Racism still represented in some schools

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Michael Jackson said it best: “They don’t really care about us.”

The United States of America was built on a system for white people to benefit from. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are rights that came to African Americans relatively recently. The 13th Amendment was ratified in 1865, abolishing slavery and involuntary servitude, “except as punishment for a crime.” (Keep in mind that the language has remained the same: “slavery” and “involuntary servitude” are still legal in this form.)

Even after the 13th Amendment, we see the introduction of the Jim Crow laws after the Supreme Court famously ruled “separate but equal” in Plessy v. Ferguson. The only ruling was overturned in 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.

From the time the first settlers arrived in North America in 1619, they have gained wealth from the backs of enslaved people. That’s 246 years of of slave labor, passing down slaves, property and wealth from generation to generation. By the time slavery ended, white people were far ahead in all aspects. Some families were set for life, especially in Louisiana, where plantations became the largest source of income. This is one aspect that goes into white privilege. That, coupled with widespread racism and having connections to people in power will land you a great deal of benefits.

With that being said, there is no denying that racism would be a lingering stain on the U.S. Racists have never gone away, they’ve just been more covert.

Over the weekend, HuffingtonPost accused Dayanna Volitich, a 25-year-old social studies teacher at Crystal River Middle School in Florida, of hosting a white nationalist podcast called “Unapologetic.” She used the pseudonym “Tiana Dalichow,” bragging about how she taught her views in school.

It was discovered in her podcasts that she lied to her principal when confronted about injecting her racial views into students, happily reporting that the principal “backed off.” On one episode of the podcast, Volitich agreed with her guests that more white supremacists need to infiltrate public schools and become teachers.

The is not the first time, and won’t be the last, we expose white supremacy in schools. On May 25, 2017, Crescent Leadership Academy in New Orleans fired Principal Nicholas Dean after wearing Nazi associated rings in a video.

This is why I have been so vocal about how important representation is. It is life changing and integral for the success of people of color. What about the kids that Volitich were teaching? How much did she fill their head with ignorant ideology? Will they hold onto it and bring that hatred out into the world? How many non-white children were always looked at as an “other” by someone responsible for their education and well-being?

- As for that principal, how many kids of color were punished at disproportionate rates? These aren’t just our teachers, they are our judges, our mayors, governors and representatives. Their ideologies influence the policies they make. Under 45, a lot of these people feel empowered to express their beliefs, and the current political climate is allowing them to. Roy Moore, accused of sexually assaulting minors, actually had a chance to win in Alabama. Arthur Jones, an outspoken white nationalist and Holocaust denier, is running for Congress.

To have someone understand where you come from and fight for you has a lasting impact. The same weekend a white supremacist teacher was fired, the charity created in honor Philando Castile paid off the lunch debt for every student in the 56 schools in the St. Paul Public School District, including the school where Castile worked as a cafeteria supervisor before he was fatally shot by a police officer.

What we do today can have lasting echoes into tomorrow. Stand up for what is right at all costs; the world depends on it.