

# 2019-2020 Committee Reports for 71st Annual Meeting

May 9, 2020

## Voter Service Committee-LWV North Pinellas 2019

### VOTER REGISTRATION

- Increased our Florida League-certified voting registrars from 16 to 41 ready-to-register vols
- Intensified voter registration activities between January 1 and February 18, 2020—Voter Registration deadline to reach as many potential voters as possible
- In 9 months, assisted 500 citizens to register to vote, request vote-by-mail ballots, use post office addresses for folks in temporary housing, and check on the status of their VR forms
- Registered 56 newly naturalized citizens in less than 60 minutes on Constitution Day 2019
- Identified VR sites to connect with first-time voters such as returning citizens, Spanish-speaking citizens, minority groups, elders, youth, and low-income residents

### RETURNING CITIZENS

- Attended LWVFL-sponsored voter registration training events at Stetson College of Law, St. Pete /Clearwater Bar Association Event, and LWVFL annual meeting in Venice, Florida, focusing on returning citizens
- Provided Voter Service at community law clinic at SPC Clearwater
- Participated in filming and interviewing four returning citizens at Stetson Law School film studio to create video clips encouraging returning citizens who qualify to register to vote
- Connected 20 returning citizens with Florida Restoration Rights Coalition
- Developed close working relationships with HEP (Homeless Empowerment Program) and PERC (Pinellas Ex-Offender Re-entry Coalition) with voting rights and voter education outreach efforts
- Participate in monthly LWVFL dial-ins re: voter education and registration for returning citizens  
\*\*\*submitted by Karen Owen, lead for Amendment 4 Voting Rights

### NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE

- Organized a Hot Topic featuring Deb Mazzaferro
- Participated in postcard campaign to state lawmakers
- Participate in monthly LWVFL calls

### CANDIDATE FORUMS

Moderated municipal forums in Oldsmar, Tarpon Springs, and Safety Harbor. At least 8 League volunteers assisted at each event, which led to new and interested League membership signups.

### VOTE411/PINELLAS VOTER GUIDE ONLINE

Multiple members participated in the Vote411 project with St. Pete Leaguers to develop the Pinellas Voter Guide. We developed questions for candidates to respond to and analyzed ballot issues in municipal jurisdictions, including Clearwater, Safety Harbor, Oldsmar, and Tarpon Springs.

## REFINING OUR FOCUS, OPERATIONS, AND VOTER REGISTRATION KITS

- Created a 3-page resource for registering eligible Pinellas citizens living in temporary housing and shared it with the Supervisor of Elections office and inserted information into the Voter Service reference binders
- Updated Voter Registration kits with yard signs, reference guide & branded tabletop displays, generic reader glasses for low-vision citizens, and hand/or surface sanitizing to minimize viral exposure for League volunteers and voters
- Consulted often with LWVSPA to ensure best practice
- Still in process: researched modes of voting practices in 9 large counties in Florida including Broward, Collier, Duval, Escambia, Hillsborough, Leon, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and Pinellas
- Currently alternating monthly meetings between afternoon and evening to accommodate working members, and varying meeting locations for greater geographic reach; using Zoom for evening VS meetings

\*\*\*Submitted by Doris Reeves-Lipscomb, Voter Service Facilitator

## **Membership Committee-LWV North Pinellas 2019**

New connections were established and networking has solidified relationships with other LWVNPC committees and the community including:

- Many new Hispanic connections such as Puerto Rico Connect, LULAC, La Mesa, and UniMex.
- Current membership is 160
- Promotions on FaceBook increased by approximately 10%
- Attended Hot Topics and other events to increase contacts
- Welcome letters with important league materials sent to all new and renewing members.

