

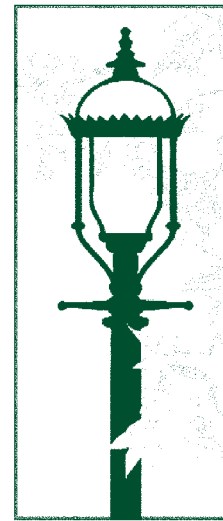
## Looking Back *continued*

there was a significant Jewish minority in Maplewood and South Orange then, the towns seemed racially homogeneous, essentially white. There had been clubs restricted against Jews, Blacks and others, vestiges of overt prejudice.

In the 1980s there were some racist incidents in Maplewood. The responses were community-wide celebration of diversity, largely organized by Friends and Neighbors (a merger of South Orange Neighbors and Maplewood Friends), a South Orange-Maplewood League of Women Voters' Forum on Race Relations, efforts to create a South Orange/Maplewood Human Relations Committee and a Maplewood community development commission. That the Coalition took root and flourished is no surprise given this reaction.

In the mid-1990s, the racial mix in the high school was changing. Census data suggested that parts of the towns were re-segregating, and "for sale" signs were popping up like mushrooms all over town, or so it seemed. I and the other members of the Maplewood Township Committee were concerned. With the active support of Mayor Davenport, I convened an ad hoc group of citizens (a committee that was never named) to discuss perceptions and misperceptions and what action might be taken. Fred Profeta, a participant in the group, brought a news article about an integration consultant, Don DeMarco, to the attention of the group. Mr. DeMarco of Fund for an Open Society came to talk to the governing bodies of South Orange and Maplewood, the School Board, and the public about pro-integrative strategy. This

led to the formation of an intergovernmental task force which incorporated as the private/non profit Racial Balance Task Force that subsequently became the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race. I was an advocate for the organization as a member of the Township Committee, strongly supporting town funding for it, believing then as I do now that if we do not talk about race, if we do not try to understand one another, the malignancy that is racism, although in remission from time to time, will be forever with us. South Orange and Maplewood and the Coalition have made much progress since 1996, but there is more to do. Our sages tell us you are not obliged to finish the task, neither are you free to neglect it. And if not now, when?



# South Orange/Maplewood COMMUNITY COALITION *on Race*

*nonprofit organization working for a  
community that is truly inclusive and racially  
integrated — free of segregation in housing  
patterns, schools and community involvement.*

2007 ANNUAL REPORT  
JANUARY 1, 2007 — DECEMBER 31, 2007

## Looking Back



I became a Coalition Trustee after retiring from the Maplewood Township Committee when my third term ended on December 31, 2002. I am now a member of the Coalition's Executive Committee.

I have lived over half of my life in Maplewood. In 1972, Mada and I were living in Forest Hills with our two children, Sara 5 and Dan only months old. We needed more room and began looking for a house in New Jersey—between New York where Mada's parents lived and suburban Philadelphia where my parents lived. My friend, with whom I shared an office in a downtown New York law firm, suggested that we look in Maplewood where he grew up. In our second week of house-hunting, we came to Maplewood, fell in love with the town, and bought our house on Euclid Avenue. We moved into our house in June 1972—in the middle of hurricane Agnes.

We moved to Maplewood for most of the same reasons that people are still moving to Maplewood and South Orange: wonderful housing stock, beautiful trees, welcoming people and good schools. Although

*Continued on page 8*

## Looking Forward



Racial integration in the United States is, unfortunately, a rare and precious thing. The communities of South Orange and Maplewood are proud of their racial integration, but history tells us that staying integrated into the future requires intentional policies and a lot of work. For more than twelve years, our two town governments and our citizens have been working to make this a reality.

Maplewood and South Orange continue to set the standard for what an ideal community looks like in the 21st century, and you, our neighbors are responsible. We can all read the headlines around the country and recognize that there is much work to be done. We can be proud that, as a community, we do not accept intolerance. We continue to strive for equity and excellence in our schools and for a community that is truly inclusive.

