



YEAR 4 REPORT

November 2021 – July 2022

Since our last report in October 2021, there has been no shortage of crises confronting Rochester and our nation. Ten African Americans shot dead by a white supremacist in a parking lot outside a Tops grocery store in Buffalo, just miles up the road from Rochester. 19 children and two teachers shot dead in a school in Uvalde, Texas. January 6th Committee hearings revealing that the violence of the attack on the Capitol could have been far worse.

These are just a handful of examples that demonstrate the importance of the work of the Levine Center to End Hate. In the midst of these events, we continue to provide important programming to our community. Below is a summary of our work and activities for the period November 2021 to July 2022.

STAFF CHANGES

Thanks to the generosity of the William and Mildred Levine Foundation, we had the opportunity this year to fully staff the Levine Center to End Hate. In addition to our Youth Engagement Coordinator, Thomas Cuyler, who joined the staff in August 2021, we hired Charlseyy Bickett in April 2022 as our Community Engagement Coordinator and Chaz Goodman in May 2022 as our Marketing and Communications Manager.

Charlseyy served as executive director of Mary's Place Refugee Outreach for five and a half years prior to joining the Levine Center. Her responsibilities include planning and developing educational and dialogue programs to address racism, antisemitism, and other forms of hate, including our annual Summit to End Hate; conducting research on national anti-hate program models to inform our work; expanding our relationships with community organizations; and working to develop volunteer and advocacy opportunities.

Hiring Charlseyy to manage program and event planning has freed up the Levine Center director to focus on recruiting new Steering Committee members; establishing a new Corporate Council; developing and implementing a fundraising plan; engaging a strategic planning consultant; serving on a steering committee planning a response to the ReAwaken America Tour, featuring Michael Flynn and Roger Stone, that will be held in Rochester on August 12-13; and supervising a staff of six, among other community engagement responsibilities.

Chaz joined the staff less than two months ago and in that short time period has produced communications for two events (*Black Prosperity* and our *State of Hate in Rochester* community survey); managed a highly successful press conference which garnered significant media coverage for release of our community survey; revamped the Levine Center website; developed marketing materials for sponsor recruitment; and significantly expanded our social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Unfortunately, we said goodbye to our program assistant, Alyssa Bourgeois, in May 2022 when she took a job in New York City. We were grateful for the nearly two years that Alyssa worked with us. We were able to bring Victoria Pacheco on in a temp-to-perm capacity, overlapping with Alyssa. Victoria is the consummate team player, supporting all staff efficiently, effectively, and with an incredibly pleasant, can-do attitude.

STEERING COMMITTEE CHANGES

In June we thanked Carolyn Nussbaum for two years of service as co-chair of the Levine Center Steering Committee and welcomed Zack Ellis as the new co-chair, serving alongside Kevin Beckford, who will continue to serve for one more year. This will allow Zack the benefit of working with an experienced co-chair and enable us to establish a succession process whereby co-chairs alternate years transitioning off.

Carolyn will now serve as chair of the new Corporate Council, which will begin meeting quarterly in September. The Council, which will be made up of 10-12 local business leaders, will help to advance our mission and build on DEI efforts to increase understanding as an antidote to hate. Currently, we have three confirmed members—from M&T Bank, JP Morgan, and Canandaigua National Bank—and are actively recruiting a diverse membership.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We have held several community programs during this reporting period, described briefly below:

The Disturbing Resilience of Antisemitism – December 1, 2021

Anti-Jewish bigotry and violence has seen a significant resurgence in the United States over the past several years. This conversation with Oren Jacobson, co-founder of [Project Shema](#), explored how the world's oldest form of hate has survived and thrived over thousands of years and enabled participants to deepen their understanding about the lived realities and challenges facing the Jewish people today. More than 75 people attended this virtual program.

Taking Violent White Supremacy to Court: The Charlottesville Verdict – March 2, 2022

This is the third year the Levine Center has partnered with the Konar Center for Tolerance and Jewish Studies at Nazareth College and the Monroe County Bar Association to bring a program to the Rochester community. At this virtual event, Amy Spitalnick, the Executive Director of Integrity First for America,

spoke about taking the organizers of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville to court and winning. These were some of the country's most notorious neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and hate groups, and the case against them, which secured millions of dollars in damages and bankrupted many, was an example of one tool – the law – that can be used to hold extremists accountable for their violence. Over 100 people attended this virtual presentation, which was moderated by local attorney Erin Elmouji.

