



BING

The newsletter of the Rotary Club
of Dover, NH



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

February 16, 2022 – Zoom Meeting

Welcome one and all to the greatest Rotary Club in the world. We are all here to Serve to Change the World.

Program: Ken Mendis from Racial Unity Task Force

Ken Mendis is retired and working full-time as a volunteer on the Racial Unity Team. Out of respect to the people who were here before colonization, Ken read a Land Acknowledgement. Also, this is Black Heritage Month - BHM signifies unity and recognition cutting across racial barriers. As Granite Staters, we cannot allow roadblocks to the teaching of our history, need to give them the tools that they need to live in a diverse society.



Ken shared slide show. He began with a painting by local artist – three people without faces filled in. Anyone can put themselves into one or more of the faces.

Who We Are – The Racial Unity Team

Founded in 2015 –The Racial Unity Team (RUT)) was formed after the tragic June 2015 shooting of nine Black people at a church in Charleston, SC. The shooter wanted to start a revolution of hate; a group of Exeter, NH residents decided to start a revolution of love. Their mission is to advance relationships among people of different racial identities, increase understanding, and reduce racial bias in our communities. Their Vision is to lay a foundation for developing racial understanding by establishing a transformational goal of developing communities that promote racial diversity and understanding. Geographically diverse activists now – started at an Exeter group; became statewide about two years ago. Membership and Board are diverse.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Feb. 23 – Together on Wednesday, 5-7 pm, The Roost- notify Melissa if attending.

Pledge: Phil R.
4-Way Test: Betsey AP.
Guests: none

Rotary moment: February is Peace & Conflict Resolution Month. 2/22, 6-7 pm, Zoom with past chair of Rotary Foundation - also a dad who guides youth to lead a peaceful life. Link will be sent to all in the club.

*Today's newsletter
authored by Jim V.*

Ken presented a slide with the multiple accomplishments of the Racial Unity Team.

- Walk a mile for racial unity – 85 people joined the first year – history walk in Exeter. Today it's a mile-long walk can be done independently.
- Culture Seekers/Culture Makers activity in 2017. Work expanded in 2018, NH Ed Dept announced a reworking of social studies curriculum. Racial Unity Team added components on history of Black and Indigenous people – curriculum developed is still sitting on desk of Dept of Ed chair's desk.
- Fireside chats after George Floyd murder, topic was NH legislation.
- Racial Unity Day every September
- Art & Poetry challenge with high school students – followed by shows at town libraries. Currently working to set up a date with Dover Public Library

Second slide was a listing of his disappointments. Lack of movement on curriculum by the head of the Dept. of Ed. Proposed new laws that try to dictate curriculum. Racial discrimination increase. Teachers who now feel unsafe.

Racial/Ethnic Composition of New Hampshire

Race – primarily related to physical characteristics

Ethnicity – primarily related to nationality/cultural perspective

Growth in diversity: 12.8% minority in 2020; was 7.5% in 2010.

Dover's Black Population – overall small increase, but fewer in schools. Asian population is large – higher % by far than statewide.

What can communities do?

- Constantly reaching out to draw people into a conversation with the Team
- The Team works with SAU-11 (superintendent Hebron), Dover library, Dover Ad-hoc Committee on Racial, Equity, & Inclusion

Q & A

- **Is NH a welcoming state?** Ken said there are pockets who are not, though generally it is. Cora called for additional outreach. Mentioned DALC and other avenues, also mentioned the ways that Dover has become positive in this area.
- **Dr. Cora Quisumbing-King asked how Rotary could become involved?** Betsey suggested art is a great way to get conversations started. Ken noted student activism that challenges norms.

Speaker Bios:

Ken Mendis - Malaysian and Sri Lankan American and resident of Stratham, NH, founding member of the Racial Unity Team and President/Chair of the Board of Directors. His volunteer work touches many New Hampshire communities and social justice organizations, school districts, as well as the NH State Board of Education, Governor's Office, and the Legislature. He has served

as Board Member for Council for International Visitors, Newport RI. Has coordinated Foreign Policy Association Great Decisions discussions in Newport RI, Florence SC, Newaygo MI, and Basel Switzerland and planned and organized USAID, Community Support winter program for two years. He has served as moderator for the First Baptist Church Exeter NH, on the Rockingham Planning Commission Age Friendly Communities Regional Steering Committee, on Exeter Hospital's Community Health Needs Assessment Steering Committee, and on SAU 16 Anti Discriminatory Task Force. Also - Global Director for Quality Systems for Fortune 500 companies Raytheon, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Novartis, Hoffman La Roche and others, Ken has spent his professional career working to address systemic problems within these organizations while working on assignments in Europe, South America, Asia, Australia, Canada, and the United States. Ken is the contributing author to two books published by Van Nostrand Reinhold, *A Handbook for Software Quality Assurance*, and *Total Quality Management for Software* and is also published in the *European Journal of Parenteral Sciences*. Ken holds a BS in Engineering and an MBA.

Dr. Cora Quisumbing-King

- Of Cebu City, Philippines & Dover, New Hampshire, USA, Co-Chair, NH AAPI Democrats, Member, Dover ad hoc Committee for Racial Equity and Inclusion, McConnell Center Advisory Board; Tutor, Dover Adult Learning Center
- Member, Dover Democrats Executive Committee, Candidate Recruitment & Campaign Committee; Convenor, Social Justice Action Group
- Board Member, NH Racial Unity Team; Founding Member of the RUT, AAPI Advisory Group
- Author of the 2020 op-ed "*My Turn: The Disappearing American Dream* & 2021 "*Being Who I Am*"; Co-producer of three family books
- PhD, Social and Organizational Psychology, University of Chicago
- Before retirement, served as a manager, consultant and facilitator in the field of organization & leadership development at Liberty Mutual, the Amoco Management Learning Center, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and Banco Popular.

Announcements:

Next week will be a *Together on Wednesday* event at the Roost from 5-7 in the evening

We will be donating \$2,400.00 to the Dover Friendly Kitchen for takeout containers for 4 months

Bingo – 63 players, 14 boxes of tickets: tickets increasingly hard to get tickets. Sheila is look for additional help tomorrow and next few Thursdays. Construction continues on the BINGO hall

Social Committee – Meeting next week at The Roost, next month Blue Latitudes.

Golf Committee – Soon to talk with Cochecho CC to see if we can have a social time after the tournament. Website will soon be up. Tournament is the first weekend in June.

Foundation: Gregg – not present, but we are lagging a little behind in our annual giving.

Correspondence: Thank you from Horne St. School for funding snacks for kids.

Happy dollars:

Marion C. –Thanks to Ken and Cora for the program.

Tom D. – Cast in *What's Upon a Mattress* at Garrison Players in April. He's the mute king.

Feb. Birthdays:

Kathy L.	2/15
Cara S.	2/28

Feb. Anniversaries:

Laurie W.	22 years
Kristin S.	6 years
Tracey D.	11 years
Naila A.	2 years