



# THE COLLECTIVE JOURNEY: YEAR ONE REPORT

(SEPTEMBER 2023- SEPTEMBER 2024)



## Greetings!

I can hardly believe it's been a year since I took a leap of faith, driven by a deep-rooted desire to do my part in transforming harmful workplace cultures globally, starting with the United States, and create environments where Black people are not merely surviving but truly thriving.

Year one was incredible—marked by highs, lows, maybes, yeses and nos. Lots of affirmations and challenges. Each experience contributed to our immense growth and reaffirmed that embracing my passion, gifts, and talents to launch this organization was the best decision made in September 2023.

The TooREL Institute for Social Change (TISC) was founded with the primary goal of creating safe spaces where **Black women are seen, heard, valued, and supported**. Our goal is to build inclusive, equitable, and welcoming communities and workplaces for everyone. As history and our ancestors have shown, prioritizing the needs and desires of Black people ultimately benefits everyone. We focus on creating welcoming environments specifically for Black women because they have been continuously dismissed, silenced, and harmed in workplaces across the United States. Beyond the extensive data available, my nearly three decades of experience in the non-profit sector—particularly within the domestic violence movement—provides a deep personal understanding of these issues.

TISC offers hope, vision, passion, truth-telling, and actionable solutions. **The fire** needed to ignite and sustain real change.

At TISC, we work with individuals and organizations that recognize and acknowledge the injustices faced by Black people in institutions across the country. Our goal is to eliminate the unfair treatment, harm, and abuse of Black people in organizations funded to empower service providers that deliver inclusive, trauma informed and survivor-centered services for victims and survivors of gender-based violence. Our collaborators are ready to **move beyond mere words to meaningful action**.

We work alongside organizations to assess their cultures, co-create plans for REAL cultural transformation, and implement or enhance policies and practices to foster welcoming environments for all. Sometimes, it's necessary to dismantle outdated systems and rebuild them from the ground up. The Band-Aids are falling off! **Temporary solutions are no longer sufficient**. Black advocates are exhausted and tired. Extremely tired. Tired of being tired.

In the past year, we've engaged and collaborated with national, state, and community-level organizations and service providers to deliver impactful, action-oriented trainings to **over 1,400 individuals** on topics central to our mission and vision. It has been an absolute privilege and honor to be invited to tables and platforms and be recognized as a trusted by-and-for culturally specific organization, committed to addressing the unique needs of Black communities.

What's next for year two? After listening to feedback from the public, primarily Black advocates and our esteemed Advisors, we're excited to introduce several new signature trainings and initiatives, including our inaugural retreat for Black and Brown advocates, our leadership program for leaders and aspiring leaders and a new podcast series primarily focused on individual and organizational wellness.

I invite you to reach out and collaborate with us to **transform your workplace and communities into a place of joy, hope, healing, love and trust**, where all Black people are valued, seen and heard, and no one is left behind.

I am truly excited for what Year Two will bring. Here's to continued growth and progress! Onwards together...

Arlene Vassell, Founding Director

# ABOUT US

**Going Beyond Diversity, Equity & Inclusion to Create Welcoming Environments for All People.**

**MISSION:**

To create inclusive, equitable and welcoming communities and work environments for all people.

**VISION:**

To create Black-centered organizations and communities where Black people are thriving, not merely surviving

**We believe** that every community and organization have the capacity to create an environment and culture that values diverse backgrounds, perspectives and lived experiences; and every individual has the innate ability to be an active participant in the necessary activities to support that philosophy.

## CORE VALUES



**Love**



**Joy**



**People  
Centered**



**Truth Telling**



**Respect**



**Collaboration**



**Vulnerability**



**Openness**



**Honesty**



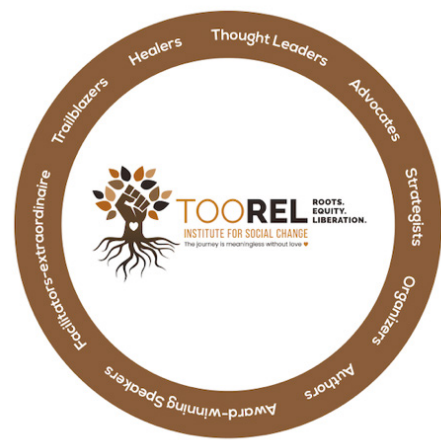
**Humility**



**Accountability**



**Integrity**



# THE COLLECTIVE

Over 75 years of experience working with and supporting thousands of service providers and dozens of organizations committed to advancing gender equity and social justice.

