

SURJ Families December call: Making our SURJ chapters multi-generational spaces:

12-14-15

Find us in: Showing Up For Racial Justice (SURJ) Families on Facebook.

Contact: SURJFamilies@gmail.com

Call Setup: We are going rogue with this call and trying out a new format. We will have a panel lined up to answer questions but they will not give prepared speeches. The framing section will be the space that Rebecca lays out the mission of SURJ Families, the importance of multi-generational movement spaces and how we plug into this work looking through a family lens.

Agenda:

1. Welcome and introduction: (Julie, 5 mins) SURJ Families 'history', why we are on this call.
 - a. Welcome, thank you for the work you are doing, or would like to be! SURJ Families is made up of parents who are committed to racial justice. Our organizing committee formed this summer and we've organized several calls and toolkits to support families doing this work. The best way to keep up with what we are up do is to join the Showing Up For Racial Justice (SURJ) Families Facebook group, where several hundred parents talk and share resources.
 - b. Theme and focus of the call is to help our SURJ chapters and affiliates gain some strategies and tools to use to make their spaces multi-generational.
 - c. If you haven't already, look at the toolkit. The format today will be mostly an opportunity for you to ask questions from a set of panelist who are all organizing caregivers and families.
 - i. Rebecca, Louisville. Has supported BLM organizers with childcare and set up forums for Black moms who have lost children to guns to talk about their experience and heal. She is working with her SURJ chapter to make meetings friendly to families and elders.
 - ii. *Coleen, New Orleans. She was a child who grew up in the feminist movement of the 70s, and now parents two teenagers, who organizes and works with youth and adults as part of the anti-racism facilitator team at the Center for Ethical Living & Social Justice Renewal. She has worked with Unitarian Universalist camps and LGBTQ organizations to create youth led space, and each summer facilitates a Harry Potter*

camp that last year began the process of intentionally naming racism as part of their program.

- iii. *Zoe, Denver. They are a parent and longtime organizer working with Denver SURJ and 9to5 Colorado among other organizations. They've spent significant time organizing movement spaces that are multigenerational, queer, and poor or working class. Zoë and their partner (an elementary school teacher) also compile books, curricula, and educational materials dedicated to social justice issues for school age children.*
- iv. Meredith Martin-Moats, Arkansas. Meredith works for racial justice in rural and small town spaces, with the McElroy House. She helps to build "urban to rural connections" across communities and believes that the caregiving work that is often done by woman is a lot more subversive than it appears. She works to ensure that caregivers are able to participate as they are in this important work. This means parents, but also members of the sandwich generation who are caring for their aging parents.

2. Framing: (Rebecca, 5-7 mins)

- a. The mission of SURJ Families.
- b. The importance of moving in multi-generational spaces and how they relate to our core shared values at SURJ.
- c. We can add elements to existing organizing spaces, or we can create side spaces to address issues directly related to families.
- d. Young children learn from being in organizing spaces, and as they are youth they can help build the future they want to create.
- e. It's a value of White supremacy to set aside elders and children. It's important to be inclusive, but also a key value to
- f. How we look at the already flowing movement for Black Lives Matter through a family and caregivers lens and finding realistic ways to show up and take action.
- g. We will offer some strategies and tools in our answers to create and find multi-generational spaces within our already existing spaces. This can be accomplished by simply adding some concepts to our meeting spaces to make them comfortable for families and caregivers or by creating a separate space that is accountable to a larger space (a SURJ chapter or SURJ affiliate)

3. Panel introductions: (Julie, panelists 5 mins) Each panelist will quickly introduce themselves and their work. Share any role that Julie missed that you think is important

for participants to know about, and a moment where you saw the promise of multigenerational organizing realized. (ONE MINUTE EACH)

