

<b>Name</b>	Allison Shockley (individual)
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:ashockley415@gmail.com">ashockley415@gmail.com</a>
<b>What is your current relationship status?</b>	Engaged
<b>Please provide at least one of your social media accounts.</b>	Instagram Handle: @allieshockley
<b>Tell us about your love story!</b>	I met Daniel (my fiance) at a local bar in our hometown of Chico, CA. I had never actually had a conversation with him, but we had grown up attending the same Jr. High and having some mutual friends. I like to say it was love at first beer because after reconnecting in our hometown I just knew we would be together forever.
<b>What will you be doing a year from now and 5 years from now to continue to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community? OR, what were you doing one year ago and five years ago to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community?</b>	My goal as an educator is to further my career in creating change for the public school systems. I plan on creating policies that bring equity and support to our predominantly black schools giving them the opportunities to succeed in whatever they set their minds to!
<b>What other local organizations do you support with volunteer work?</b>	Jefferson County Public School District
<b>In what ways have you advocated for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or have demonstrated being a change maker in our community?</b>	As a teacher in a predominantly black elementary school I find it is my duty to be an advocate and an ally. Living in Louisville, KY the hometown of Breonna Taylor, I've been to the marches and protests for justice and supported the black community by shopping at black owned businesses and volunteering my time and efforts to bring justice for Breonna's family and the great city of Louisville.
<b>Tell us about how a situation of racial injustice in your own life, growing up or currently that has moved you toward advocating for racial equality.</b>	When I was a college student at San Francisco State, my friend and I went to a nail salon. The worker immediately helped me and my friend Rachel sat and waited to be helped. People came into the salon and were Greeted and helped before her. When my appointment was over I noticed she had not been helped once. I asked her what the matter was and what she wanted to do? She quietly said she wanted to leave and asked me not to make a scene. She was silent on the drive home and I realized at that moment that I could never relate, I could never understand what she just went through, but I could help. I could advocate and use my resources to better educate those around me to do better and be better.
<b>Name 2 social accounts that you follow who have inspired you to put forth your efforts toward change.</b>	@teachersforblacklives @educatorsforjustice
<b>What makes you personally passionate about the #BLM Movement? How do you think more people could be a part of this movement and advocate for real change?</b>	Having taught in a classroom where I was the only white person completely changed my outlook and understanding of diversity. My school doesn't have a playground, the walls are crumbling, and we find roaches and bugs crawling around regularly. If you go up the street to the predominantly white schools, you will find a very different picture. When you see the injustices everyday and hear the stories first hand from the mouths of 8 year olds. You cannot be quite. You cannot sit On the sidelines. You must fight and you must do better. I believe if people took the time to expand their resources, explore new relationships and actually learn from someone who might not look exactly like them, we would find peace.
<b>What does equality mean to you?</b>	Equality is giving everyone the same piece of pie. I believe in equity, which is giving everyone what they need to be successful. Some people might need a little more assistance than others, I believe excepting those differences and the idea that others might need more than you is the key to success.
