

Wakefield Human Rights Commission
Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King Day Planning Subcommittee
11/5/2020

Present:

Nicole Jacob (WHRC)
Jeremy Little (WHRC)
Teresa Aravena-Gonzalez (WHRC)
Benny Wheat (WHRC)
Eileen Rooney (from the public)

1. Introductions: what draws you to planning this event?
 - Teresa: enjoy going to the event, make a day out of it with the family. For her son o learn what it's all about
 - Jeremy: It's an important day but there's a lot more to it than just a name. Want to make it broader to include also community service and things like that. Also bringing some expertise on how to do it in an interesting way virtually
 - Nicole: Have gone to the last few in Wakefield and one in Cambridge and was moved by celebrating not only MLK but also the message of service and treating others well. The community service piece of it really means a lot to me. Her son was one of the speakers last year which was very meaningful and to bring awareness to art produced by African Americans
 - Eileen: haven't been in Wakefield very long, so looking for an opportunity to meet more people and particularly more diverse people in the community. Looking forward to working on a project together
 - Benny
2. Recap of past years' events
 - Benediction
 - Keynote speaker
 - Youth participation: poems, readings, etc
 - Music
 - Awards
 - Service opportunity
 - Button competition
 - Art
3. Visioning: What would a meaningful and compelling MLK & CSK Day event consist of?
 - For community service piece: trying to really get people to know that the service portion is essential.

- In Cambridge they spread it out all over town where people can make contact with the event in multiple places
- Even though we're virtual we can still involve the town through the schools. The schools are in all different parts of town and could get a lot of people involved
- An example to look to is Parent University: they were able to make it very engaging. Getting someone who is very engaging on zoom is important
- It's more powerful if the keynote speaker is someone local, either Wakefield or tied to Wakefield
- Having a theme is great to tie things together. Theme ideas:
 - Something unifying, bringing people together
 - Buzzwords in the world of diversity: allyship, intersectionality
 - Collective action
 - "United and moving forward"
 - Could have a general theme, and then can tie in to some of Dr. King's or Mrs. King's powerful words
 - Something linking our current events (like voter suppression) to the ways in which people are oppressed
 - "Compassionate community" "are we a compassionate community?" "We are a compassionate community"
 - "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members" Coretta Scott King
- Student involvement at different levels
- Community service: could do throughout the week. Could work with different organizations in the town. Like drop boxes at different locations.
- Bringing Mrs. King to the forefront could be good

Input from WMHS's Diversity Leaders (from last year):

- Weaving together some basic education about civil rights campaigns from the 50s and 60s, what the impact of those campaigns was, what is currently going on re social justice issues, and what the current day movements are to address social justice
- A speaker or speakers who can speak from personal experience and impact people emotionally
- A powerful youth speaker
- Don't focus on a bunch of speeches or long speeches, focus on powerful speeches
- Connecting with the audience in a variety of ways (speaking, singing, dancing, etc)
- Connecting people with what they can do, how they can get involved in current movements for social justice
- Making the connection that the legacy of Dr. and Mrs. King's work is partially about racial justice, but more broadly about many forms of structural oppression

4. Event components: Are there components we want to add or remove from the traditional event line-up?
- Could have the event be a blend of live and recorded. This could also open up more possibilities for speakers (someone who isn't available on the day, or kids who are nervous to present live could record)
 - A recorded compilation of videos, do a hash tag or something and students and others in town can submit short videos that we compile
 - Could have a virtual service challenge where people do service individually, maybe could then post a video of themselves. We provide a list of opportunities/resources for volunteering, and then people in the community go out and do their service
 - Virtual scavenger hunt: release it a few weeks before and families could go out and learn. Could partner from the Wakefield Historical Society, the library. Could have a component of the event
 - Involve the students who organized the BLM march in the spring. They could be the keynote speakers! They are also women which could tie in with a greater centering of Mrs. King
 - Award ceremony: instead of speeches could do an interview format. Could submit the blurb/description of them and their work to the Item with photo
 - Should they be called awards? It's not a competition, and we don't do service for the recognition. It's more of a highlight.
 - We don't want to lose the recognition of Bill Chetwynd

5. Next Steps

- Touch base with Faith and her co-leaders about if they would be interested in being our keynote speakers: Benny will do this
- Reach out to volunteer organizations
 - Jeremy will reach out to his Stoneham contact
 - Benny will reach out about community meals and food pantry
 - Benny will reach out to prior award recipients to see if their organizations
 - Everyone reach out to people you know, see if they know of organizations in town or nearby that are looking for volunteers
- Each person think about the theme, formalize what you think the theme should be so we can make a decision at our next meeting
- Next meeting in about 2 weeks: Benny will send a doodle poll

6. Check-out: plus/delta

- Getting a feel for everything, it was all good
- Getting the info up front was helpful