On the following pages, you will read about some of the public activities that have given us national, as well as local recognition. Our robust promotions program has resulted in publicity in the *New York Times*, *Star Ledger*, regional and national magazines, as well as impressionistic praise on *YouTube*. At the same time, we continue to assess our efforts to meet the needs of our evolving communities.

To that end, we are in the final stages of our Strategic Plan. One of the things we have been discussing in our Strategic Planning process is whether or not the word "integration" goes far enough in describing the changes that we envision. It is, for example, possible for our towns to be racially integrated by the numbers but still fall far short of the truly integrated ideal. We can even have people of different races live in every other house, but if we do not ever enter each other's homes—if we as adults do not develop personal relationships across race, are we truly integrated? We have for this reason begun to use "inclusive" alongside "integration" in an attempt to capture and amplify our ideal, that all people should feel and be valued and welcomed for who they are, as well as what they can contribute to our community—not just in our real estate efforts, but in our schools, interfaith communities, civic organizations, businesses, municipal governments and every aspect of our life together.

As we continue to grapple with these important issues as a community, I encourage you to join us and continue to support our efforts with your volunteer time and/or financial contributions. Together, we have the power to shape the future of integration, not only in South Orange and Maplewood, but also across the nation.

CAROL BARRY-AUSTIN  
*Board Chair*

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Two Towns, One Community ♦ www.twotowns.org

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COMMUNITY COALITION on Race  
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Maplewood, NJ 07040

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2007 Annual Highlights

JANUARY 2007

• *MLK Event: January 15th:* The IOC Committee sponsored the Coalition's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day event at St. Georges Church in Maplewood attracting 310 residents and friends. Voices in Harmony singers provided an excellent musical compliment to the program. Hendriks Davis, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity Newark, was the keynote speaker. A Volunteer Fair and reception followed.



SO/M families gather to honor and build on Dr. King's legacy

FEBRUARY 2007

• TwoTowns One Book 2007 Book Discussion Group for *Whose Afraid of a Large Black Man* by Charles Barkley was held February 13th at the Maplewood Library.



TwoTowns: One Book: Joanne Beckerich, Meredith Sue Willis, Audrey Rowe and Nancy Janow

• This was the first year for inclusion of a children's selection for TTOB, *Billie of Fish House Lane*. Closing events were held for the children's book at the Maplewood Library on July 12th and at South Orange Library on July 17th. The author, Meredith Sue Willis, held about 16 children and 5 parents totally engaged during these two book discussions and the students made personalized canvas book bags as souvenirs of the events.



Parents Explore Becoming Better Advocates for their Children

MARCH 2007

• The Parent Advocacy Workshop was held at Clinton Elementary School on March 20th to educate parens of elementary school students to help their students achieve success in the South Orange/Maplewood School District. Facilitator and role play leaders were Coalition volunteers, Dr. Linda Cameron-psychologist and diversity specialist Mary James Edwards.

• The same workshop was repeated at Seth Boyden on October 16th for elementary Parents, then again at South Orange Middle school for Middle school parents October 30th.

APRIL 2007

• Eighteen realtors representing Weichert (Mpld & SH), Burgdorff (Mpld. & SH), Caldwell Banker, Prudential and Century 21–Emma participated in the Annual Realtor Tour conducted April 24th by Touring Committee guide, Brad Takahashi and Program Director, Audrey Rowe.



Samiel Cameron, Creator of 'Highlighting Columbia High School: "Facts, Fears & Folklore"'

• *Highlighting Columbia High School: Facts, Fears & Folklore?*, a workshop concieved and presented by CHS student Samiel Cameron was sponsored by the Coalition and CHS Home & School Association

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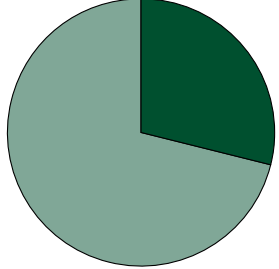
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2007 Expense Summary

