



SOUTH ORANGE | MAPLEWOOD COMMUNITY COALITION ON RACE

Our Vision:

To achieve & sustain the benefits of a thriving, racially integrated and truly inclusive community that serves as a model for the nation.

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2012 Annual Report

Making Integration Meaningful & Lasting

We were heartened by a national study of diverse suburbs released in July by researchers Myron Orfield and Thomas Luce called "America's Racially Diverse Suburbs: Opportunities and Challenges." In it they recommend concerted efforts like those practiced by the Coalition in order for diverse communities to be sustainable.

Racially diverse suburbs like Maplewood and South Orange are on the rise: more Americans live in diverse suburbs than in predominately white ones.

Yet these suburbs have a tough time remaining integrated. According to Orfield and Luce, census data since 1980 show that integrated areas are highly vulnerable to resegregation over time. The Community Coalition on Race has ensured that South Orange and Maplewood buck that trend through its work on stable racial integration.



Guests at Celebrating Integration join hands!



Memorial Day Parade

While the study warns that the usual trajectory for diverse suburbs is racial instability and resegregation, the authors hold out hope that this pattern is not inevitable. "Stable integration is possible but, it does not happen by accident. It is the product of clear race-conscious strategies, hard work, and political collaboration among local governments." This is precisely the work of the Coalition.

We invite you to take a look at our 2012 highlights and to join us in 2013 as we move intentional integration forward.

2012 Highlights...

11th Annual MLK Observance, Volunteer Fair, & Community Service

This MLK Celebration was a true sign of our community's commitment to integration. The interfaith observance was attended by more than 500 people and included a dance performance by members of CHS Special Dance, selected readings from faith communities, and music by the Voices in Harmony Choir. Keynote speaker, Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Director of the Schomburg Center for Research, focused his remarks on the need for ongoing efforts in civil rights and race relations.

It was indeed "a day on, not a day off," food, coats, hats, shoes, books, and glasses were collected to support a variety of local agencies; over 100 emergency food packages were assembled; children designed get-well cards for children in the hospital; the SO Rotary ran a blood drive; the libraries sponsored teens reading to kids, a letter writing project to soldiers on duty; and the PTAs held a screening of *My Friend Martin*. The dedication of our local volunteer organizations helps all of us to live the dream through learning and service!



Aida Mesmerizes Children & Adults!

Integration through the Arts uses the arts to bring people of different races and cultural backgrounds together. Bringing the Verdi opera *Aida* to life for children was the vision of a team that included Lori Brown Mirabal, Doreen Oliver, Ruthanna Graves McQueen, and Audrey Rowe. In keeping with the Coalition mission of integration, they chose this opera because of its theme: people from different backgrounds trying to overcome their differences. Preschool and elementary school kids were entranced by the story, singing and dancing.

Visions Of Integration Are All Around Our Towns!

Through the Lens of Integration used photography to connect local residents who wanted both to learn more about photography and to explore the theme of integration in their art. Participants attended free workshops that were taught by professional photographers, Joy Yagid and Mansa Mussa. The fabulous photos filled an entire room during the Artist's Studio Tour in June at the Pierro Gallery in South Orange.



Preschool Open House

The Schools Committee hosted our 11th Annual Pre-school Open House for parents. The event began with a presentation by seasoned SOMA educator Principal Tina Lehn on what to look for in early childhood education and the types of activities that support kindergarten readiness. Twenty-three preschools had displays and shared information for parents of toddlers.



Through the Lens of Integration photos

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Conversations on Race: Growing Through Our Discomfort

Over 130 people came to Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel to participate *Conversations on Race*, the Coalition's annual forum for candid dialog about race.

Attendees heard some provocative and pointed ideas about stereotyping, the language we use, and how this impacts race relations from Barbara Heisler and Dr. Khalil Muhammad who are well known in the fields of social justice and the history of race relations. Especially poignant were their personal stories –Ms. Heisler's from the perspective of a long-time resident and a thought leader on intentional integration and Dr. Muhammad's as a recent transplant to South Orange and the author of a book about the criminalization of race.

Ms. Heisler focused on the need for intentional integration to counter our tendency to segregate based on race even when our goals—as parents, as homeowners, as residents—are the same. Dr. Muhammad shared a story about failing to respond to a neighbor's unexpected racist comment linking bad behavior to being black. Ultimately, we need to challenge the false narratives that persist about race.

Following the presentations, participants had small group discussions to further explore these issues, to build connections, and to consider solutions relevant to our community.



