

The Journey

THE WINCHESTER MULTICULTURAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER

In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.

— Martin Luther King, Jr.



A Look Back

Winchester Multicultural Network 2017-18 Board Members

Michael Bettencourt

Susan K. Lewis

Rev. JP Robins

Mayra Rodriguez-Howard

Robin Smith

Sandy Thompson

Juanita Zerda

Aba Taylor

Executive Director

Steering Committee Members

Sahar Ahmed Awerbuch

Dennis Brett

Kai Chen

Phil Coonley

Jerome Garciano

Margery Jackson

Gloria Legvold

Terry Marotta

Seeme Moreira

Kaye Nash

Hillary Turkewitz

Felicity Tuttle

Lily Yamamoto

June marks the end of the Multicultural Network’s busiest year—a chance to take a breath and look back at what has transpired in the past few months. As Executive Director Aba Taylor has noted, “the Multicultural Network remains focused on its mission by educating, advocating, and responding to the diverse needs of our community.” This response has taken the form of helping to organize Civic Gatherings #2 and #3 and offering programming around race, immigration, and transgender issues, as well as bystander training and communication skills. Some highlights are included in this newsletter.

American Denial

Gaining insight into the myriad ways that racism impacts all of us has been a priority for the Network since its beginnings. On May 11th our program featuring the film *American Denial* brought audience members a new level of understanding. The film explores how it is that we can believe in the American ideals of equality, justice, and equal opportunity and, at the same time, perpetuate discrimination in areas of employment, housing, voting rights, and education. It compares the 1938 report prepared by Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal, which gauged race relations in the wake of the Great Depression to our attitudes today.

Racial bias is “in the air” and still pervasive despite civil rights laws and the success of black individuals such as Barack Obama and Oprah Winfrey. The great majority of the prison population is black or brown, though there are no more drug arrests for men of color than for white men, the film states.

Following the screening, Network Executive Director Aba Taylor discussed the film and facilitated a Q&A with filmmakers Kelly Thomson and Llewellyn Smith. They see the documentary as a wake-up call to the reality that many people in the United States need to face the racial inequities that impact all of us. Thomson and Smith encouraged audience members to sit with what they had taken in and “Be sure you really, really get what is happening before you try to figure out how to fix it.” Taking the Implicit Bias Test, available online, is one important way to tap into your own hidden biases.

Books for Summer Reading

Although the label *beach books* is hardly accurate, the books listed below are compelling reading and only a small sample of what is available.

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehesi Coates

In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehesi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis.

Deep Denial by David Billings

Billings, a white southerner, reveals the evolution of white supremacy from colonial Virginia to our own time. He pays special attention to the Civil Rights Movement. Each chapter begins with an intimate and unsparingly personal account from the author's own life and then lays out the historical facts.

The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race, edited by Jesmyn Ward

The essays in this anthology on race in America were written by black writers who reckon with race, morality, and human nature as, sadly, they respond to many of the same questions that confronted us in the sixties when

James Baldwin wrote *The Fire Next Time*. Assembled by Jesmyn Ward, National Book Award-winning writer, this book is important reading for everyone who is "committed to the cause of equality and freedom."

Jackson, 1964 and Other Dispatches from Fifty Years of Reporting on Race in America by Calvin Trillin

In this collection of essays on race in America, journalist and writer for *The New Yorker*, Calvin Trillin covers 50 years of his reporting—from the Civil Rights Movement in the South to the excessive sentencing and use of force by police.

The Making of Black Lives Matter: Brief History of an Idea by Christopher J. Lebron

The author, Assistant Professor of African-American Studies and Philosophy at Yale University, offers a condensed and accessible intellectual history that traces the genesis of the ideas that resulted in the building of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

Loving Day by Sandy Thompson

Monday, June 12th was the 50th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision in the case *Loving v. Virginia*, overturning laws forbidding interracial marriage.

Sheryll Cashin writes in her new book *Loving: Interracial Intimacy in America and The Threat to White Supremacy* that when Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote the unanimous opinion, he used the term white supremacy in reference to the miscegenation laws. Cashin states that "today the race mixing that supremacists feared is growing apace, and interracial dating, marriage, adoption and friendship are occurring at rates that were unfathomable 50 years ago." A short piece in the June 2nd issue of *The Week* magazine states, "Seventeen percent of U.S. newlyweds in 2015 were of differing races or ethnicities, a fivefold increase since the landmark *Loving v. Virginia* Supreme court case, according to the Pew Research Center."

