



SOUTH ORANGE | MAPLEWOOD COMMUNITY COALITION ON RACE

Our Mission:

To build and sustain a community that is racially, culturally, and socially integrated and truly inclusive, where there is equity and equality for all.

2017 Annual Report

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Throughout 2017 we asked how we can create change—especially in a period of rising residential segregation and of ongoing racial tensions in communities across the nation in which the likelihood of cross-racial and cross-cultural understanding is diminished. In his 1967 book *Where Do We Go from Here? Chaos or Community?* Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote that the challenge after the passage of the voting and civil rights acts would be to gain equity in education, jobs, wages, and housing—especially during “a new phase of white resistance.” He offered hope with his vision of the ‘Beloved Community,’ in which an “all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood” would replace bigotry and racism.

At the Coalition on Race, we pursue community over chaos. We work to engage people in thoughtful dialogue and relationship-building, in learning about race and privilege, and in advocacy for policies and practices that support equity for all members of our community. In 2017, our work included all of these efforts through programs like:

- Conversations on Race
- Coffee House Discussions
- ‘Talking to Children about Race’ workshop series
- XRrootsFest, our annual multicultural festival
- The Civic Engagement Institute
- Analysis of and report on the demographics and residential patterns affecting our schools and towns
- Anti-bias training
- Advocacy for police reforms, and more

The result has been a notable transformation in the degree to which people are willing to call out racial bias publicly—whether in group meetings, in response to civic issues like education, policing, housing, neighborhood stability, or on various local social media forums. And we at the Coalition have seen growing attendance at our events, more engagement and collaboration, and requests for more training.

In 2017 we held 56 pro-integrative events, trainings, and dialogues for over 3,000 people. We invite you to have a look at our 2017 highlights to see how you can work on integration and inclusion in the coming year.



Chair Robert A. Marchman speaks at the March for Equity



2017 Talking to Children about Race panel



Coffee House Discussion: Race & Privilege: Going Deeper.

2017 Highlights...

The 16th Annual MLK Observance & Volunteer Fair Reminds SOMA Residents to Stand Together and Speak Out

Hundreds of people of all ages filled the Columbia High School auditorium to honor Dr. King through music, a sharing of interfaith readings and an affirmation of Dr. King's call to action and service. An inspirational speech was given by guest speaker LaShawn Y. Warren, the newly appointed Vice President of Faith & Progressive Policy at the Center for American Progress in Washington D.C. Ms. Warren remarked on the irony of celebrating Dr. King's legacy the same week our country will inaugurate a new president whose values seem to stand in complete contradiction of everything Dr. King stood for: love, unity, social justice, peace and equality. She continued, "We find ourselves in uncharted territory, from immigration, policing, women's rights, gun violence, climate change and growing income inequality." She told the audience that the road ahead of us will not be easy and that we must consider how our actions affect others.

The Volunteer Fair following the observance featured local community groups that provided opportunities to serve the community, including feeding the poor and mentoring young people. Youth were invited to help stuff bags filled with toiletries for the homeless.



SOMa was Shining with Luminaries on MLK Day

More than 600 homes participated in this year's Luminary Project in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Each The goal is to light up the Two Towns with outdoor luminaries as a sign of peace and solidarity with Dr. King's vision. We thank everyone for participating this year and sharing their beautiful luminaries on social media for the world to see. The luminary kits were put together by a wonderful group of volunteers—including kids and local Girl Scouts—under the leadership of South Orange resident Patricia Canning.

17th Annual Conversations on Race

Race & Privilege: *Raising Consciousness to Address Racial Inequities*

A panel of four experts inspired passionate dialogue about race and privilege among the community of 140 attendees from Essex County and beyond at The Woodland in Maplewood. We brought together a racially integrated panel that included: Khadijah Costley White, Assistant Professor in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rutgers University; Demelza Baer, Esq., a Policy Counsel for the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice; Jane Bleasdale, a diversity consultant whose research is focused on equity and inclusion; and David Troutt, Professor of Law, author, and founding director of the Rutgers Center on Law, Inequality, & Metropolitan Equity.

