



People's Alliance NEWSLETTER

FALL 2015

Progressive Issues Forum & Membership Meeting

Tuesday, Sept 15 at 6 PM
Durham County Main Library
300 N Roxboro St

Note to Parents:

We will have childcare available from 6-9pm, for children ages 3-10. If you are interested please RSVP online at http://www.durhampa.org/sept_membership_2015

Progressive Issues Forum. Join us for the next progressive issues forum where we will discuss "The Schools Our Children Deserve." Traditional public schools and the teachers in them are under unprecedented attack. Issues of racial equity and choice infuse personal and political discussions. People's Alliance has made a commitment to race equity. What does this mean in terms of supporting public education? What can we do together to make our public schools great for all our children?

Join us for an open community discussion of this vital issue. We will begin with a panel that includes Mike Lee, parent of a DPS student and DPS school board member; Bryan Proffitt, president of the Durham Association of Educators and Tema Okun, of Dismantling Racism Works (dR Works).

Membership Meeting. After the panel, PA members will review the guiding principals for PA's education policy positions. The policy positions we will review can be found here: www.durhampa.org/sept_membership_2015.

During the membership meeting we will discuss a proposed amendment to our bylaws that would simplify and strengthen the structure of our nominating committee. If you would like additional information in advance of the meeting please visit http://www.durhampa.org/sept_membership_2015.

People's Alliance PAC Endorsements



At a meeting held August 25, nearly 200 members of the People's Alliance PAC came together to debate and vote on who the PAC will endorse in the upcoming Durham Mayor and city council races. By the end of the meeting, the members had voted to support the following candidates:

Mayor
William Bell

City Council
Jillian Johnson
Charlie Reece
Steve Schewel

More information on each of these candidates and on the endorsement process can be found at www.peoplesalliancepac.org/2015_endorsements. And if you are able to volunteer to help these candidates succeed, please sign up at http://www.peoplesalliancepac.org/pac_volunteer.

Book Study: *Urban Alchemy*

Pick up a copy of the book at The Regulator, and join us for three discussion sessions: September 16, September 30, and October 7, 7:00 - 8:30 PM.

SpiritHouse NC is kicking off its second Durham city-wide book study to explore and address systemic racism, gentrification, and divided communities in Durham. The book for this round is *Urban Alchemy: Restoring Joy in America's Sorted-Out Cities* by Dr. Mindi Fullilove. Join PA members and friends in talking about what the ideas in this book means for the city where we live. How has Durham been "sorted out" by urban renewal and gentrification? What can we do together to restore and renew our city in alignment with principles of social and racial justice? To join our discussion group, sign up here: http://www.durhampa.org/book_study_urban_alchemy.

Gentrification and Neighborhood Change

At the May People's Alliance Membership Meeting nearly 200 people came out to hear a presentation about "Gentrification and Neighborhood Change in the Central City" by Mel Norton, sponsored by People's Durham and the Coalition for Affordable Housing and Transit Outreach Committee. Mel brought her perspective as an urban planner, affordable housing advocate, and anti-racist white progressive to the presentation, which had five main parts:

- 1) Defining gentrification and identifying it as a social justice issue
- 2) Placing gentrification as the latest in a legacy of displacements of people of color in Durham, and as a direct consequence of discriminatory policy on the federal state and local level
- 3) Discussing the local dynamics contributing to the increasing gentrification the central city over the past 10 years
- 4) Presenting a data-driven analysis of where gentrification is happening, how fast, and where it is headed
- 5) Proposing a range of actions including city-wide policies as well as individual and community actions to foster inclusive neighborhoods

The feedback has been tremendous, and clearly it is a conversation our community was eager to have and to continue. The full presentation is now available at <http://www.durhampa.org/housing>.