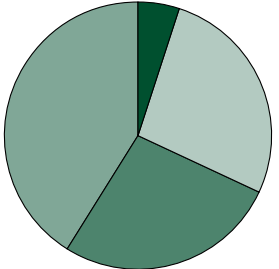
Programs Expense–71%  
Operating Expense–29%



TOTAL \$140,315

2007 Income Summary

Gifts–41%  
Village of South Orange–27%  
Maplewood Township–27%  
Other–5%



TOTAL \$141,338

2007 BOARD of TRUSTEES

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Audrey Rowe, PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
Don DeMarco, OPEN  
Barbara Heisler Williams, OPEN  
Joy Kalfus, PUBLICIST



2007 Annual Highlights Continued

Superintendent, Brian Osborne, to about 60 residents who came out to listen and comment on the work of the organization.

NOVEMBER 2007

• Twenty-three childcare and preschool agencies participated in the November 14th Preschool Open House to be jointly sponsored by the NA&CL and Schools Committee. 180 parents attended with guidelines for Pre-Kindergarten provided by Mark Quiles, Principal of Seth Boyden Demonstration School.

DECEMBER 2007

• The year ended with our annual Holiday gathering of trustees, volunteers and friends for a buffet dinner and drinks at Cryan's Restaurant in South Orange on December 14th.



Dr. John A. Powell interacts with forum participants

REACHING OUT

SPEAKERS BUREAU

The Coalition's Speakers Bureau was developed at the beginning of this 2007 as a vehicle for trustees and other Coalition volunteers to meet and dialogue with civic organizations, neighborhoods associations, clubs and other groups in South Orange and Maplewood about the organization's mission, goals and current activities. Letters announcing the program and inviting requests for speaking were to close to 100 local organizations.

The first Coalition Speakers Bureau event was held at Ethical Culture Society of Essex County Sunday, February 25th in Maplewood. A panel, including Coalition Executive Committee Members Jeff Gruenwald, Natalie Thigpen and Meredith Sue Willis, was joined by Program Director, Audrey Rowe as they shared information about the Coalition and answered questions from approximately 30 attendees. The second Speakers Bureau engagement with Maplewood Chamber of Commerce was held on March 28th with 25 people attending. The next Speakers Bureau engagement was April 30th with the African American Jewish Coalition which serves Essex County and whose cofounder, Rich Cohen, lives in Maplewood.



Jeff Gruenwald, Natalie Thigpen and Meredith Sue Willis speak at Ethical Culture Society Platform

YOUTUBE

At the suggestion of the Coalition Marketing Committee, award winning videographer and Columbia High School alumnus, Cris Thorne, created a video tribute to South Orange/Maplewood on YouTube entitled Two Towns. The Marketing Committee plans to launch more Internet video and advertorial projects promoting the Two Towns. You can

view the current video by logging on to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTXKNy-s>.

EXTERNAL MARKETING:

In 2007, Coalition staff mailed 117 information packets promoting South Orange/Maplewood in response to requests received by email, through the [www.twotowns.org](http://www.twotowns.org) web site and the 1-800-CLOSEBY telephone number. Most requests resulted from referrals by friends and relatives and from Coalition ads placed in Brooklyn, *The New York Times*, Hoboken or *Art Times* newspapers.

Twelve free tours of South Orange/Maplewood were conducted by the Touring Committee for 23 prospective home buyers in 2007.

2007 AMBASSADOR PROGRAM SUMMARY

You May have run into coalition volunteers at one of the fourteen events that we hosted. This year Coalition Trustees and volunteers interacted with 1600 residents and friends. 225 people registered to receive ongoing information from the Coalition.

