



The grass roots organizations below will be featured at the LWVA Racial Justice Task Force event, Tuesday, March 23, 2021, Working Towards Racial Equity: A Round Table and Dialogue. They have shared these statements in advance of that conversation to give everyone background and to save time at the event. These organizations will reflect on their work, how they might work together more effectively and how the greater community can get involved.

Background on participating organizations:

N'COBRA

Founded on September 26, 1987, the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (NCOBRA) is the premiere, mass-based coalition of organizations and individuals organized for the sole purpose of broadening the base of support for the long-standing reparations movement and obtaining reparations for African descendants in the United States.

NCOBRA has chapters, members, affiliates, and supporters throughout the U. S., Africa, Europe, Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Our local contact email address is: NewEnglandNCOBRA@gmail.com

The National website is: <https://www.ncobraonline.org/about-ncobra/>

Submitted by Kathleen Anderson
March 16, 2021

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The Racial Equity Task Force is specifically for residents (not elected leaders) of Amherst and the surrounding area to share resources and ideas as we organize and struggle to become better humans and antiracists. In this time of the pandemic and necessary social distancing we utilize videoconferencing technology and social media to unite friends, allies, and co-conspirators to make our communities more just for everyone. In this critical moment in history, it means we must question our reality and work together to bring about change. We look forward to in-person organizing when it is safe to do so and will continue to develop the People's Assembly model of consensus building and holding municipal officials accountable to us. We thank all who join us in this journey.

Email us at racialequityamherst@gmail.com

Submitted by Dr. Amilcar Shabazz & Dr. Demetria R. Shabazz
March 6, 2021

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POCU: Hi, this is Phoenix and Monica and we are the Vice President and President of the **People of Color United club (POCU)** at the Amherst Regional High School. At our school POCU represents a safe place for primarily students of color and white student allies. In POCU we primarily focus on the Idea of community and building a family that consist of people that look like us and people that we know will

look out for each other. Our main activities in POCU (during the pandemic) consist of having conversations about current events, school problems that need to be addressed and how they can be fixed, and finally just doing weekly check-ins with each other such as, "how's your week going." For some information about the officers, I've (Phoenix) have been doing community work with an organization named the Julius, Harriet Tubman, Healthy Living Community/Organization for almost all my life. In this Community/ Organization we have put on 10 summer confesses that surround the ideas of social justice and equal rights. Monica has also done a numerous amount of community service in Springfield and surrounding areas.

For more information contact: Mary Custard custardm@arps.org

Submitted by Phoenix

March 2, 2021

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Reparations for Amherst is a grassroots organization, co-chaired by Michele Miller and Matthew Andrews, specifically focused on reparations for slavery and post-slavery anti-Black racism in Amherst. R4A is composed of non-Black ally volunteers, to be guided by an advisory board of Black stakeholders in the community. We seek to work with our town government, anchor institutions, the business community, and individual residents to establish a means for economic reparations and a community-led process for full repair.

For more information contact: <https://www.reparationsforamherstma.com/contact>

Submitted by Michele Miller

March 3, 2021

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Tzedek, the Jewish Community of Amherst's Racial Justice Initiative was founded last summer in the wake of George Floyd's murder. A group of JCA congregants felt it was important to work on making the JCA a more actively anti-racist institution and carry that out into our civic community. Tzedek is a sub-committee of the JCA's Tikkun Olam (Social Justice) Committee. Tzedek means justice; our goal is to work for a more equitable and just society.

Tzedek has four active subgroups:

The Vetting Group researches organizations and issues, making recommendations to the JCA community about providing financial support as well as signing petitions and participating in local and national actions.

The Reparations Group is made up of JCA congregants who want to study this issue and its possible application in Amherst. The subgroup presented some of their findings at a community wide forum and are currently running an Adult Education course.

The Book and Film Group is made up of participants who read both fiction and non-fiction books and view films centered on race in America.

The Action Group looks at racial inequities in policing and our system of incarceration through study and speakers. They strive to enable the JCA community to use its voice for effective change in criminal justice at the municipal and state levels.

Besides the activities of the subgroups, once a week, congregants get together to discuss the intersection of race and Judaism in America. Looking forward, the subgroups will continue their work. Tzedek hopes to make connections with people and groups of color, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

For more information contact: info@jcamherst.org Submitted by Amy Mittleman 2/27/2021

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The Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION) <https://interfaithamherst.org/> is a network of over 20 faith communities in Hampshire County. Formed in 2005 to promote understanding among Muslims, Jews, and Christians, ION has expanded to include Quaker, Baha'i, Buddhist, and Unitarian communities. We learn from each other's' traditions, rejoice in what have in common, and appreciate our differences.

We respond to events and circumstances through our shared concern. In past years we helped raise funds towards opening Hampshire Mosque and repairing Goodwin Memorial AME Zion Church. Last year, the 400 Years Project fostered learning and acting for Indigenous people in the Northeast displaced and oppressed since the first English colonists landed.

Regardless of our differing faith traditions, we are all called to work to confront and eradicate systemic racism, both institutional and interpersonal. To raise public awareness, since May 2020 ION has sponsored two continuous weekly vigils for racial justice in Amherst every Tuesday at 5 pm and in South Hadley at 10 am every Saturday, standing in support of Black Lives Matter and remembering lives lost.

In the coming months, ION plans to offer internet-based gatherings devoted to sharing resources, listening to those who are directly affected by racism, and planning appropriate actions. ION-affiliated faith communities undertake similar individual efforts, in their worship, study, and action. Our disparate belief systems converge in our desire to repair racism's devastating effects and build a more just society.

For more information contact: info@interfaithamherst.org

Contributed by Anita Sarro

2/27/2021

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Please visit League of Women Voters of Amherst website: <https://www.lwvamherst.org> where will be posting more following the event. And...consider joining us in the League! Become a member!

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.