



Year Three Report October 2020 – October 2021

Introduction

In Year Three of the Levine Center to End Hate, we built on the successes of our first two years. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to make our work challenging, but we adapted well, delivering high-quality virtual programs that enabled us to continue moving the mission forward.

Over the course of 2020-21, we successfully achieved the goals we set for ourselves:

1. Deliver educational programs addressing racism, antisemitism, and other forms of bias to 500 – 700 participants across the greater Rochester community
2. Offer interactive programs in a safe setting that enable 150 – 200 participants to engage in dialogue that expands understanding, challenges assumptions, and examines biases
3. Develop a pilot program engaging 10 – 15 youth in education and training on racism, antisemitism, and activism in partnership with the Jewish Federation’s education and engagement department

While we are proud to have achieved these goals, the numbers don’t tell the whole story. We know that in this time of virtual programming, one person who registers to attend an event can really be two, three, or more in the same household engaging with our programs. And as we describe in more detail below, we are creating an enduring impact with long-lasting content that is being used by our community in innumerable ways well beyond the original program, creating a ripple effect that is greater than can be accounted for by individual numbers.

Programming

A Tale of Two Cities: Redlining and Racist Policies in Rochester, New York

On February 10, 2021, we held a virtual event in partnership with TEDx Rochester titled **A Tale of Two Cities: Redlining and Racist Policies in Rochester, New York**. The program was an outgrowth of two highly successful presentations at our first *Brave Spaces* Summit in October 2020. Simeon Banister, Vice President of Community Programs at the Rochester Area Community Foundation, and Shane Wiegand, Educator and Researcher, joined forces to deliver an incredibly thorough, insightful, and challenging history lesson on the often-overlooked social policies that have shaped Rochester. Over 1,500 members of our community registered to attend, and more than 800 were on the call.



We received completed surveys from an impressive number of people – 234 – or more than 25% of attendees. Clearly, people were interested in letting us know what they thought, and we were delighted to gather the information, which is summarized in the attached report. The topic was critical, and for many people the information was new. Below is some of the feedback we received.

It was an amazing amount of information, specific to Rochester, packed into an hour. It is so important to shed light on our difficult and racist past to better understand and acknowledge our difficult and racist present so we can hopefully make some significant anti-racist changes for the future.

The more I learn about the systemic inequality that has plagued our community among others, the more I realize that I know so little, and still have so much to learn. Amazing webinar. Thank you to all who made it happen.

This presentation was one of the best that I have attended in quite a while. Both speakers told their "stories" in a very passionate manner - and I would expect that it impacted every one of us who attended. I learned a great deal and I really felt the urgency that the speakers imparted. There is a great deal to accomplish but with more of these presentations and the work that is being currently done, I believe that we will begin to see changes occur. Thank you very much for imparting your knowledge and experience this evening.

I really thought this was informative, inspiring and eye opening. I plan to become a nurse in the Rochester area once I graduate in the spring and I think that it is crucial to understand populations I may encounter in the work force. I did not know a lot of the information shared about Rochester in this presentation. After watching this presentation, I feel a duty to be an advocate for BIPOC in Rochester and to raise awareness for the disparities they encounter on a daily basis. Thank you so much for your time tonight. Continue your amazing work:)

Asian Matters: Standing with Rochester's Asian American Communities

With attacks on Asian and Asian Americans increasing across the country, the Levine Center to End Hate was proud to partner with Monroe Community College's Department of Global Education & International Services and steering committee member Christina Lee, Coordinator of Global Education, to present **Asian Matters: Standing with Rochester's Asian American Communities**, a three-part series exploring the Asian and Asian American communities of Greater Rochester, the history of racism and xenophobia aimed at Asian and Asian Americans in our country, and ways we can work together to support our Asian and Asian American neighbors. The program took place on three Sundays – March 21, April 11, and May 2, 2021 – with over 150 people attending in total.

Session One, titled **Asian in Rochester**, examined the impacts of racism and xenophobia historically and more recently with the COVID-19 pandemic and featured a panel made up of Natasha Chen Christensen, a Taiwanese American Associate Professor of Sociology at Monroe

Community College, and Pilapa Esara Carroll, a Thai American Associate Professor of Anthropology at SUNY Brockport who teaches about issues of migration and gender. Christina Lee, who is Korean American, served as moderator and helped to plan the series.

Session Two, titled **Asian in Perspective**, brought together three Asian Americans from different sectors of Greater Rochester – Korean American musician Hannah PK, Indian American journalist Smriti Jacob, and Laotian American Monroe County legislator Frank Keophetlasy to talk about common misperceptions of Asian Americans and the negative effect they have on the Asian American community. Samiha Islam, whose parents are from Bangladesh and who was a member of the Levine Center steering committee, served as moderator.

