

Abington HRC: Meeting Minutes for May 1, 2024

Present: Members: Michele Cooper, Rosemary Jenkins, Joanne Kleiner, Shelley Rosenberg, Cheryl Rusten, Justin Williams

Ambassadors: Bonnie Dalzell

Guests: Madelena Rizzo

The minutes from April 2024 were approved.

Old Business:

State HRC presentation with Chad Lassiter on “Beloved Community.” The event is scheduled for June 5th from 6:30pm-8:00 pm at the Crestmont Community Center. HRC members should come at 6, if possible, to help set up the chairs and should also post the event flyer to their respective social media accounts. John Spiegelman told Bonnie he would share it with the commissioners but members can also mail to theirs just in case. It appears that registration is requested—so don’t forget to register!

Community Dialogue Training: Shelley reported that a member of the Philadelphia HRC is going to do a 2-part training that will likely address how to facilitate meetings and develop programs. Details will follow. Two other members of the Tri State group also offered to provide training on various topics such as addressing racial issues.

Annual Report: This has been submitted.

Human Library: Bonnie provided a summary of the very successful event held recently in Moorestown, NJ. Represented among the 15 human books were, among others, a refugee, a gay elder, and a person with bipolar disorder. Over 100 people attended. Bonnie offered to spearhead a similar event at the Abington Library if the AHRC wanted to move forward. We decided to try to arrange for a program in the fall. Bonnie will talk with the library director about potential dates and then we will work on finding people to be our books. The human books are expected to watch a pre-event video to help them understand what will happen during the event.

Autism Film update: Several members attended the film, which they said was excellent. They also learned what Upper Dublin Police and Fire are doing to accommodate the needs of people on the autism spectrum. Rosemary will reach out to their Abington counterparts to learn what they might be doing. We also discussed a tentative program focused on the autism spectrum for April 2025.

Social Media Update:

- During April our Facebook followers increased by 30—a very healthy increase. We also saw more page visits.
- We made 10 posts during the month.
- Regarding upcoming posts, we will start to post about the various June Pride events coming up in the Township

New Business:

Braver Angels: Following up on last month's suggestion, we had a presentation by Madalena Rizzo on Braver Angels and the types of programs that could be available to us. Ms. Rizzo is a forensic clinical psychologist who volunteers with Braver Angels to lead programs because she is passionate about civil discourse and the need for people to listen to each other even when they disagree. She gave us a history of the organization and options for program set up. Following her presentation, we decided that we should review the Braver Angels website (braverangels.org) to determine what kind of program would work best for us. We will review the site and discuss further at the June meeting.

Civil Conversation workshops: Justin also participated in a 3 hour "civil conversation" workshop sponsored by the Philadelphia Interfaith Council which he found very insightful. This group will be offering a free "Train the Trainer" (on how to facilitate civil conversations) workshop on May 15th in Colmar from 9am-1 pm. Several AHRC members expressed interest in possibly attending.

Abington Night Out: This will take place on Monday August 5th. Joanne and Rosemary will get there at 4:30 to set up. Rosemary will get additional candy and Cheryl will bring all the stuff from last year. Cheryl will take stock of what we have and we can decide what additional materials we might want. One possibility is Human Library announcements if we have a date.

Misc:

AHRC member Justin Williams was just appointed to serve on the newly revived Montgomery County Advisory Board to the PA Human Relations Commission. Congratulations to Justin, who will be a fantastic addition to this group

Next meeting: June **12**, 2024 (note change in usual date due to program on June 5)

Respectfully submitted: Cheryl Rusten, Secretary