



Be Part of the Conversation: Challenge Your Perspective

All staff and 5th grade students attended the *RACE Are We So Different?* exhibit at the Pacific Science Center in December 2013. Here are some of the concepts and questions that we explored:

- Race is a human invention; there is no scientific evidence for the existence of race in humans.
- The idea of race has changed over time and our lives are impacted by changing beliefs about race.
- Race and discrimination still impact how each person experiences the world. How does thinking about the history of racism help us to think about what race is today?

Learn more at <http://www.understandingrace.org/home.html>

- What are individual, institutionalized and structural racism?

Learn more at: *RACE The Power of Illusion* at PBS <http://www.pbs.org/race/>



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Action and Tools

In November 2013, author and illustrator Anne Sibley O'Brien visited Meridian School and met with faculty, parents and students K-5. Here are some highlights of our learning with Ms. O'Brien:

- **Assist children in developing positive racial associations** of both themselves and people different from them: introduce concepts of race to children by intentionally finding books and movies that celebrate differences and portray positive interactions across races. Children are already noticing differences; talking about these differences gives children permission and language to voice them.
- **Educate children about prejudice and discrimination** working on the development of empathy and critical thinking skills. Why is it important to learn from history? How are our history and beliefs impacting our lives today? Have you ever felt excluded? How do you feel when you include others in your play?
- **Be inclusive:** Race should be framed as about "all of us," not through the lens of "Us/Them." Though our experiences may be very different based on the groups we belong to, everyone has a racial identity and everyone's life is affected by race, whether we are aware of it or not.



- **Address systems, social roles and power:** Racism is not the same as "being mean." Prejudice based on skin color and racial features is a human tendency, but racism is not just personal, it is collective and institutional as well. In order to process their own experience and to develop effective skills, young people need age-appropriate information about how U.S. society gives white people racial advantages and people of color disadvantages. If the adults caring for them do not offer concrete, direct, and bold language, guidance and models for counteracting the dominant culture's messages about race, children's attitudes and behaviors will be formed by these influences, and they will act out the racial roles that society has assigned them. Find resources at: <http://annesibleyobrien.com/>

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