

## **Shramadana Project Meeting Minutes - Amended Triangle Insight Meditation Community**

by Mary Mudd for 7 June 2017

**Attendees:** Susan Arshack, Cathy Cole, Tom Howlett, Leslie Killeen, Gordon Livermore, Gerri McGuire, Mary Mudd, Glaeshia O'Rourke, Barbara Shumannfang, Howard Staab, Hilda Sucipto, Ron Vereen, Karen Ziegler

We discussed the following agenda items:

- 1. Review of Questions About Volunteering** – we spent about 15 minutes discussing these seven questions (see below) with regard to being volunteers in the SP. These questions were written by Barbara with regard to the “white savior complex” and have also been made available to the four Racial Affinity groups for contemplation. A short video explaining the white savior complex can be found at this link: <http://everydayfeminism.com/2016/06/white-savior-problem/>.
  
- 2. Update on Service to the Episcopal Center** – Ron provided Sam Laurent with MP3 files of meditation guidance for students to use and also offered personal assistance.  
  
Ron will follow-up with Sam to schedule a meeting to discuss plans to paint the interior walls of the episcopal center and to build storage benches. Howard will also participate in this meeting.
  
- 3. Update on “Media Night”** – Gerri McGuire reported that the next media night will be July 14 with a showing of “13<sup>th</sup>”. General plans are to provide two media nights in the fall and two in the spring. Several films have been proposed, one of which is “Cowspiracy”.
  
- 4. Caring Circles** – There has been no activity with Caring Circles other than my request for Pet Sitter referrals. The system worked correctly with that request.
  
- 5. Sangha Tiny Library** – Hilda donated a bookcase for the Tiny Library which is now located in the hallway across from the bathrooms. Several books, magazines and a few DVDs have been donated. We briefly discussed adding a small cork board above the bookcase that could be used to display the current newsletter each month. Ron will discuss this idea with the other teachers and Sam.
  
- 6. Lama Rod Owens Visit** – Lama Rod Owens will be here for a week including Oct. 21-22 and will be available to give a talk and possibly a workshop during that time. Richard Jaffee in the Department of Religion wants him to give a talk at Duke, and other area groups are interested in participating with us in sponsoring the talks/workshops. Ron will follow-up on fees and transportation costs. Our organizing committee will include Barbara, Cathy, Karen and Ron. There will be additional volunteer opportunities during the time Llama Rod is here.

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- 7. Other Future Events** - Ron Vereen has contacted David Loy who will come in the winter.

We also agreed to plan another retreat for Memorial Day weekend (Thursday to Sunday) at Avila Retreat Center. Karen will make the reservation with Avila.

A trip to DC to tour the new Museum of African American History and Culture has been postponed till sometime next year. Leslie has been to the museum and recommends having at least two days for visiting because there is so much to see. Docent-led tours are available. Also, it was suggested that it would be helpful to have a booklet about the museum here for people to review before going to visit.

Ron will talk with Jeanne van Gamert about a possible Ruth King visit. Ruth King is currently available in March 2018.

- 8. Quarterly Community Gathering and Potluck** – Ron Vereen will mention this idea at the next meeting of Buddhist Teachers. Besides this idea, we discussed having potlucks/social gatherings within our sangha to provide more interaction and connection amongst members.
- 9. Durham CAN** – Glaeshia mentioned that the Durham Friends have a group that is working with Durham CAN (Congregations, Associations, Neighborhoods) which is a diverse and multi-racial group. She suggested that any of our sangha members who are interested in this could work together with the Friends group. Glaeshia will keep us updated on those activities.
- 10. Quarterly Small Group Sangha Meetings** - Tom suggested that once a quarter the Wednesday night sangha meeting format be changed to have members break into small groups to network and bond. Ron will review this idea with the other teachers.

**Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will be in September. I will send a Doodle poll closer to that time. Our sub-groups (media night, Llama Rod organizers, etc.) will meet more often, as needed.

Questions referenced in 1. above:

Here are a few questions we can consider in our Shramadana Project and Racial Affinity groups as a way to support volunteer efforts at Triangle Insight, to cultivate ties between the individual groups, and to develop shared language around some common themes. These questions are written in the context of being a “white savior”. You can view a short video explaining the “White Savior Complex” at this link: <http://everydayfeminism.com/2016/06/white-savior-problem/>

1. Are we trying to “fix” anything? If so, what?
2. Who identified the problem? Whose idea was it to fix this?
3. Did the group we intend to volunteer with approach us, or did we offer help?
4. Did we ask and deeply listen to how the community would like us to be involved?
5. Did the request come from the community or from an agency or organization?
6. How does this volunteer effort benefit us? Are we doing it to feel good? For sentimental reasons? To “make a difference?” For public approval?
7. Are we engaging in the work to “empower” an oppressed group? How does this attitude highlight privilege? How does it reinforce hierarchy?