



2020 Impact Report

LION'S STORY

From the Partners

For a number of years Dr. Howard Stevenson had a vision of a parallel not-for-profit entity that would be fueled by his research, yet stand alone as a nimble entity. He saw a village of trainers extending and building racial literacy in individuals and organizations. Alongside Howard, his colleague Dr. Brian Peterson had ideas and intentions to build an organization created, managed and fueled by people of color. This timely intersection is where Lion's Story began. The emerging organization's Partners, Charles B. Adams and Shamm H. Petros, have made Howard's dream and Brian's idea a reality. Lion's Story is currently composed of a small, but mighty team of **three full time staff members and an expanding village of 32 racial literacy trainers/trainees, coaches and researchers.**

After our initial training of leaders and teams composed of The Hive's (Spring Point) fifteen core grantees, we moved in two intentional and intertwined directions. First, with a fiscal sponsor, we began to field requests from several of the participants who attended that first public Lion's Story training supported by and held at the Hive. Soon thereafter, we entered conversations and then met clients in the not-for-profit and education spaces who knew of Howard's research and themselves needed racial literacy, be it immediate help, continued guidance and/or strategic support. We quickly had a number of clients and a growing pipeline of potential clients. The second direction was to create and build a sustainable organization with systems, structures and an earned revenue funding stream fueling our work and empowering our decision making.

During this launch year, or year zero as we called it, we worked to:

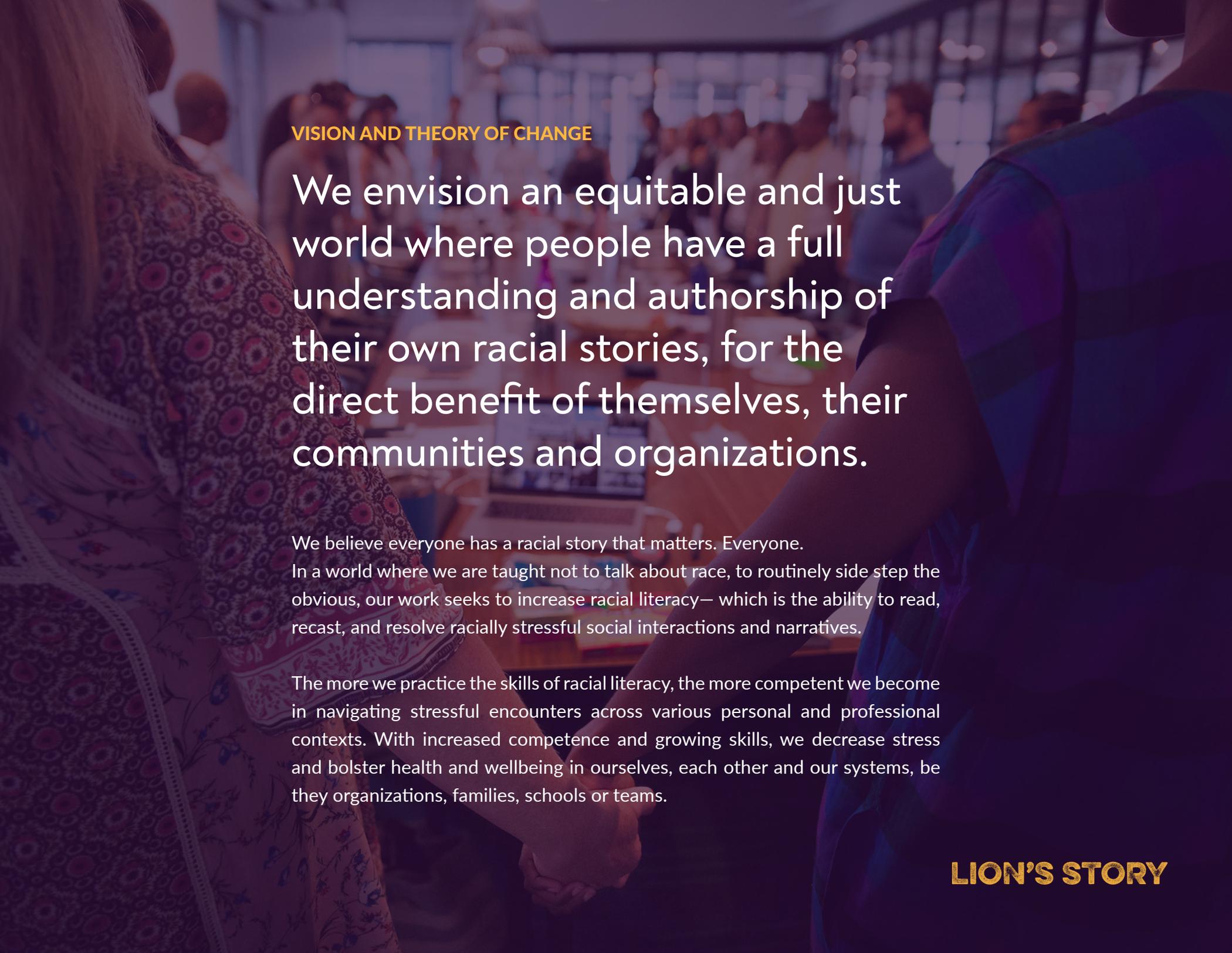
- Re-establish our not-for-profit status
- Clarify and refine our products and services
- Secure office space for the team
- Maintain a healthy \$415,000 budget
- Collectively articulate our mission, vision, theory of change
- Develop our client acquisition funnel, and
- Build a team of over 35 entrusted, talented professionals.

