

FEBRUARY 2019

VISION ACTION NETWORK

# THE CATALYST

INSPIRING COLLABORATION IN WASHINGTON COUNTY



## BUSINESS TAKES ON HOMELESSNESS

VAN facilitates Hillsboro's Joint Task Force on Homelessness

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

News and noteworthy opportunities

## ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY

VAN's Collaborative Community Forum takes a significant step forward

# Director's Corner



**Glenn Montgomery**  
Executive Director

I love languages. Over the years, I've studied German, Swedish, Russian, and Spanish. In college, my major was Computer Applications Management, and I wrote code in several languages, samples of which you can probably now find in the National Museum of Natural History alongside cuneiform clay tablets and Bob Dylan lyrics. But I digress. I am reminded that language is ever evolving. Over time, some are replaced altogether which is why my youngest daughter - a recent computer science grad - is interviewing with Google, and I am not (side note to VAN's Board: I never even applied!).

I see some striking parallels between foreign languages and the language of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). I find myself working hard just to gain some technical proficiency, and that only goes so far. While I may understand 20% of what a "native speaker" says, my tongue trips over itself whenever I try to utter the most basic of expressions. I make a lot of mistakes, and sometimes I'm just afraid to say anything at all. And beyond the language itself is the culture that surrounds it. While it might take years for me to feel comfortable immersed in a foreign culture, when it comes to DEI, I can't be certain I will ever feel "at home." And yet, I am compelled to try because, unlike English or HTML, I believe the language of DEI is fundamentally essential to who we are as a human family.

This is why VAN is investing in partnerships with culturally specific organizations in Washington County. With their help, VAN is gaining fluency on issues of equity and learning to listen and respond in appropriate and effective ways, as reflected in our recent Collaborative Community Forum (pg. 6).

Much has happened since our December issue, and there are many opportunities for you to consider. I hope you find some useful information in this issue of *The Catalyst*, and perhaps a little inspiration to carry you through the day.

In service,

# Reflections on DEI

## Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



**Fernanda Wilent**  
Director of Community Engagement

### Aiming Towards Social Inclusion

Dear friends,

During the last few weeks it's been a pleasure to join forces and come together as a community with one common goal of advancing racial equity aiming towards social inclusion in Washington County. It is highly motivating to see that there is a genuine desire, across all sectors, for shared prosperity. We all know that this is not just the right thing to do, but that the cost of exclusion is simply too high socially, politically and economically.

As we determine together the best way to move towards inclusion, I want to share with you a great paper by Maggie Potapchuk for assessing community inclusiveness entitled [\*Making Progress: A Tool and Resources for Leading Inclusive Communities\*](#). Though originally published in 2003, the content is no less relevant today. The tool itself was created in response to events that occurred in Clarksburg, West Virginia where the Ku Klux Klan demonstrated their opposition to the cities first African-American mayor Rev. Dr. David D.A. Kates. The National League of Cities promoted the tool as part of its goal to "end racism once and for all." On the next page is an example of one of the questions asked to assess inclusiveness in a community.

It is part of VAN's mission to promote inclusive leadership in Washington County. We are inspired by your engagement and committed to continue the conversation. Please stay engaged, share your thoughts and ideas with us, and join us on April 29th to continue the conversation!

Kind regards,

*Maria F. Wilent*

# Reflections on DEI

## Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**Q: In policy discussions covering areas like housing, employment etc., are racial issues or racial disparities part of the discussion?**

<b>Not Discussed</b>	<b>An Afterthought</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Part of the discussion.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race is not a part of community policy discussions.</li> <li>• When race is brought into a community policy discussion, it is sometimes ignored, either as an issue or even as the cause of any problem.</li> <li>• Individuals and organizations that raise the issues of race may be perceived as oversensitive or trying to create havoc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race is beginning to be a part of community policy discussions. This transition may be due to outside influences, or key voices in the community speaking up, or a major racial incident.</li> <li>• The response is similar to the Invisibility stage. In policy discussions, the issue is typically placed in the context of blaming the community of color, or short-term solutions are identified without delving deeper to understand systemic issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions about the impact on communities of color are beginning to be raised when policy issues are discussed.</li> <li>• As more questions are raised in policy discussions, there may be strong feelings toward the people who raise the issue, including anger, disappointment, and the urge to isolate them.</li> <li>• There is a growing group of people who, with increased awareness of racial issues, becomes more vocal and active.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People form alliances based on their priorities and commitment to addressing racism.</li> <li>• Questions posed about race are more integrated into policy discussions.</li> <li>• There is a commitment to educate residents about the structural impact of racism.</li> </ul>
<b>Invisibility</b>	<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Disequilibrium</b>	<b>Restructuring</b>