Little by little, couple by couple—gay and straight—relationships across race and ethnicity are chipping away at racism. Cashin says, "This transition from blindness to sight, from anxiety to familiarity, is a process of acquiring 'cultural dexterity.' Culturally dexterous people have an enhanced capacity for intimate connections with people outside their own tribe, for recognizing and accepting difference rather than pretending to be colorblind."

Cashin's point about how relationships are eroding the barriers of racism speaks to the fact that change happens at different levels. The *Loving* decision in 1967 broke down an institutional barrier. The friendships, adoptions, marriages, and other cross-race relationships that are happening now are breaking down racist attitudes and beliefs on the personal and interpersonal levels.

Civic Gatherings

The second Civic Gathering, “A Caring and Connected Community,” resulted in the formation of small working groups. Topics included discussion of ways to promote bystander training, civic education, collaboration among town organizations, the town’s Human Rights Statement, and multiculturalism in the schools. The Network’s Executive Director, Aba Taylor, then worked with Selectman Mike Bettencourt, School Committee member Susan Verdicchio, and former Selectman Tom Howley to plan a third gathering on May 18. The focus of the

gathering was “Building Momentum in Service of a Caring and Connected Community.” A spokesperson for each of the groups reported on the group’s work. These presentations were followed by the listing of themes, and the idea of a logo representing the shared values and goals was suggested.

September 18 is the date of the next meeting. Anyone interested is invited. Details will be announced in the next few weeks. Be sure to check our website (www.wmcn.org)

The Story Behind the Signs by Steve Smith

Thanks to civic meetings organized by WMCN this past winter, a group of townspeople from Winchester has joined a national campaign called “Hate Has No Home Here.” Our committee came together as a result of the second civic gathering, held in February. Groups focused on a variety of issues (see *Civic Gatherings* elsewhere in this newsletter) Our group was interested in coming up with public ways to highlight our town’s commitment to human rights as embodied in Winchester’s Human Rights Statement. The national campaign for “Hate Has No Home Here,” which was started by two elementary school students in Chicago, is intended to remind passersby that we stand united with neighbors and business owners who espouse similar, inclusive values. The effort is entirely non-partisan and is spreading rapidly throughout the country. Lexington, Arlington, Watertown, and many other neighboring towns are also participating. The two-sided signs contain the message “Hate Has No Home Here” in languages reflecting the most prevalent ethnicities and cultures in Winchester. Residents are able to purchase signs (the \$5 donation is used to cover printing costs) by visiting our group’s Facebook page or by going to the Winchester Multicultural Network’s homepage:

For info about our efforts in Winchester:

<http://www.wmcn.org/hate-has-no-home-here-campaign-in-winchester/>

<https://www.facebook.com/HHNHHWinchester/>

For info about the nationwide campaign:

<https://hatehasnohomehere.wordpress.com/>

A perspective on the signs

Recently Heather Janules, the minister at the Winchester Unitarian Society focused her Sunday sermon, “Our Home Here: Building and Enjoying Community,” on the signs. She said, “... And so, I read the ‘Hate Has No Home Here’ sign, not an indictment of others but a reminder to myself. And I understand the word ‘here’ to refer not to a place but to a person, to my heart, just like the heart on the sign itself. While we are all vulnerable to the temptation to dehumanization and hatred, for us to live lives of wholeness, it cannot dwell within us. The sign is a perpetual reminder to me that ‘a generous heart is always open, always ready to receive’ whoever may walk past our lawn and cross the threshold.”

To read Rev. Janules’ complete sermon, go to: <http://bit.ly/2rVeJSE>.

*Committee members are Marla Harris, Anna Hood, Shyamal Jajodia, Shelby Meyerhoff, Stephen Perepeluk, Steve Smith, and Paula Zaiken.