We are mission-driven professionals, dedicated to transforming your organization. Our work is informed by our lived experiences, history, research, diverse cultures, and stories shared by individuals and communities most impacted by racial inequities, institutional racism, and other inequities.

We are subject matter experts, strategists, thought leaders, healers and facilitators devoted to dismantling inequitable systems and structures that deem dominant cultural groups deserving of lives free from violence, while others are harmed, overlooked, dismissed, and mistreated in their communities and workplaces.



# TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING



Number of  
Individuals  
Trained:  
**1,400+**



- Boston, MA
- San Francisco, CA
- Montgomery, AL
- Detroit, MI
- Phoenix, AZ
- Tulsa, OK
- Seattle, WA
- Washington DC
- Memphis, TN

\* In-Person Trainings





“

**You are incredible, Arlene Vassell. Thank you for sharing your energy, power and wisdom with us this morning.”**

**#NOVA50 Workshop Participant**

### **Trainings Tailored for Requesters Include:**

- Creating a Healthier WE: Empowering Advocates to Thrive
- Roots, Equity and Liberation: Advancing Our Advocacy Together
- Roots, Equity and Liberation: Creating Inclusive and Welcoming Environments for All
- Domestic Violence and Health: Understanding Root Causes and Policy Options.
- Becoming and Unbecoming for the Journey Ahead
- Promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Across the Diaspora
- Healing Together: Supporting Children, Youth and Families Impacted by Domestic Violence
- Planning for Sustainability and Diversifying Funding
- Writing a Winning Grant Proposal

SYSTEM OF CARE VIRTUAL SUMMIT 2024

# ALL SYSTEMS GO

TAKING ACTION TOGETHER.

May 14 - 16, 2024

ICADV Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence

## Inviting Black, Indigenous and People of Color

Embracing Wholeness. Building Rapport.

Join us for our 3rd annual BIPOC Leadership Summit a two day virtual event happening on January 2024. A welcoming space of multi-cultural/multi-ethnic people, with different abilities being stronger together.

**2-DAY VIRTUAL SUMMIT**

ASL & ESL INTERPRETATION WILL BE AVAILABLE

JANUARY 18, 2024 12:00 - 04:30 EST

JANUARY 19, 2024 12:00 - 04:00 EST

FOR MORE INFORMATION [icadvinc.org/events/](https://icadvinc.org/events/)

## Domestic Violence and Health: Understanding Root Causes and Policy Options

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH POLICY

Healing Together

Supporting Children, Youth & Families Impacted by Domestic Violence

Presenter: Arlene Vassell (she/her/hers)  
Founding Director, TooREL Institute for Social Change

Hosted By Michelle Tulloch-Neil, Global Jamaican Diaspora Representative, Northeast USA

# UNITY IS STRENGTH

PROMOTING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ACROSS THE DIASPORA

TONIA MOULTRY- PACE  
CEO & FOUNDER OF FULL SPECTRUM DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION LLC

ARLENE VASSELL  
FOUNDING DIRECTOR, TOOREL INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

JOIN US FOR PANEL DISCUSSION AND Q&A

May 29, 2024 | 7:00 PM EST

MEETING ID: 883 9494 2257  
PW: 812864

“

Dear Ms. Vassell, My sincere thanks for your exceptional contribution to the Northeast Jamaican Diaspora on the topic of promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion across the diaspora. Your captivating presentation demonstrated your deep knowledge on the subject that resonated strongly with our audience. Once again, thank you for sharing your expertise and insights that made a significant impact on our community. ”

Michelle Tulloch-Neil, Global Jamaican Diaspora Council NE USA



PRESENTS AN INVIGORATING AND INSPIRING VIRTUAL WEBINAR

# Workplace Wellness:

## Moving Beyond Words to Action

**JANUARY 16, 2024**  
1:00PM - 2:30PM (ET)

FACILITATORS



ARLENE VASSELL



MARISSA WILLIAMS



JOYCE L. KYLES

**CLICK THE LINK BELOW FOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION.**



[WWW.TOORELINSTITUTE.ORG/EVENTS](http://WWW.TOORELINSTITUTE.ORG/EVENTS)



# Workplace Wellness:

## Moving Beyond Words to Action

**APRIL 11, 18 & 25**

Join us for these invigorating and empowering conversations where participants will gain practical tools to create a thriving work environment that promotes holistic wellness and health.



