

Commission for Diversity and Tolerance
June 2, 2016
Senior/Community Center

Attendance: Tom Getz, Hannah Wilson , Sheila Trieff, Margaret McQuillan, Donna Scott, Tommy Furlong, Beth Horne, Superintendent of Schools Susan Viccaro, Peter Blaiwas, Kat Preftes (Kat arrived after her son's concert)

Call To Meeting 7:10 P.M.

SCHOOL UPDATE: Superintendent Viccaro briefed us on an incident where a teacher found underneath a poster some graffiti which was of a hateful nature. The police were notified and investigated. She also notified the mayor and CDT. Superintendent Viccaro brought a copy of the recent Daily News editorial which suggest that the community respond to any act of hate. There have been 4 or 5 incidents on the North Shore. She initiated a lively brain storming conversation on how best to proceed.

- The Community Read book by Choates, *Between Two Worlds* was suggested for both High School and wider community.
- There could be a continuation of the conversation launched by Debbie Irving author of *Waking Up White* who presented to the Jr. Class.
- Dictionary...of the things we take for granted to be made available for immigrants. Spark Notes...for newcomers....
- It was acknowledged that staff are all at different places but it is important to keep educating. White privilege was felt to be an important issue.
- It was noted that the schools do a good job...We could support the existing programs in the school by helping to advertize and perhaps get the message out to local congregations through the Clergy Association.
- White People Challenging Racism class could be offered to the teachers
- We wondered how to teach social responsibility. Southern Poverty Law Center has a wonderful curriculum and the community has had training from the ADL.
- Working racially diverse schools in other districts has its benefits and drawbacks. The transportation costs are high and it is challenging to manage. Does it get at white privilege?
- There was a desire to involve the youth in the conversation but we recognize it is hard for them to know what they have not experienced.

We agreed from the brainstorming that teaching about White Privilege is the first priority. We will consider whether Debbie Irving could come in the fall. She leads a workshop titled; *I'm A Good Person, Isn't that enough*. Possibly get students to help fundraise and look into crowd funding....

In the fall Superintendent Viccaro would like to come to our meeting with some administrators. We also are invited to meet with the leadership team which meets 2x a month to share any programs or ideas with the administrators in the district.

MINUTES APPROVED AS AMENDED
NEW BUSINESS

KIDS AS PEACEMAKERS UPDATE: Wet Paint Auction is planned for the fall. June 16 at 9 AM planning meeting at Central Congregational Church. Tentative Date of the auction is September 24th. We are invited to participate in the planning.

COMMUNITY READ: Planning Meeting, June 9th at 7 P.M. at Café DiSienna. We are invited to participate.

PEACE PRIZE DEBRIEF: Well done!! Kudos to our youth representatives Tommy Furlong and Hannah Wilson. We appreciate the flowers provided by Jan Lorrey and the donations from the banks.

Kat has a Press Release which will go into the paper about the PP and Mini-grants.

Some suggestions for next year:

Move to an earlier date possibly April and keep the PP and Mini-grants together

Invite Kids as Peacemakers to hand out checks.

Invite School Committee and City Council.

Initially make contact to the Superintendent with the request for nominees and then assign one person to each school and that person to contact the families.

Entertainment--It seemed festive enough without any.

Name tags for next year.

TRANSGENDER: In the fall we are planning to show *Tomboy*. Kathleen is working out the details.

LOOKING AHEAD IN 2017

Meet in August to brainstorm ideas for next year.

The two issues presenting are White Privilege and something we are having a hard time naming exactly but it has to do with the undertone of fear, the escalating violence and the prevalence of anti-immigrant and racist undertones in the media and the complete lack of civility by public figures. We would like to provide something which reminds us all how to live together in a civil society, welcoming all. Our task for the summer is to be ready with ideas at the August meeting.

We will explore getting a clergy liaison in fall. Sheila might be a liaison from us to them if no one from the clergy group is able to attend the meetings.

Peter will be our new webmaster

Many, many thanks to Donna Scott for her service. It was her last meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

June 16 7 PM Communications Plan Subcommittee

August 25th ...6 P.M. Brainstorming meeting.

September 8th September meeting 7 P.M.

MEETING ADJOURNED 8:50 P.M.