



OBSERVER REPORT

TASK FORCE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

March 16, 2023 via Zoom

LWV Observer: Shari Pressman

Members present: Helaine Hazlett and Diane Gora (co-chairs), Chief Dennis King (ex-officio member), Deacon John Whipple, Candice Sliney, Reece Dahlberg, Sarai Miller, Scott Marcus, Celia Sliney and Helina Tadesse (Student Representatives), Louis Meyi and Jay Morrison (liaisons to Marblehead Racial Justice Team)
Guests: Natalie Belli (Grade 6 teacher at Village School) and 42 of her students, Sue Stibel, Caja Johnson

Welcome: Chief King, Helaine, and Natalie welcomed the large group of students to TFAD. Chief King noted that he was especially enthusiastic working with Marblehead Public School students and was encouraged to see their participation.

February Book Read: "Stamped" by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi
Students had read the edition written for Grades 6-9

An hour-long discussion followed, led by Natalie, Celia, and Helina. Students participated in a lively, skillfully directed examination of the book and if or how their views on racism and race changed because of it.

Was it better to be colorblind or to acknowledge and celebrate differences?
What do the terms segregation, anti-racist, and assimilation mean? What is the meaning of freedom? How do people become attached to racist and anti-racist ideas?

After the students signed off, Natalie explained that she teaches critical thinking skills by asking students, "What makes you think that?" and "What makes you say that?" Students were frequently prepared with specific quotes to validate what they'd said during the discussion. They were encouraged to do their own research if they questioned a statement.

Update on Marblehead Police Dept. Chief King noted that graffiti was found at Village School during the weekend of March 11 and that messaging went out to the school community. Because the case is under investigation, he couldn't speak in any further detail.

The MPD had an operational plan in place on February 25 for Jewish venues because of the Day of Hate. Fortunately, no incidents were reported. The ADL has recognized increased antisemitic incidents, so our efforts need to remain strong. Chief King will be part of a Lappin Foundation group of Police Chiefs and District Attorneys meeting at the U.S. Holocaust Museum to learn about the role their counterparts during the Holocaust.

Report on Marblehead Public Schools Celia and Helina, as members of Team Harmony at MHS, will attend the ADL Youth Congress in Boston to discuss fighting hatred and creating safe schools. It is the first in-person Congress in three years.

Team Harmony will also conduct Health Seminars (called that because it's held during Health period) on April 4 with students in each grade from Grade 3 through high school freshmen. Presentations are designed with grade-appropriate vocabulary, topics, and activities.

Juneteenth Celebration planned for Wednesday, June 14 at 4:30. Diane Gora wrote the grant for the event, but TFAD must fund it upfront. She would like the entire committee involved.

Letter to Select Board Candice and Joe have not received any response yet.

Marblehead Racial Justice Team Louis Meyi and Jay Morrison reported that Conversations on Race continue at the Marblehead Museum on Monday evening, April 27 with the topic Black Mothers/Babies at Risk. Participants in medical fields will participate. Louis and Jay also reported that the portraits that have been displayed at the Brown School this year will be moved to Glover School. The tentative date is May 5. The portraits spend one year at each school.

Next Meeting is scheduled for April 13 at 7pm.