

DEI Summit Presentations  
March 26, 2022

- Breakout 1
  - Disability Advocacy – [Moderator: Allison Lourash](#)
    - Jeremy Opperman – Rotary International, DEI Task Force
      - Bio - Mr. Opperman started his own HR marketing firm in 1999 and has increasingly been focused on diversity and disability issues and is passionate about the unhesitant and natural integration of people with disabilities into mainstream society. Mr. Opperman is a member of the cause-based Rotary Club of World Disability Advocacy
      - Topic - He will talk about the role of disability advocacy within Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
    - Nate Johnson – Dir North Quabbin Citizens Advocacy
      - Bio - Nate and his family first became involved with disability rights when his parents fought for him to be educated in a mainstream classroom. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from UMass Amherst. He currently serves as Executive director at North Quabbin Citizen Advocacy, a community-based organization that recruits and supports helpful friends for people with disabilities. He lives in Western Massachusetts where he is a member of the Athol/Orange Rotary Club.]
      - Topic
    - Victoria Handley – Advocate for people with Autism
      - Bio - Victoria Handy is a graduate student with high-functioning autism. She has a 6-year-old daughter with high-functioning autism as well. She is 3 months from her M.S. in ABA. She is a member of the cause-based Rotary World Disability Advocacy Club.
      - Topic - She will discuss the intersectionality of race and disabilities as a black autistic woman.



- How to Get Started with DEI in Your Community – Moderator: Sue Peghiny – Rotary Club of Newton
  - Anna Giraldo-Kerr – The Lived Experiences Project
    - Bio - Ms. Giraldo-Kerr is a 20-year Needham resident and CEO of Shades of Success, Inc. a learning and development organization that helps clients craft equity-centric strategies to address leadership and management challenges. The Charles River Regional Chamber of Commerce selected her as one of the 50 Most Influential Business People of Color in the Boston Metrowest area. Ms. Giraldo-Kerr and Dr. Nichole Argo co-founded the Lived Experiences Project in 2020.
    - Topic - Storytelling for Social Change: Creating a platform to amplify the voices of underrepresented community members.
  - Janine Taylor – Town of Sudbury DEI Commission, Sudbury DEI Lived Experiences Project. (Stephanie Oliver).
    - Bio - Janine Taylor is the Chief Human Resources Officer at Advocates, a large non-profit, human services agency headquartered in Framingham. Janine has 20+ years of HR experience – her areas of expertise include diversity and inclusion, employee engagement, employee relations and organizational development. Janine holds a master's degree in Management from Emmanuel College and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Boston University. She is a dually certified human resources professional (SPHR and SHRM-SCP) and a certified Employee Engagement Specialist. Janine resides in Sudbury, where she is actively involved in promoting racial equity and inclusion. She is the founder of Sudbury's Black & Blended Families group, sits on the steering committee of Sudbury's Racial Climate Task Force, is a member of Sudbury's DEI Commission and is actively involved in Sudbury's school systems.
    - Topic - Lived Experiences Sudbury is a project of the Sudbury Diversity Equity and Inclusion Commission (SDEIC), a public body of volunteers appointed by the Sudbury Select Board. The goal of the Lived Experiences project is to collect local stories to document experiences with all forms of racism and identity-based prejudice from people who live, study, visit, or work in Sudbury. The project sub-committee is working with Dr. Nichole Argo, co-founder of the Lived Experiences Project in Needham, MA to develop



the survey and outreach strategy. The sub-committee is currently in the process of finalizing the survey and plans to launch it in April 2022. Costs associated with the Lived Experiences project are being supported by a gift from the Sudbury Foundation.

- Paula Collins (Shrewsbury) (also known for disability advocacy)
  - Bio – Paula Collins is a long time advocate for people of all abilities . She leads a team of job developers at WORK Inc who specialize in helping people with challenges find work. Her work in human services is a second career born out of her determination that different abilities are valuable in the workplace and community at large. A mother of two young men, one with multiple mental health challenges as well as an intellectual disability. Paula was part of the Shrewsbury DEI Task Force and a member of the storyteller subcommittee to hear the personal stories that will influence policy, Board of Directors of the Stepping Stone Community Theater which is an integrated theater company, and former SEPAC President. Paula is currently a certified Windmills trainer which is an employment Disability Inclusion Program, CESP Certified, and Marc Gold Customized Employment Certified.
  - Topic
- Creative Equity Initiatives For Your Community – [Moderator: Joyce Graff](#)
  - Liora Norwich – Network for Social Justice / Winchester
    - Bio - With over 15 years of experience, Liora has worked domestically and internationally as a non-profit executive and consultant. Liora joined the Network for Social Justice (NFSJ) as Executive Director in 2019, and in 2021 launched the NFSJ's consulting arm, supporting small to medium sized organizations, faith ministries ,and businesses to build an equity lens into their operations, policies and programs. Internationally, she also spent more than a decade supporting local partners and international organizations to advance social justice and civic engagement through integrated community development initiatives in Israel and Palestine. Liora received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2014, and her MBA in non-profit management from the Heller School at Brandeis University in 2018.
    - Topic - '**Building creative equity initiatives for your community: Avoiding reinventing the wheel**'. From MLK Day, to Pride celebrations, to awareness raising around Indigenous Peoples Day, towns and cities



