

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael Givens

Phone: 857-310-5007 (o); 857-540-0617 (c)

Email: mgivens@hyamsfoundation.org

Web: www.hyamsfoundation.org

Hyams Foundation Launches Joint Initiative with Mayor Marty Walsh to Discuss Race Equity in Boston

New city-wide initiative to bring together business, government, education and community leaders to create an action plan for ending racism

BOSTON—Today, The Hyams Foundation announced the launch of a series of city-wide dialogues around racism and racial justice in collaboration with Mayor Marty Walsh.

Recent high-profile events have brought national attention to racism in Boston, including Saturday Night Live comedian Michael Che's statement that Boston is the most racist city he's visited. Most recently, a Red Sox fan was banned from Fenway Park for life for hurling a racial slur at Baltimore Orioles player Adam Jones. Another Red Sox fan was ejected and banned for life a few days later for making a racial slur. Recently, civil rights groups released a report noting a glaring disparity in admissions rates between black and Latino students and their white counterparts when applying to Boston's prestigious exam schools.

"These events illustrate what Bostonians of color experience each day," said Hyams Executive Director Dr. Jocelyn V. Sargent. "For example, lower wages and rates of homeownership have led to a significant wealth gap by race: the median net worth of a white Bostonian is \$247,500—that figure drops to \$8 for a black Bostonian. This is only one example of the inequality experienced by more than half of our residents."

From June to December, each of Boston's neighborhoods, from East Boston to Hyde Park, will hold a facilitated discussion on race open to all Boston residents. This series of dialogues will result in an assessment of what each sector can do to end racism.

"I am grateful to the Hyams Foundation for their partnership in the effort to bring these important conversations to every neighborhood in Boston," said Mayor Walsh. "When we hosted the first citywide race dialogue last November, we saw there was great interest for these conversations to take place, and also saw the healing power that comes with being open and honest about racism. As we continue our work in the city to close persistent racial gaps, I hope all residents will consider stepping forward to get involved in the conversation and help move us closer to racial equity."

"Boston is at a key moment: with increased economic development, a growing population that is becoming more diverse, and a new city-wide strategic plan, a huge opportunity exists to ensure all Bostonians are able to contribute to the city's vitality and growth," said Sargent.

“We've seen dialogues around race happening locally and nationally over the last few years, but we've seen little progress in transforming these dialogues into action. It's time for us to walk the talk.”

A schedule of the neighborhood dialogues will be published this summer.

Founded in 1921, the Hyams Foundation is a private, independent foundation dedicated to achieving economic, racial and social justice in Boston and Chelsea Massachusetts. For more information, visit www.hyamsfoundation.org.