TO: APA Board of Officers

SUBJECT: Berry Fund for Public Philosophy, Donor Funds Award Report

FROM: Racial Justice Lab, Department of Philosophy, Vanderbilt University

DATE: September 28, 2022

Brief Overview and Background

The Racial Justice Lab received a $1,000 grant from the Berry Fund for Public Philosophy in the fall of 2021. The APA’s donor fund website specifies that all projects funded by the APA must submit a report detailing how the APA funds were used and evaluating the project’s progress toward its goals in the preceding year. Therefore, this report details the Racial Justice Lab’s use of APA’s funds and evaluates progress toward our goals.

The Racial Justice Lab (RJL) explores the challenges of acting responsibly in relation to real-world problems of racial injustice. It is a collaborative, creative, experimental, and problem-centered space for testing, applying, and extending the ideas that emerge from the growing philosophical literature on racial justice. It is a social ethics humanities lab which, like laboratories in the natural sciences, aims to diagnose and solve real-world problems.

Funded Project Overview

The lab’s service-learning projects include “37208 Creates,” a racial justice art space in historic North Nashville, and “Philosophy for Black Lives” (P4BL), a video series which aims to gather and document a range of philosophical responses to the 2020 so-called “summer of protests.”

Of the $1000 Berry Fund award from the APA, the RJL put $700 toward undergraduate student research on the ‘37208 Creates’ Project, and $300 for professional video editing services on the “Philosophy for Black Lives” project.

Evaluation of Award

The goals of the undergraduate student research are both pedagogical, focused on the students’ philosophical development, and strategic, with immediate benefit to the ‘37208 Creates’ project team. Our student researchers were able to access and scan documents in the Metro Nashville Archives pertaining to real estate development and highway construction in the North Nashville corridor, compile lists of related creative placemaking projects nationally, detail relevant grant opportunities, and research evaluations of analogous projects. These resources, in the form of professional memorandums of understanding, were then shared with the entire project team and will be put to use in ongoing and future project efforts. The student research continues in the form of independent studies and paid research assistantship in the fall of 2022.

Regarding the professional video editing services for the P4BL project, the edited videos have been made available via the RJL’s public website as well as via Youtube. They are now durable
digital objects that can be used as resources for teaching or for public programming. We hope that these videos will inspire future debate as well as showcase often sidelined perspectives in professional philosophy.