The Journey

THE WINCHESTER MULTICULTURAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER

EDITORS: DOTTY BURSTEIN AND SANDY THOMPSON

GRAPHICS DESIGNER: LILY YAMAMOTO

CONTRIBUTORS: STEVE SMITH, HILLARY TURKEWITZ

The Journey is published three times a year and is one means that the Network uses to carry out our mission to inform, advocate, and respond.

Winchester Multicultural Network

P.O. Box 346, Winchester MA 01890 • 781-729-7100 • www.wmcn.org

Salam Neighbor by Hillary Turkewitz

Salam Neighbor is an award-winning film and campaign to connect the world to refugees. On May 3, a screening of the documentary was hosted by the Network and LIVE LEARN ACT, a Winchester-based nonprofit focused on teaching students to “live and act globally.” Over 75 audience members were given a unique opportunity to learn about what life is like in the Jordanian Za’atari refugee camp, which holds 85,000 Syrians.

The film was followed by an informative Q&A session with panelists Aba Taylor, the Network’s Executive Director; Dierdre Giblin, Asylum Lawyer with Cambridge-based Community Legal Services and Counseling Center; and Dr. Omar Salem, Chairman of the Karam Foundation, a nonprofit whose mission is to build a better future for Syria.

Most who viewed this powerful film were moved to want to help; the panelists noted a range of ways to do that. One way is to donate to the organizations on the ground in this and other refugee camps. They include **Save the Children** (savethechildren.org); the **International Rescue Committee** (rescue.org); and the **UNHCR** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, unhr.org/en-us). One can also choose to support organizations like the **Network** (wmcn.org), **LIVE LEARN ACT**

(livelearnact.org); the **Karam Foundation** (karamfoundation.org), **Community Legal Services and Counseling Center** (clsacc.org), and the **Council on American-Islamic Relations** (cairma.org).

A strong message of the evening was to promote the film so that more people can learn about this crisis and refugees, whether through community-based screenings or in high schools. Sarah Meehan Chiofara noted, “Living inside the Winchester bubble, it’s so easy for me to get disconnected from the struggles of the wider world, and this event was a wonderful way of providing a much needed and welcome perspective.”

While the need can feel overwhelming, Aba Taylor pointed out that we can start making a difference by forming person-to-person connections, talking about these issues with friends and neighbors, and engaging in conversations with people who may hold differing views.

The Network thanks the primary organizers of this event, from LIVE LEARN ACT: Stephanie Smith, Co-founder and Co-President; Christine Kowalczyk, Co-President, and Heidi Rosenfeld, Program Director.

Speak Up! by Dotty Burstein

When we see people behaving badly—showing a tendency to stereotype or to act with prejudice toward others—it often takes courage to speak up.

However, if we do it in a respectful way, without blame or an accusatory tone, we show others, especially our children, that we recognize hate and prejudice for what it is and are unwilling to dismiss it as a joke or ignorance.

The real danger lies in remaining silent.

Speak Up at School: How to Respond to Everyday Prejudice, Bias and Stereotypes

is the title of a guide available on the Teaching Tolerance (tolerance.org) website. While designed for teachers, most of the suggestions included are helpful for all of us.

Speak up if:

- you hear ethnic jokes or racial slurs;
- you witness parents or caretakers acting emotionally or physically abusive toward children;
- you hear someone labeling another person based on his/her geography, class, or race/ethnicity (examples include ‘redneck’, coming from the ‘wrong side of the tracks’);
- you witness bullying of children or harassment in the workplace;
- you hear examples of denial such as the Holocaust, climate change, and the Armenian genocide;
- you observe mimicking of people with disabilities, LGBTQ persons, or any other group being stereotyped;
- you hear anti-Semitic or anti-Muslim remarks.

The Multicultural Network Celebrates Pride Month

June is LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender) Pride Month, and the Network celebrated by offering a program on June 22nd featuring three panelists from the organization SpeakOUT which is made up of volunteers who are committed to “working to create a world free of homo-bi-trans-phobia and other forms of prejudice by telling the truths of our lives.”