across Massachusetts are seeking ways to elevate historically marginalized groups, and hold events to highlight issues of diversity and equity in their community. While there are an increasing number of such programs each year, developing creative ideas and thinking through inclusive pathways to generate community participation is often done in isolation. As a result, in developing these initiatives many of us find ourselves struggling to reinvent the wheel, even when there are great models all around us. This panel aims to provide a few case studies of successful community programs, offering models for future initiatives, and generating audience discussion of best practices to troubleshoot common challenges.

- Peishan Bartley – Boxborough DEI Committee
  - Bio - Peishan Bartley is the Library Director of Sargent Memorial Library of Boxborough, MA. She is a member of the CWMARS library network's Social Justice sub-committee, and a member of the town's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. She is a first generation immigrant from Taiwan, worked in the private sector, taught as an adjunct professor, been a stay at home parent, got a PhD degree in Library and Information Science from Simmons College, and finally became a public librarian. She sees the library as an invaluable, integral and active member of the community that provides information resources, community services, and connects people. She works to offer a collection and programs that encourage learning, exchanges of ideas, community engagement, and health and wellbeing in an open, safe, and welcoming space for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Peishan believes that no person is an island, and it is only by working together can the world be made better.
  - Topic - Boxborough is a small town that went through a huge population growth in the past few decades. I will talk about the changes in the town's demography as the population grew, and the initiatives we've taken to bring the community together
- Tony Logalbo – Newton – Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Harmony Foundation (Liz T)
  - Bio - Mr. Logalbo currently serves as the President of the Foundation for Racial, Ethnic and Religious Harmony (the "Harmony Foundation"), a small Newton-based private foundation organized in 1990. It works in the Newton community, making small grants and sponsoring such



community events as it deems may best serve the community in promoting and sustaining racial, ethnic and religious harmony. Tony enjoyed a 47-year career in municipal government management in California and Massachusetts, retiring in 2016 after serving 36 years as Finance Director for the Town of Concord, Mass.

- Topic – Among its activities, the Harmony Foundation makes small grants, typically in the range of \$1,500, to various local organizations in the aggregate of \$15,000 to \$20,000 each year. These grants support programs and initiatives that are deemed to meet the Foundation’s Mission: to facilitate learning, interaction, understanding and respect across racial, ethnic and religious dimensions within the Newton community. In recent years, a number of not-for-profit grant applicants have submitted funding requests in support of DEI initiatives. The Harmony Foundation has concluded that such initiatives are in furtherance of its mission, has funded and will be actively monitoring several programs, and anticipates a continuing focus on such initiatives - which hold the promise of planting current seeds in good soil for the promotion, growth and sustaining of future community harmony.
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- Infusing DEI On and Off Campus – **Moderator: Julie Ginn**
  - Hank Parkinson – Fitchburg State University
    - Bio - Hank Parkinson is currently the Dean of Students at Fitchburg State University; he has 24 years of progressive experience in higher education administration and is a leadership trainer. He earned a BS in business administration from Quinnipiac University, an MEd in education from Sacred Heart University, and an EdD in higher education and leadership from Nova Southeastern University. He has worked at multiple institutions and is experienced in student activities, operations, orientation, First Year Experience, leadership development, volunteerism, Greek Life, residence life, multicultural affairs, and recreation services. His research interests include first year experience, leadership development, student development, and diversity, equity, inclusion work. He has recently received a Massachusetts Commonwealth Citation for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work and was elected for NASPA Region I Massachusetts State Director.
    - Topic