The third and final session, titled **Asian in Action**, introduced attendees to three local Asian American change-makers whose activism on behalf of refugees, the LGBTQ+ community, and others breaks down divisions that can become a source of hate. Panelists included Joshua Wu, a Vice President at Edelman Data & Intelligence, who is actively involved with diversity and inclusion efforts at Edelman; Jeremy Tjhung, who moved to Rochester from New York City in 2018 with a mission to volunteer, work on campaigns, and register voters and was actively involved with Moms Demand Action Against Gun Violence, Indivisible Rochester, the Out Alliance, and others; and Soe Win, who came to the United States as a refugee from Burma in 2007 and is currently a PhD candidate at SUNY Buffalo with a focus is on gender equality and violence against women and minorities. The panel was moderated by steering committee member Tiana Stephens, who is the Communications Officer at the Greater Rochester Health Foundation.

Brave Spaces 2021: Rochester's 2nd Annual Summit to End Hate

The Levine Center to End Hate held **Brave Spaces 2021: Rochester's 2nd Annual Summit to End Hate** on Sunday, October 17, 2021 with the theme, "Hate will not divide us." Over 300 people registered from a range of sectors, including business, banking, nonprofit, education, and health care, in addition to community members.

Keynote speaker Juju Chang, Emmy-award winning co-anchor of ABC Nightly News, spoke about how the uptick in anti-Asian as well as anti-Jewish hate have affected her personally, and how she has used her platform to bring these issues to the public's attention. 96% of survey respondents gave Juju a 4 – 5 when rating her effectiveness as a keynote speaker. "Juju was an excellent speaker. ... Great to hear her thoughts from a Korean-Jewish lens."

Closing speaker Chris Mosier is a trailblazing athlete who made history in 2020 as the first transgender athlete to compete in the Olympic Trials in the gender with which they identify. In a wide-ranging conversation moderated by Brighton native and Pace University student of dance Matthew Lipschitz, Chris spoke about how he is using his platform as an athlete to speak out against hate. "Chris Mosier is a fantastic, engaging, and inspiring human. Thank you for bringing him to this summit."

The **breakout sessions**, listed below, received high marks from participants.

- **Building Unity in the Workplace:** A moderated panel of local business and government leaders shared successes and challenges implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programming, and recommendations for building unity in the workplace. Panelists included representatives of M&T Bank, Edelman Data & Intelligence, Monroe County, and Greyston Center for Open Hiring.
- **Teaching History through an Antiracist Lens in Monroe County:** East High Superintendent Shaun Nelms, Brighton Central School District Superintendent Dr. Kevin McGowan, and East Irondequoit Central School District Superintendent Mary Grow discussed a more inclusive history curriculum for 8th, 11th, and 12th graders being rolled out across Monroe County this year.
- **Understanding and Interrupting Implicit Bias:** Facilitators from the Rochester-based Center for Dispute Settlement led a workshop that laid the foundation for understanding the impact of implicit bias on our relations, communities, and systems.
- **Safe Spaces for Youth in Schools:** A panel of four young people from across the area discussed how their schools have (or have not) worked to build systemic safe spaces for youth of different identities. The panel was expertly moderated by Sady Alvarado-Fischer, Corporate Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for Excellus BlueCross BlueShield.

We asked survey respondents to assess how successful we were in achieving our three goals on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very successful). The results showed that the event hit the mark.

1) Develop a deeper understanding of what is driving increased expressions of hate.

- 67% gave a score of 4 - 5

2) Explore tactics for combatting bias, prejudice, and bigotry.

- 83% gave a score of 4 - 5

3) Feel empowered to address hate in your spheres of influence.

- 75% gave a score of 4 - 5

We also found that we are reaching a diverse audience with our programming. Among those completing the survey:

- 18% were Black/African American, 10% were multiracial, and 68% were White/European American
- 5% were 18-29 years of age, 32% were 30 – 49, 55% were 50 – 69, and 10% were 70+
- Respondents live all across Monroe County, in the City of Rochester and in many of our suburbs, including Brighton, Fairport, Gates/Chili, Greece, Irondequoit, Pittsford, and Webster

Generation Justice

In April, 2021, the Levine Center partnered with the Jewish Federation and the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence to offer ***Generation Justice***, a 4-part virtual series for Jewish teens to explore racism, social justice, and community-building. The program created a trusted space for 10 high schoolers from Brighton and Pittsford to build the vocabulary and tools needed to engage with lifelong anti-racism work by participating in conversations facilitated by two Gandhi Institute staff that helped them to challenge their assumptions and prejudices. Teen participants reported that the program provided them with the opportunity to ask questions and explore concepts without fear of judgment. They were glad to learn about the history of the Black Lives Matter movement and the working concept of implicit bias. We were pleased to pilot the program with the group and look forward to exploring ways to use what we learned in future youth programming.

