



MV DIVERSITY COALITION NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2021

The *MV Diversity Coalition* (MVDC) Board of Trustees hopes each of you are enjoying Spring and more importantly, the lifting of the extended Covid-19 restrictions that have limited the ability to conduct in person meetings and other gatherings for over a year.

With Summer rapidly approaching, the June 2021 *MV Diversity Coalition Member Newsletter* is being issued to update you on the activities and collective progress that has been made or that are currently in process (by the Board of Trustees, MVDC Committee Chairs and Members) towards our mission to lay the groundwork to eradicate racism.

Also included in this edition of the *MV Diversity Coalition Newsletter* is a list of important dates. Please take a moment to add these dates to your calendar.

The MVDC Board of Trustees have been actively engaged in a number of efforts focused on enhancing our organization's infrastructure and building our capacity, while also continuing to collaborate with other agencies and individuals on a number of projects and initiatives. This includes the following key accomplishments:

- **Launched New Website:** Thanks to a generous donor contribution, our new website was launched earlier this month. Check it out at: mvdiversitycoalition.org
- **Created MVDC Logo:** We are delighted to present our new and unique MVDC logo which we think reflects both our diversity and our hopeful energy in helping to eradicate racism. The MVDC logo is available and can be placed on MVDC communications that are being issued.
- **Diversity Celebration Plan:** In partnership with the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association (The Campground), the Diversity Celebration will be held at the Association's Tabernacle in Oak Bluffs this Fall. In addition to The Tabernacle partnership, the Celebration will be held in collaboration with other groups and agencies who share our mission; such as the IGI and 'The Long Talk About the Uncomfortable Truth', to name a few. This celebration will be designed to educate and entertain. We have a group that is beginning to move forward in the planning of the Celebration and it is very exciting! The more participation, the more we will connect to one another, and this is where we need to go as a community. Please let us know if you have any personal connections to performing artists who you would like to recommend for consideration. If you are part of another agency or group that would like to partner with us or add an event to our *MVDC* Diversity Celebration Calendar, let us know that as well. (info@mvdiversitycoalition.org). You may participate in the Celebration events as a member of *MVDC*, or as an agency partner. If you are interested in the education aspect of the celebration's events, contact Andrew Patch (andrewpatch@hotmail.com.)
- **MVDC Workshops:** We held our first workshop on May 15th, and in the process some wonderful new friendships were formed. The workshops are co-facilitated by Freedom Cartwright and Sandy Pimentel. We thank the Wampanoag Tribal Elders of Aquinnah for their willingness to share and participate in the May workshop. We are preparing for another workshop on July 10th and hope to offer one each month during the ensuing year. These workshops are designed to bring us together as friends, community members and advocates of change. Since space is limited, we are responding in the order in which people have indicated their interest. Please sign up soon. to those who are interested, as is possible, We hope that by the end of the year to have offered the experience to no less than 100 participants.

MVDC Committees and members have continued to remain actively engaged in collaborations with other organizations and individuals on projects and initiatives. A summary of the key Committee initiatives and activities include the following:

Criminal Justice Committee (Sandy Pimentel, Chair)

The Committee, in collaboration with the MV Police Chiefs, secured grant funding and donations from the *MV Community Foundation*, the *MV Social Justice Committee*, the *MV Hebrew Center*, and the *Wampanoag Tribe of Aquinnah*, to conduct a three day *Police Implicit Bias Training Session*. The training sessions were conducted in May and all six Island Police Departments participated. Before and after police encounter data are currently being collected for research. All data will be held until Dr. Walter Collier, Chair Emeritus and a highly recognized and published social scientist, has completed his data collection. Data analysis is nearing completion and a formal report will be issued. We can assure that it can be properly evaluate The MVDC Criminal Justice Committee is discussing next steps.