Black Prosperity: Achieving the Unfulfilled Promise of Economic Equity – June 15, 2022

Inspired by an article that appeared in the New York Times last fall called [‘Black Capitalism’ Promised a Better City for Everyone. What Happened?](#), we developed the [Black Prosperity](#) program to examine Rochester's history of discrimination and explore ways to ensure equity.

The first panel included Dennis Bassett, Assistant to the Corporate Vice President of Kodak; Bob Duffy, President & CEO of the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce; David Powe, President of the Greater Rochester Black Business Alliance; and Dr. Ruth Scott, Former Rochester City Council President. The second panel featured Melissa James Geska, President of US Ceiling Corporation; Christopher Santana, Apparel Entrepreneur & Owner of RIXCH EXCHANGE; and Tim Taylor, Founder and CEO of Data Brilliance Software, LLC. Our steering committee member Adrian Hale did an expert job facilitating the panels and summarizing the critical points.

The event was held at Kilbourne Hall at Eastman School of Music, with over 100 people attending. Responses to the event, which was also live streamed and recorded, were extremely positive. We will be building off of this event, which itself built off of our Tale of Two Cities event last year, at our Summit to End Hate in October.

“State of Hate in Rochester” Community Survey Press Conference – June 22, 2022

One week after the Black Prosperity program, we hosted a press conference at Village Gate for local media to cover the results of our community survey. The "State of Hate" survey was designed to help understand local residents' attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of discrimination and bias in Greater Rochester, and to provide tools and actions to help address issues of discrimination in order to bring the community together. [Click here to download the "State of Hate in Greater Rochester" report.](#)

Two key findings were identified in the survey data. First, while most people report being aware that discrimination is an issue in our community, it is a theoretical concept for most Whites but a part of the lived experience for the majority of Blacks/African Americans and members of other subgroups.

The second finding is hopeful: the Greater Rochester area is seen as a welcoming place by 81% of area residents – a statistic that holds over many different demographic groups – due to what they see as its diversity and open-mindedness.

Data detailing the perspectives and experiences of the surveyed subgroups will be included in a monthly series of releases beginning in August. These subgroups include people who are Black/African American, LGBTQ+, Jewish, and/or disabled. Data related to educational topics will also be released.

A range of media outlets, including the D&C, WXXI Radio, Spectrum News, and the Rochester Business Journal, attended the press conference. Links to their coverage are included at the end of this report.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

As noted above, Thomas Cuyler began working as the Youth Engagement Coordinator at the Levine Center in August 2021. He promptly set about creating a Youth Ambassador Council (YAC) and recruited a diverse group of students to participate, eight in total, from urban and suburban schools. The YAC met for educational programming every Sunday. Students worked a total of eight hours per week on the following initiatives:

- Mapping for Educational Equity
- *All Things Possible* curriculum development
- School and Community Equity Initiative
- Social media project

Mapping for Educational Equity

Developed in partnership with Nazareth College, the goal of this project was to identify educational intervention deserts in the Greater Rochester area. Ambassadors conducted data scrubbing and quality assurance/quality control on the database provided by Nazareth College. They also coded the data for strategic analysis. Multiple iterations of maps and web map applications were produced, along with a final Story Map. The ambassadors assigned to this project gained an in-depth education around the uses of ArcGIS Online software and tools, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access and Google Sheets for their uses in mapping and data management. Students, parents, community members, and others can use the maps, [which have been uploaded to our website](#), to access comprehensive contact information, as described below. Based on conversations Thomas conducted with various school administrators and school board members, never before has this information been gathered in one place.

All Things Possible Curriculum Development

Ambassadors worked on a series of lessons called the *All Things Possible* curriculum, which addresses systemic racism and how hate impacts social-emotional and mental wellness on an individual and communal level. Roland Murphy, an incarcerated individual and president of the Youth Assistance Program at Attica Correctional Facility, developed the first iteration of the curriculum. Thomas and a team of volunteers further developed the curriculum, which the youth ambassadors then reviewed and evaluated for use with the School and Community Equity Initiative, described below.