The panel shared their knowledge and experiences about how white privilege plays out in economics, education, media, housing, the criminal justice system and other areas of our daily lives. Panelists were asked to answer questions that ranged from defining "privilege" to offering suggestions for remedies to minimize the negative effects of unearned advantages in America.



patrick hilaire photography





XRootsFest (*crossroots fest*) Was a Day of Music, Dance, and Learning

We had a great day at XRootsFest 2017! This annual multicultural festival included engaging entertainment and learning from a wide variety of regional performers and cultural groups who shared everything from hip hop dance and music to Native American dance, to African drumming, to Japanese traditional Taiko drumming, to Indian classical dance, to Haitian Freedom music, to our own Columbia High School's Special Dance, and much more. A new component at this year's festival was the Edu-tainment Tent, in which children and families had the opportunity to hear a story and to learn about cultural practices from places around the world.

The Schools Committee

Talking To Children About Race & Identity Three workshops were held on 1) multi-racial families, 2) having the first conversations about race with preschoolers, and 3) 'intentional parenting,' including candid talk about race in family life. Attendees learned how to be intentional in talking about race with children at all ages in order to help them develop their understanding of racial and cultural identity.

Advocacy for School and Classroom Integration The committee was active in the meetings for equity and inclusion, and led a session at a communitywide forum on school demographics and ways to integrate the schools. The committee appeared before the BOE to express their deep concern about the increasing segregation of the elementary schools, the need to increase and maintain a diverse staff, and the implementation of the access and equity policy.

SOMa Integrated Playgroup The playgroup brings together children ages 6 months to 5 years and their parents/guardians in a relaxed, fun setting, monthly on Saturday mornings.

BOE Candidates Forum Candidates offered their positions on vital issues for our schools and towns, including the access and equity policy, the continuing minority achievement gap, and how to create true integration in our schools.

16th Annual Preschool Open House This event provides parents with the opportunity to learn about all the preschool options in and near our towns. Renee Joyce, Director of Montrose Early Childhood Center, gave a talk for parents on choosing an appropriate school for their children.

New Teacher Orientation Co-chairs Carol Barry-Austin & Sue Willis told new teachers about the Coalition's advocacy for excellence and equity for all students. New staff were given a tour of the towns to give them a sense of the variety of neighborhoods and businesses, the demographics, the history, and venues for school trips and events.



Coffee House Discussions

2017 saw a steep growth in interest and attendance in these quarterly events. The year began with a talk about the immigration ban and the perils for undocumented immigrants and those in detention centers. People shared concerns about being an immigrant and supporting SOMa's substantial immigrant population. The next discussion was a deeper dive into the topic of race & privilege. People noted the importance of this topic in a community where many have an ostensible acceptance of diversity but fail to appreciate the racism faced by people of color here regularly. Later in the year we partnered with the libraries to offer a special discussion just for teens at which they identified common race issues and worked on plans to create more supportive environments for community youth.



Celebrating Integration: Our Journey Continues

A spirit of gratitude filled the awards dinner as over 150 people gathered at The Woodland in Maplewood to honor **Dr. Adunni Anderson, Carol Buchanan, and Jim Buchanan**, all of whom have contributed to our integration and inclusion mission through their commitments to education, building strong neighborhoods, and using the music and the arts to bring people together. Assemblywoman Mila Jasey presented the honorees with state legislative proclamations, Senator Corey Booker sent a congratulatory message, and Mayor Vic DeLuca and Village President Sheena Collum were there along with our many supporters to celebrate the work accomplished over the last year.

Two Film Screenings Provoke Intense Discussions

Before the Trees Was Strange is about one man's journey growing up 'white' in the Bahamas, to Boston where he was assumed to be 'black.' The dialogue with filmmaker Derek Burrows included what race means in places with histories that are different from the United States; what it means to be white or black and how that can vary in one's lifetime and within one's family; and the hidden stories of families' racial identities.