<b>The wedding will take place, likely on a weekday or Sunday in the late Spring/Summer post-Corona in 2021. We are coordinating with 20+ vendors on the same date, therefore are you able to be flexible with the dates we give you as options? The venue is also in Georgetown, TX.: I agree</b>	

<b>Name</b>	Ashley Gilbert + Aaron Jimenez, as a couple
<b>Email</b>	Ashdelillah@gmail.com
<b>What is your current relationship status?</b>	Engaged
<b>Please provide at least one of your social media accounts.</b>	Ash IG: @ashdelillah
<b>Tell us about your love story!</b>	<p>Hi i'm Ash, a fierce chicana raised in San Diego and my sweet fiance, Aaron is a full Salvadorian raised right here in heart of Austin! We're honored to be an interracial couple and show its beautiful to love people different than you.</p> <p>We have quite the modern day love story! We met 2 years ago over instagram (when this wasn't the cool way to meet your lover lol). We had mutual friends though our Church Hillsong and somehow came across each other's page. He says he fell in love with me the second he saw my pictures but i actually didn't notice him at first.</p> <p>After some time he finally built up the courage to message me and after a few conversations i knew immediately he was different. He was gentle and sweet. Some might say it's crazy, some might say it's fate but who knew we would talk everyday after that for the next 2 years.</p> <p>Within those 2 years, we've face-timed, moved across states for each other, traveled together, laughed, cried, made the sweetest of memories, experienced some of the most painful cry-on-the-kitchen-floor kinda nights, we've seen sunsets together and sunrises, but most importantly we've fought for change together for our black and brown brothers and sisters.</p> <p>We got engaged in the middle of a civil rights revelation and i wouldn't have it any other way. This may be the most important years of our lives. And i'm so grateful.</p> <p>So here we are. Fighting. Loving. Learning.</p> <p>This is us.</p>
<b>What will you be doing a year from now and 5 years from now to continue to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community? OR, what were you doing one year ago and five years ago to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community?</b>	<p>Gosh we are such dreamers. It would be amazing to someday start a business that supports and advocates for the BIPoCommunity. We ARE that community. We're still young and i'm not sure what that would look like....but until then, we'll keep writing, keep creating, keep speaking, keep supporting, keep educating, and keep loving.</p> <p>And when my future kids are doing their history homework, and they see the images of kind folks being gassed, shot at, and arrested because of the color of their skin. I hope my son looks up and ask "momma, where you there? Did you fight for justice too?"...because i will graciously look at his sweet brown eyes and say yes baby. mom and dad were fighters. Even if we weren't raised to think Black lives matter, my kids in 5 years will grow up declaring that.</p>
<b>What other local organizations do you support with volunteer work?</b>	<p>We actually have not volunteered this past year like we've wanted too, most of our support is done online (unless peacefully protesting). Being in the hub of COVID we have been taking very safe precautions, doing our part, and staying in as much as possible. It's so unfortunate but we believe it's necessary, for now (:</p>
<b>In what ways have you advocated for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or have demonstrated being a change maker in our community?</b>	<p>Honestly i think we've been created to fight for the oppressed. His sweet, tender, gracious heart and my fiery, bold, strong heart make for a well balanced team. I'm convinced it's in our blood.</p> <p>To be honest, it took some time for Aaron to understand the importance of fighting for our Black brothers and sisters as he comes from a very prideful, religious hispanic household who doesn't think its necessary to stand up for someone not of your kind (this mindset is actually quite common for latinxs). It's more of a "keep your head down, mind your business" and "well they never helped us" type of mindset. It took a gracious amount of unlearning, listening, praying, apologizing, and learning again to get him to where he is.</p> <p>He can now proudly declare "tu lucha es mi lucha" (your fight is my fight) and believe it.</p> <p>The past few months, we have actively sent out petitions to thousands of people, joined in on peaceful protest, have had the most uncomfortable and difficult conversations with our families, created content that supports our Black community, shut down racist and the ignorant, stand up for those who's voice is ignored, educated ourselves and our white friends over and over again, supported Black companies, and stop supporting anti-black businesses. Life has been chaotic but sweeter and it's not stopping until justice is served.</p> <p>Im actually writing this on 4th of July with the heaviest heart. Everyone deserves freedom, and we need to keep working towards true independence for all. Tu lucha es mi lucha.</p>
<b>Tell us about how a situation of racial injustice in your own life, growing up or currently that has moved you toward advocating for racial equality.</b>	<p>I grew up a mixed kid, i have never fit in with the whites or the hispanics. I was told by my Mexican friends "you're too white" and i was told by my White friends "you're too ghetto". This broke me growing up, all the way to the University level. My college in California literally had a "diversity club"....and it was uncommon for a Latina to be studying at a higher education.</p> <p>My finance on the other hand has experienced harsher moments. He is full Salvadorian and he grew up in a very White Austin neighborhood. He went to a predominately white school and has had predominantly "white" jobs. He would hear racial slurs like "beaner" and "you're only good at Soccer because you're Mexican" (and he's not even Mexican, yall). Whenever his beautiful, loud, Salvadorian family enters a restaurant one of 2 things happen...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People stare down.</li> <li>2. They're served last.</li> </ol> <p>Aaron is terrified of cops, has been since he was 6 years old. Just last week a White cop suspiciously pulled us over because he wanted to pet our Husky....as i looked over at Aaron in the driver seat, he was so uncomfortable and fearful, he was shaking. This isn't normal. This isn't they way life should be lived.</p> <p>And this is because we are white-passing Hispanics. Imagine if we LOOKED our race. Jesus Christ.</p> <p>This is why we fight. This is why we speak up. We need freedom + justice. We are both warriors born from the breaking and the rising. We need healing to take place in America or things will always be this way.</p>
