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The Catalyst

a bi-monthly publication
from Vision Action Network

INSPIRING
COLLABORATION
IN WASHINGTON COUNTY



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DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Glenn Montgomery
Executive Director

Dear colleagues:

If I were to describe the first two months of this year, I'd use one word... "big." In early January, VAN's largest board of directors – now 18 members strong – convened for its annual strategic planning retreat. Ten members participated for the first time, and their big energy filled the space that was generously provided by our friends at THPRD. VAN's seasoned directors contributed wisdom drawn from history and perspective-taking, and together we dreamed big about the possible.

For those who know VAN, we are all about collaboration, and a recent example was an opportunity I had to work alongside Marcus Mundy, Executive Director of the Coalition of Communities of Color. He and I are co-founders of the Washington County Racial Equity Collaborative, but in this instance, we were hired by Metro to help them build the capacity of communities of color. We co-chaired an impressive group of leaders from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) organizations in a series of workshops to develop recommendations that were presented to Metro Council on February 27. At that work session, Marcus and I had an opportunity to address the Council, and at the conclusion, Metro's COO was instructed to find the money to kick-start a 3-year pilot program with at least \$500 thousand of grant funds for the first year – a big win for the tri-county region!

In other big news, I'm pleased to report that the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Ad Hoc Work Group wrapped up its vital work in February with the help of a team of consultants led by Trillium Advisors and convened by VAN. I encourage you to read more about this under VAN's Initiatives of this newsletter, and then attend the public presentation of their findings and recommendations during the Washington County Board of Commissioners (BOC) work session on March 17.

Speaking of the BOC, I want to congratulate them on the very recent adoption of the county's first Equity Resolution, the culmination of over a year of staff labor, diverse community input, expert advice, and a commitment by the commissioners to make it happen! I witnessed the amazing public testimony and the historic vote, and I'm eager to see how this resolution influences the substance and spirit of county policy, operations, and the big impact it will have on the larger community.

VAN's own equity work takes a significant step forward as our board and staff will soon embark on a months-long journey facilitated by the Center for Equity and Inclusion. This is an essential part of our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative.

Big stuff, all of it!

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn Montgomery". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

REFLECTIONS ON DEI

REVERSE MENTORING FORWARDS EQUITY

As part of a community driven process VAN facilitated last year, VAN encouraged constituents - about 450 people - to generate ideas and envision ways to operationalize them to [advance racial equity in Washington County](#), specifically in the areas of education, economic empowerment, and civic engagement. One of the topics that came to the surface was the need for mentorship programs.



Fernanda Wilent
Director of Community Engagement

Mentorship is not a new initiative, and in many cases it has become a formal program in organizational culture. But in a growing and changing culture, most have realized the need to be constant learners and this has brought to the surface a fairly new concept called [Reverse Mentoring](#).

Stanford Social Innovation Review, a quarterly magazine published by the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society at Stanford University, recently posted a great article on this topic entitled [“How Reverse Mentoring Can Lead to More Equitable Workplaces”](#).

Sharlene Gandhi, the author, writes:

“Reverse mentoring as diverse mentoring can break down traditional barriers that impede the advancement of racial minorities in the workplace. Upending the power dynamic of the traditional mentoring model promotes a sense of belonging and nurtures stronger connections between colleagues. It is this human connection that will lead to a more equitable future.”

VAN has convened other culturally specific organizations to formalize our latest initiative [The Racial Equity Collaborative](#) and to envision a way to build capacity for communities of color and undeserved populations in Washington County. As we do this work, we will be looking to engage other key organizations to increase collaboration. It is important, however, that as we aim to do this work of addressing equity, we also remind ourselves of the need to regard communities as the experts of their lived experiences, and to approach the work at a relational level. Let’s ask people from a different background to mentor us so we can build that connection at a human level; let’s become part of the community we aim to empower. That is what will lead us, ultimately, to a more equitable future.

Yours in peace,

Maria F. Wilent

Community Engagement

EVENTS & CONVENINGS:

Be informed. Stay engaged!

