

SDARJ Education and Scholarship Meeting
May 26, 2021

Participants: Hope Vella, Gwendolyn Miller, Anna Moshier, Zita Dresner, Barbara Guthrie, Jane Lord, Jim Henry, Linda McDermott, Alicia Jones, Ruth Cohen, Jim Sherard, Erica Novak, Barbara Tenney, Gail Jackson, Michele Lee Warch

- **CALL TO ORDER**

- Welcome New Members
 - Welcome to Anna Moshier, Manager at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Anna joined us to help educate our community (and herself) on racial justice and how to make things better. She believes OLLI can partner well with SDARJ.
 - Welcome back to Hope Vella, who was introduced last month.
 - Welcome to Michele Leigh Warch. Michele is Human Services Department Chair at Del Tech. SDARJ hosts interns from her department. She joined SDARJ this year and has attended town halls and Dialogue to Action. She is also a member of the YWCA White Ally group. Michele is a therapist who is now teaching. She became acutely aware of the internet desert in Sussex County through the pandemic and would like to focus on that.
- Minutes from the 4/28/21 meeting approved.
- Finance Report- James Sherard
 - No reported donations or expenses this month so far. Our balance is \$9745.05. Jim bought and made the scholarship certificates. They cost \$29, which Jim donated.
 - Gwendolyn Miller: Submit any receipts or bills to Bruce Bolander for reimbursement or payment. You don't have to use your own money when printing. We use a specific printing group, Coast to Coast Printing, who will notify Bruce or Charlotte about any payment due.

- **EDUCATION REPORTS**

- Book & Film Club - Aimee Wiest & Kathleen Baker
 - No report today.
- Community Minority Liaison Committee & DE Black History Curriculum - Hattie Bull
 - No report today.
- Paraprofessional Scholarship & Achievement Campaign - Alicia Jones
 - We have received one application for the Para scholarship, but the applicant did not submit all documents by the deadline. She was disqualified due to this. So, we have no qualified applicants this year.
 - Gwendolyn Miller: We sent a letter to the applicant who did not submit all items by the deadline, Shelly Jones, to let her know what was missing from her application. She sent an email asking if she could submit past the deadline. We told her we would discuss her status at this meeting today. In the meantime, we asked her to get the missing items together in case we decide to move forward with her application. We have heard from some members of our committee regarding this extension, but they were varied.
 - Linda McDermott: We should not accept her for this year, but we should encourage her to apply again next year. The emailed request for an extension came in after the

three days she was allotted to submit the missing items. If there was an extenuating circumstance, we might reconsider, but none of that was explained.

- Barbara Guthrie: Agrees with Linda. Would not want to enable someone. It's important to do things on time. We should encourage her to apply for next year.
 - Gail Jackson: Agrees with the above comments. There were weeks in which Shelly did not follow through. We should encourage to apply next year.
 - Alicia Jones: The items that were missing were two recommendations and the information on the first page. What we asked her to do was minimal.
 - Erica Novak: Our Communication Committee was not aware that we were supposed to handle the Para scholarship communications.
 - Gwendolyn: Had indicated at an earlier meeting that the Communications Committee would not attend to the Para scholarship communications, because we have to end the process for one scholarship before attending to another. As it turns out, though, the scholarships overlapped, so the Communications Committee should handle the rejection letter to our one applicant.
 - Erica Novak: Because the candidate cited the busyness of the end of the year, it might be a good idea to move this scholarship to another time of the year, such as June.
 - Hope Vella: Agrees with the above comments. Others who are in programs with deadlines must submit assignments on a timely basis. It's a lesson learned.
 - Jim Sherard: He did not understand what the candidate's obstacles were. Jim suggested we give her three days to submit the information. He does agree with changing the application deadline to June. We should encourage her to apply for next year.
 - Gwendolyn Miller: The Communication Committee will communicate the resolution to Shelly. We also had another applicant who submitted information well after the deadline. We did communicate to her that she should apply for next year.
 - Gwendolyn thanked Alicia for leading a great campaign to recognize the students with the Achievement award. One middle school recipient sent us a thank you note.
 - Alicia Jones has had to go to some schools more than once because of remote learning. The students' pictures have been individual as a result and the Gazette will bunch them together on one page. Alicia will go to Love Creek and another school next week prior to dismissal for summer. The parents see their kids' photos before they are published. We still have two quarters of the program going forward next year since we were funded for a full year.
- Press Releases - Jane Lord
 - Barbara Guthrie will be writing a press release about the May 26 awards ceremony for the students who completed our modules and Jane will send that on to the newspaper.
 - Barbara Guthrie would like to see our scholarship recipients featured in an article in the newspaper as well. Jane Lord asked for photos. Gwen indicated that we need recipients to give us permission to release their pictures and their names in an article. Gwendolyn will address this. Last year the students submitted their own pictures.