<b>Name 2 social accounts that you follow who have inspired you to put forth your efforts toward change.</b>	@weallgrowlatina + @arielleestoria
<b>What makes you personally passionate about the #BLM Movement? How do you think more people could be a part of this movement and advocate for real change?</b>	<p>Someday, when our beautiful brown baby is born, i refuse to have him/her be told they can't make it because the color of their skin. George Floyd deserved better. Breonna Taylor deserved better. Ahmaud Arbery deserved better. Elijah McClain deserved better.</p> <p>Honestly i think people just need to listen. They need to deconstruct what the "history books" taught them and really listen to real hurting people. We need to remove certain words from our vocabulary and keep having uncomfortable conversations. We need to grieve for the broken. We need to heal + support Black businesses and speak out when we see something wrong. We need to keep reading books, signing petitions, and putting pressure on our government leaders. We need to vote wisely. We need to see all humans as humans and be part of the solution.</p>
<b>What does equality mean to you?</b>	All lives no NOT matter until Black lives matter.
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<b>Name</b>	Erika Wright	<b>What other local organizations do you support with volunteer work?</b>	The Refuge Place
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:erikamw2070@yahoo.com">erikamw2070@yahoo.com</a>	<b>In what ways have you advocated for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or have demonstrated being a change maker in our community?</b>	<p>I co-lead a bible study for young adults and teenagers in the Austin/Pflugerville area. As a Christian, I believe that one of the primary tenants of my faith is to fight against injustice and for the oppressed. The message of the gospel and of Christ is good news for ALL who receive it, the lost and marginalized alike. And it is the story of my personal freedom so I will never stop speaking of it. For me, this is my primary contribution to advocate for equality, justice and diversity.</p> <p>I am also a community event organizer at my church and we have formed a lasting relationship with the Pflugerville Health Care Center where we serve them in different ways throughout the year. My favorite (and arguably their favorite) thing that we do is singing for them on Sunday afternoon. To me, spreading joy and love conquers any negativity that may be present. While it is necessary and important to face the negativity head on, it is equally important to not allow that negativity to take over. We all have a light to shine and to me that is why diversity is so important. Each person has a different experience. Age, race, class, religion, sexual orientation, they all play a role in how we interact and interpret information and we need each other in order to be able to view things clearly.</p> <p>I also like to use my voice and temperament to my advantage. I make myself readily available and invite people to discuss any of these issues. It is a loaded topic and can be very emotionally charged and taxing. Some of my black friends don't have the bandwidth or emotional capacity to entertain such conversations, which I understand, but I like to serve as a bridge and hold space for the tension.</p>
<b>What is your current relationship status?</b>	engaged	<b>Tell us about how a situation of racial injustice in your own life, growing up or currently that has moved you toward advocating for racial equality.</b>	<p>The black experience is not monolithic, though I wish I could capture it all to share. It's tough to think of an isolated event but my most current and direct experience was during a celebratory event for a friend of mine. Her dad came by and introduced himself to her friends (me included) by his first name, waited for everyone to walk away and said "Mr. _____, to you" with a facetious smirk. It was extremely demoralizing and I remember deciding to internalize it so that I wouldn't make everyone else uncomfortable on such a joyous occasion. I tried to rationalize it. "Why me?" I looked around at my friends. There were other women present, other millennials, but I was the only black one. To this day, when I think about it, I rack my brain hoping that it was something else, that maybe this time another explanation will make sense.</p> <p>I think the loneliness and pain of these situations is what motivates me to advocate. I never want anyone to have to experience that type of hatred and discrimination for something out of their control, for something they are proud of. I want everyone to know that they are loved and cared for beyond comprehension and that even in those isolating, unnerving moments, there is hope. That their life and skin tone is intentional and worthy.</p>
<b>Please provide at least one of your social media accounts.</b>	@erikamichelle__	<b>Name 2 social accounts that you follow who have inspired you to put forth your efforts toward change.</b>	@drcarolineleaf @iamtabithabrown
<b>Tell us about your love story!</b>		<b>What makes you personally passionate about the #BLM Movement? How do you think more people could be a part of this movement and advocate for real change?</b>	Being a black woman, I have had numerous racist encounters, as well as countless friends and family members who have been victims of racism. For me, this is more than a movement. It's a way of life that started when I was birthed out of the womb of a black woman. I wake up next to black lives that matter. I serve black lives that matter. I do life with them. I laugh with them. I dine with them. I cry with them. I grieve with them. I create with them. I honor them. I love them.