ARLENE VASSELL



MARISSA WILLIAMS



JOYCE L. KYLES

Three 90-minute virtual sessions

One 60-minute peer-to-peer virtual session

One 30-minute consultation/coaching call

**\*Pre-requisite:** Free Workplace Wellness Introductory session. If you missed the introductory session, please request the recording by contacting [info@toorelinstitute.org](mailto:info@toorelinstitute.org)

**SECURE YOUR VIRTUAL SEAT TODAY AT [WWW.TOORELINSTITUTE.ORG/EVENTS](http://WWW.TOORELINSTITUTE.ORG/EVENTS)**



FREE VIRTUAL TRAINING

# Becoming & Unbecoming

## For the Journey Ahead

**APRIL 30**



FACILITATOR  
ARLENE VASSELL

TISC,  
Founding Director

**1:00PM - 2:30PM (ET)**

Who do you need to be in order to **become** an effective and influential social change agent?

What limiting beliefs, thought patterns and behaviors do you need to release in order to show up - **over and over again**- as your whole, authentic, self?

Are you ready, **really ready**, to jump start your self-discovery journey of becoming the best version of YOU?

**SECURE YOUR VIRTUAL SEAT TODAY!**  
REGISTER AT [HTTPS://WWW.TOORELINSTITUTE.ORG/EVENTS](https://WWW.TOORELINSTITUTE.ORG/EVENTS)

“  
**Holistic Wellness embodies caring for the needs of the whole person**  
- mental, physical, spiritual, and social.

# PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

“

**Presentation informs and inspires people to plan and act to address systemic inequities.”**

“

**The speaker was very engaging and left me with ways to really assess my organization.”**

# MEANINGFUL COLLABORATIONS & CONNECTIONS

## YOU'RE INVITED

to a gathering in Montgomery to transform engagement with people who cause harm through gender-based violence.

RSVP below. This is a non-transferable invitation.



Are you ready to transform practices that criminalize and punish people who cause harm through gender-based violence? Are you committed to building a survivor-led, anti-racist, human-centered movement to support healing-centered engagements of individuals, families, and communities? Then please join other like-minded activists for a national convening on working with people who use violence in their families in Montgomery, Alabama. This event is organized by Futures Without Violence, the TooREL Institute for Social Change, and Harmony One Restorative Justice.

Over forty activists and organizers said YES to the calling! The event was thought-provoking, inspiring and life changing for all. Stay tuned for more details about the convening, which will be shared far and wide in Year Two.

TooREL facilitators Arlene Vassell, Marissa Williams, and Joyce Kyles customized and led two sessions at each Knowledge Institute. The sessions were titled "Creating a Healthier WE: Empowering Advocates to Thrive" and "Writing a Winning Grant Proposal."

**SCESA** **Ujima**  
The National Center for Victims' Support

**ANNOUNCING:  
KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTES  
2024**

\*use the QR to complete the interest form

**ABOUT:**  
Knowledge Institutes are two day training events featuring workshops led by culturally specific experts from all over the country.

**WHO MAY ATTEND:**  
We are seeking advocates, community leaders, and service providers from **culturally specific organizations** who are dedicated to responding to all forms of crime especially those that disproportionately impact Communities of Color.

**For eligible organizations, scholarships are available to assist with travel, lodging, per diem, and local transportation.**

[bit.ly/KnowledgeInstituteInterest](https://bit.ly/KnowledgeInstituteInterest)

- Phoenix, AZ  
July 24-25
- Tulsa, OK  
August 13-14
- Seattle, WA  
August 21-22
- Boston, MA  
September 10-11



Please scan the QR code to provide information to help us accurately determine the number of participants for each institute. Please submit a separate form for each person from your organization who would like to attend. Feel free to share the flyer and participant interest form with other organizations that could benefit from the Knowledge Institutes. You will receive a follow-up email if you are selected for the institute. Your participation is greatly appreciated!

The Knowledge Institutes are produced by Ujima and SCESA under Grant Number 15POVC-21-GK-00845-NONF, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed at the institutes are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

# NEW PODCAST FEATURE

Our Founding Director, Arlene Vassell, was featured on the “DELTA Reflections: Shaping the Future of IPV Prevention,” a PreventConnect mini-series podcast that delves into the transformative journey of the DELTA project, a groundbreaking initiative by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention aimed at preventing intimate partner violence.