- Eric Nguyen – Dir Center for Inclusive Excellence – Framingham State
  - Bio - Eric Nguyen (he/him/his) joined Framingham State University in June 2021 as the Director of the Center for Inclusive Excellence. Eric brings extensive experience developing programs that prioritize equity, social justice, and belonging for all students. In particular, Eric is committed to an intersectional approach that centers and uplifts the voices and narratives of students who hold historically marginalized identities. Prior to joining FSU, Eric’s work focused on expanding academic opportunities and building community to empower first-generation, undocumented, and low-income students of color in middle school, high school, and college settings. In his free time, Eric enjoys outdoor activities including rock climbing, trail running, and mountain biking. He is also an avid photographer, and he enjoys birdwatching, hiking, gardening, and raising a six-month-old with his partner Bonnie.
  - Topic
- Lee Santos Silva – Dir Center for Equity and Cultural Wealth, Bunker Hill Community College
  - Bio - Lee Santos Silva (he/him/his) is the Director of the Center for Equity and Cultural Wealth at Bunker Hill Community College. In this role, he partners with campus, local, state, and national partners to improve outcomes and create inclusive and affirming academic and work environments for members of the BHCC community. Prior to assuming this position, he served as a faculty member and Chairperson of Bunker Hill’s English Department, where he led curricular, co-curricular, and cross-departmental equity reforms that also integrated students’ cultural wealth. His teaching areas include academic writing, African American Literature, and LGBTQIA literature.
  - Topic
- Breakout 2
  - How to Partner with Rotary on DEI Projects – **Moderator: ???**
    - Bill Paulson – Diversity Book Fair / Little Free Libraries
      - Bio – Bill Paulson is a member of the Rotary Club of Needham. He is also the head of the Rotary District 7910 Social Equity Task Force.
      - Topic – The Rotary Club of Needham put together a Diversity Book Fair together with the Needham Public Schools. Our goal was that every child should see themselves in the books they read at school. We raised





\$8000 for books. We are also working with the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) to install Little Free Libraries at the two NHA sites in town.

- Sandra Burgers – President Rotary Club of Shrewsbury, 7910 Youth Exchange Inbound Chair, 7910 Social Equity Task Force
  - Bio - Sandy Burgers, president of The Rotary Club of Shrewsbury, has a passion for non-profits and has dedicated her life to volunteering. Her desire is to help improve her fellow humans' lives and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. Being a Rotarian plays a big part of her life, especially the International Exchange Student Program. Before moving to Massachusetts, she worked at the district level assisting with youth exchange as well as at the club level in The Overland Park Rotary Club, District 5710. While still in Kansas, she and her husband hosted 7 exchange students and welcomed many more into their home as guests. She enjoys working with the Rotary Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force here in Central Massachusetts. In District 7910, she coordinates the inbound Rotary Youth Exchange Students. Sandy resides in Worcester with her husband and 2 canine children, Frankie and Pickles. She is the mother of two grown daughters and has 2 granddaughters who are the joy of her life.
  - Topic - Sandy will share her current journey as Rotary president planning the addition of a Community Fridge in Shrewsbury and the importance of and how to include the community for a hybrid mutual aid project.
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- Panelist 3 – Gary Arthur Wellesley Rotarian
  - Bio - When Vin Spoto reached out to me in order to get more info on the food program I had started at Village Church, it appeared the same as many. In my mind it was going to be a quick cup of coffee and on my way. Eighteen months later I am a Rotarian (Never imagined) and we have completed one of the most productive fundraisers to date. We have a female president and service to the community is strong. Our chapter's social and racial demographic is mimicking our community and I could not be more proud to be associated with Rotary International. I was attracted to the fact that Rotary is all about service, we are doers, and that is where I engage. The recent weekend of Rotarians in the kitchen sealed the promise of the Rotary getting involved in real solutions to today's issues.
  - Topic
- Resilience Network – Moderator: Tom Daly
  - Nichole Argo – Needham Resilience Network



- Bio - Nichole Argo is the Director of Research and Field Advancement at Over Zero, a non-profit based in Washington, DC., where she conducts original research on belonging and social cohesion in the US, and designs and evaluates violence prevention interventions. A social psychologist by training, Nichole holds degrees from Stanford, MIT and the New School for Social Research. She lives in Needham with her family and two young kids...in their spare time, they like to frequent Needham's stained glass and pottery studios.
- Topic - Dr. Argo co-Directs the Needham Resilience Network, a table of liaisons to all identity groups and stakeholders in the town meant to ensure that all perspectives within the community are given a voice regarding current challenges, and that relationships can be built across groups. Years 1 and 2 will focus on countering hate and fostering social cohesion in Needham, and aligning around a rapid response process.
- Jamele Adams – Franklin Freedom Team
  - Bio - For over 26 years, Jamele Adams, current Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Scituate Public Schools, has been well known for engaging with issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

As the former Director for New York Yankees Derek Jeter's "Jeter's Leaders", Jamele oversaw a unique leadership program that supports high school age students in New York City. Jamele then moved to Brandeis University where he served as Dean of Students. Along with specific responsibilities for student campus life experience, he pioneered and supported programs that celebrated and enhanced campus pluralism.

