

## The Ethical Culture Society of Essex County

### Minutes of Board Meeting 12/9/20

Present: Tom Cunningham, Elaine Durbach, Lisa Novemsky, Zia Durrani, Jackie Herships, Jill Farrer, Peggy Toy

The meeting was called to order by Tom Cunningham, President, at 11:10AM. A quorum was present.

#### **Agenda Item**

- End of year gifts for Liz and Marshall
- Alice and Sue's Platform
- Programming/Upcoming Platforms
- Shannon's request to use space in ECS Building
- Update on New Year's Eve party
- Update on talk on Race
- Update on Bee Signs

#### **End of year gifts**

A gift of \$125 was approved by the Board for Liz as a thank you for running the office (same amount as last year) and a gift of \$200 was approved for Marshall in addition to an earlier \$200 gift given to him for the extra work he is doing related to COVID and to thank him for managing the ECS Building during the pandemic.

#### **Alice and Sue's Living Ethical Culture Colloquy**

Those who attended reported that about 12 people were at the Zoom meeting and they had a worthwhile and enjoyable discussion. Attendees were prompted to reflect on things they appreciate and/or don't appreciate about our current situation.

#### **Programming/Upcoming Platforms**

- Sunday, 12/13/20 11 AM - Dr. Joe Chuman, leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County, is retiring and will be giving a presentation entitled "My Vocation" for the NY Society for Ethical Culture, reflecting on his life's work with the Ethical Society. Information and access to the talk can be found at <https://ethical.nyc/sunday-12-13-joe-chuman-my-vocation/>
- Sunday, 12/20/20 11AM - Artist Mikel Frank, who worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for many years and is currently an art instructor in North Carolina, will talk about the Global Art Project, an international collaborative of artists working in diverse media to celebrate the potential of group expression, helping to spread peace and harmony around the globe. Jill will provide a blurb for publicizing the event.
- Sunday, 12/27/20 11AM - Esther and Zia will give a shared talk and lead a discussion based on a recent webinar/panel discussion on the question: Why is Quality of Life

Falling in the U.S.? Nicholas Kristof was one of the panelists. Esther wrote up his talk and will send it out to members to read before the talk.

- January Platforms
    - Zia and Esther may have a Colloquy on Race in the middle of the month
    - January 31 is an all-society meeting with Congressman Jamie Raskin, one of the founders of the Freethought Caucus
    - Jill is working to arrange as a speaker for January an artist/quilter whose quilts depict the African-American struggle.
- Tom pointed out that the AEU website has a calendar where we can enter our events to link them to other societies and publicize our programs.

### **Shannon's Request to use space in the building**

Shannon asked if space in the ECS building could be used by the MAPSO Youth Coalition's child care support program. Marshall informed Shannon that the building is currently closed. In a related matter, another group had asked if they could use the front porch of the ECS building as a drop-off point for donations that would then be picked up there. The Board agreed that it would be acceptable to use the porch for donations.

### **New Year's Eve Party**

No update on the party. Tom will check with Jeanine.

### **Update on Bee Signs**

Jackie said she would like help with the Bee Sign Project. Specifically, she would like volunteers to keep records, do drop offs of the signs, do outreach. Elaine suggested having a speaker in the Spring to talk about bee-friendly plants. Zia will contact someone from the garden club in Maplewood as a possible resource for a speaker etc.

### **Additional topics**

Tom gave an update on the family education group. Aidan organized a Secret Santa among the families. They are planning to get together on Zoom to share the experience of opening the gifts together.

Zia spoke about the YES program, Youth and Ethical Societies. Tom forwarded information to Jasper and Aidan about this program, who both expressed interest. There will be an all-society YES platform in early March. Aidan is planning to participate.

Tom talked about wanting to check up on members we hadn't seen recently. Lisa and Elaine offered to reach out to try to get updates on the status of some of these members.

Bill Stoeber has come out with a book about his travels. Elaine will ask him if he would be interested in speaking about the book at a platform.

Tom talks about new ways to promote, present and expand on platforms while we are all virtual. Some ideas included:

- YouTube videos by the presenter to precede a talk(e.g., doing a reading from a book), or sending out information, websites, links, readings, etc., to introduce members to the topic
- Following up with a later discussion and/or a Q&A
- Meeting on another day, possibly with breakout groups, to discuss some of the ideas presented in the talk.

Tom and Elaine will work on implementing some of these ideas in January or February.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:21PM.

Minutes Submitted by Peggy Toy