

Athens Community Relations Committee
May 4, 2021 | 12pm
Zoom

Next Meeting Tuesday June 1, Noon – 1 pm

Present: John Schmieding, Angie Hall, Brandon Thompson, Marlene De La Cruz, Raymie McKerrow, Dawn McCarthy, Lacey Rogers, Rebecca Robison-Miller

1. Welcome and introductions

Update: John and Marlene are following up with Rhys Carr, Fer Vallejo and Sedric Granger about joining the ACRC.

2. Approve minutes

Minutes from last month have not been distributed.

3. Old Business

a. Update on work with Athens City School System:

Lacey reported that the class at high school is going well, it will be offered again next fall.

b. The current book club has over 40 people involved. This summer will be a beginner course and an advanced club for people who have already attended. Lacey, Marlene, Brandon Thompson, Tammy Tucker, Rachel Siegl, Chris Stepp and John are the facilitators.

c. Report on meeting with students on 5/3:

- o Students were mature and engaging, however, sharing experiences can be traumatic, is it helpful or hurtful for kids to share? One student shared that racism is so engrained in their life that it is routine now.
- o Students articulated that adults are not listening to them so the ACRC should make this a priority.
- o The student perspective is very helpful-there is an increased level of racism among students compared to past years.
- o A support group, access to a counselor and open, safe space needed.
- o There were sentiments shared that the students don't feel supported by schools and no one sticks up for them when incidents occur. All students could benefit from resources/education about to help and be an ally. However, it is difficult to be an ally if there are no consequences for racist actions/behavior.
- o A resounding message/take away is that that adults need to listen better.

3. New Business

a. Planning for youth antiracism activities:

- o Can teachers be involved in developing the safe space/structure? There seem to be inconsistent repercussions for racist behaviors. The ACRC cannot dictate this programming, input from schools is needed.

- o Students have a list of activities that can be build off of that Angie shared. Activities include: Engaging in dialogues; sharing experiences with other students, staff, administration, etc.; events that share culture – traditions, food, etc.; mandated course and/or discussions for all teachers and students.
 - o ACRC should create a space/activities for anti-racism work and sharing. Ideas suggested were monthly events/assemblies and celebrating individuality. Angie would like her students to be involved in this. It is important to keep in mind socio-economic inequities and that sharing experiences can be powerful, impactful, and/or hurtful. It was also suggested that audiences for various events be designated – events for students of color to connect and for all students. There could be opportunity to share through art centered storytelling and/or book clubs. There is also opportunity for connection for students for cultural events.
 - o There is a need for a non-judgmental space for white students to ask tough questions.
 - o Two events – a “speak out” and celebrations (Angie’s students)
 - o Speak out – Start in groups with people who feel comfortable with one another - consideration needs to be given to safe space and authenticity.
 - o Celebration – Use Andrew Jackson Davison clubs at middle and high schools – can plan assemblies and other activities – this will be pursued next school year.
 - o Summer activities: Summer camp sessions? Collaboration with established camps?
 - o Bringing students of color together? Brandon can support and there is potential for physical space at the Athens Community Center. Dawn can help with outdoor spaces as well.
 - o Target dates – end of July, beginning of August. This will be a couple of hours, a mix of fun and discussion and ACRC will plan for summer camps next year.
 - o Would teachers be willing to meet in small groups in the late summer? If there is a program established this could potentially be used a PD for teachers.
 - o Unless the culture changes, working with students will not make much difference.
 - o John is working with Dr. Gibbs for potential programing/training for teachers and support staff, more to come.
 - o John will contact Fitz Rea d and Jennifer Hinkle about attending the June meeting.
4. Set next meeting dates
Meetings will remain on the first Tuesday of every month at 12pm.
Next Meeting Tuesday June 1, Noon – 1 pm
5. Adjourn

Chat Notes:

Could you please drop the names of potential members in the chat please?

From "De La Cruz-Guzman to All Panelists: 12:08 PM

Rhys Carr and Fer Vallejo

From "Schmieding to Me: (Direct Message) 12:09 PM

Sedric Granger

From Me to All Panelists: 12:09 PM

Thank you!

From Brandon Thompson (he/him) to All Panelists: 12:36 PM

oops, ouch, whoa

From Angela Hall to All Panelists: 12:41 PM

Covid--no in person this year gatherings

From Brandon Thompson (he/him) to All Panelists: 12:43 PM

do we know where the school is on their racial audit being conducted?

From Angela Hall to All Panelists: 12:44 PM

Still conducting interviews... met with MS students this past Monday

I think teacher interviews done--Chris Stepp has sat in on all meetings.

From Me to Everyone: 12:45 PM

Collaboration with established camps could be an option as well

From Angela Hall to All Panelists: 12:51 PM

Teacher PD before students arrive in the fall--mandated. If something is structured, then I believe Dr. Gibbs would use PD time for this

Learning for Justice

I'm spending the first 3 weeks of July out West

From Brandon Thompson (he/him) to All Panelists: 12:51 PM

end of july beginning of august?

From "De La Cruz-Guzman to All Panelists: 12:52 PM

First half of July works for me

And 23rd of July through the end of july

From Dawn McCarthy (she/her) to Me: (Direct Message) 12:53 PM

I am available first two weeks of July and in August.

From Dawn McCarthy (she/her) to All Panelists: 12:53 PM

I am available first two weeks of July and in August.

From Me to Everyone: 12:55 PM

Can you please drop your name if you are interested in working on summer camp/event?

From Dawn McCarthy (she/her) to All Panelists: 12:56 PM

And we don't want that Brandon!

From Angela Hall to All Panelists: 12:56 PM

I'll help--Angie

From Dawn McCarthy (she/her) to All Panelists: 12:56 PM

Dawn McCarthy is interested.

From Lacey Rogers to All Panelists: 12:56 PM

I'm interested

From "De La Cruz-Guzman to All Panelists: 12:56 PM

Perhaps we could use recent graduates and those who went through the book clubs to help with the program

From Brandon Thompson (he/him) to Everyone: 12:57 PM

i am interested.

From Lacey Rogers to All Panelists: 12:57 PM

That'd be my birthday sooo

From Dawn McCarthy (she/her) to All Panelists: 12:57 PM

I can make it work.