- a. Meredith - 3 young children, what can allow people to show up when they are caregiving for someone who is sick or dying or older. Started thinking of caregiving as a hinderance, but realized that lives didn't mesh with organizers, and shifted to make it a part of the forefront of our work. Unintentionally make spaces hard to be (accessible to wheelchairs) people freaked out about nursing a baby
 - b. Zoe: struggled as a 12 year old youth & where found welcome, AIM multiracial organizing. No question that youth and elders would be welcome. Vacillated on how good at making a variety of people welcome & thoughtful about how to do that.
 - c. Coleen: homeschooled, because family wanted them to be fully in the world, at 10 was fully participating in NOW chapter. 7 - whole family and NOW chapter took a bus to Tallahassee to pass a law, joyful childhood moment, that was my family. The real icing on the cake was the first chapter meeting after the trip, adults debriefing. One adult, any by the way, we have to recognize the best part was having these fantastic children involved. For Coleen as a 7 year old, was huge to realize it was important I was there. Not just tolerated, not just accepted, to celebrated. That's the goal for me.
 - d. Rebecca - learned from parents to speak up, show up for others. carried that through college years. Had children and saw BLM movement kick off. Found mutual interest as mother, woman, human. Hard to do with 2 young children and another on the way. Started forcing multigenerational spaces, brought kids & we'll figure it out. In action spaces, think that's really important to show them how to be an activist, they won't know. Can go to rally, can engage and learn, talk to people other than me, other people and children believe what mommy believes, foster love and activism. Also works with local BLM, as a White ally can take on that role. As White allies, male White allies in particular, create the space for Black women to lead.
4. Q&A: (Julie, Panelists, 30 mins) Open the floor to questions that our panelists and SURJ Families leaders will answer.
- a. Liz - People's _____ Action League in Spokane
 - i. Planning checklist for a meeting or event to make the space multi generational. How do you communicate that will be welcoming? How

do you work out childcare when there are insurance and liability?

Sometimes better not to have kids there.

1. Child programming, social justice content in what they're doing.
Not just coloring, wraps around to what adults are doing
 2. Advertise that have food, childcare, safe space for children.
Once you start creating it, people will step up, people came to offer childcare.
 3. Childcare stipend for people to apply for and use it for however it works for you.
 4. Acknowledge that you know the issues and be honest about where you are at and what you can offer.
 5. Childcare will be provided, meals would be provided, call X if you have a ride.
 6. People scan for accessibility (childcare, rides, etc)
 7. Use a survey to ask what access needs are (childcare, rides, food - what are your food needs?) so you don't end up with
 8. If you haven't been a caregiver, you're oblivious - make sure people who aren't caregivers bring the food, help make it accessible - "If you're not bringing a child or elder, please bring food." People who don't have kids offer to read books in another room, etc.
- ii. Families For Justice - also connected to Groundwork & SURJ Affiliate.
How to engage families? Multiple ways, have spaces specific to families, in education, in actions already planned, create specific spaces for families to be involved in the actions. How to grow the families voice, it's powerful. How do you grow your network?
1. Regular meetings, weekends, fun content, Raising Race Conscious Children webinar. Children become friends & it makes it easier.
 2. Leadership bringing kids to decision making meetings, the world didn't end when the baby cried or had to step out
 3. Always having kid activities involved, story section with kids books set out. Engaged more adults too.
 4. Cultivate consciousness of how time moves differently. White supremacist & capitalist structures push on deadlines, move quickly. That's important, but also important to see the pace of

work alongside life. Shift to understanding that also it's a part to tend to that person who needs your care. Be vocal that not everyone's time moves in the same way, it's not a bad thing. Realized that could connect what learned from home with community work. Not connecting those two things is part of the problem. Frustrated when it takes a long time to get together.

5. Organizing moves online. Not a failure, just how our lives work.

1. Survey/resources: (Facilitator, 5 mins)
 - a. Who wants resources - 10%
 - b. Who would be interested in a coach to help navigate moving into a multi-generational space 10%
 - c. Who needs to be connected with a local SURJ chapter or affiliate 0%
2. Debrief: (Julie/SURJ Families organizer, 5 mins) Get some a few feedback comments from callers
3. Closing and appreciations: (Julie, 3 mins)
 - Dolores Huerta - brought lots of kids, working for social justice is heroic, importance of seeing their parents as heroes. One child was playing on the phone and they were asked what they were doing. Child: "Calling the people" Adult: "Are you calling them to picket?" C: "No, they're not ready to picket yet, I'm calling them to leaflet." Shows the importance of having children in the movement.