Save the date! Thursday, April 30th 5:00 p.m - 8:00 p.m

Vision Action Network and the Racial Equity Collaborative are pleased to invite you to the 3rd Collaborative Community Forum:

Advancing Racial Equity: The State of the Community

Location TBD

Unity and accountability are the themes of this year's forum. A year ago, we convened leaders and community partners to brainstorm ideas on ways to advance racial equity in the areas of education, economic empowerment and civic engagement. It's time to come together, assess our progress, and recommit to collaborative efforts that move us in the right direction!

Got VAN?

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

Need a convener or value-added facilitator?



Contact Glenn Montgomery, Executive Director
glenn@visionactionnetwork.org or 503-846-5792

NEWS AND NOTEWORTHY

DACA, Know Your Rights, Public Charge

Here are a few important links to share with families and social service agencies.

[Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign](#) is

leading the efforts of informing people about Public Charge. They have info sheets, and documents that explains everything about PC.

The Oregon Ready Coalition which also manages the [Oregon Immigration Resource Page](#) is working on informing families about Public Charge. They have created great info sheets in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

[Oregon Public Benefits Hotline](#). They can answer questions about Public Benefits and Eligibility. The number is 1 (800) 520-5292

CENSUS

#Wecountoregon

#Wecountoregon is a community-led effort to ensure that hard to count communities, including people of color, immigrants, renters, rural communities, and parents of children under 5 -understand and take the 2020 Census, will be hosting training sessions. To learn more about details on dates and locations, please [click here!](#)

UNITE OREGON

Is partnering with the City of Portland to provide the Pan-Immigrant Organizing and Leadership Training (PILOT) program's 2019-2020 training: We COUNT (Community/Census Organizing and Understanding Network Training).

Applications are officially open, please [Apply Here \(English\)!](#)

MET

Will be hosting a Census 2020 Ambassador Training Summit n Saturday, March 7, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. @ MET More more information and to Register please visit: www.metpdx.org. Free and Open to all!

APANO

and other organizations like Causa, Virginia Garcia and Centro Cultural, among others, are joining efforts and have great information and tools to train and recruit leaders for the upcoming Census. We encourage you to [visit their websites and get involved!](#)

PUBLIC CHARGE COMMUNITY FORUMS

Know Your Rights - Public Charge

Hosted by Virginia Gracia and Catholic Charities

Date: Monday, March 2

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Location: Virginia Garcia Cornelius Wellness Center (1151 N Adair St, Cornelius, OR)

Public Charge and the deportation process

Hosted by The Immigrant Solidarity Collaborative, SOAR and Pueblo Unido.

Date: Saturday, March 7

Time: 4pm-6pm

Location: United Methodist Church
168 NE 8th Ave, Hillsboro, OR 97124

Community Spotlight

CITY OF BEAVERTON

The quarterly Welcoming Beaverton partner gathering takes place Wednesday, April 22 at Tualatin Hills Nature Center Beaver Den Room in Beaverton. Welcoming Beaverton supports the successful integration of the local immigrant community. For more info, please contact Alexis Ball at aball@beavertonoregon.gov.

CITY OF HILLSBORO

If you live in Hillsboro, consider joining the [Hillsboro Civic Leadership Academy](#). Applications for the 2020 Civic Leadership Academy will open in May.

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL OF WASHINGTON COUNTY (HRC)

The HRC Listening Sessions present: The Bias and Kids Conversation Project facilitated by Oregon Humanities.

Monday April 20th from 5:30-7:30pm - Location: TBD.

Please visit our [Facebook page](#) for further details and updates.

TUALATIN HILLS PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT

THPRD invites the community to participate in a [public survey](#) as part of its community visioning. Available in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Korean and open until April 24, so take a moment to fill it out!

WASHINGTON COUNTY

VAN staff was honored to witness the testimony and unanimous adoption of the Washington County Equity Resolution on Feb. 25! See the [press release](#) for more info.