After each panelist told their story, there were many questions from the audience and the following important points made:

- There is a difference between sexual orientation (whom we are attracted to) and gender identity (the gender we identify with).
- Dysphoria is the feeling of disconnect between what a person feels regarding gender identity and their sex at birth.
- The legislation that has been so controversial—that has been called the “bathroom bill”—is designed to protect Trans people who are no threat to others.
- Massachusetts has been a leader in the LGBT movement since the 90s.
- Legalizing gay marriage at the Federal level was a critical step forward.

In 2016 President Obama recognized Pride month with this statement:

The fight for dignity and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people is reflected in the tireless dedication of advocates and allies who strive to forge a more inclusive society. They have spurred sweeping progress by changing hearts and minds and by demanding equal treatment—under our laws, from our courts, and in our politics. This month, we recognize all they have done to bring us to this point, and we recommit to bending the arc of our Nation toward justice.

In conjunction with Pride Month, we suggest reading *Becoming Nicole*, by Amy Ellis Nutt, reviewed here by Kaye Nash.

“Who we are is inseparable not only from who we think we are, but from who others think we are.”

—Amy Ellis Nutt

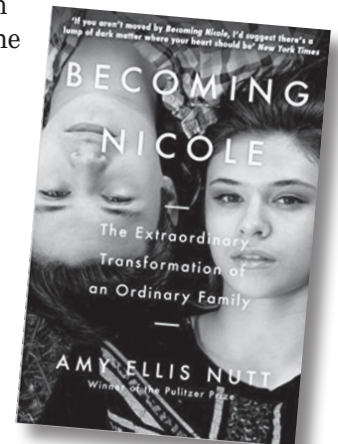
How many of us can say we have a transgender friend? Or, have the definition of transgender on the tip of our tongue? Polling shows that nearly a quarter of Americans don’t know what the term transgender means and that only 1 in 10 say they are close to someone who is transgender.

You will come away from reading *Becoming Nicole* not only knowing what transgender means but also having experienced, though vicariously, the journey of an all-American family struggling with—and embracing—a transgender child.

Kelly and Wayne Maines’ twin boys were identical—except that one boy always identified as female. *New York Times* bestselling author, Amy Ellis Nutt, in collaboration with the Maines family offers a powerful and intimately reported narrative of a brave girl and her family during this nation’s ground-breaking movement to expand the rights and dignity of transgender children across America.

In her prologue to *Becoming Nicole*, Nutt poses a question: “What does it feel like to be a problem?”

The book explores the question and invites the reader in. In the editor’s words, “Anyone who has raised a child or ever felt at odds with society’s conventions or norms, or had to embrace life when it plays out unexpectedly can relate to *Becoming Nicole*.” It is a story about standing up for your beliefs and yourself.



Other books of note:

- *Transgender Children and Youth* by Elijah C. Nealy is a new library book designed by its author to “cultivate pride and joy with families in transition.”
- “*You’re in the Wrong Bathroom*” and *20 Other Myths and Misconceptions About Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming* brings together the medical, social, psychological, and political aspects of being trans in the United States today and unpacks the twenty-one most common myths and misconceptions about transgender and gender-nonconforming people.

Being an Active Bystander

Thirty individuals from Winchester and other towns gathered at Temple Shir Tikvah on Thursday evening, June 8, for a two-hour bystander workshop given by Dan Ottenheimer, Dan Lieber, and Marion Magill, Temple members who have received training from the Quabbin Mediation organization. Quabbin Mediation is an organization based in Central and Western Massachusetts that does training in the areas of mediation, communication skills, and intervention in harmful situations.

The workshop, titled “Active Bystander Training: Creating Safety in Contentious Times,” included a discussion of factors that inhibit bystanders from taking action, shared examples of situations that participants had witnessed or been part of, brainstorming possible interventions, and an emphasis on the importance of being an active bystander.

A handout from Quabbin concluded with the following statement:

Bystander acts that stop harm doing to individual targets also stop the changes in a community that encourage harm to others. Active bystanders help develop positive attitudes, behaviors and values in the whole community.

Let America Be America Again

Poem by Langston Hughes (first three stanzas)

Let America be America again.
 Let it be the dream it used to be.
 Let it be the pioneer on the plain
 Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—
 Let it be that great strong land of love
 Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
 That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
 Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
 But opportunity is real, and life is free,
 Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There’s never been equality for me,
 Nor freedom in this “homeland of the free.”)