Levine 2.0

In April 2021, the William and Mildred Levine Foundation provided generous new funding to scale up and amplify the efforts of the Levine Center through youth engagement, corporate partnerships, volunteerism, and advocacy. The new grant was designed to build on the Center's successes in the areas of education and dialogue while significantly expanding the pillar of positive action through tangible, hands-on engagement of youth and adults.

Levine 2.0 and Youth Engagement

We hired Thomas Cuyler as the Center's first Youth Engagement Coordinator in August. Thomas has several years of youth development experience and a degree in Community Youth Development from Nazareth College. He hit the ground running and is in the process of recruiting high school students for a Youth Ambassador Council (YAC) that will help provide input to the Levine Center's youth engagement efforts. He has developed a structure for the YAC, created an application and marketing materials, researched and established an amount for student stipends, and networked with local organizations to help identify prospective applicants. Participants will be paid \$13.50/hour for a 4- to 6-hour workweek.

Thomas is also bringing a new *Mapping Equity* project to fruition in partnership with Nazareth College; ROC The Future, a collective impact initiative bringing together a coalition of partners working toward a shared vision of academic success for every child in Monroe County; and ESRI, the company that is providing us with the GIS (geographic information system) licenses needed for the project. Thomas will train the participants to use the GIS software to collect and consolidate information on educational interventions such as academic support, sports, extracurriculars, job readiness, and college readiness across the city and county. They will take this information to create a story map that can be used to identify where interventions are lacking so that Nazareth College and ROC The Future can develop a plan to distribute resources more equitably.

We aim to engage 4 – 5 high school students in the *Mapping Equity* project, which is slated to take place in the second half of the school year. Some of these students may also serve on the YAC. Not only will they develop concrete, marketable skills through the GIS training and work, but they will also be developing their leadership, planning, and communications abilities.

Levine 2.0 and Corporate Engagement

In the area of corporate engagement, we were very successful in securing sponsorships for our *Brave Spaces* summit totaling \$41,500 from JPMorgan Chase, M&T Bank, Trillium Health, Nixon Peabody, and Excellus. But our intent is not to simply be transactional. We are seeking constructive relationships with corporate partners to help them build on their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts by creating a platform for dialogue and increased understanding as antidotes to bias and hate.

As part of this work, we will be creating a corporate council to advance the mission of the Levine Center through targeted engagement with Rochester’s business and non-profit sectors. Council members will act as ambassadors to their own and other organizations, work with Levine Center staff to assess the need for trainings and educational programs within their organizations, promote a soon-to-be-developed Levine Pledge to End Hate, and identify and shepherd corporate sponsorship opportunities. We have been in conversation with several local corporate leaders about serving on the council and are finalizing the charter and the list of council members to begin in early 2022.

Raising Awareness

We have been grateful for the opportunity to elevate our message through media coverage:

- In March 2021, Levine Center director Karen Elam appeared with Natasha Chen Christensen, Associate Professor of Sociology at Monroe Community College; Pilapa Esara Carroll, Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at SUNY Brockport; and Christina Lee, Levine Center steering committee member and Coordinator for Global Education at Monroe Community College, on WXXI’s radio show *Connections* with Evan Dawson to talk about [How we can work together to support our Asian and Asian American neighbors](#).
- On October 11, 2021, Karen had the opportunity to promote [Brave Spaces 2021 on 13WHAM’s Good Day Rochester](#) in an interview with anchor Alexis Arnold.
- On October 15, Karen had another chance to boost publicity for the summit in an [interview with Mark Gruba at 8WROC](#).

In addition, in April 2021, Karen was invited to serve as a panelist on the topic of “Systems Change Agents: Policy, Decision Makers and Accountability” at the YWCA’s annual premier event, [Stand Against Racism](#). She joined Dr. Candace Lucas, Monroe County’s Chief Community Engagement Officer and Lead Staff on the Commission on Racial and Structural Equity, and Dr. Cephas Archie, Chief Equity Officer for the City of Rochester, to discuss actions that individuals and systems can take to affect real and lasting change in the fight for equity.

Our efforts to collaborate and partner with other organizations engaged in similar work has resulted in requests to co-sponsor programs, which in turn has enabled us to amplify our message.

- In partnership with Monroe Community College, we co-sponsored a talk by Dr. Carol Anderson, chair of African American Studies at Emory University, on “Voter Suppression, Inequity & Racism” on February 25, 2021.
- In June, 2021, we were approached by Bruce Barnes, Director of the George Eastman Museum, to ask that we co-sponsor a series called *In Solidarity: Celebrating Asian/Pacific American Directors* at the Dryden Theatre. Dr. Barnes had become aware of our efforts to highlight the recent attacks on the Asian American community through our *Asian Matters* series. We were thrilled to be asked and enthusiastically agreed to co-sponsor. In the course of conversations with Dr. Barnes we were also asked to co-sponsor a second series, *In Solidarity: Spotlighting Black Film Artists*, and again, we agreed without hesitation.