Recipient of many awards and recognitions for his work in higher education, and with a horde of young scholars interested in law and creative writing in his wake, Jamele is also a nationally celebrated poet.

"Love how you love who you love" -jma

- Topic - Jamele will speak to his experience creating a network of "Freedom Team" organizations that work to preserve freedom through unity in the community. Members of these groups meet monthly to explore ways of offering dialogue and support to individuals and the entire community





with a goal of promoting love, inclusion and trust (“LIT”) and moving beyond tolerance to embracing, celebrating and sharing our community’s diversity.

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- Anne Aisenberg – Natick, SPARK Kindness
  - Bio - Anne Aisenberg graduated from Boston College School of nursing and has worked for 36 years as a pediatric nurse in a diverse medical setting. She has always had a strong interest in social justice and embracing people of all backgrounds. She has been a volunteer for SPARK Kindness for about 5 yrs and is on the Belonging, Equity and Community team and the SPARK Kindness crew. She has also been on the planning committee to help with the installation of a Diverse Little Free Library on a playground in Natick in the near future. Currently Anne is taking a course on nonviolent communication and microaggressions with Dr. Roxy Manning and has attended several other programs addressing racial inequities and racial justice. Anne also volunteered working with the homeless for 12 yrs at the Community Day Center of Waltham providing support services to people of diverse backgrounds.
  - Topic – Natick is a member of the Freedom Team network. Anne will talk about their experience with this and building resilience in general.
- Municipal DEI Efforts – [Moderator: Marianne Cooley](#)
  - Latosha Dixon – Town of Chelmsford, Chair DEI Committee
    - Bio - Latosha Dixon is the Chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee in Chelmsford, MA. The DEI Committee was formed in September 2020. Latosha works in the pharmaceutical industry and has supported DEI efforts in her company for many years. She is actively engaged in addressing the needs of colleagues from diverse backgrounds: Blacks, Latino, Women, Veterans, and LGBTQ+ . Her experience with DEI at work prepared her to lead her town’s DEI committee. She believes every person deserves to be seen, heard, and respected. She also believes education is the key to breaking barriers. Last, but not least, she believes it is necessary to build inclusiveness into our daily lives because it will enhance our communities. Latosha has degrees from Georgia Southern University and Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences University. She is also a proud mother and a fur parent.
    - Topic - Chelmsford DEI noteworthy initiatives including:
      - Proclamation condemning Racism, Hatred, and Discrimination
      - Juneteenth and Day of Peace celebrations



- “I’m Not Racist” film screening
  - Webpage content
  - Collaboration with other town groups
- Hattie Kerwin Derrick – City of Newton, Dir Community Engagement & Inclusion
  - Bio - Hattie Kerwin Derrick is the Director of Community Engagement & Inclusion as well as the LGBTQ+ Liaison for the City of Newton. She is charged with civic and community engagement and inclusion. This includes facilitating relationships with residents, communities/groups and stakeholders across the City. In her role she:
    - Assists and provides information, access to information and resources for communities including:
      - Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)
      - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+)
      - Persons with disabilities
      - Any resident or person doing business in Newton in need of assistance or support
    - Develops, promotes, supports, and assesses community engagement, participation and inclusion in Citywide and departmental programs and events
    - Works with all City boards and commissions on diversity, equity and inclusion
    - Builds collaborative partnerships with diverse people and organizations to include community groups, non-profits, community-based organizations, faith communities, businesses, and service providers, including those that serve traditionally underserved populations, to help the community engage in an equitable way.
    - Prior to her current role Hattie was the chair of the Newton Human Rights Commission (HRC). As a member of the HRC, Hattie collaborated with residents and city staff to promote mutual understanding and respect by combating discrimination and embracing diversity.
  - Topic –
    - Language access for residents – interpretation/ translation/ simplification
    - Procurement process with the lens of equity. We are looking at what barriers in the bidding process can we remove to support underrepresented groups.
    - Programming with local community groups – to provide diverse programming for the community.