Save the date! On Friday, April 10, Health and Human Services will host its Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) 2020 Forum at Walters Cultural Arts Center. Contact Erin Jolly at erin_jolly@co.washington.or.us for more information.

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.

VAN INITIATIVES AND CONVENINGS



WASHINGTON COUNTY THRIVES

Last spring, VAN convened Thrives members after the passage of the Metro affordable housing bond, the "sticks and bricks" funding for much needed housing in the region. It did not take long to agree that Thrives next area of focus should be "wrap-around" services, such as behavioral health, addiction treatment, job coaching, etc., all of which serve to keep the most vulnerable residents stably housed. VAN ultimately formed the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Ad Hoc Work Group, and with the financial backing of Washington County Administration, we engaged Trillium Advisors to work with this group and other experts to assess the current delivery system and recommend changes to deliver better outcomes for county residents. These recommendations will be the focus of a presentation delivered to the County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, March 17 at 1pm during their regularly scheduled work session.

Coinciding with this effort, VAN has represented the Thrives Collaborative on the Advisory Committee of [HereTogether](#), a coalition of service providers, business leaders, elected officials, and advocates who believe homelessness in the region is not an unsolvable problem. For over a year, HereTogether has worked on a funding measure to help chronically homelessness people and those at imminent risk of losing their home. During this past month, the HereTogether Coalition worked around the clock to complete the draft language of a ballot initiative that would fund critically needed services, and on February 25, the Metro Council adopted this language and voted unanimously to [refer the measure](#) to the May 2020 ballot. If approved by voters, the measure will generate nearly \$250 million per year for homeless services. While this is not enough to solve the enormity of the problem, it is a significant step towards improving the lives of thousands of people on the streets today.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Last September, VAN's Board created the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative to reflect the community's deepening commitment to advance equity in Washington County, and in recognition of VAN's role as a convener that creates space for critical dialogue and collaborative action. The Racial Equity Collaborative (REC) is an important outgrowth of this initiative. Co-convened by VAN, members of the REC recently signed an MOU to formalize their partnership and work towards a 3-year equity action plan that will be presented to the Washington County Board of Commissioners and other community leaders before the end of this year. Among other activities, the REC is hosting the 3rd Collaborative Community Forum on April 30 (see pg. 3 for details and save the date!).



GOOD TIMES!



VAN's Board retreat was a great way to kick off 2020 where we welcomed seven new members who brought both fresh perspectives and positive energy.
(L to R back row: Mike Duyck, Tara Pedersen, Sr. Adele Marie Altenhofen, Katherine Russell, Andrew McGough, Kemp Shuey, Maria Rubio, Narce Rodriguez, Rania Ayoub, Ed Guzman, Chris Villa
Front row: Roy Kim, Glenn Montgomery, Al Roque, Annie Herbert, Alexis Ball, Fernanda Wilent
Not pictured: Insil Kang, Mary Monnat, Dick Stenson)



Lots of chatter and laughter among loyal friends, supporters and donors at VAN's 3rd annual VIP Reception on Feb. 13



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 (retired)

Sr. Adele-Marie Altenhofen
(Vice-Chair)
Sisters of St. Mary's of Oregon

Dick Stenson (Immediate Past Chair)
Tuality Healthcare (retired)

Annie Herbert (Secretary)
Kaiser Permanente

Directors

Rania Ayoub
City of Hillsboro

Alexis Ball
City of Beaverton

Ed Guzman
Sightline Institute

Insil Kang
Village Church

Roy Kim
Central Bethany
Development

Andrew McGough
WorkSystems, Inc.

Mary Monnat
LifeWorks NW

Tara Pedersen
Columbia Bank

Chris Villa
PCC Rock Creek

Narcedalia (Narce) Rodriguez
Pacific University

Albert (Al) Roque
Washington County
Sheriff's Office

Maria Rubio
Centro Cultural

Katherine Russell
Providence St. Vincent
Medical Center

Kemp Shuey
Community Action

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