Anti-Bias Collaborative

In December 2020, we invited local organizations engaged in addressing racism, bias, and other forms of hate to meet on Zoom. The purpose of the meeting was to learn about what each of us was doing, share information on upcoming programs, and discuss ways that we could best coordinate efforts to avoid duplication and enhance collaboration. More than 20 organizational leaders attended the first meeting. Groups included Action for a Better Community, Urban League of Rochester, United Way, Native American Cultural Center, PathStone Foundation, Frederick Douglas Family Initiatives, Heritage Christian Services, Gandhi Institute, Monroe Community College, Partners in Restorative Initiatives, and more.

The group has gathered online every month since that initial meeting. New organizations have joined, and some have stepped away, but the consistent feeling is that we should continue to meet. We have engaged in vigorous discussions, centered around the question, “What would a Rochester free of hate look like?” We have used the time together to support one another in this challenging work and to share information and resources. We are proud to be providing a platform for these gatherings through behind-the-scenes work, including calendaring the meetings; setting the agendas; taking, editing, and sharing the minutes; and facilitating the discussions. This is the type of collective impact work that the Levine Center is uniquely positioned to provide.

Our Enduring Impact

In the brief time that the Levine Center to End Hate has been in existence we have established a name and place for ourselves in the greater Rochester community. The unique, rich programming we have developed—including our *Why Do We Hate?* launch event in 2019 and our signature *Brave Spaces* summits in 2020 and 2021—has offered content never before experienced by our participants. We have been responsive to incidents of hate, developing our *Asian Matters* program to address the uptick in anti-Asian violence and inviting a transgender athlete to be our closing speaker at this year’s summit.

We have been extremely gratified to learn of the enduring impact of our programs. For example, steering committee member Christina Lee discovered that the Warner School of Education had incorporated the recordings of our *Asian Matters* series into their classes, and M&T Bank VP Melissa Jordan, who served as a panelist at this year's summit, told us that she used the recording of Shane Wiegand's presentation on redlining (from last year's summit) in a training with one of the bank's resource groups. Furthermore, we know from Vimeo analytics that individuals have been accessing recordings of many of our programs.

As we heard from one of the 800+ participants in *A Tale of Two Cities*:

This is a presentation that everyone in Rochester must see. ***I am grateful that this presentation will be provided to all of us. I will be asking friends and family to watch this and offer space to hold discussions.*** We must come to terms with the reality of Rochester and the suburbs, and our role in it, past and present. ***The call to action cannot be understated.*** Thank you, thank you, thank you! (Emphasis added.)

The Levine Center to End Hate has quickly become identified as a thought leader in the Rochester community. Businesses and nonprofit organizations representing other minority groups have invited us to the table, and we have witnessed broad acceptance and belief in our capacity to address hate. It is on this strong, steady footing that we head into our fourth year, excited for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Conclusion

With the pandemic continuing to disrupt our day-to-day lives, the work of the Levine Center to End Hate is more important than ever. While being unable to bring people together in person has been frustrating, we have maximized the opportunity that technology has provided to continue offering high-quality, thought-provoking programming. We know from surveys and informal feedback that we are delivering much-needed and much-appreciated content to our community.

In our "Levine 2.0" proposal, we described plans to build on these successes while laying the groundwork to expand the pillar of positive action through youth engagement, corporate partnerships, volunteerism, and advocacy. To that end, below we describe our goals for 2022:

1. Hire a full-time Program Coordinator to plan, develop, and implement programs addressing racism, antisemitism, and other forms of hate. *(We have encountered challenges over the past several months trying to hire for this position due to changes in labor market brought on by the pandemic. In response, we are reworking the job title and description and are hoping to be able to identify and hire a candidate in the first quarter of 2022.)*
2. Develop a Youth Ambassador Council and a local anti-bias curriculum for Rochester area youth to address issues of hate

3. Create a Corporate Council of leaders who will engage the broader Rochester business community in the work of the Levine Center

As we move past the pandemic and into more opportunities for in-person gatherings, we will build out our volunteerism and advocacy capabilities. We are hopeful that we can lay the groundwork for this phase of our work in the spring or summer of 2022, but ultimately public health guidelines will dictate the timing. We are ever grateful to the William and Mildred Levine Foundation for supporting this important work and look forward to another year of impactful programming.

Attachments:

- *Tale of Two Cities* evaluation summary
- *Asian Matters* evaluation summary
- *Brave Spaces 2021* evaluation summary