Some events include Juneteenth, Indigenous Peoples Day and Overdue: Confronting Race & Racism in conjunction with the Newton Free Library.

- Project Pop-up to support micro and small businesses and unrepresented and women owned entrepreneurs.
  - Trainings – for staff, City Councilors and Boards & Commissions
  - Will be working with consultants on a detailed action plan for creation of an inclusive and equitable City Government operations and services that is sustainable.
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- Becca Meekins – Town of Northborough, Asst Town Admin, Northborough D&I Committee, Co-Chair Mass Municipal Assn DEI Committee
    - Bio - Becca Meekins has served as the Assistant Town Administrator for the Town of Northborough since October of 2020. Prior to that, she was the Town of Grafton's Assistant Town Administrator from 2017-2020. She serves as Northborough's staff liaison to the town's Committee for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging since its inception in 2020. She currently serves on the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee. In her free time, you can find her hiking with her wife and two dogs, or serenading her two cats with covers of The Beatles.
    - Topic - There is lots of excitement in the field of local government around diversity, equity and inclusion. More communities are establishing DEI Committees, and many are hiring DEI Directors as full-time staff to lead development and implementation of strategic plans, goals and initiatives around matters of equity and inclusion. Taking the first step in establishing a committee can be challenging. I'll give you some insight into how to organize a committee around goals, establish ground rules, and ultimately, provide guidance or recommendations to your community about how best to address the diversity needs in your community.
  - DEI in K12 Ed – [Moderator: Bruce Field](#)
    - Dr. Noor Ali – Principal, Al-Hamra Academy, Shrewsbury, Asst Prof Grad School of Education, Northeastern University
      - Bio - Noor Ali, Ed.D., is an assistant teaching professor in the Graduate School of Education at Northeastern



University. She has been a K-12 teacher for 15 years and is the principal of Al-Hamra Academy. Dr. Ali, who coined the Critical Race Theory subset of MusCrit, has published in academic and media outlets and will soon publish the book *Critical Storytelling: Narratives of Muslim American Youth*. She is also a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce for the Town of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.

- Topic - DEI- Beyond Tokenism
- Tiffany Lillie – Framingham Public Schools, Assistant Superintendent of Equity
  - Bio - Tiffany Lillie currently serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, and Community Engagement for Framingham Public Schools. Ms. Lillie's educational background includes a bachelor's degree in Neuroscience Psychology and a master's degree in Urban Planning. As a youth worker and organizer for over 15 years, her commitment to equity and liberation fuels her passion for community engagement as a key to success.
  - Topic - Moving from transactional to transformational relationships. Designing professional learning opportunities to engage in storytelling and reflection. Authentic two-way collaboration with family and community partners.
- Jessica Peterson – Principal Newman Elementary Needham
  - Bio - Jessica Peterson has served as the Newman Elementary School Principal for the past 12 years. She began her career as a special educator which is where her advocacy for inclusion and equity began. Having worked in a variety of schools and districts, Jessica's vision has been to examine the systems that are contributing to structural racism and to work with communities to dismantle these. In conjunction with district colleagues and staff, Jessica is proud of the work that has begun at her school and in Needham to address these important issues so that all students have access to opportunities that further their learning
  - Topic - Needham Public Schools has implemented the Racial Literacy Curriculum created by the Pollyanna Organization. In its second year of implementation, teachers in grades K-5 have taught explicit lessons connected to race and anti-racist practices. Students engage in topics including:
    - The physical world around us - a celebration of skin colors



- We are part of a larger community - encouraging kindness, social awareness, and empathy
  - Diversity around the world - how our geography and our daily lives connect us
  - Stories of activism - how one voice can change a community (and bridge the world)
  - The development of civilization - how geography gave some populations a head start (dispelling myths of racial superiority)
  - How “immigration” shaped the racial and cultural landscape of the United States - the persecution, resistance, and contributions of immigrants and enslaved people
  - In addition, schools have provided parent sessions to engage the wider community in this important work including how to have conversations that are developmentally appropriate
- Karen Bourn
    - Bio - Karen Bourn, M.Ed has been the principal of John Eliot Elementary School in Needham for the past five years. As the daughter of immigrant parents from Colombia, her experience as a former English Language Learner and marginalized student has been a catalyst for her strong commitment to equity and inclusion. She has led various trainings for staff around Culturally Responsive Teaching Approaches as she strives to make Eliot school a place where all kids will be successful regardless of their personal and academic challenges. Karen is currently a doctoral student at Boston College researching best practices to improve student's Academic Self Concept.
    -