

NAACP Branch Meeting
January 5th, 2022

6:00 pm

6:05 pm President Dennis Powell (DP) starts meeting: “Good evening everyone. Welcome to 2022. We can only hope that this year is going to bring us a new beginning in humanity. I’m going to start this meeting by asking for a moment of silence. As we come up on the anniversary of Jan. 6 let us keep democracy in our prayers.”

6:06 pm

Gabriela Sheehan from Jewish Family Service- welcome as our guest.
Al Blake- Thank you DP and Happy New Year to all
Al is on a host team to welcome the refugees.

6:07 pm

Gabriela Sheehan: (gave an overview on what JFS is currently doing with the Afghans)
“A family of 7 is arriving to the Berkshires tonight
I’m very new to Jewish Family Services
We wanted to resettle up to 60 Afghan refugees
We will have settled 31 ppl in 3 weeks
We have settled most of the families in Pittsfield.
14 new kids in berkshire county”

6:13 pm

Erica Mielke: How is the organization working with the schools in Pittsfield to help the transition?

6:14 pm:

GS: I had A great meeting with Mr. Curtis. Coming with grant money. Additional funding for after school programming. After they are settled JFS is here to stay

6:16 PM

Darcie Sosa:
Translation services?
Who are the partner orgs?

GS: There are too many to name

Apps : Tarjimly is an app we are using for translation- like facetime with a real live interpreter
There has been Lots of love and support and kindness despite this dark time

6:18 pm

Sabrina Allard: Any families in south county?

GS: None yet, Housing mostly is our issue

6:20 pm

Sabrina: What do the young folks need?

GS: We have young young kids currently but teens are coming. We will soon find out and we'll be happy to update you.

6:22 pm

Marjorie Cohen- transportation ?

GS: all clients will be eligible for driving

A donor out of springfield is doing a matching program with the long term goal of buying a home

6:25 pm

Marisa; kamaar had a question . . they will all be enrolled in tutoring

Offers for job training and skills training

They are evacuees

6:26 pm

Kamaar: How to connect with JFS

GS: I'll put my info in the chat for everybody

g.sheehan@jfswm.org

413-358-1511

6:27 pm

Erica - can you share a couple of success stories?

GS did so

*not sure why there is a big blank space here

6:30 pm

DP: Thank you for your commitment

Committee Reports

6:31 pm

Kelan - Last meeting as chair of the committee. Going to Grad school.

Passing reigns to Darcie and Kate Hocker for an interim basis. If anyone is interested in being a permanent chair or co-chair.

Marj: lets thank him!

6:33 pm Erica- you've helped streamline everything thank you

6:35 pm

Rebecca:

Website committee pages are up

The learning circle is wonderful-

Members are co-facilitating

6:36 pm Linda Morris Kelley - also going well

6:38 pm Education committee

Francis not here nor Linda

6:39 pm

Housing Chair

No updates

6:40 pm

Welcome Helen Moon to her first meeting as chair of the political action committee

Helen- Thanks Dennis I just took over so no update

6:42 pm

AJ

Reparations working group and economic justice group is reconvening

Christina or Anthony from Regress are not here

6:45 pm

DP Freedom Fund - we are doing really well with.

Dr. Kendra Fields will be awarded the award

Also this year we created an indigenous people award

First recipient is Larry Spotted Crow Mann

6:52 pm

How are students chosen who receive this scholarship
DP- they've graduated from Berkshire Schools

6:52 pm

Vicky Smith - What's happening with the Mum Bett project? I talked to Smitty and he seemed offended. .

DP: He is coming before the executive committee
The people that he asked to participate weren't at the table when decisions were being different. I'll leave it at that for now.

6:56 pm

Daryl: Toni Buckley asked me to share about the MLK day of service at bcc- does naacp want to sponsor

Marisa: I'm also curious about the evacuees emotional needs, and the stress of assimilation, particularly around race and their education about what its like to be a black or brown or frankly non white person here in the Berkshires.. . .

7:01 pm

Erica - is there a way to coordinate resources? We have a lot of need

7:03 pm Diane Wortis - used to work at Ms. Halls

7:05 pm Vicky Smith- how can we apply some of this to local need?

7:06 pm Tommie- MLK celebration at BCC voting rights

7:08 pm Don Lathrop - voting rights . Tomorrow park square 5 pm

7:10 pm - DP: thank everyone for being here. Keep a look out for Freedom Fund

Motion to adjoin Erica
Not sure who seconded

*As recorded by Marisa Massery

