

2023-2024 Social Justice Committee Annual Report

Cathy Solomon, Chair
Penny Hall, member
Etta Zasloff, member
Nancy Richman, member

Goals/Mission Learn, Educate, Advocate

Accomplishments/Highlights

- Continued the twice monthly Anti-Racism discussions
- Expanded Anti-Racism to include Anti-Semitism
- Hosted a successful community event around the 2 part Narragansett Nation History presentation with a total of 190 people registered for both events
- In collaboration with primarily Peace Dale Congregational Church (PDCC), grew the South County Social Justice Coalition
- Changed name from Social Justice to Social and Racial Justice Committee, eliminating a separate group for Anti-racism

Details

Learning. We continued to learn more about the history and nuances of racism and other “Isms”

Overview of topics:

Slavery in RI (Smith Castle)
Anti-Semitism/Islamophobia
History of Israeli/Arab nation conflict
White Privilege
Housing
Class
Intersectionality of Racism with:
Culture
Poverty
Maternal health
Housing

Education: Sharing our learning with a broader audience

9/25/23 Service - Members of ARC shared insights on what they have learned about their own racism.

3/12 and 3/25/24 - Educators from the Tomaquag Museum and members of the Narragansett Tribe presented the history of the Narragansett Nation and their treatment over

the centuries by colonials and their descendants.

Advocacy: Created two successful state legislative forums on October 22, 2023 and April 7, 2024 as a member of the UU Legislative Ministry of RI. Rev Denis was the emcee of both events. 80-100 people from across the state attended

Collaborations

We collaborated with several partners this year.

- South County Social Justice Coalition: The Coalition, founded in March 2023, has continued to grow, with 111 individual subscribers, representing 15 different faith groups and provider organizations to the weekly email list. Besides the email network the coalition, led by Leslie Chouinard, Joanne Haynes, Jim Moore, and Etta Zasloff, the SCSJC was formalized in Feb. 2024 with continuation of the Friday newsletter of social justice events in and around South County, a [website](#), a better email platform, and quarterly meetings featuring presentations from allies on affordable housing and good citizenship.
 - Westminster Unitarian Church: Participation in two Braver Angels events/workshops
 - Tabled at the Washington Community Service Event to learn more about social service providers in South County
 - Attended a 9/23/23 presentation at Wakefield Baptist Church to learn more about how Jonnycake Center and Warm Welcome house serve the community.
 - The Womxn Project - Participating in a network to show up at social justice events in South County
 - Peace Dale Congregational Church - PDCC has a strong climate/environmental group that meets regularly. They have graciously allowed us to participate with them.
 - RI Coalition for Separation of Church and State. Bethany Sorrentino has joined us on a few occasions to educate us on the focus and activities of this group. There have been no actions as of yet.
 - Clothing Drive: We participated in a clothing drive in October 2023 for Tabatha's Closet, a ministry of Peace Dale Congregational Church
 - MLK Day: Tabled at 1/15/24 event hosted by Towards Antiracism North Kingstown(TANK) and SK Social Justice
 - Nuclear Now: 1/12/24 Film Screening sponsored by PDCC Affordable Housing Presentation at South County Social Justice Coalition quarterly meeting on 4/7/2024
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- South County Habitat for Humanity: A meeting is planned for June 26 to discuss the possibility of UU group build project. Representatives from the organization will discuss the details/options for this project which will take place in August or September.

Share the Plate

Under Barbara Beckwith's direction, we donated \$4,651.11 to the following eight non-profits

Southern Rhode Island Volunteers
Friends of the Saugatucket
Jonnycake Center for Hope
Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense, RI chapter
Hadassah
Muslim Aid USA
Domestic Violence of South County
WARM Center of Westerly

2024-2025 Goals

- Community Support
 1. Continue to show up in support of community events
 2. Stand up against hate and prejudice
 3. Support causes that are in line with our principles
 4. Learn more about the needs in the community. Educate the congregation about it and determine appropriate actions
 5. Advocate for action. Make a difference.

Challenges

- We have been challenged to find topics and facilitators for our group discussions.
 - Bring in outside speakers?
 - Reduce meetings to once per month?
- How can we turn our discussions into actions?
 - More community events at the UU
- Advocacy
 - Getting more involved/We have an election coming up!
 - UU Legislative Ministry