EVENTS HOSTED BY THE COALITION:

MLK Observance  
BOE Candidates Night  
Elijah Sing-In  
Facts Fears Folklore  
Workshop (2)  
Mayfest  
Annual Realtor Tour  
Two Towns-One Book (2)

South Orange Newcomers  
Welcome to Maplewood  
Integration Matters! Forum  
Report to the Community  
Parent Advocacy  
Workshops (2)  
Preschool Open House

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ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

TRUSTEES AT WORK

Coalition trustees began meeting in January of 2007 to establish common ground for completing a new strategic plan, and in March, a “Visioning” workshop was facilitated by marketing and advertising executive, Kevin Rhodes of Maplewood to examine the organizations purpose, values, and long term goals. The organization wanted to gain a broader perspective outside of the current board, so a Strategic Planning Committee was formed from past trustees, community leaders and several committee co-chairs to provide feedback on the organization’s current and future strategy.



(HSA) at Columbia High School on April 18th, and the Maplewood Middle School HSA at MMS in October for middle school parents.

- The Coalition submitted a winning application for *Facts, Fears & Folklore* in a competition for *The Princeton Prize in Race Relations*. Samiel Cameron received honorable mention for her work towards fostering racial harmony at the high school level.
- A choral and symphony performance of *Mendelssohn’s Elijah* was sponsored by the Interfaith Outreach Committee of the Coalition working with local choral group, Voices in Harmony on April 29th at Prospect Presbyterian Church in Maplewood. The concert was made possible through grants awarded to the Coalition by New Jersey State Council of the Arts administered by Essex County Local Arts Program Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs and by the Fraentzel Foundation.

MAY 2007

- On May 16, 2007, the Coalition was honored as one of only four recipients of the *Exemplary Partnership Program Award* from the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and the New Jersey Association of Partners in Education for *Aim High!*—a program focused on eliminating the racial Academic Achievement Gap in South Orange/Maplewood Schools.
- *The Five Steps for Excellence* in our schools was drafted and refined by members of the Coalition’s Schools Committee, approved by the Trustee body, and delivered to the District Superintendent, PTA Presidents Council, Board of Education, South Orange-Maplewood Education Association and both Township governments between September and December 2007. Roll-out to the community will commence in 2008.

JUNE 2007

- The first Financial Incentive Committee session was held June 26th with Dave Onderko, President of Allegiance Community Bank in South Orange to develop additional program to incent homebuyers for

prointegrative choices.

- The Coalition’s PRISM (Pro-Integrative Second Mortgage) Loan Program extended 1 new loan, increasing the total to 7 loans open and 9 paid in full. These loans are low interest, capped mortgages extended to home buyers who purchase in neighborhoods where they are racially under represented.

JULY 2007

- *Coffee & Conversation with the Coalition* was held on July 18th with 10 top local realtors to discuss the state of real estate sales in the South Orange/Maplewood and the key factors influencing the local market. Top Realtors agreed to meet with the Coalition at least 3 times a year for mutual updates.

AUGUST 2007

- On August 23rd, the Coalition’s Schools Committee and Touring Committee participated in the South Orange/Maplewood School District Annual New Teachers’ Orientation Tour delivering remarks to the group of 29 new teachers on the importance of integration to our community and school district and providing highlights during the tour.

SEPTEMBER 2007

- The *Integration Matters!* forum was held September 17th at Columbia High School drawing close to 210 people to hear nationally acclaimed authority on race issues, Dr. John A. Powell, and to discuss how integration is experienced in our own community. The event was co-sponsored with Fund for an OPEN Society with funding from the Initiative for Regional and Community Transformation at Rutgers University and the Ford Foundation.



Residents share their integration experiences

- NA&CL hosted a dialogue between the Hillcrest Neighborhood Association, Maplewood Township Committee Members and Maplewood Police Chief Camino to discuss concerns and plans following a fatal shooting of a disturbed Maplewood resident after police were called to the scene.

OCTOBER 2007

- The Coalition Annual *Report to the Community*—a town hall style dialogue between Coalition committees and the community—was held at Baird Community on October 18th.  
Opening remarks were delivered by new SO/M School District

*Continued on page 4*

Support the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition

Your generous gift will help the Coalition’s work continue. The South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race is dedicated to preserving our two towns as a community of choice for all.

*Please support the Community Coalition’s activities by sending a generous donation.*

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