Economic Inequality Action Team News

After the successful launch of the **Durham Living Wage Project**, our **Economic Inequality Action Team** is gearing up to re-start regular meetings this fall. If you're concerned about growing economic inequality and are interested in learning about and promoting strategies that ensure more broadly shared prosperity in Durham, please join us. We will be meeting the third Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting will be Sept. 16 at 7pm (location TBD). For more info, please contact Carl Rist at rist@frontier.com. This is an active and engaging Action Team, which launched the DLWP with a total of 64 Durham employers now "living wage certified." The project's part-time coordinator, Mel Norton, is working with the project's steering committee to recruit additional businesses, expand our communications activities, and raise additional funds. For more information visit www.durhamlivingwage.org.

Environmental Action Team News

Although it has been several years since PA has had an active Environmental Action Team, it is time to energize Durham's progressive voice for our environment. We are planning to have a community discussion on Sept. 29 (at 7:00 at the SW library room A) to present several ideas for environmentally focused action and hopefully organize the next generation of People's Alliance Environmental Action Team. We hope to see you there!

There many potential avenues for action, for example a community solar project, seeking passage of a local fracking ordinance, or pressing Durham Public Schools to think big about sustainability. We'll talk about what's possible and what makes sense for a group like PA. If you have any questions, please contact Sara Terry at saju_1@yahoo.com.

Seeking Board Member Nominations

Do you know of someone who would be a good PA board member? We'd love to meet them. We invite you to send board member nominations to info@durhampa.org. Our nominating committee will consider each candidate carefully as we prepare the slate for review in November. **Special Notice:** We are looking for two youth board members – ages 16-21 – to join our board in 2016. If you know any good candidates, please let us know!

**Board Member Profile:
Magan Gonzales Thigpen**

Thank you for
your service, Magan!

Magan is a native North Carolinian, having grown up in Kitty Hawk and Asheville. After receiving her B.A. in Political Science from the George Washington University, Magan worked for a campaign consulting firm to get progressive candidates elected to state and national office. Since then, Magan has focused on her commitment to ensuring that all children have access to a high-quality public education. Her work in education includes recruiting teachers for high-poverty schools, mentoring youth in a college access program, and serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA with the Asheville City Schools Foundation. In 2014 she received her M.P.P. from Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy.

Magan is currently a district policy analyst at a Raleigh-based education non-profit, where she leads a peer-learning network for the state's urban superintendents. Magan joined the board in January of 2015. When asked about what drew her to get involved with PA, Magan replied: *I am proud to call Durham home and feel deeply committed to advancing a more progressive and just city where all people can live well. Since joining PA, I have had the opportunity to learn more about the history of progressive politics in Durham and connect with inspiring, passionate community members working toward a shared vision of a more just and equitable city for everyone.*

Save the Date

We hope you can join us at the following events:

- **PA-PAC Endorsement Meeting**
August 25th at 6:30 PM at St. Luke's Church, 1737 Hillandale Rd.
- **"The Schools our Children Deserve"**
Progressive Forum & Membership Meeting
September 15th at 6 PM. Main Library, 300 N Roxboro.
- **Urban Alchemy Book Study**
September 16, 30 and Oct. 7 at 7pm. Location TBD. Please RSVP online.
- **Economic Inequality Action Team Meeting –**
September 16 at 7pm. Location TBD.
- **Environment Action Team Meeting –**
September 29 at 7pm. SW Library, Room A, 3605 Shannon Road

For more information, and to see new events scheduled after this newsletter went to press, please visit www.durhampa.org/calendar

Seeking Volunteers

Elections. The PAC is now actively seeking volunteers to help these candidates succeed in their races. If you are able to join in this important work, please sign up at www.peoplesalliancepac.org/pac volunteer.

Action Team Volunteers. We are looking for a diverse group of activists who are willing to work with others to address the range of issues facing our community. If you are interested, please email info@durhampa.org.

Office Support. We run a lean, mean operation. We can accomplish greater things with your help. If you are interested in providing administrative and office support, please email info@durhampa.org.