

Criminal Justice Task Force
Zoom Meeting
Monday, May 11, 2020

AGENDA

Present: Mark, Ellen, Al, Louise, Kathleen, Betty, Shanique, Jo, Roberta, John, Barbara

1. Check in: How is everyone doing? Luckily we all seem to be doing well.
2. Shawn in hospice care: Penny will arrange for an e-card to Cheryl. The contact information was shared by email. Cards and letters are welcome.
3. Betty: Training on doing effective One-on-Ones: There are several types of one-to-ones. The relational one-to-one is focused on trying to grow the organization and connecting to others. Betty began a connection with Van at People's Choice, and is willing to provide food for events or activities. There is also a leadership, coaching and mentoring and other models of one-to-one. Betty needs our help to connect with people to engage with making social justice changes. RocACTS is about dismantling structural racism and making community change. Some questions about feeling seen, how it felt, and how others let you see them fully, and how that felt. 70% listening, 30% talking – you are listening to their story. We shared on these questions. Leaders have followers. Some points: Listen; openness and safety; ask/invite – uncover self-interest; genuine interest, honesty, curiosity, empathy, understanding; human connection, vulnerability; honest self-disclosure, vulnerability. Let them know who you are and why you're here, quickly, and why you are asking them to connect. Ask transformational, agitational questions. Invite them into building power. To prepare for your one-to-one: think about what you are willing to share about yourself, why you're here, what you are curious about with them, what could we invite them to do. Betty needs help as organizer and needs suggestions for people to meet. We are a small group; we and Syracuse are the only members in FIA who only have one organizer. VOICE-Buffalo has 3 organizers, each focuses on a particular area. Betty needs to focus on all of it and needs to build a team to help grow this organization. If we could do at least 2 one to ones a month, which would be better than what is happening now! FaceTime, Zoom or phone conversations are what we need to use during social distancing. [FYI: I just put a post on my Facebook page requesting interested people to do 1:1s with me]
4. Shanique: Survey results and letter writing project: Some people had issues joining the survey; seems like most of us did but some had messages that indicated that they had already participated when they had not. She received 6 responses. The issues appear to be a tie between HALT, prison reform/COVID19 and PAB, two votes each. Progress with HALT depends on whether the legislature meets again. The survey will go out again because there were glitches. We can form subcommittees to focus on each area. HALT and PAB the letter to the Governors are continuing actions.

There is a lot of activity coming from Faith in Action. Thanks to everyone who has sent out letters asking prisoners about COVID. There is a list of a little over 100 people to send Tocsin Magazine but unsure about when it will be OK to go inside again, as currently things are shut down. Expecting to start mailing out June 1. Jerome might know whether the magazine can get through.

5. Roberta: Report from First Unitarian Criminal Justice Ministries priorities: Voter turnout and collaboration: The Governor has sent out applications for absentee ballots for the primary. One can also apply online. Concern that people may not understand how to respond and vote absentee. It's easy to make a mistake and lose the vote. The application needs to be sent in and then the ballot when received has to be properly filled out and returned. Who can we partner with around this? League of Women Voters? Other groups? The Social Justice Executive Council is planning a Zoom conference to come up with a list of groups in the community to partner with. Please send information to form a coalition to get these votes out to Roberta. Barbara notes that she is involved in a campaign that is working to get people's attention on this. Penny notes that people can be reached through churches; most are Zoom meeting. Technology can be used to train people to get their ballots completed.

6. Activism in quarantine: Consider signing the petition to demand justice in the murder of Ahmaud Arbery in GA. When situations like this arise, is it possible for FiA and/or RocACTS to send letters that indicate that these are areas of national interest? Betty notes that RocACTS always signs on to the initiatives of FIA. This was done under the umbrella of Live Free in FIA. Also, here is the link to the situation in NC that I mentioned during our meeting: From The New York Times:

Ex-Deputy Charged After Armed White 'Mob' Confronts Black Family

The deputy was fired after "terrorizing" a North Carolina family in what appeared to be a case of mistaken identity, officials said.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/10/us/North-Carolina-deputy-charges-racism.html?smid=em-share>

7. Additional updates: Plush: everything is on hold but he's in touch with Shonda. He got a new attorney who had some new strategies and there is concern that he was set up. Let's get an update from Shonda.

8. Additions: Please get your remaining letters out for Tocsin. Drive up Covid-19 testing is available at MCC – fill out an application online. Hopefully, no one needs this but let people know who might. Henry is recording Alchemical Dialogues for a podcast that will eventually go up on YouTube or possibly other sites. The focus is on the transformational and spiritual aspects of important topics. We could do CJTF work, HALT with Jerome, dismantling structural racism with Betty, Tocsin Magazine with Shanique, and more. More information to follow.

Next meeting: June 11, most likely on Zoom again. Please contact me (zaynabkathleen@gmail.com) if you need more information about how to participate via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen FitzPatrick, Co-Chair with Shanique
with Penny and Roberta for First Unitarian, Criminal Justice Ministry