

THE HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMISSION (HRAC) *and*
THE DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ASSOCIATION OF WESTFIELD

PRESENTS

A Community Discussion on

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION AGAINST HATE

February 3, 2022 ■ 7:00 to 9:00 PM ■ Westfield High School Auditorium



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Westfield High School Auditorium
550 Dorian Road, Westfield, NJ

PROGRAM

WELCOME

Alexis Jemal

Chair, HRAC 2020 - 2021; Member, MLK Westfield

Elizabeth Wolf

President, MLK Westfield

REMARKS

Shelley Brindle

Mayor, Town of Westfield

PRESENTATION & PANEL DISCUSSION

Here's the Problem, Now What?

Claudia Cohen and Cheryl Swift

Moderators

GUEST STUDENT SPEAKER

Euan Stuart

AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

CLOSING REMARKS

Alexis Jemal

Guest Student Speaker

■ **EUAN STEWART** is a Junior at Westfield High School who is a member of the *No Place for Hate* committee and has been involved in many of the school's activities against hate. Euan, whose mother is a South African-Indian and whose father is a Canadian-Scots, was born in Sweden, and has lived in many countries, including England, South Africa and Australia.

Panelists

■ **POLICE CHIEF CHRISTOPHER BATTILORO**, Westfield's 10th Chief of Police, was appointed in December 2018. Raised in Westfield, he is a 1991 graduate of Westfield High School as well as a 1995 Clemson University graduate (BA, History). A highly decorated police officer who has earned awards and recognition for his service, Chief Battiloro was the commanding officer first for the Operations Division and then for the Internal Affairs and Professional Standards Unit prior to becoming Chief of Police.

■ **PAMELA BRUG, MD, MS** is a board certified obstetrician-gynecologist in New Jersey. A graduate of Westfield High School, Douglass College, and Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Dr. Brug has practiced medicine for over 25 years. The found-

er of the New Jersey Black Women Physicians Association, which addresses disparities in Black maternal and infant health, Dr. Brug has worked throughout the Covid pandemic to address disparities from education to vaccination.

■ SUPERINTENDENT DR.

RAYMOND A. GONZÁLEZ joined the Westfield Public School District in August 2021 after seven years as Superintendent in Westwood, New Jersey. With degrees from Princeton University (B.A.), Rutgers University (M.A., Ed.D.), and a second Masters from New Jersey City University, Dr. González has spent his more than 23-year career committed to education in large urban and suburban districts.

■ **EDWARD (ED) ISRAELOW** is a retired attorney who worked in private practice and then for many years in senior level positions with real estate development companies. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Northeastern University School of Law, Mr. Israelow has served as past president of the Metro NJ Chapter of the American Jewish Committee, an advocacy organization with focuses that include combatting antisemitism and racism.

■ **REV. JEREMY JINKINS** is the Senior Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Westfield and comes to us with close to 20 years experience working in matters of justice, social healing, and

racial reconciliation. A former director of development for nonprofits, Jeremy was a student of Womanist scholar bell hooks at Southwestern University, is a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, and has served churches in Virginia, Georgia, and New Jersey.

■ **KIMBERLY LEEGAN** is in her 9th year at Westfield High School teaching Humanities, Global Perspectives, Mock Trial and Women Studies. With degrees from Wesleyan University and Seton Hall Law School, Ms. Leegan is a recipient of the James Becker Award for Global Understanding from the National Council for the Social Studies and is the co-coordinator of WHS's No Place for Hate Committee, the moderator of the Jewish Cultural and Development Club and the Junior States of America, as well as the coach of the Mock Trial Team.

■ **MAUREEN MAZZARESE** is the Director of Counseling for the Westfield School District who has made student wellness and recognizing the whole student a priority. In her 33 years with the Westfield Public Schools, Ms. Mazzarese has served as a Student Assistance Counselor, the counselor for Project79 students and their families, a founding member of the Westfield Black Achievers, an advisor to the WHS African Awareness Club and the WHS Transition Project, and she is currently a member of the Mayor's Mental Health Coalition.