Our launch year has been a telling experience of what it means to build and nourish a healthy village of professionals working towards a more equitable world. In the upcoming year, we are dedicated to nourishing a village of change agents and racial literacy experts working to deliver the highest quality products and services on behalf of Lion's Story.

With Gratitude,
Charles B. Adams & Shamm H. Petros



pictured above: Shamm H. Petros, Partner and Director of Learning & Evaluation (left) and Charles B. Adams, Founder and Managing Partner (right)



VISION AND THEORY OF CHANGE

We envision an equitable and just world where people have a full understanding and authorship of their own racial stories, for the direct benefit of themselves, their communities and organizations.

We believe everyone has a racial story that matters. Everyone.

In a world where we are taught not to talk about race, to routinely side step the obvious, our work seeks to increase racial literacy— which is the ability to read, recast, and resolve racially stressful social interactions and narratives.

The more we practice the skills of racial literacy, the more competent we become in navigating stressful encounters across various personal and professional contexts. With increased competence and growing skills, we decrease stress and bolster health and wellbeing in ourselves, each other and our systems, be they organizations, families, schools or teams.

LION'S STORY

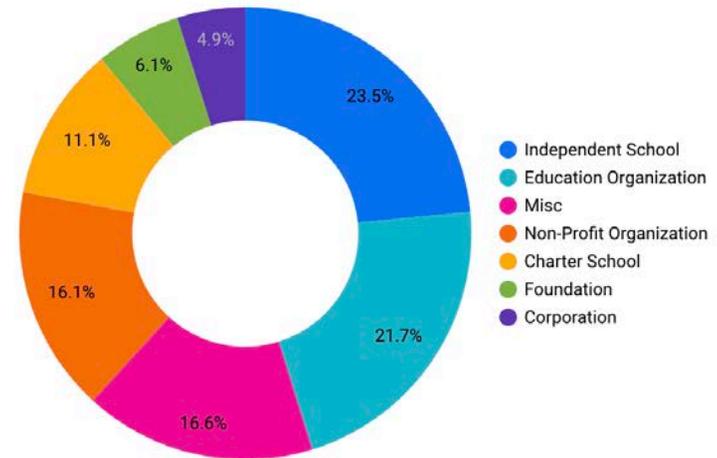
Our Clients

LAUNCH YEAR STATS

1,178 INDIVIDUALS
TRAINED

157 TRAINING
HOURS

Our current client list represents organizations that are proactively committed to building their capacity to face racially stressful moments and scenarios. Those situations are either inherent in their stated mission, anticipated in the interaction between their staff and clients or can be proactively addressed by a new leader or another significant shift at the organization. We are incredibly proud of what we accomplished alongside each of our client partners.





OUR MISSION

Our **mission** is to develop the skills and capacity, in individuals and institutions, to process racial stress, claim stories and heal from racial conflict.

OUR VALUES

- Everyone has a racial story.
- Racial Stress Matters.
- Competency over Character.
- Hope is essential.
- Authorship is freedom.