Education Committee (Jocelyn Coleman Walton & Lisa Pimentel, Co-Chairs)

- The Education Committee has been attempting to bring racial literacy opportunities to island students, so that every child on Martha's Vineyard will feel a sense of belonging. Kyle Williams, whose family has had a historical connection to Oak Bluffs for generations, is an *MVDC* member and agency partner. He is providing his highly acclaimed program to *MVDC*, as a tool for progress. "*A Long Talk about the Uncomfortable Truth*" has been addressing institutional racism in colleges and universities across the country. Kyle and his team continue to offer this educational opportunity to our community. To date, a number of Islanders have benefited from this experience. This includes sixteen school committee members, administrators, and teachers. Additional information about the "Long Talk," is available on the following website: <https://www.alongtalk.com>.
- The Education Committee has brought suggestions for cost effective and quality resources to MV schools, including curricula suggestions to help students and educators understand the nature and pervasiveness of racism. The result has led to the introduction of the Pollyanna Racial Literacy Curriculum, a pilot curriculum chosen for the Chilmark School. This curriculum has been vetted by teachers and accepted by the *MVDC* Board of Trustees because it is believed to directly speak to our mission. The curriculum offers teacher guidance to assure they get what they need to educate their students on cultural literacy. The good news is that the training is cost effective and the teachers are enthusiastic.
- The Education Committee has been working in a bi-coastal, school-based partnership, with the *MV Charter School*, the *MV High School* and *The Oakwood School* in LA. Students and teachers from both MV and LA schools have been engaged in creating digital media work that can be used to address racism in the future. They are having fun with their music and art.
- A *Library Book Initiative* was launched several months ago by the Education Committee. They have been working with librarians across the Island to expand the supply of racially and culturally- literate books to both school and public libraries. This Committee has raised the necessary funding to launch the project and book orders are currently being paid for and placed, with the help of the librarians. In addition, *MVDC* members are reading books to school children in order to provide positive inclusive literary experiences for Island children.

Health Disparities Committee (Dr. Lorna Chambers Andrade, Chair)

- This Committee is focused on a *Technology for Seniors' Initiative* to address the technology divide experienced by many island seniors who are unable to take advantage of tele-health visits with medical practitioners, to stay connected with family members or participate in virtual house of workshop services because they can't afford the technology and have not been trained on how to use the technology for these purposes. The initiative is currently in the planning and fund development stage and will be done in collaboration with a number of other island agencies who currently provide social services to island seniors.
- In coordination with the *MV Community Services (MVCS)*, and in partnership with *The Healthy Aging Task Force*, we are attempting to move effectively to address the Mental Health needs of those who have historically been underserved in the community. Strategies to build a more trusting network are underway. Evaluations from *MVCS*, and from various other sources, indicate that the elderly and People of Color, among others, have been underserved on Martha's Vineyard. A forum was held as part of the strategic planning process of *MVCS*, with *MVDC* members, to help us determine need, and to design plans to address these service gaps.

The Committee has been working in collaboration with other community partners to assure the equitable distribution of the COVID vaccine. *MV Community Services*, with the *MV Diversity Coalition*, have reached out to networks of color, the *Island Councils on Aging*, the *MV League of Women Voters* and *MV Hospital*. Education and outreach have been our major tools in collectively, and successfully, getting the vaccine to those who may not have the resources or the will to get to the vaccine site. While we believe that we have made a difference, the data will ultimately help us to understand our impact as time goes on.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Our Annual *MV Diversity Coalition Annual Membership Meeting* will be held on Tuesday, July 6th at 3PM – 4PM. All MVDC Members are invited and encouraged to join us. PLEASE COME! This will be a virtual meeting; the zoom dial—in information will be emailed a week prior to the meeting date.

MV Diversity Coalition Celebration at The Tabernacle: Thursday, September 2nd, Friday, September 3rd, and Saturday, September 4th (events currently being planned)

MVDC COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE – If you are interested in joining one of the MVDC Committees, please contact the Committee Chair or Co-Chair):

Health Disparities- Chairman Dr. Lorna Andrade (drlorna.andrade@hotmail.com)

First Tuesday of the Month at 10AM

Criminal Justice- Co-Chairs Sandy Pimentel and Freedom Cartwright (sandra620@gmail.com)

Meeting time: the third Friday of the month at 11AM

Education Committee Co-Chairs; Jocelyn Coleman Walton and Lisa Pimentel (lpimma@pacbell.net)

Meeting times: Every second and fourth Thursday of the month.

Freedom Cartwright facilitates a safe and support space called “Practicing Your Activism.” On the third Thursday of the month.

Thank you all for your interest and willingness to ride with us on our journey to unity and equality.

We look forward to a wonderful summer and look forward to meeting many of you for the first time in person!