You can catch the full episode at <https://www.preventconnect.org/podcast/>



**DELTA**  
Reflections

Shaping the **FUTURE**  
Of intimate partner violence prevention

Available on  Spotify  

  
prevent  
connect  
A ValorUS PROJECT

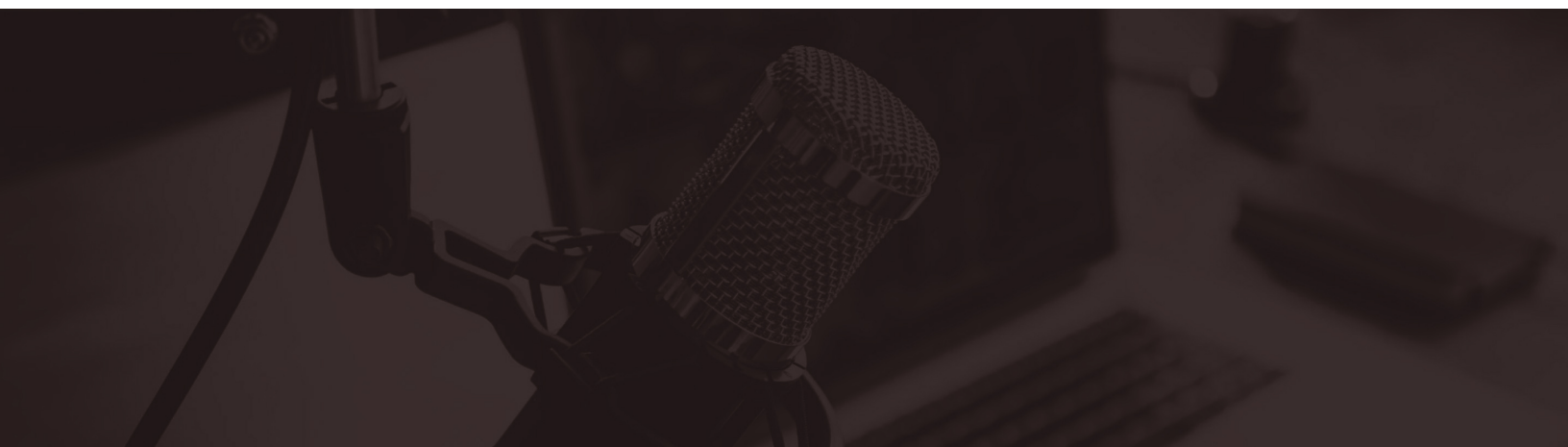


**DELTA**  
Reflections **PART 2**



Shaping the **FUTURE**  
Of intimate partner violence prevention

  
prevent  
connect  
A ValorUS PROJECT



# INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT AND UNIQUE REQUESTS

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

for Black and Brown people navigating oppressive work environments and dealing with abuse and harm caused by toxic workplaces.

### Self-identities

#### Gender

Women: 9

Men: 1

Non-Binary: 1

#### Race/Ethnicity

Black: 8

Latinx: 2

N/A: 1

#### Age

18-25: 3

25-45: 7

45-60: 1



## Reasons provided for seeking support, coaching and/or therapy, expressed in their own words

"Racist work environment"

"Oppressive work environment"

"Not able to accommodate Deaf LGBT Black staff"

"Unrealistic work expectations"

"Targets at work"

"Emotional harm caused by co-worker "

"Feels invisible and frustrated in workplace [and movement]"

"Unfair termination and discrimination in the workplace"

**You're not alone! If you're struggling in a toxic work environment and need support, don't hesitate to contact us at [info@toorelinstitute.org](mailto:info@toorelinstitute.org).**

**If we're unable to provide long-term care and support, we'll connect you with trusted individuals vetted by our Collective.**



**HERE and there:**

*An open letter to white women in the movement to end gender-based violence*

Dear White Women:

Welcome. I'm glad you are HERE. Let's talk about here and over there.

I hope **this time** you will stay here. When I saw hundreds of lovely pink knitted hats across the country, I was finally convinced that you were here to stay.

For years white feminism has waged a war against Black women, Black men, Black children, Black babies and our Black communities. With too many casualties to name them all. It wasn't televised, it wasn't video-taped, but the pain and scars remain visible in the lunch rooms and board rooms over there. Those most impacted have been silenced on the margins. Like my sister Lina Juarbe Botella would say, on the margin of the margins. You know them well. You should call them by their names. **Say Their Names.** All Black Lives Matter. So, **Say Their Names.**

I wonder...

### **Three requests**

to share "Here and there: An open letter to white women..." in workgroups and committees working to address oppression and injustices in the movement and within organizations.

As an aspiring ally, you can also use the letter (with permission from author, Arlene Vassell) as a starting point to facilitate discussions about the legacy of oppression in this country, systemic injustices, and the plight of Black people both within your organization and "the movement." The letter can serve as a catalyst for developing actionable strategies and commitments to confront and address systemic oppression and injustices.

