (Spanish)
Monday, March 29 (English)
Tuesday, April 6 (Spanish)
Monday, April 12 (English)

OUR HUMANITY COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINICS

Tuesday, March 23

INSTAGRAM LIVE SESSIONS

Wednesdays at 12 PM EST @urutherighttobe

OUR HUMANITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Bishop Theodore L. Brooks, Sr. – Presiding Bishop, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World

Miguel Castro – Chair, Connecticut Hispanic Democratic Caucus

Rev. Kendrick Curry – Pennsylvania Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.

Karen DuBois-Walton, Ph.D. – Executive Director, Elm City Communities

Dr. Joycelyn Elders, M.D. – Former Surgeon General of the United States

William Graustein – Trustee, William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund

Toni Harp – Former Mayor of New Haven, Connecticut

Abraham Hernandez – Executive Director, Connecticut Chapter of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

Camara Jones, M.D., Ph.D. – Physician and epidemiologist, Past President of the American Public Health Association

Roslyn Meyer, Ph.D. – Roslyn Milstein Meyer and Jerome Meyer Foundation

Frances Padilla – President, Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut

Amos Smith – President & CEO, Community Action Agency of New Haven

Charlie Stallworth – Connecticut State Representative

Michael Taylor – Chief Executive Officer, Cornell Scott Hill-Health Center

Toni Walker – Connecticut State Representative, Co-chair of Appropriations Committee for the State of Connecticut

OUR HUMANITY

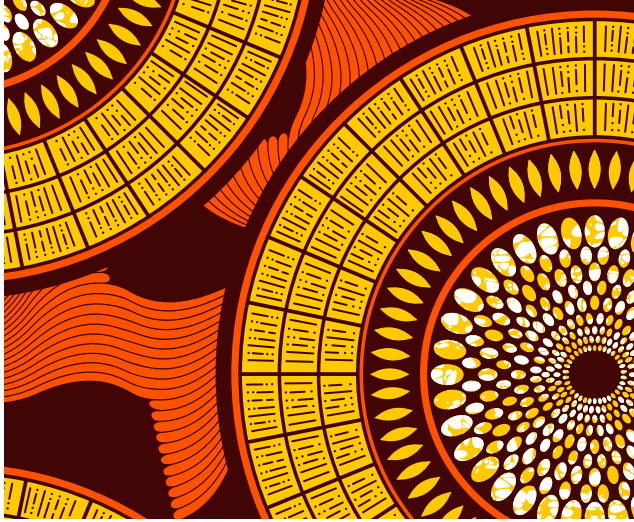
PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations partnering with URU on Our Humanity include:

A Kidd From New Haven [CT]
Alliance for Safety and Justice
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Indian Science and Engineering Society
Black Public Media
Cheryl Duncan & Company PR
Church of God in Christ, Connecticut Chapter [CT]
Community Action Agency of New Haven [CT]
Connecticut Health Foundation [CT]
Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center [CT]
Creatively Speaking
Divas with Disabilities
Elm City Communities [CT]
Get Us PPE
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation & Tufts Health Plan Foundation
Medical Organization for Latino Advancement (MOLA)
National Academy of Medicine
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference [CT]
National Minority Quality Forum
National Urban League
New Haven Fire Department
New York Women's Foundation
Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College
The Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church
The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc. (PAW)
Salud America!
Yale Community for New Haven Fund [CT]
Yale School of Medicine Minority Organization for Retention and Expansion (MORE) [CT]

OUR HUMANITY

NATIONAL SUPPORTERS



To bring Our Humanity to fruition, URU has united with a diverse group of allies, creating partnerships with national and local organizations that represent powerful engagement opportunities. We are all committed to slowing the coronavirus and strengthening our communities against the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Our Humanity is made possible through the funding support of:

