

Lakewood Community Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes – December 12, 2013 – *final*

Attending: JT Neuffer, Chair; April Stoltz; Karen Kuramoto; Chris Varano; Ayman Alkayali; Bernadette Elston; Nahida Farunia; Barbara Schwartz, Secretary; Melissa Garrett, Community Relations Specialist

Absent: Paula Maeder Connor; Joe Lobo; Dan Saracina, Veronica Youngblood; Monique Smith, City Council Liaison

Minutes: The minutes of the meetings for June, September, and November were approved with corrections and changes to be made by the Secretary and forwarded to Melissa. (There was no meeting in July, and there was not a quorum for August and October, however the notes were reviewed for informational purposes.) A change in future practice was suggested by JT and agreed by the group that announcements will be made after the meeting is adjourned and will not be part of the minutes. Melissa also pointed out that if a person leaves prior to the end of the meeting, with the result that a quorum no longer exists, the meeting should be adjourned at that point. For those minutes that required changes, JT moved that they be approved with amendments, Nahida seconded the motion and all approved.

Review of Community Conversation, Upstanders: The Power of One, co-sponsored with the Ranger 360 program, on 11/19/13: The group's consensus was that the event went very well. It was great to have Mayor Summers' and Councilman Tom Bullock's support and presence, as well as Jim Crawford, Dir of Lakewood Library, the location of the event. Katie Kurtz and Abby McGinty of Ranger 360 were great to collaborate with. The panelists they invited were outstanding and well-received by those attending. Although many did not wish to sign-in, there were approximately 40-45 people attending. Many asked very good questions, and they seemed very engaged and interested in the topic and what the panelists had to say. The panelists were: Emmie Hutchinson, Coor. Of H2O, Lyndie Schuckert Guidance Dept. facilitator, Ron Lewis, teacher and coach at LHS, and Devon Chodzin, student at LHS. JT did a very professional job as moderator and presented the panelists with thank you gifts of gift certificates to the Algebra Tea House donated by Ayman. Katie and Abby were presented with a framed copy of the Upstander flyer, signed by all the members of the Commission, Melissa, and the four panelists.

There was some discussion about how to improve getting the word out about our events. Dan Saracina has created a Facebook page for us and has posted our events. Bernadette offered to take the list of names and email addresses gathered at past events and put them into Excel so that they could be used to notify past attendees of future events.

Diversity Potluck is scheduled for Thursday, January 23rd at the Lakewood Women's Pavilion. The ad hoc committee met Monday 12/2/13 at Panera. April said they felt the program should be about LCRAC – what we do and why. Nicki Antonio, former city councilperson and current state representative, would be asked to speak as the person who initiated and pushed for the city ordinance establishing LCRAC. She could talk about the inception of LCRAC, and that after

911 people were not feeling safe and felt unwelcome. Nicki could address why it's important to have such a group in such a diverse community, and that Lakewood recognizes the need. It was also considered to have Dru Siley, Lakewood's Director of Planning and Development speak, as well as someone from Lakewood Alive, to talk about future visioning for Lakewood. After some discussion it was felt that the focus should remain on Nicki, with Nahida as an original founding member, and to allow for more time for people to talk and mingle and enjoy the food. It was felt that the primary purpose of the potluck is to bring together the diverse population of Lakewood in a place where they could meet informally and get to know each other better. To get feedback from people and facilitate discussion, there will be questions at each table and a member of LCRAC at each table to get the discussion going.

Bernadette said we would start at 6 with an ice-breaker until 6:15. We can have people pin their place of origin with a sticker on a world map. JT will welcome everyone and introduce our speakers. From about 6:30 to 7:15 sharing the meal, and at 7:15 having small group discussions. 7:45 – 8 would be programming by the RAD students, and at 8:00 closing statements. The program will again be called The World Lives in Lakewood and we will adapt last year's flyer, which Melissa will run off. Barbara will get poster boards for thank you's to donors and the world map to Nahida. April will talk to Deagen's for a mac & cheese donation, and asked that all members approach places where they eat for donations of food. Melissa and Karen will set up the kitchen and food. Everyone should plan to help clean up. We also talked about having a children's activity area, and we will need name tags, pens, tape, stars, paper for recording answers to questions.

Monique Smith, our city council liaison, will be finishing her term at year's end and JT will send a thank you to Monique from the commission.

Vice Chair position – JT moved that April Stoltz be appointed to the Vice-Chair position. Bernadette seconded the motion and all approved.

Membership for a high school student has been recommended to city council and will require an ordinance to allow it. The question was asked if we will have a new city council liaison. Melissa said it is not a requirement.

Chris moved to adjourn the meeting, Ayman seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

The next meeting will be Thursday, January 9, 2014 at 6:30 PM.

Minutes submitted by Barbara A. Schwartz, Secretary

Letters To The Editor

Ranger 360, Upstanders And Community Conversation

by Kate Dailey

When my partner and I were deciding where our family would make our home, we were looking for a community in which two white moms with two brown boys could settle and find a supportive and embracing community. As I am from New Jersey, I was voting for a move east. She grew up in Lakewood and was certain that we could find a home here. So when we moved the fifty miles east from our home in Erie County to Lakewood in 2002, I felt a bit like she won that discussion. Now, in 2013, I can't imagine any other community in which we would feel so at home.

I have had so many moments over the past 11 years when I have felt grateful for that move to Lakewood. Our experiences in the schools, the faith community, and the civic community have shown us a city that is invested in the quality of life of all of its members. Most recently, it has been the Ranger 360 program that has caused me once

again to feel proud and thankful for this community we call home.