We are here to support you with initiating these conversations and developing equity-centered and inclusive solutions.

# LOOKING AHEAD: WHAT TO EXPECT IN YEAR TWO



Roots, Equity  
and  
Liberation Online  
Training



Collaborative  
Leadership  
Program



Team Building  
Retreat: The Power of  
Connection



Workplace  
Wellness 3-part  
Series



New Signature  
Trainings



Podcast Series



New Publications



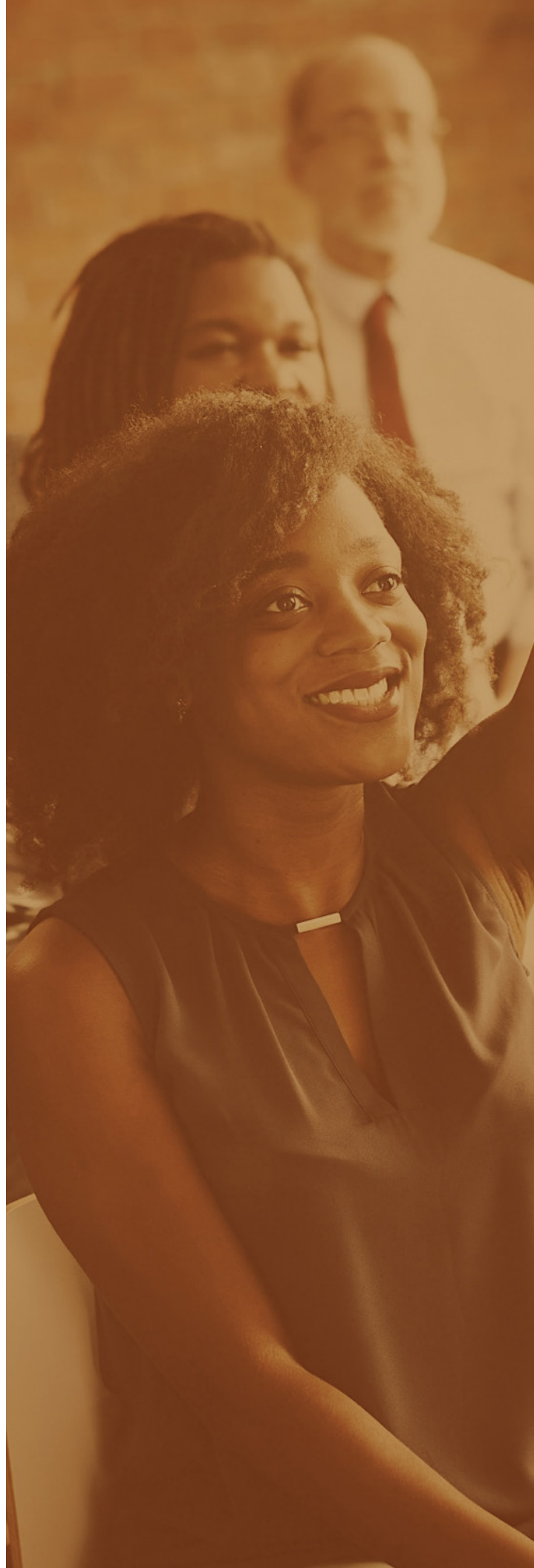
Individualized Support  
and Coaching



TooREL Quarterly  
Newsletter



Monthly "Pay-What-  
You-Can" Virtual  
Trainings



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**OFF**

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**TOORELturns!**

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Year One was a period of significant achievement and learning! Throughout chapter one we have forged meaningful collaborations with national, state-level and community-based organizations, which have been instrumental in driving our success and enriching our approach. These partnerships have not only expanded our network but have also provided valuable insights and support that have helped us navigate challenges and embrace new opportunities.

As we move forward, we are committed to incorporating the lessons learned into our strategy and operations. The experiences and feedback gathered over the past year have equipped us with a deeper understanding of our strengths and areas for improvement. By applying these insights, we aim to enhance our capacity building initiatives, strengthen our collaborations, and continue our trajectory of growth and innovation.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us on this journey. We look forward to building on our successes, deepening our partnerships, and addressing future challenges with a renewed focus, hope, joy and optimism in the coming year.

Here's to an exciting Year Two filled with continued growth, and progress!

## **The Collective**



## Contact Information

P.O. Box 670082, Coral Springs Florida 33067

[www.toorelinstitute.org](http://www.toorelinstitute.org)

[info@toorelinstitute.org](mailto:info@toorelinstitute.org)



**History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived,  
but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."**

**– Maya Angelou**