- Who brings up racial issues? How is that person(s) perceived by others?
- Are racial issues brought up seeking understanding, discovering how different racial groups are treated, or brought up in the context of fear and blame?
- When race is brought up is it talked about openly or are code words used? (e.g., urban youth, at-risk children, inner city)
- In some communities where people of color have recently become/are the majority, race may be talked about in policy discussions, but in terms of divvying up resources or focusing on class differences, rather than a common vision for quality of life for all residents.

*Assessing your Community's Inclusiveness*

*M. Potapchuk*

Over the next couple of months, VAN and its partners are holding Community Conversations with Washington County communities of color that will feed into a public gathering called [Advancing Racial Equity: Moving Ideas Into Action](#).

Contact VAN or any of the organizations below to learn more and see how you can participate.


 Coalition of Communities of Color  
 Shweta Moorthy  
 shweta@coalitioncommunitiescolor.org


**ADELANTE MUJERES**  
 EDUCATION • EMPOWERMENT • ENTERPRISE  
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 ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN NETWORK OF OREGON  
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# Convenings

## Hillsboro Rises to the Challenge on Homelessness

Last fall, the City of Hillsboro and Hillsboro Chamber asked VAN to facilitate a Joint Task Force on Homelessness. The impetus behind the request was the increasingly visible presence of people on the street who have no home or adequate shelter, and its impacts on the wider community. Mayor Steve Callaway and Chamber Chair Sarah McGraw-Plaster co-chaired the group composed of local business owners, city and county staff, and key community faith and service organizations.



The Task Force held seven evening meetings over three months and developed a solid framework for a "toolkit" to help business owners and staff resolve issues stemming from homelessness in a respectful and dignified manner. There was broad acknowledgement that the toolkit does not offer solutions to the causes of homelessness, but it can educate the business community and give them better ways to address issues as they arise.



Sonrise Church hosts the 90-day [Shelter @ Orenco](#) in collaboration with other local churches, businesses, foundations, and the Washington County community.

In the spring, the Chamber plans to offer a free training for businesses so they can be better informed on the issues, familiarize themselves with the new toolkit, and learn about existing resources designed to serve the homeless population.

Contact the [Hillsboro Chamber](#) for more information.

### Got VAN?

OUR mission is to bring people together across sectors to address complex issues for the benefit of the Washington County community.

[Let's explore your specific needs!](#)



Contact Glenn Montgomery, Executive Director  
[glenn@visionactionnetwork.org](mailto:glenn@visionactionnetwork.org) or 503-846-5792

# Convenings

## Responding to the Call: A Solid Step Forward



VAN gathered 215 people at Village Church on January 31 for its Collaborative Community Forum entitled *Responding to the Call: Advancing Racial Equity in Washington County*. In partnership with Adelante Mujeres, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), Bienestar, and Coalition of Communities of Color, the forum convened a refreshingly diverse array of public, private, nonprofit, and faith-based participants, 40% of whom identify as people of color.

Attendees spent a furiously-paced half-day "crowd-sourcing" their best ideas on education, economic empowerment, and civic engagement - themes from the "Call to Action" of the [Leading With Race](#) research justice report. Over the next couple of months, the conversations will continue as VAN and its partners engage the wider community to present these ideas and gather their input. And on April 29, **all are welcome** to join us at Sonrise Church in Hillsboro to learn what we've discovered along the way, and to identify some specific opportunities for collective action to advance racial equity in Washington County.



### Moving Ideas into Action

Advancing Racial Equity  
in Washington County

Monday, April 29, 2019

4:30-7:30pm

Sonrise Church, Hillsboro

Stipends available. Childcare provided.

[More Info](#)

# Community Spotlight

## 2019 Washington County Community Engagement Summit!



FREE event with a light lunch included!  
[RSVP](#) now!