- Alicia Jones: The Sunshine Circle students have not applied for our scholarship. We need to let them know to do that for next year.
- Youth Report (Becoming Visible: Students for Change) - Barbara Guthrie & Jim Henry
 - Our biggest project is the recognition ceremony we are holding in Georgetown tonight. These students completed the modules we offered via Zoom. The students are from Cape, Sussex Tech, and Sussex Academy. Invitations went out with a permission form over a month ago. We have received seven permission slips already to have the students' photos in the newspaper. We also invited the parents to come to the ceremony. Charlotte King may attend, and we have asked her to speak. We are giving out certificates, stickers, and pens as gifts. The students will also get rack cards from SDARJ and a complimentary student membership. There will be food and beverage. We are meeting at the Georgetown Circle at 5:30 tonight. This is a good way to advertise that we facilitating educational opportunities for students.
 - Next steps: We will discuss our involvement with YMCA and the Boys' and Girls' Club. We may do some in-person teaching next year.
- Website/Technology - Erica Novak
 - Gwendolyn asked that Jim Henry set up someone else's name on the Zoom account so multiple people can host. Barbara Guthrie volunteered to be that person.
- **OLD BUSINESS**
 - Charlotte King Scholarship - Documents Applications - Limited Access
 - Compendium Description Sent -- Agree on timeline for scholarship updates
 - The Compendium asks every year if anything has changed in the information listed on their site about the scholarship. We don't have to have specific items in until a little later this year because they are no longer printing hard copy.
 - Erica has communicated some language changes to the Compendium via email. She has not heard back from them.
 - Gwendolyn asked the committee about changing the deadline date and no one felt it was necessary.
 - We changed the amount from \$500 to "a minimum of \$500." We will divide the number of recipients into the total donations for the scholarship going forward.
 - Erica removed specific requirements from the Compendium blurb in preparation for this discussion. Gail Jackson would like clarity for next year. The requirements say 2.5 GPA or higher. Is that cumulative or for the semester?
 - Communication Committee Report - 2021 Workflow
 - The committee has been busy communicating with applicants and tracking workflow. The only thing that is pending is an email from one recipient who asked what the next steps are. We need to develop a communication about how and when recipients will receive checks.
 - Evaluation Committee Report

- Barbara Guthrie: We received five completed applications. We also received a transcript from an applicant with no other items submitted. We made several attempts to communicate with this student without success. We spoke with her counselor twice and requested that the applicant call Ruth Cohen, which she did not.
- One applicant who did not have great grades or GPA in her first years in high school did have a 2.5 GPA thus far this year. We had discussed earlier whether to make an exception for GPAs under 2.5. This student had some extenuating circumstances. We saw her middle school grades, which were great. Her mother had been in a collision and has been unable to work. Her essay was passionate. We do need clarity on the GPA issue.
- Each student will receive \$1300. Names: Aya Daisey from Cape, Chloe Fisher from Early College HS at Del State, JaLynn Hope from Cape, Deena Johnson from Milford, Logan Miller from Sussex Tech.
- Gail Jackson: On the application it lists GPA of 2.5 as a requirement. Is that per semester or cumulative? Gail thinks it should be cumulative.
- Gwendolyn Miller: We will spend time in July or August reviewing our experience this year and we will implement any necessary changes to our requirements, documents, and/or process.
- Barbara Tenney: The 2.5 requirement should be cumulative over at least a year and preferably over three years. There may be times when we have to modify the requirement, such as with the student mentioned above.
- Ruth Cohen suggested we develop brief guidelines for each requirement so we can treat each applicant fairly.
- Gwendolyn suggested we all read the essays.
- Alicia Jones: We should remain flexible and not be rigid with guidelines and be able to take each individual as an individual. There are some students who suddenly realize they want to go to college and may have improved their grades at the end of their high school career.
- Zita Dresner: Zita found at least one of the essays incoherent and not at the level of writing a high school student should demonstrate.
- Gwendolyn Miller: In the future, if there are problems with communications about who is on what committee and what the assignments are, please reach out to Erica or Gwendolyn for assistance.
- Jane Lord: She sees the alliance as a grass-roots organization that doesn't get stuck in strict rules where people have to fit. If we can address a need where other organizations will not, we will. In the past, we have seen that the same students got the same scholarships. We want to be the organization that considers each student individually.
- Erica Novak: Agrees with Jane. She wants us all of us to use Google Docs so we can all read the information submitted. We need to determine what we

want this scholarship to be. The number of requirements we have currently may be pushing students away.