Moderators

■ **CLAUDIA E. COHEN, PH.D.** is an Adjunct Faculty member at Teachers College, and the President of The Third Alternative, LLC, a consulting group that offers conflict and leadership coaching, strategic retreat planning and facilitation, mediation services and organizational change support. Dr. Cohen facilitates community-based conversations about structural racism and the practice of becoming intentionally conscious about the impacts of white privilege and race.

■ **CHERYL LUNDY SWIFT, M.ED.** is an award-winning educator, motivational speaker and entrepreneur. The founder and CEO of EduPower, an education consulting firm that empowers people to reach their fullest potential, Ms. Swift has also worked in leadership and executive roles for various educational organizations, written curriculum, and developed professional learning. Cheryl is a Commissioner for Westfield's Human Relations Advisory Commission.

The Westfield Human Relations Advisory Commission (HRAC) and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Association of Westfield, are pleased to welcome you to this Community Discussion on Accountability and Action Against Hate. Incidents and experiences of hate have dominated the national and local news conversations without much discussion on community response. The objectives of this community discussion with our local leaders are to speak to the issues of hate that Westfield has experienced and to discuss community accountability as well actions we can take to ensure that hate has no home in Westfield. It is our belief that a straightforward discussion that goes beyond awareness and asks – What is our responsibility as a community? And what can we do? – will strengthen our community and will foster greater inclusivity in our town.

We are grateful for the support of the Town of Westfield, in particular Mayor Brindle and Town Administrator, Jim Gildea. Thank you as well to the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. González, and Westfield High School Principal, Mary Asfendis, for their support of this event at the high school and in the district. We also thank Matthew DiFabio, Susan Gibbs, and Sean McArthur for facilitating our use of the auditorium. Special thanks to our panelists and moderators – we greatly appreciate their time and enthusiasm.

Human Relations Advisory Commission (HRAC)

In November 2019, Dr. Pamela Brug, MD, and Dr. Alexis Jemal, PhD, proposed forming a Human Relations Advisory Commission (HRAC) to Mayor Shelley Brindle and with unwavering support, Mayor Brindle formally appointed eleven Westfield residents to the newly-formed HRAC by February 2020. Despite the difficulties of launching this important initiative amidst a global pandemic, HRAC has worked virtually since June 2020 to advance its mission to “serve as a resource and community partner to uproot, dismantle and eradicate hate, prejudice, racism, and to foster an inclusive and supportive environment, raise awareness, and build a community that appreciates our commonalities and celebrates our diversity.” HRAC is committed to standing against such acts of hate and bigotry, as well as proactively listening to our community, understanding residents’ concerns on tolerance within Westfield, and creating programs and alliances with community groups that work towards the stated goal of inclusion.

MLK Westfield

Begun in 1987, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Association of Westfield strives to adhere to the important tenets from the words and life of Dr. King. To achieve this mission the Association annually sponsors an Interfaith Commemoration Service and undertakes educational and other activities that will encourage all residents to practice the principles of justice, fairness, brotherhood and non-violent community action espoused by Dr. King. Now in our thirty-fifth year, we hope that the spirit of Dr. King’s dream lives in our works and actions. Visit us at: www.MLKWestfield.org.

Community Discussion Committee

ALEXIS JEMAL,
COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON, MEMBER OF HRAC & MLK

PARIS BARKER, HRAC

DONNELL CARR, MLK

CLAUDIA COHEN, MLK

LAURIE MAC NEILL CLANCY, MLK

VARSHA DAS, HRAC

DEBBIE GODDARD, HRAC

RONALD HOLMES, MLK

BARBARA MONAGHAN, MLK

NINA OVRYN, MLK

MALLARY SALTZMAN, MLK

CHERYL SWIFT, HRAC

ELIZABETH WOLF, MLK

SOFIA ZIMMERMAN, HRAC

STUDENT MEMBERS

CYNTHIA LI, MLK

MADISON WRIGHT, MLK

DISRUPT HATE
WORKING TOWARD AN
INCLUSIVE WESTFIELD