



Diversity Task Group Minutes

Date: November 19, 2018
Time: 6:45pm – Social Time; 7:00-9:00pm - Meeting
Location: Jefferson Cutter House

1. Welcome and introductions: an invitation from Mr Roger's Neighborhood
2. Minutes and sign in: Michaiiah, Michi, Miriam, Sophie, Robin, Brooks, Mary, Rajiv, Jane, Judith, Katell
3. Approval of minutes: Last meeting was a small group with five attendees, so approval of minutes was waived.
4. Discussion Questions:
 1. What are people's experiences with tension in the community? What do you think is the source or cause of this tension?
 2. What would you want the other party to know about you so you'd be seen as an equal/valued member of the community?
 3. Conversely, what would you need to learn about the other person/people in order to understand them better or connect with them on a common human level?

The idea behind these is based on a discussion begun with Arlington PD (Julie Flaherty). Led to her and METCO group going apple picking, which was helpful. Then, there was the incident with the Arlington police officer who posted his opinions, so the tension in the community continues and needs to be addressed in an on-going way. Attendees raised the following:

- Recent article on hate crime stats in Arlington
- Comments in passing: in parks, in halls of the schools, etc. These microaggressions (and not-so-micro continue)
- One attendee is a parent of an African-American child and shared their experiences, both positive and negative
- Online discussions on facebook: use of racist slurs, aggression, in the name of free speech
- Do stories provide a way to help others understand? Or can people really understand if they haven't experienced it themselves? (definition of privilege) Stories can be more powerful than the anonymity of online forums.
- Concern was raised that there seems to be a blindness to the issues. Is there an interest in communication at all? (recommended book: The Forgotten by Ben Bradley, Jr.)

5. Project Updates:

1. DIGs and ways to support

- Rajiv gave update on Gibbs: no response from principal, so then heard back from assistant principal about if the parents had any ideas
- Judith updated from Thompson: brought ideas to the principal, especially the listening groups idea that started at Brackett and the trouble getting in touch with Carlos Hoyt, so are looking for alternatives
- Miriam explained role of superintendent's task force that includes teachers and administrators, such as organizing cultural competency day on nov 6 (chaired by ass't superintendent) – using book Cultural Competency and the Brain
- Katell gave update on Peirce process, which includes one listening session with Carlos Hoyt in October and formation of a core group.
- Miriam mentioned the committees that work in the spring and summer for hiring and DIGs could participate in that, arlington needs a recruitment and retention specialist in HR, for example, there is no inclusion for after-school teachers (no emails or communication)
- Michi is at Hardy and wanting to be involved with DIG there
- First official meeting of Brackett's group is next week and they submitted a grant for listening sessions that includes several schools

2. Town interviews: why diversity matters to me: Sophie updated on town-wide diversity project that includes interviews across the years – distribution will go from March-April, culminating in a town hall event (true story performance)

3. Anti-bullying curriculum in the schools: Brooks reported he has worked with Ottoson and HS students to create trainers for active bystander trainings, as an after-school activity organized by the clubs, Train the trainer in January (other towns also interested). Could bring the trainers for the elementary school parents as a way to reach younger students, Refugee by Alan Gratz chosen for Arlington Reads

4. Parking ban's effect on low-income renters: In the works, they meet in the library

6. Events to continue learning

1. METCO dec 1: 12th Baptist Church in Roxbury, 4-6 pm
2. true story performance
3. 18 refugees living in arl/camb/som
4. star wars film with down syndrome actors as heroes