- Alicia Jones: The name of our scholarship was supposed to be aligned with our mission and goals.
- Gwendolyn Miller: There is a difference between equality and equity. The requirements must be equal. But not everyone can be reviewed exactly the same way as everyone else. Some students need a leg up and our mission is to support that student along with the student who does have support. Some of our applicants had a strong support system. Others are doing it all on their own. We need to support students where they are.
- Press Committee Report
 - Gwendolyn Miller will seek permissions from the scholarship winners to include their photos and names in the press release.
- Award Committee Report - Award Programs
 - James Sherard: The Early College at Del State's graduation has already passed, so we will not be able to recognize Chloe Fisher at graduation. Jim will deliver certificates to a counselor at Cape to distribute at their graduation. Jim asked for assistance at the following graduations:
 - SUSSEX TECH -17099 County Seat Hwy, Georgetown, DE 19947, June 1, at 6PM in the gymnasium.
 - MILFORD HS - 1019 N Walnut St, Milford, DE 19963, June 7, 6pm, outside in Briggs stadium Program
 - Alicia Jones has volunteered to help. Jim is working with the counselor at Del State to see when he can get a certificate to Chloe Fisher.
 - If anyone else wants to help Jim with any one of these programs, please contact him. Sherard2@verizon.net
 - Jim Sherard: When will we send out the checks to the students? Jim would like clarity. Do we need to wait until we have proof of acceptance at a college or university?
 - Gwendolyn Miller: To whom do we write the check? The parent, school, or student? We discuss this every year. This year, we are giving out the largest amount we have ever given out.
 - Barbara Guthrie: Was on a scholarship committee for a historical society. They did require proof of enrollment to receive the check. She believes they sent the check directly to the college.
 - James Sherard: Last year, he believes we gave the money to the student.
 - Anna Moshier: Her children applied for scholarships and the requirements are all over the show. It seems that checks under \$2000 go to the student. She did have to send proof that her children were admitted to college.

- Alicia Jones: We did not send the check to the college because we were concerned they would deduct it from any financial assistance they offered. We sent the check to the student but let the parents know about it.
 - Anna Moshier: This can be difficult with 18-year-olds who are considered adults by FIRPA.
 - Gwendolyn Miller: We don't have to decide today. Not all the recipients have gotten letters from their college to prove their enrollment, so we have time. We need to decide both who would get the check and what proof needs to be sent to us.
 - James Sherard: Would like the student to confirm to us that they have been enrolled. At that point, we would send them a check.
 - Michele Warch: The student's schedule or bill is available to them online immediately upon registration.
 - Alicia Jones: When we distribute the scholarship certificate, we need to have a letter letting the student know they will get the check upon submission of proof of enrollment.
 - James Sherard: All he has is a certificate acknowledging that they have won the scholarship. He volunteered to draft a letter to let students know what documents they can send to prove enrollment.
 - Gwendolyn Miller: Last year, we gave a certificate without a letter. The checks were distributed in June or July.
 - Erica Novak: Encourages us to send out instructions to students via email, as this is how we have been communicating with them all along. Whether there is a hard copy of a letter or not, Erica suggests we have the same information sent to them via email.
 - James Sherard: Date for Cape ceremony is June 1, so we need to draft a letter prior to that date. Gwendolyn will draft the letter and James will include it with the certificate. The letter will indicate how the money will be sent.
 - Gwendolyn Miller: Suggests we upload documents we want the committee to review to Google Docs. If you are having problems accessing Google Docs, please forward your document to Erica who will upload it and send a link out to everyone. Jim will forward the certificate to Erica.
- Recommendations for new SDARJ Education and Scholarship Committee Chair or Co-chairs
 - Gwendolyn's time as our chair is coming to a hard stop shortly. She has been named president of the League of Women Voters for the state. Congratulations and well deserved, Gwendolyn!
 - Erica Novak: Is functioning as co-chair and asked for clarity on the role going forward.
 - Gwendolyn Miller: How can we engage more of our members to participate in the needed areas? We receive emails asking for help and we need to find a way to encourage more of the 25 people in our committee to be active.

SDARJ Education and Scholarship Meeting
May 26, 2021

- Alicia Jones: If members are assigned to a committee, the responsibilities should stay within that committee. If members on the subcommittee are not stepping up, that should be addressed.
 - What motivates members to step up? Barbara Guthrie: Suggests there are people who don't know how they can get engaged. The chairs of each committee should brainstorm with the rest of the subcommittee about the help they need. Then reach out to our committee members. Sometimes people don't know what they can do.
 - Erica Novak: We need some way of communicating the tasks that need to be done. A clear action item list. Overuse of emails is not effective.
 - Michele Warch: That would be helpful -- maybe a short list of responsibilities and expected time needed. We need a central place where we can list what is needed. Michele has found ways to volunteer on a specific tab on other organizations' websites. Gwendolyn said we are still working on our volunteer tab.
 - Linda McDermott: Maybe we need to make clear that volunteering to help a subcommittee doesn't mean you have to be member of that subcommittee.
 - Alicia Jones: Suggests we have subcommittee assignments, letting each member know what their responsibilities are.
 - Gwendolyn Miller: Sometimes subcommittee leaders are afraid to delegate. We need to do that as chairs. Suggests that we will discuss this more later.
- **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
 - The next SDARJ Education and Scholarship Committee meeting is on Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 11:00 am