<b>What will you be doing a year from now and 5 years from now to continue to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community? OR, what were you doing one year ago and five years ago to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community?</b>	My 1 year goal is to continue volunteering (as described above) and working on a segment on my YouTube channel called "Authentici-Tea: a series" that I started recently to highlight the stories of BIPoC. In 5 years, I plan to be pursuing or have obtained a masters in counseling or a doctorate degree in psychology to serve better BIPoC that are seeking out these services, as we are underrepresented in this area.	<b>What does equality mean to you?</b>	My philosophy is that we approach one another with humility and respect. Not everyone has the means or desire to donate, protest, or volunteer but everyone has the time and responsibility to listen and to educate themselves. To accept responsibility for their own actions and do the inner work that is required of them to make a positive and lasting change in our world. Even if you can't find it in you to support the movement, you can confront your biases and the way you've contributed to the need for the movement. Change starts in our hearts, moves into our homes and infiltrates the world. Don't just do justice, be just. As MLK Jr. put it, that we would live in a world where we will not be judged by the color of our skin but by the content of our character. When we can all look at our neighbors and acknowledge their intrinsic worth and treat them accordingly.
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Name	Jessenia Garcia	<b>What other local organizations do you support with volunteer work?</b>	<p>Movement Mujeres - fellowship for women of color created by Wendy Davis in effort to fight for woman's, racial, and LGBTQ rights, environmental, reproductive, and racial justice.</p> <p>American College Counseling Association - I am the co chair of the diversity and inclusion committee where I lead efforts to promote multiculturally competent and social justice based mental health services for college students.</p>
Email	<a href="mailto:jessenia.garcia@gmail.com">jessenia.garcia@gmail.com</a>	<b>In what ways have you advocated for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or have demonstrated being a change maker in our community?</b>	<p>I am an educator. Educator and social justice are one and the same. It is my duty as an educator to lead by example when it comes to social justice, which requires challenging unjust systems and traditions. Coming from an underprivileged background, I understand the impact of services on communities. Therefore, I started young doing my part to utilize my privilege to help others. I have participated in protests since the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement and since 2016 when immigrants began to be attacked in this country. In addition, I have dedicated my efforts as a doctoral student and now professor to educate and challenge others in my profession. I have held workshops, training, written articles, and have conducted research with a social justice mindset. Change does not end with ending police brutality or defunding. There are racist and discriminatory practices in mental health too. So I, take my job seriously both as a mental health counselor and as an educator of future counselors.</p>
What is your current relationship status?	engaged	<b>Tell us about how a situation of racial injustice in your own life, growing up or currently that has moved you toward advocating for racial equality.</b>	<p>I am Latinx. Daughter of immigrants. Both of my parents came here undocumented in search for a better life. I am daughter of immigrants, come from low SES, and darker in skin the others in my family. Therefore, since an early age, I have been aware that society does not treat everyone equally. I have been called names, bullied, had people assume I am not competent, been followed in stores, and in educational settings, have received microaggressions and tokenized. There have been many instances where I have been highly aware that people project their biases onto me. So, I decided early to challenge that. My way, was in mental health and healing with a focus of racial/ethnic stress and immigrant issues.</p>
Please provide at least one of your social media accounts.	Instagram and twitter handle: neplantera	<b>Name 2 social accounts that you follow who have inspired you to put forth your efforts toward change.</b>	400 and one. And Nalgona Positivity Pride
Tell us about your love story!		<b>What makes you personally passionate about the #BLM Movement? How do you think more people could be a part of this movement and advocate for real change?</b>	<p>My core values are justice and community. I believe Black lives matter. A person's life is not political. It is not a game and right now there is strength in the movement. More people have realized that justice is tainted in this country and finally have become angry enough to look closer. I am not Black which means it is double my duty as an ally to show up. People can be part of this movement by moving past superficial initiatives such as posting a black space on social media. People need to practice true reflection on their privilege and how anti-Blackness has impacted their worldview. People can also push for system changes and donate to organizations or sign petitions. Where do you hold power? How can you use your power for this movement? Everyone's answer is different however we can also challenge ourselves to do more.</p>