Alexion Charitable Foundation

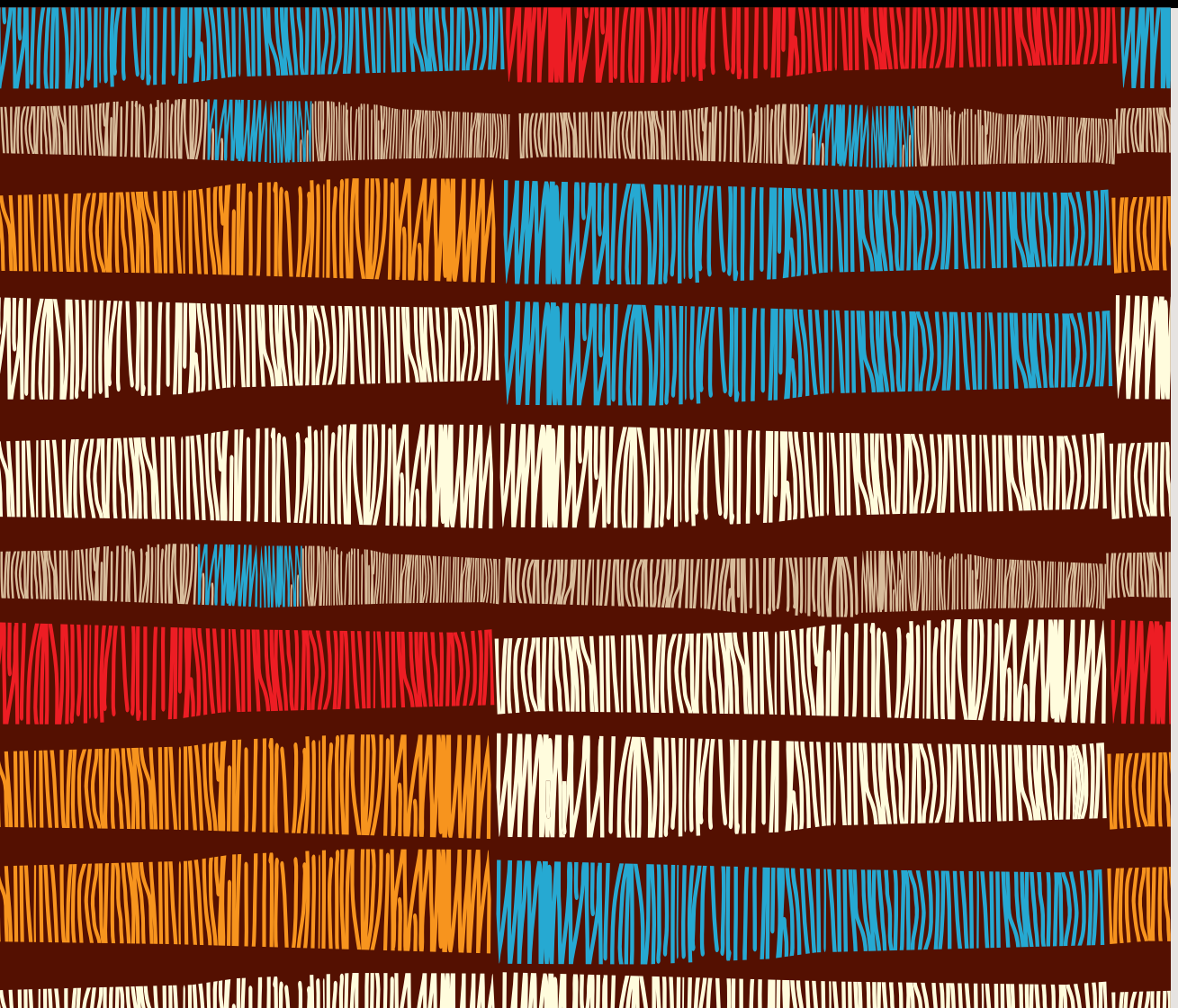
The California Endowment

The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

The Roslyn Milstein Meyer and Jerome Meyer Foundation

The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund



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www.urutherighttobe.org