

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Erika K. Wesley Joins Westport Country Playhouse as Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Newly created position is underwritten in part by a Connecticut Cultural Fund Operating Support Grant administered by CT Humanities

Westport Country Playhouse has named Erika K. Wesley to a new, full-time position titled director of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). She will provide strategic and operational leadership of all EDI policies, programs, training, and practices for the Playhouse.

“Erika is a tremendously impressive addition to our Playhouse family who is already bonding with staff and trustees and bringing transformative insights to our long-range work on equity, diversity, and inclusion,” said Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director.

The new position reflects the commitment of the Playhouse’s board and staff to place anti-racism and inclusion at the center of their work. Wesley will be instrumental in helping the Playhouse realize its vision of becoming a regional hub for theater, art, ideas, and fellowship with communities extending beyond Westport to Southwestern Connecticut.

“I am honored to be the inaugural director of equity, diversity, and inclusion for Westport Country Playhouse,” said Wesley. “I am excited to have the opportunity to marry my experience as a nonprofit executive with my passion for literary and performing arts.

“Access and equity are two cornerstones of my professional work and I hope to work collaboratively with the staff, board of the Playhouse, and community to bring the principles of EDI to life.”

Erika K. Wesley is a nonprofit leader with over 10 years of experience in constituency building, relationship management, program development, strategic planning, leadership development, and teaching and curriculum development. Wesley is also a writer and storyteller committed to unearthing the experiences of Black people in Connecticut and raising them up in poems or prose. She is the author of the book “For the People to Drink” and the creator and host of the “Show of Hands” podcast.

Wesley is a higher education and community educator with teaching experience in business writing and creative writing. She is the chairperson of BLaC (Building Leaders and Communities) Strategies, an emerging nonprofit in Connecticut focused on cross-community leadership development and community messaging.

Most recently, Wesley served as the executive director of Horizons at Greens Farms Academy, Westport. She has also worked with Fairfield County’s Community Foundation and Carver Foundation

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of Norwalk. She has a B.A. from University of Connecticut, an M.F.A. from Manhattanville College, and is completing an Ed.D. in organizational leadership from Abilene Christian University.

The director of EDI position is underwritten in part by the Connecticut Cultural Fund Operating Support Grant administered by CT Humanities.

Westport Country Playhouse is a non-profit organization that produces theater from playwrights, actors, directors, and designers of all backgrounds, while entertaining audiences and exploring human and societal issues along the way. Located on Paugussett land, the Playhouse is creating an antiracist environment with staff, artists, community leaders, and board members, and has ongoing discussions around EDI as well as relevant trainings in antiracist practice, bystander intervention, and social justice. All Playhouse staff are committed to learning about EDI work and engaging with the Playhouse in this mission. Information about the historic Connecticut professional theater is at westportplayhouse.org.

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