What will you be doing a year from now and 5 years from now to continue to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPOC community? OR, what were you doing one year ago and five years ago to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPOC community?	<p>One year from now, I would have mentored Black and students of color in the field of counseling. I was not only a first generation student, but I was also one of the only students of color in the classroom. This was difficult to navigate and created feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome. Therefore, I choose to pay forward my privilege and be a source of support for those who often feel forced to assimilate to the White male pro type in academia.</p> <p>Five years from now, I hope to be in position of leadership in counseling organizations in Texas. The mental health field remains majority White but we know Texas BIPOC need representation in their therapists. I want to lead initiatives to increase students of color in programs and more importantly, support them once they get there. BIPOC are traumatized by the injustice and emotional labor this country requires of them. My passion comes from wanting to offer pathways for healing. As a counselor, I can reach a few clients. However, as a social justice led counseling faculty member, I can reach many more through my engagement with students and community.</p>	<b>What does equality mean to you?</b>	<p>Equality means understanding how systems of power thrive on the oppression of others and doing everything to dismantle that. It means ensuring that as a society Black lives matter and people take ownership in learning about their privileges. It means that everyone at the table is heard not merely provided a seat.</p>
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<b>Name</b>	Karley Southern & Mason Gavin, as a couple
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:southernkarley@gmail.com">southernkarley@gmail.com</a>
<b>What is your current relationship status?</b>	Engaged
<b>Please provide at least one of your social media accounts.</b>	@itskarleytime @masongavin
<b>Tell us about your love story!</b>	We met within 3 months of both of us moving to a new city. We have spent 4.5 years together now and loving every moment we have together.
<b>What will you be doing a year from now and 5 years from now to continue to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community? OR, what were you doing one year ago and five years ago to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community?</b>	We are continuing to participate in our local government, until our city council is better represented by people from our city. I will vote and call into city council until we see change.
<b>What other local organizations do you support with volunteer work?</b>	@icantbreatheCHA is a great group here that we have been actively attending their protests and promoting their info.
<b>In what ways have you advocated for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or have demonstrated being a change maker in our community?</b>	Karley - I have participated in every city council budget hearing and have participated in multiple marches. We have been sharing and advocating on how to vote and reach out to public officials. Mason has been my rock in all of this, helping me with speeches, emails, calls, and marching by my side. We have also used our voices on our business pages - @riversidechattanooga @chattanoogaoffroadmonthlymeet Working in the off road communities, this has been particularly interesting. We are happy to be leaders in our area who can vocalize BLM.
<b>Tell us about how a situation of racial injustice in your own life, growing up or currently that has moved you toward advocating for racial equality.</b>	I would have never known about this from my own personal experience until I saw how officers were treating protesters. It changed my life forever and had made me passionate about true equality whether it's police or childrens after school activities.
<b>Name 2 social accounts that you follow who have inspired you to put forth your efforts toward change.</b>	@icantbreathecha @concernedcitizensforjustice
<b>What makes you personally passionate about the #BLM Movement? How do you think more people could be a part of this movement and advocate for real change?</b>	I think that it's most important for people who have had it fairly easy to advocate for change. I am a white female and haven't been treated poorly because of the color of my skin. I think that being able to listen to those who have experienced injustice and wanting change for them is extremely powerful and how we can all come together.
<b>What does equality mean to you?</b>	That a person no matter their skin color or background is offered the same opportunity to succeed.