A screening of *I am Not Your Negro* was organized by Essex County Freeholder President Britnee N. Timberlake and South Orange Village Trustee Deborah Davis Ford. They, along with Founding Executive Director of EmergeNJ Karen Hilton and Black Parents Workshop founder Walter Fields, led a powerful panel discussion in response to a series of racial controversies in SOMa.



Foundation, Community, & Local Business Support—Thank You!

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Benevity Causes
Community Foundation Of New Jersey
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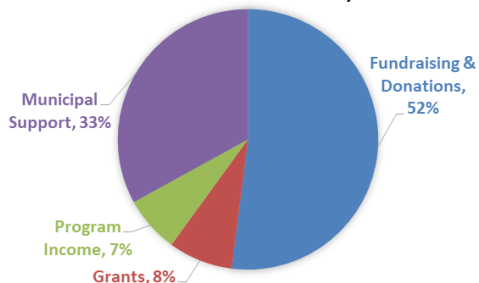
2:2 Boutique
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Achieve Foundation
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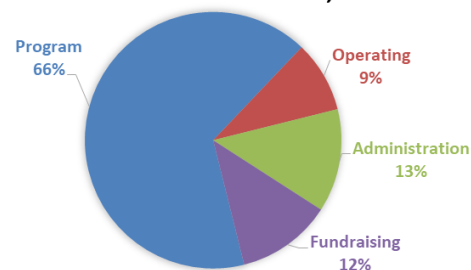
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2017 INCOME SUMMARY TOTAL PROJECTED: 170,979



2017 EXPENSE SUMMARY TOTAL PROJECTED: 144,597



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Coalition on Race Advocates for Police Reform

Building on the work we began in 2014 to end racial profiling and to become a model of fair and unbiased policing, Chair Robert A. Marchman and ED Nancy Gagnier met with the police chiefs to discuss improved community policing; anti-bias training; more opportunities to interact with youth; and community concerns about racial profiling. In addition, the Trustees issued a *Call For Reform Of Police Practices And An End To Police Abuse Of Black Residents* and participated in intergroup collaborations on police accountability, joining SOMA Justice, the Black Parents Workshop, MAPSO FreedomSchool, and SOMA Action to demand changes in biased and harmful police practices in our towns.



March for Equality; Vigil for Charlottesville; March for Racial Justice Trustees marched and Coalition Chair Robert A. Marchman spoke to support those who are victimized by racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic and misogynistic hate groups. "We must persist in demanding change from elected officials and hold them accountable, we must speak up and call out family, friends and others who make offensive comments, we must hold companies accountable who promote and benefit from the spread of hate, educate the ill-informed, and we must volunteer and participate in organizations that are making a difference."



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[CommunityOnRace](https://CommunityOnRace.com)

[communitycoalitiononrace](https://communitycoalitiononrace.com)

Anti-Bias and Cultural Competency Training in SOMa and Beyond The Executive Director and Program Director presented two training sessions for a regional service organization in cultural competency to support its efforts to be more diverse and to develop culturally sensitive services.

They were also invited to do an in-service training on anti-bias education with the Maplewood Middle School staff. The presentations generated productive questions and conversation on privilege, stereotype threat, implicit bias, and how to discuss racial, ethnic and culturally-based experiences and difference with students as well as colleagues.

Coalition Demographics Report Reveals Important Information on Community Diversity and School Integration

We presented the report before the Seth Boyden community, Presidents Council, and the Board of Education to highlight SOMa's school integration and changing demographics issues. We then used the report at the district's **Town Hall on Equity & Inclusion** to share the history of school integration in SOMa and to generate potential solutions to current integration needs from the community.

For the complete report, visit our website.

The SOCO 47th Annual MLK Celebration honored 3 amazing women for their contributions to the community—and all are part of the Coalition on Race: Abigail Cotler, Coalition Trustee; Sue Willis, Coalition Trustee; and Patricia Canning, leader of the Luminary Project and Schools Committee volunteer.