\*\*\*Submitted by Eliseo Santana, Former Vice President and Membership Chair with Ms. Protopapas, Data Base Administrator for Membership

## **Education Committee 2019**

LWV North Pinellas 2019 The newly “re-established” Education Action Committee is a county- wide group working collaboratively with the League of Women Voters of St. Petersburg in order to advocate for our students, teachers and Florida public education. This past year members met with Legislators and School Board members to address several issues including:

- Adequate funding of Public Education
- Equitability and oversight of Florida’s Charter Schools
- Over testing and equitable testing of all students including ESOL Students
- School safety, the Guardian Bill and Active shooter drill frequency ➤ Mental Health issues facing schools and students
- Restorative Practices in Pinellas County
- Adequate funding and oversight of Florida’s Pre-K program
- We hosted the forum, “**Following the Money -Charter School Business Practices**”, and will continue to educate and advocate for holding any Florida School (public, charter, or private) who receives tax dollars to the same standards as Florida’s public schools.

\*\*\*Submitted by Nikki Fleming, Education Action Chair

## **Poverty/Health/Juvenile Justice Committee-LWV North Pinellas 2019**

Our commitment remains: increasing affordable housing, especially supporting full use of the Sadowski Fund for this purpose, increasing TANF and SNAP and Medicaid benefits, expanding transportation for low-income areas and improvements in VPK-preschool programs. Our Accomplishments include:

- Chair, Beth Hovind, led monthly meetings and shared timely articles addressing our poverty priorities.
- Beth became the Florida League chair of the State Poverty Action Team.
- Karen Owen added Poverty to our LWVFL web site and the bibliography she created. Poverty Summit January 2019 details: <http://tinyurl.com/FLpovertyconference>
- The committee hosted 'Are You My Neighbor' attended by 80 individuals representing their interests in addressing local poverty. Speakers represented the Pinellas County School Board, Pinellas County Commission and the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg. Jackie Farrell and Miriam Benitez-Nixon prepared and distributed flyers at community locations to promote the event.
- Jackie and Beth met with two of the five senators in our area. Jillian Kennedy met with Representative Chris Latvala.
- Our chair arranged several state conference calls with experts on poverty issues and encouraged legislative solutions and advocacy.
- Karen and Beth developed two Power Point presentations on poverty in Florida, 15 and 30 minutes each, for use by the committee at civic functions and the LWVFL web page.
- The committee was kept up-to-date on pending legislation in Tallahassee.
- Individual members participated in various meetings held by community organizations.
- Beth and Doris Reeves-Lipscomb attended the LWVFL state conference in Tallahassee.
- The LWVNP Poverty Action Team became a member of the statewide Sadowski Coalition.

\*\*\*Submitted by Beth Hovind, Poverty/Health/Juvenile Justice Committee Chair

## **Natural Resources/Environment Committee Report-LWV North Pinellas 2019**

We celebrate the first year of the LWVNPC Environmental Action Group (EAG)! We continue to participate in local activities that support good stewardship of Florida resources and lands and educating the chapter on emerging that will impact our environment. We usually meet monthly via conference call.

We organized the following activities for the NPC:

- 'Hands Across the Sand' at Dunedin Causeway
- Sustainability Coordinators Roundtable
- Hot Topic from Rise Above Plastics group
- 'Recycling 101: Back to the Basics' presentation
- Tidal Town Hall - all environment candidate forum

Some activities we participated in include:

- Supported the successful proposal & launch of the Mission Blue Hope Spot that recognizes the Florida Gulf Coast.
- Formed tri-chapter alliance with the St. Pete area and Hillsborough County LWV's to lend support or opposition to local issues. Sent letters opposing the development of the Big Bend Power Station by TECO Energy and the Toilets to Tap proposal by Tampa Bay Water.

- Supported the Florida Coalition of Concerned Citizens by saying NO Roads to Ruin in opposition of Florida Legislation to build 300 miles of toll roads through rural lands.
- Met with Congressman Bilirakis to urge support for pro-solar legislation.  
\*\*\*Reported by Co-Chairs Dave Sillman and Stephanie Bolden