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<b>Name</b>	Michael & Christi Carter, as a couple
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:cmc0329cmc@gmail.com">cmc0329cmc@gmail.com</a>
<b>What is your current relationship status?</b>	Married ***Our story involves a Marine hero (now serving our community as a Police Officer) and a beautiful woman reaching for the stars***
<b>Please provide at least one of your social media accounts.</b>	Facebook: Christi Lynne Carter (seriously I just recently signed up lol)
<b>Tell us about your love story!</b>	Our love story is not exactly a romantic fairytale more like a rescue mission. It's a little hard to tell because it is very personal. So we will try to make it short, sweet, a little serious and a little fun too. "Christi never believed in true love until she met, me, Michael." Yup, that is true babe. I also never believed in heroes either until I met you. We met through a mutual friend when Michael was in the Marine Corps. I was a single mom of 2. I struggled growing up with parents fighting all the time, my mother leaving, then my mother taking us with her to only send us back, and then my father giving my 4 sisters and I up to his siblings, moving far away, splitting us up. Then, we got sent back to our father once more, who at that point had pretty much given in to depression. I never felt like I belonged anywhere and I did not believe in love. I was a teen mom at 17 years old with an abusive drug addict slash drug dealer ex-bf that would not leave me alone. So for the rescue mission! My husband, Michael fit the part of a true hero, he being a sexy Marine and all. This was 7 years ago. We talked all the time, literally til the sun came up and he still would go to work serving our country. He knew my crazy life story, my fears and the 'problem'. As much as I tried in a small town to get help to keep this abuser villain of an ex away, even with a protective order, the guy did not get the hint. Until he met my Marine one day. Michael and I were at the park one day with the kids and the 'problem' showed up. The hero met the villain. The villain did exactly what the beautiful girl said he might do, try to kidnap the girl. He tried to throw her into the getaway car. But no! The hero, my hero, my Marine, took charge. He flew in on his F35 with pride and valor, not to mention those sexy muscles. Michael used his super powers to scare away the villain. With screeching tires and a villain on the run, the beautiful girl was saved. In the arms of the hero, the Marine, (my hero! my Marine!) Michael proposed with a beautiful aquamarine ring, flowers and champagne. He took me to the courthouse to get married. We didn't get to take any pictures, have family there or even dance. That 26th day in July of 2013 I will remember forever. But now we need a wedding, a nice one with all the fancy stuff. Babe..."Who would've thought a kid from Brooklyn, who was convinced by the world he would amount to a little more than nothing, would honorably serve his country during a war on terror and then go on to serve his community as an officer of the law. If that's not enough, meet the girl of his dreams and start a beautiful family. They say all it takes for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing. Something I always had a hard time accepting, so when I heard my nation's, my community's and my love's call to arms, I had no choice but to answer."
<b>What will you be doing a year from now and 5 years from now to continue to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community? OR, what were you doing one year ago and five years ago to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community?</b>	Michael: Five years from now I plan on doing the same thing I set out to do 5 years ago, that is to be the change I want to see in the world. I will continue to serve our community and help those less fortunate. Christi: I have my Associates in Education and currently working on my Bachelor's to teach EC-6 grade. I have been helping the elderly within the community and I plan to keep that going. I can help be a voice for the children and for the elderly; those who can no longer fight the fight and for those who can not speak up for themselves.
<b>What other local organizations do you support with volunteer work?</b>	We often donate items to Round Rock service center and we both help out with our children's sports.