LION'S STORY

Training

THEN

Lion's Story's services are grounded in evidence-based, therapeutic approaches, fueled by decades of research on racial socialization by Dr. Howard C. Stevenson from the Graduate School of Education of the University of Pennsylvania.

NOW

Our trainings prepare individuals to become better observers and change agents in both personal & professional racial encounters. Using mindfulness strategies, Lion's Story trainers guide participants through the processing of personal & professional racially stressful encounters to develop racial literacy skills of reading, recasting & resolving. Typically, training involves the practice of storytelling, journaling, debating & role-playing through the medium of individual, paired, small and large group work. Our trainers are a dynamic cohort of therapists, diversity & inclusion specialists, administrators and thought leaders in the fields of education, psychology, organizational leadership and positive youth development. Trainings are available as **Client-Based**, through partnerships with an entity, or through individual or group registration during our regularly offered **Racial Literacy Institute**.

Racial Literacy Institutes (RLI)

RLI participants gather for a 4-day convening, led by Lion's Story trainers and staff, to cultivate racial literacy. In 2019, over 90 individuals participated in the Institute.



2019 Racial Literacy Summer Institute

- 90+ professionals attended
- Over 60% identified themselves as educators
- 36.4% of participants worked with children
- **94% of participants would highly recommend the training to a colleague**

NEXT

First Virtual Summer Institute

This year Summer Institute 2020 will be virtual, held from August 10th through August 13th. The Racial Literacy Virtual Institute is a unique environment where you gain the most access to concepts and practical applications of Racial Literacy. While it is a four-day virtual convening, we have split up the days into varied levels of engagement: live large group demonstrations and small group conversations, asynchronous activities, and more opportunities to connect with one another and the Lion's Story Village. Participants are welcome to register as individuals or as a group of representatives from an organization, entity, and/or school.

Coaching

THEN

Originally, we envisioned our work as three facets of racial literacy skill building: training, assessment and consulting. While we find our training to be a necessary foundation for holistic awareness of racial stress, we also noticed an opportunity to extend our impact by spending regular, predictable and confidential time with an organization's leaders. The time spent with leaders to design the arc, timing and focus of the training was a clear indicator of the potential reach of our work.

NOW

The probability of our training fundamentally shifting the culture, practices and outcomes of an organization increases when the named leader (or several leaders) commits to the ongoing personal work of deepening their racial literacy commitment. Currently, we provide coaching services for executive and organizational thought leaders, either by title or in practice, on their racial literacy development. Often coaching services are delivered in tandem with organization-wide training, which allows for staff to hold their leaders accountable to their commitment to racial equity.

NEXT

Over the next year, our goal is to onboard 2-5 new executive coaching clients. We also plan to extend our office hours services and begin building virtual affinity groups for ongoing professional development.



"Prior to my introduction to Lion's Story and its process of self-inquiry, I had been frustrated with my past experiences of professional development opportunities focused on diversity, equity and inclusion work. You cannot legislate or mandate hate or racism away, but through the deep self work of Lion's Story, I have been able to identify the experiences and influences that have shaped my worldview about race and equity. The skills I have developed through this work have greatly influenced the ways I interact with my colleagues at Philadelphia Young Playwrights, as well as made me more mindful of other people's personal processes of reflection, identification, and understanding, or lack thereof. The tools I have gained through this training have positively impacted my emotional and mental well-being as a professional Black woman in America."

Lisa Nelson-Haynes

Trainer & Executive Director, Young Philly Playwrights

Our Village

In the fulfillment of our vision for a racially literate world, we prioritized the care, preparation and development of our village, which is made up of: **Founders, Partners, Board Members, Staff, Trainers, Trainees and Researchers**. All members of the village are referred by our Founders and Partners and are required to complete 24 hours of direct racial literacy training. After their initial training, individuals exercise their racial literacy skills as trainees, completing 40 additional hours of training and evaluation.

Since February 2019, **Lion's Story evolved from a dozen of community-referred thought leaders, to a cohort of 30+ racially literate guides (14 Trainees, 10 Trainers, and 7 Senior Trainers)**. Our village is supported by monthly meetings and clinical-style supervision by Dr. Stevenson. Over the past year, the team was provided opportunities for professional development. We have also developed pathways for individual growth in the organization by designating roles according to technical affinity and credentials.