School and Community Equity Initiative

The *All Things Possible* curriculum will serve as a central component to the School and Community Equity Initiative (SCEI), currently in development. The goal of the SCEI is to serve as a resource to students and families experiencing issues of concern around bias and discrimination. Ambassadors used the mapping process described above to create a directory of principals, assistant principals, and DASA (Dignity for All Students) coordinators at elementary, middle, and high schools in the Greater Rochester

area. The SCEI will be able to use this directory to help students and parents know whom to contact as they work to resolve issues in school.

Social Media Project

Ambassadors developed a social media marketing strategy to promote the work of the YAC. They facilitated presentations and sought input on the strategy from the Levine Center director and Jewish Federation marketing staff. They received approval to set up profiles and will work with Chaz in the new school year to coordinate effective social media messaging.

Other Youth Programming

- On March 11, 2022, Thomas, Youth Ambassador Jacob Flores, and Center director Karen Elam visited Roland Murphy at Attica Correctional Facility. YAC members had viewed a recording of a powerful TEDx Attica talk given by Roland where he described feeling guilt and remorse for his crime and contemplating suicide. Instead, he found hope while living in prison and committed himself to learning from his past. He obtained his GED, completed various drug and anger management programs, and participated in a mentoring program called the Youth Assistance Program. He currently serves as its president. In this role he created the *All Things Possible* curriculum. The purpose of the visit was to learn more about Roland's experience and discuss the possibility of his giving a similar talk to youth in Rochester, depending on the success of his application for clemency.
- On March 14, 2022, local anti-bullying activist Angelicia Smith met with the YAC to discuss bullying and how a healthy school and community culture can make the difference for youth. Angelicia lost her 11-year-old son to suicide on June 22, 2021 after years of race-based bullying and cyberbullying. Her goal is to use his story and legacy to protect other youth who are at risk for self-harm and/or suicide as a result of bullying.
- On March 22, 2022, U.S. Congressman Joe Morelle came to the Levine Center at the Federation offices to meet with the YAC. Ambassadors heard from the Congressman about his background and legislative priorities and had an opportunity to describe their work and ask questions.
- On May 27, 2022, Thomas, two youth ambassadors, and staff of the Levine Center and Jewish Federation attended a vigil for the victims of the shooting in Buffalo. The event took place in the parking lot of a local Rochester Tops grocery store.
- On June 18, 2022, Thomas and Youth Ambassador Farell Carey staffed a table at the Ibero American Action League's Safe Summer Bash, promoting the work of the Levine Center to the predominantly Latinx participants and talking with prospective youth ambassador candidates.

NEWS COVERAGE

"State of Hate in Greater Rochester" Community Survey Press Conference

- [Results released from State of Hate in Rochester, NY survey](#) Spectrum News | 06.22.22

- [What's the 'State of Hate' in Rochester? Community overwhelmingly sees itself as welcoming](#) Democrat & Chronicle | 06.23.22
- [New 'State of Hate' report highlights discrimination, fear and hope in Rochester region](#) WXXI | 6.22.22
- [Levine Center to End Hate shared results of “State of Hate in Rochester” survey](#) WROC | 06.22.22
- [Community survey examines views on discrimination](#) Rochester Business Journal | 06.23.22

Black Prosperity: Achieving the Unfulfilled Promise of Economic Equity

- [Event to Examine Rochester’s Elusive Black Prosperity](#) Rochester Beacon | 06.14.22
- [Kilbourn Hall to Host Black Prosperity](#) FoxRochester.com | 6.14.22
- [Economic Equality is the Focus of Upcoming Event in Rochester](#) Rochester Business Journal | 06.10.22

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Marching in the Pride Parade – Saturday, July 16
- Webinar by [Katherine Stewart](#), author of *The Power Worshippers: Inside The Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalism*, hosted by the Levine Center in partnership with interfaith groups as a follow-up to the ReAwaken America Tour taking place August 12-13
- “State of Hate in Rochester” Community Survey subgroup data releases
 - Black Community – Monday, August 8
 - Education Results – Friday, September 9 presentation to Monroe County Superintendents
 - Disabled Community – Monday, October 3
 - Jewish Community – Monday, November 7
 - LGBTQ Community – Monday, December 5
- Youth Ambassador Council kick-off – September (exact date TBD)
- Corporate Council kick-off – September (exact date TBD)
- [Brave Spaces: Rochester’s 3rd Annual Summit to End Hate](#) – Friday, October 21, 8 am – 1 pm
- Strategic planning process with new steering committee and staff – Fall 2022 with plan in place by January 2023