<b>In what ways have you advocated for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or have demonstrated being a change maker in our community?</b>	Michael: Raised in a single parent household, my mother impressed upon me from an early age that I needed to be at my very best, as I was already battling with 2 strikes against me (being a black male). As I grew, I began to understand the urgency of my loving mother's message. Being from Guyana, South America and immigrating to America as a teenager, she saw first hand how it was hard enough to be black in America, let alone to be a young black male from the ghetto, where your every move could be interpreted by the "powers that be" as a threat. She made a conscious decision to give me a name that did not readily identify me as a young black male. She then stressed the importance of my education and worked day and night to give me every extra curricular opportunity the city had to offer. She made sure that I knew how to wear my pants above my waist, look a person in the eye when I spoke and to speak with dignity and confidence that left others wondering where my hard New York accent had disappeared to. I've always done my best to shatter stereotypes and took great pleasure in watching the confused faces of hiring managers as they searched the waiting room for the applicant named Michael Carter they interviewed over the phone. Now as a City of Round Rock Police Officer, husband to an Irish/Italian wife and father to 3 beautiful biracial babies, I continue my mother's teachings not only to my children but to the youths of our community who need the same guidance I was given and often don't know where to turn to receive it. The best way to advocate for racial equality, justice and diversity is, to continue to be a positive role model for kids in the community who too often only see "successful" black men in a music video or on a sports field. Christi: I always had a passion to hang around the kiddos (never grow up, always have fun :-)) and help the elderly. I never got to meet my grandfathers on both my mother and father's side and I only got to spend just moments with my grandmothers. So, always having had that desire to know who my Grandparents were, a fire grew inside of me to help out within the community. I love hanging out with the kids in the neighborhood and encouraging them to play sports and to do their very best at everything. I also had started my own small business before COVID, helping the 55+ community. I would clean, cook, run errands, play games and puzzles, and more for several elderly in the RR community.
<b>Tell us about how a situation of racial injustice in your own life, growing up or currently that has moved you toward advocating for racial equality.</b>	Michael: Being racially profiled as a teenager I would be followed around in a retail store, randomly stopped and frisked by local police, and was even made fun of by other black kids because my name was not ethnic enough. Christi: Growing up in a town bordering Mexico, I was the outsider. I was 1 of 5 white girls in a predominately hispanic class of 30+ students. Being bullied and called names such as white trash was just a regular day. If you didn't look the part you did not fit in. Advocating for racial equality is leading with equality. No matter who you are, you are worth it. No matter where you are from or what you look like, everyone deserves respect and dignity.
<b>Name 2 social accounts that you follow who have inspired you to put forth your efforts toward change.</b>	Tarana Burke and Barack Obama.
<b>What makes you personally passionate about the #BLM Movement? How do you think more people could be a part of this movement and advocate for real change?</b>	Our children are biracial and that makes it personal. We do not want our children to be treated differently because the color of their skin. More people can be part of this movement by word of mouth and education. To be aware of what is going on in their own community.
<b>What does equality mean to you?</b>	To us equality is as the great Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, that our children "will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."
<b>The wedding will take place, likely on a weekday or Sunday in the late Spring/Summer post-Corona in 2021. We are coordinating with 20+ vendors on the same date, therefore are you able to be flexible with the dates we give you as options? The venue is also in Georgetown, TX.: I agree</b>	

<b>Name</b>	Sydney Ruos and Walker Hosley
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:sydneyruos@gmail.com">sydneyruos@gmail.com</a>
<b>What is your current relationship status?</b>	Engaged
<b>Please provide at least one of your social media accounts.</b>	@sydney_cr @wakafalakahoz @gooniedoobiedoo
<b>Tell us about your love story!</b>	We met about 7 years ago at Auburn University, War Eagle! We were next door neighbors with a little patch of grass between us. I was walking my dog one day, a black pittie mix named Dublin, when he saw me for the first time. He was on his steps with a friend and told him he was going to marry me one day. I thought he was a total creeper. Later on, he and his roommate got a white mix named Taz and he and Dublin quickly fell in love in that little patch of grass. They played every day that Summer while we were becoming best friends and we've been best friends ever since. I remember the first day I saw him, too. Not in the way he saw me, we had been friends for a few months at this point, but the first time I really saw him. I looked into his eyes and it was like entire world opened. I saw his heart and I haven't seen a future without him in it since. We've been together for 6 years now. He graduated two years before me so we did long distance. Dublin still gets excited when she hears me start my murder podcast because she thinks we're taking a drive to go see her dad, even if he's only just left for work. He grew up in Texas, amongst other places as an Air Force brat, and I grew up in Miami. Now we live in Birmingham where I work for a local radio station and he works for Enterprise. We bought our first home and got engaged last October. Walker always said he couldn't promise me forever but I could at least get 89 years out of him. It's become our magic number and we are strongly considering tattooing it on our butts. Now when he tells me "89," I hear "I love you" and I see our future.