On Tuesday, November 19, the Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission (LCRAC) partnered with Ranger 360 for its annual Community Conversation which was held at the Lakewood Public Library. The conversation this year was about being an Upstander and included a high school coach, a guidance counselor, the director of H2O and a student leader. The term itself was coined by the Facing History and Ourselves project and speaks of a person, group, or institution that stands up to negative and biased talk and actions and speaks out for an environment in which all are valued and all are safe. It is, I think, what so many of us are busy trying to teach and model for our children all the time. What was so important for me about the LCRAC and Ranger 360 program on that Tuesday night is that this concept of living as an Upstander has found its way into a community-

wide conversation, initiated by Ranger 360 which is a program that has been active in the schools for the past year. It appears to me that Lakewood, as a community, is embracing an idea that supports, celebrates and lifts up a diverse population of people, rather than pushing them down or out.

When examples of "maleness" from our current culture are so often limited to violence, dominance and power, and images of femaleness are limited to weakness, vulnerability and passivity, Mr. Ron Lewis, Lakewood High School football coach, is challenging his players to be Upstanders. He wants them to think about themselves as young men who can perpetuate a climate of respect and creativity, and not be limited to an idea of maleness as dominance, which is so important on the football field, but not in their relationships off the field. Lakewood's Help to Others (H2O) program, under the direction of Ms. Emmie Hutchinson, uses service as a way to instill

confidence and self-acceptance, as well as a drive to serve others - precisely the qualities that enable our young people (and all of us) to reject a culture based upon dominance and judgment of others. Lakewood City Schools, via outstanding leadership, administration and staff, not only encourages the character development of their students, but expects their students to explore and grapple with social issues, as an important component of becoming a "life-long learner." And an outstanding example of just this character development is student leader, Mr. Devon Chodzin, who exemplifies the struggles and rewards of community-based and social learning, via his many accomplishments, including being Vice-President of Model UN, leadership position in the LHS Orchestra, executive for H2O, leader of Club Identify, and becoming one of four 2012 Dare2Care Leadership Scholars. In sum, all four panel members from the LCRAC November 19 event personify and provide shining examples of what it means to be an "Upstander."

What does all of this have to do with Ranger 360? Ranger 360 is a collaborative program, one of only 9 selected nationally, between the Lakewood City Schools, community organizations, the Lakewood Police Department, business groups, and faith based organizations to address and prevent power-based personal violence. When news stories are filled with events like the Steubenville assault and the kidnapping and release of three young women after a decade of unimaginable abuse, it is more important than ever to work as a community, celebrating and accepting our differences, while working together to prevent violence against and amongst our youth. We can do that when we become a community of Upstanders, who reject the idea that violence is inevitable and work to create a community in which safety and life with dignity are everyone's right. This is the Lakewood community to which I belong and that I am proud to call home.

Kate Dailey has been a resident of Lakewood since 2002 and has two sons in the Lakewood schools.

Beck Dance Hosts Interactive Sleeping Beauty Tea Fundraiser January 26

continued from page 11

opportunity to support this endeavor is the interactive Sleeping Beauty Tea, a fundraiser for children based on this classic ballet. There are two opportu-

nities to attend this event at 1 p.m. and at 4 p.m. on Sunday, January 26 in the Music & Dance Building at Beck Center for the Arts.

The Sleeping Beauty Tea is geared toward children ages 3 to 10 accompanied by an adult. Guests will be served tea, punch, and cookies while a Sleeping Beauty fashion show and performance segments from the popular ballet take place. "The Sleeping Beauty Tea will be a wonderful experience for children who are captivated by ballerinas, fairytales, and tea par-

ties," exclaimed Melanie Szucs, Beck Center's associate director of dance education. The dancers will teach the children Sleeping Beauty mime sequences and they will take home a special ballet craft.

Tickets are \$12 per person and can be purchased at beckcenter.org or by contacting Customer Service at 216.521.2540 x10. Beck Center for the Arts is located at 17801 Detroit Avenue in Lakewood, just ten minutes west of downtown Cleveland. Free onsite parking is available.

Beck Center Financial Assistance Program

continued from page 11

private music lessons and Creative Arts Therapies sessions. "As a result of the generosity of our donors and members of the Beck Center family, more kids than ever will attend classes at Beck Center where they can tell their story

and create art experiences."

The application along with rules and regulations can be found at beckcenter.org or by calling Customer Service at 216.521.2540 x10. Questions regarding the Financial Assistance Program can be directed to Edward Gallagher at 216.521.2540 x12.

That's Slife!

Slife

That's What All The People Say

HEATING • COOLING

**Air Conditioners
Furnaces. Boilers**

**Serving Lakewood
For Over 20 Years**

LENNOX

HOME COMFORT SYSTEMS
Innovation never felt so good.™

Slife Heating & Cooling
216 221-0310
www.slife-hvac.com

SHEN YUN 2014

神韻晚會

All-New Show | With Live Orchestra

**"A Dazzling Show!
The production values are grand."**

— *The Globe and Mail*

World's top Classical Chinese dancers
Unique east-west orchestra
Exquisite costumes & Animated backdrops
Timeless legends and myths revived

ShenYun.com



Recalling the Great Qin, 2011

FEBRUARY 1 - 2

STATE THEATRE

Tickets: 216-241-6000 / 888-974-3698
Online: ShenYun.com PlayHouseSquare.org

Presented by Ohio Falun Dafa Association