

Brockton Area NAACP - Education Committee
2020 End of Year Report

The Education Committee has had a busy year during these challenging times. Our goal was to assist wherever and whenever we could for the benefit of the Brockton Public School children and parents. We started out the year with attending the opening of the Brockton Family Center with the intention of collaborating with groups like CPLAN and others in various projects and programs.

We were invited to meet with a few school guidance counselors as well as the student officers from the Unity Club from East Bridgewater Junior/Senior High School to address the racial incidents that occurred back in the Fall of 2019. I attended the meeting and heard concerns and there was some ongoing communication but when the pandemic occurred, we were not able to meet further but stayed in touch. There were no immediate requests for help at the time just an interest in partnering and hearing about what the NAACP did. The plan is to do a follow up meeting to follow up in January 2021 to check in.

Once the pandemic hit, the Committee wanted to figure out ways in which we could stay engaged with supporting our children, so in mid-May the Committee partnered with Superintendent Mike Thomas and Administrator Sharon Wolder to make a plan to help in making community based efforts to reach out to families that the school had not been able to reach. Committee members made several check in calls and were able to reach a few of those families and we directed them to school resources.

Later in May, the Committee partnered with Paul Engle, Brockton Public Library Director to do a book drive. He and his team had written a grant through the Library Foundation to obtain funds to purchase books and 2,000 books were purchased, 1,500 were given out to Brockton school children on June 4, 2020 at 10 different school locations at the time when meals were picked up. Our Committee was fortunate to have several volunteers, which included Paul Engle to assist us in handing out books to families. It was a huge success!

Due to an overwhelming response on the book drive and the requests from families for more books, we requested funds from our Branch to purchase more books, most of which were culturally enriching, fun and rich in learning for the students attending the summer programs. Again we partnered with Sharon Wolder and gave the books out during the last week of the programs. Twenty-five books were dropped off at both the Raymond and the Gilmore Schools. When the Committee members dropped off 50 books to the East Middle School, we were welcomed with a live drum performance with drums that the students made themselves. Another 40 books were left with Sharon Wolder for students in the remote Girls Mentor Program at West Middle School. Committee members and volunteers reported that it was a rewarding experience to give out books to our Brockton school children who were extremely excited to receive our gifts. The students were challenged to read the books before they started the school year in September and to give their feedback on how they liked the books. The last 10 books were donated to the Brockton Mutual Aid organization.

In September, in honor of National Mental Health Awareness Month, the Committee sponsored a self care event for Brockton parents in the hopes of providing some useful tips on how to care for themselves during the challenging times of remote teaching and learning for their children. Clara Angelina Diaz was our workshop speaker titled, "Balancing Family Life During COVID, Parents, How Are You Taking Care of Yourself?" She did an amazing job giving us useful self-care tools and tips to practice during these uncertain times. We are planning to have her come back and do another workshop in late January, 2021.

Also in September, members of the Committee attended the early Champions Helping Champions group meetings that were planning all the training for parents and students for the beginning of the Fall 2020 school year on the systems needed to be able to do the remote learning. This group also kept us informed on all the food distribution updates and the opening of the Tech Center which opened in November. We also invited Dr. Jim Cobbs to attend one of our NAACP meetings in October to provide an update on the status of the laptop distribution.

As Chair of the Education Committee, I have been invited to and attending various meetings in the community that are education related:

Officially joined the Mayor's Education Equity Subcommittee – weekly meetings
Member of the Brockton CPLAN group (Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network) bi-weekly meetings

One of the goals of the Education Committee is to focus on the NEAC mission which was presented at the last NEAC meeting in early December which was to work closely with our school districts to do whatever we can to help with closing the achievement gap among black and brown children. Discussions have been held with various New England Education Committee Chairs to learn, discuss and hear best practices about this very important topic.

Submitted by Leona Martin, Education Committee Chair