<b>What will you be doing a year from now and 5 years from now to continue to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community? OR, what were you doing one year ago and five years ago to fight for social justice and equality for the BIPoC community?</b>	A year from now, I will be really good at speaking up. Living in the South, I witness micro aggressions or even blatant racism on a weekly basis. In the past, I have been hesitant to say something in the moment because I'm scared but that fear is so much less than what BIPoC everyday. In five years, I will have found some organizations to steadily volunteer for on the local level and I will hopefully be able to make bigger donations to the organizations that know way better than me how to uplift BIPoC communities. Between now and then, I am trying to educate myself, use my privileged voice, and support those whose pain I can never fully understand.
<b>What other local organizations do you support with volunteer work?</b>	I applied to volunteer at a bunch of food banks but no one has had any openings. I actually just joined the Junior League for volunteer opportunities so I am really excited to get out in my community.
<b>In what ways have you advocated for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or have demonstrated being a change maker in our community?</b>	I love these questions! I'm as flat broke as Lin-Manuel Miranda so I've been streaming all the content where the ad proceeds go to BLM and other groups supporting people of color all day every day. I feel the most important way Walker and I have been advocating is within our own families. As much as we feel it is important to protest, to post, to be publicly anti-racist, it is also important to hold ourselves and the people we love accountable. Our families have said to us that they don't think racism is real because how far we've come since they were kids or because they don't see it happening in their communities. We have been having really difficult conversations with them and trying to affect change where we have the most influence. It isn't comfortable to correct my future father in law when he makes a biased statement or tell my brother a racist joke isn't funny and these are all the reasons why but we're making progress.
<b>Tell us about how a situation of racial injustice in your own life, growing up or currently that has moved you toward advocating for racial equality.</b>	When I joined a sorority freshman year, I became friends with the only black woman in our pledge class. It was impossible not to be friends with her. She was the funniest, sweetest, kindest, person in the whole class.  It's tradition to have "swaps" (aka dry parties with some dress up theme) with the freshman classes of all the fraternities on campus. One night, we're all dressed up and heading to the house when I realize my friend isn't there. This swap was with a "top tier" fraternity and we were all so excited. However, this top house has known ties to the Confederacy and I would come to know them as openly racist over the next four years. That night all I knew is it was where we were supposed to go. I figured she had a big test and couldn't make it but when I found out the real reason it made me sick. Their pledge trainer had contacted ours the day before. They said they'd love to have us but she wasn't invited. They said all 80 something of us were welcome except her. Our pledge trainer told her so she stayed home. None of us knew. All 80 something of us, who were supposed to be a sisterhood, walked into that house and supported their oppression of our sister because she is black. We were not given a choice. I only found out because she told me. That moment is when I realized the sheer magnitude of racial injustices BIPoC experience. This experience that made me sick was just another in a series I had never seen up close before.  My friend ultimately left our school for a lot of reason but this was one of them. There are so many things I would have done differently but even while I write this I'm thinking about all the other quite injustices she must have endured.
<b>Name 2 social accounts that you follow who have inspired you to put forth your efforts toward change.</b>	@blackatauburn @speakingofracism
<b>What makes you personally passionate about the #BLM Movement? How do you think more people could be a part of this movement and advocate for real change?</b>	I have been able to best understand BLM by comparing my life experience as a woman. The oppression, the imposed humiliation, the name calling, the fear. What I feel walking down the street at night is an ounce of their experience and that knowledge fills me with passion to make it better. I think people need to dig down dip, be honest with themselves, and find some empathy. We have to admit and acknowledge our privilege before we can do anything else about it.
<b>What does equality mean to you?</b>	Equality is not being blind to our differences but seeing and embracing them. Equality does not negate individuality but celebrates the individual by giving us all a fair shot.
<b>The wedding will take place, likely on a weekday or Sunday in the late Spring/Summer post-Corona in 2021. We are coordinating with 20+ vendors on the same date, therefore are you able to be flexible with the dates we give you as options? The venue is also in Georgetown, TX.: I agree</b>	