"Lion's Story feeds my soul with a village of people whose inner lights and passions for racial equity shine as bright as my own. It's a place that affirms my belonging, values my story, challenges my imperfections and encourages my dreams. And did I mention that we genuinely love each other and have fun together."



Erica, Director of Equity & Multicultural Education, Friends Central

"The Lion's Story village has been such a light in my life. I learn endlessly by diving into this work, peeling away the layers of my stories and feeling the stories of others wash over me. It has been such a transformative, healing process and I am thankful to be on this journey."



Brian, Kindergarten Teacher and Musician

"As someone who has had the privilege to work inside Lion's Story I can say that the methods are transformative, they're healing. They produce welcoming and nurturing environments where people are able to use their emotions for positivity... I'm pleased and proud to work alongside the professionals in the village. Lion's Story is extremely powerful."

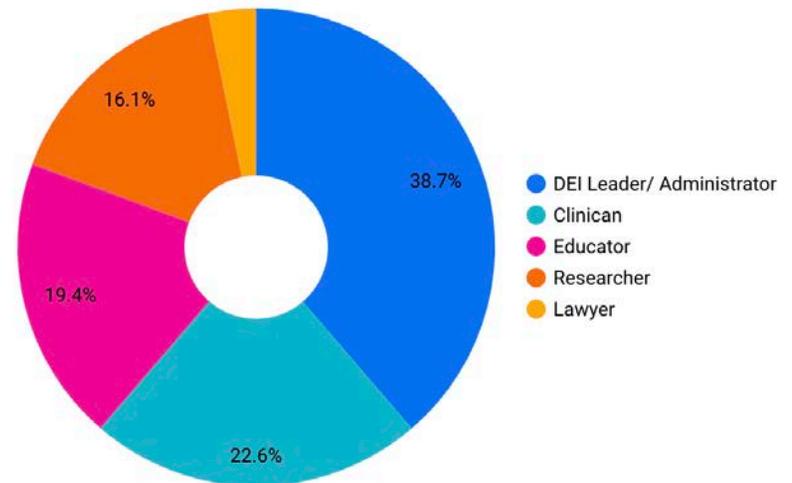


Kairi, Educator and Founder, Water the Roots



Lion's Story develops and focuses on racial literacy via three types of services: **training, coaching and assessment**. Lion's Story is powered by a collective of professionals dedicated to the work of racial literacy. Our services are facilitated by clinicians, diversity & inclusion experts, administrators and thought leaders in the field.

As our products and services evolved to meet the needs of our growing clients, our village also adapted to the call. While typically all contractors served only in the capacity of trainees and trainers, now contractors can apply and be trained for the roles of **Researchers, Trainer or Coach**. Character traits for an ideal client, a description of their responsibilities and a pathway for competency and growth has been identified for each role. These roles and responsibilities will continuously be reviewed on an individual level, between each contractor and the Director of Learning and Evaluation during bi-annual, Growth & Competency meetings, but also organizationally, as Partners monitor the growth and evaluation of all our products & services.



Lion's Story services are facilitated by clinicians, diversity & inclusion experts, administrators and thought leaders in the field. The chart above shows a breakdown of professional skill sets among our trainers.

More empathetic, more caring, more open...

“Racial literacy training for faculty was impactful. The keynote from Dr. Stevenson and the sessions led by trained facilitators gave faculty common vocabulary, tools, and skills they could bring to their work with students. This was extremely powerful for faculty because we had a common knowledge base to work with each other, and our students, around issues of race and identity. What's more, our faculty learned the impact of RL knowledge when they witnessed our students who repeatedly discussed issues of race and identity with maturity and confidence. Seeing the "product" of the student training helped to cement the importance of this work for many of our faculty members.”

“Racial Literacy work allowed our faculty members to explore and reflect on their own stories around race and identity. It provided a space for reflection and a call to action. Faculty left the summer institute, and our subsequent professional development work with Lion's Story, with the charge to be more caring, empathetic, and more open to the experiences of our students. Faculty were also given a set of tools to begin delving into issues around identity in our school.”

- Client Testimonial from William Penn Charter (Philadelphia, PA)

Contact Us

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