Facts, Fears, or Folklore: Students and Residents Have Dialog

The goal of the workshop discussion was to educate and remind the community of how incredible our flagship high school really is. Parents, Coalition trustees and volunteers, members of the high school staff, and CHS students engaged in serious discussion and discovered that, for the most part, the students are proud of their school and want the community to know it. People came away with a fresh sense of pride in what we have, who we are, and what we can do to make our school better.

Ambassador Events

Each year Coalition trustees and volunteers participate in a number of local events to introduce residents to our mission of intentional integration. We talked about integration at **Green Day**. Our community can be certified by Sustainable New Jersey if we demonstrate diversity and equity on boards and commissions; part of our goal is to promote racial integration and inclusion in government and civic organizations. Plus, racially integrated neighborhoods contribute to the overall stability of a community and thus its sustainability.

We joined other community groups on **Memorial Day** to honor of the people who died while serving the United States in war. Wearing Voices in Harmony T-Shirts, our volunteers and trustees gathered to march in the parade. Our ambassadors also had information tables at **Mayfest**, **Celebrate South Orange**, and **SOMA Pride Day**.



Celebrating Integration: Embracing Inclusion, Fairness & Opportunity

We honored two wonderful former Coalition Trustees who support our towns through their volunteerism, leadership, and promotion of integration in many ways. Over 110 people joined to honor this year's awardees, Rev. Terry Richardson, pastor at the South Orange First Baptist Church, and Charlie Bibbins, Maplewood volunteer for 50 years in numerous capacities. Assemblywoman Mila Jasey was the keynote speaker.

Guests were visibly moved by the heartfelt call for ongoing work on integration in our towns by the honorees and Assemblywoman Jasey. Trustee Alan Noel introduced Rev. Richardson, noting his commitment to community work through his ministry and special interest in the work of the Coalition. Trustee Fred Profeta introduced Charlie Bibbins as a volunteer who has had wide-ranging impact in many areas of community life in SOMA, especially in building an inclusive community.



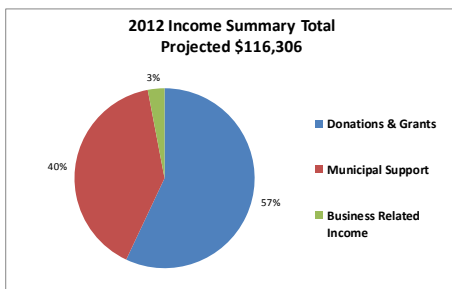
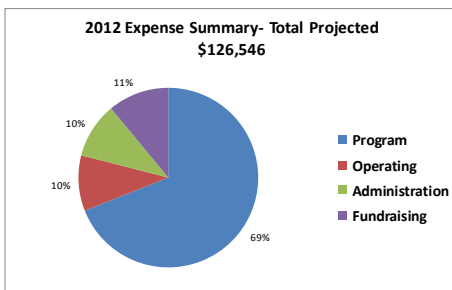
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Remembering William “Chip” Madsen



William "Chip" Madsen was a trustee of the Coalition on Race since 2007, the chair of Finance & Development for a few years, and the Chair of the organization from 2009-2011. He passed away on January 19, 2013, after a relentless fight with metastasized melanoma cancer. Chip was passionate about a number of social justice causes and gave his time and expertise to them. He had broad nonprofit experience and was a seasoned fundraiser and board governance professional.

Chip really believed in intentional integration as the best means to a long-lasting racially integrated, inclusive community. Never content to just talk about the issue, Chip was committed to action: he was at the ready for any volunteer job, including stuffing envelopes, posting signs, program development, event planning, and board leadership. He will be missed dearly.

Beyond Our Borders



The Community Coalition was honored with the **2012 Humanitarian Award** by the **American Conference on Diversity**, an organization that is dedicated to promoting mutual understanding, valuing diversity, educating and empowering leaders, and promoting inclusion and respect. They chose us as a recipient because we “advance human relations and improve the quality of life for citizenry in the Essex County region.”

The Coalition drew attention to First Suburbs issues in SOMA at its 2011 Conversations on Race. Subsequently, we have participated in regional discussions with **Building ONE New Jersey**, a statewide organization that looks at how NJ’s first suburbs can develop solutions to their unique challenges like high property taxes, aging infrastructures, and equitable school funding in diverse communities.



Leadership in 2012

Anthony Greene served as the 2012 Chairman. As a resident of South Orange and Maplewood for 26 years, a former BOE member, President of the National Insurance Industry Association, President of the American Intellectual Property Law Education Foundation, Vice Chair of the National African American Insurance Association, and over 10 years on the board of the Minority Corporate Counsel Association, Anthony brought board management and expertise to his role as Chair. We thank you for your leadership!