Virginia Garcia Cornelius Clinic, in partnership with Vision Action Network & Adelante Mujeres, invites you to a half day summit dedicated to exploring the topic of community engagement. Come share success stories and lessons learned as we aim to create programs that are relevant to, and well received by our communities.

**Tuesday, March 5, 2019**  
**9:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**Virginia Garcia Cornelius Wellness Center**  
**1151 N. Adair St. Cornelius, OR 97113**

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## Beaverton Looks for the Next BOLD Leaders

The Beaverton Organizing & Leadership Development Program (BOLD) is now recruiting for its 7th cohort of local leaders from immigrant and refugee communities and communities of color.

Do you live in Beaverton? Want to connect with other motivated community members from diverse backgrounds? Join this special program to:

- Learn concrete leadership, community organizing and advocacy skills;
- Understand local government and how to get involved;
- Build cross-cultural relationships with people from around the world;
- Help make Beaverton a thriving, multicultural city that includes everyone

**2019 Training Dates: March 30 | April 13 | May 4**  
*(Attendance for all 3 training dates is required to participate)*

**Click here [for more info and to apply!](#)**



For questions, or to refer a friend, contact: Paolo Esteban at [Pesteban@BeavertonOregon.gov](mailto:Pesteban@BeavertonOregon.gov) or 503-526-2439.

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## Oregon Humanities

### White Allyship in Close Communities

What does it mean to be a white ally? And what does it mean to have the support of white allies? What is needed from white people in our communities to move the conversation about racism—both statewide and nationally—forward in a productive and respectful way? In this facilitated conversation, participants will have the chance to explore their identities, learn how to acknowledge different lived experiences without alienating friends and neighbors, and move toward action in their own communities.

Facilitated by educator and activist Alexis James. Here's additional [information](#) to learn more.

# Initiative Updates



## Identifying Next Steps

On January 30, VAN convened the Washington County Thrives Collaborative to hear from representatives of Metro, City of Beaverton, City of Hillsboro, and the Washington County Housing Authority regarding their implementation plans for the affordable housing bond. The speakers acknowledged the challenges they face, such as closing the funding gap on projects geared towards the most economically vulnerable residents. At the same time, the tenor of the conversation was positive as each jurisdiction is rolling up its sleeves and making progress. The Collaborative now needs to decide its current priorities and is considering its options for the near term. If you'd like to stay connected to Thrives, contact VAN!

### For more info on jurisdictions

[Metro's Oversight Committee](#)

[Beaverton Housing](#)

[Hillsboro Community Service](#)

[Washington County Housing Services](#)



Metro's Jes Larson provides an update to Thrives members and supporters.



VAN engages stakeholders across sectors to collaboratively address critical issues in Washington County.

## VAN Welcomes New Board Member!



Chris Villa, President, PCC Rock Creek Campus

Chris Villa was elected to VAN's Board of Directors last month at their annual planning retreat. He recently moved from California to take over as President of PCC Rock Creek Campus in August 2018. Most recently, Dr. Villa served as Vice President of Student Services at Los Angeles Mission College where he led the equitable student success campus agenda in developing and implementing its Guided Pathways Program and the revitalization of the Student Success Center. Among his many official roles, he is also a mentor within the National Hispanic Community College Hispanic Council and looks forward to engaging with Washington County as a VAN ambassador. Some of you may already have seen him speak on January 31 as part of the recent panel during VAN's Collaborative Community Forum on racial equity.

We look forward to benefiting from Chris's perspective, knowledge, and passion as he fulfills this new role.

**Interested in what we do? Want to be more engaged in VAN's work? Contact us to share your interests and to explore the possibilities.**

**We're always looking for collaborative partners!**



# Vision Action Network

VAN engages stakeholders across sectors to collaboratively address critical issues in Washington County.

## Board of Directors

### Executive Committee

**Mike Duyck (Chair)**

Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue

**Sr. Adele-Marie Altenhofen (Vice-Chair)**

Sisters of St. Mary's of Oregon

**Dick Stenson (Past Chair)**

Tuality Healthcare (retired)

**Nancy Roberts (Secretary)**

Providence St. Vincent Medical Center

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WorkSystems, Inc.

**Mary Monnat**

LifeWorks NW

**Chris Villa**

PCC Rock Creek

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