

Iowa WINS (Iowa Welcomes Immigrant Neighbors)

Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Commission

**Wednesday, January 2nd at 7:00 PM**

First Presbyterian Church

902 S. Walnut St

Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

OUR VISION:

That the greater Mount Pleasant community would be an inclusive and hospitable community that welcomes people from across the world looking for a new home.

In order to achieve that vision, the MISSION OF IowaWINs is to:

* Identify the issues that newcomers face here, to provide solutions and help integrate them with the community at large.
* Build relationships among the diverse members of our community.
* Build and maintain the infrastructures and sustainable programs that improve opportunity and services now and for future generations of immigrants.
* Provide educational and cultural outlets to the community to learn more about the people (and their needs) who come to Mount Pleasant.

Minutes

In attendance: Dina Saunders, Emily Situmeang, Fred Miller, Heidi Riepe, Jeff Fager, Johanna Crawford, Trey Hager, Tammy Shull

* Citizenship tutoring
  + Joanne McCabe is almost complete with the tutoring of her student. We look forward to hearing about her success in completing the citizenship interview.
  + Johanna Crawford has stopped tutoring as her student determined that she needs to work on her ESL skills before preparing for the citizenship test.
  + Johanna turned over the two books that she had purchased for the use of future tutors and students. She will be reimbursed $34 for the books.
  + We will also pursue an article in the Spanish newsletter, El Heraldo, in January to publicize the citizenship tutoring program.
  + Tammy will deliver a flyer on the tutoring program to Fellowship Cup as well.
* Bystander Intervention Training
  + Tammy attended a webinar in November by AFS (American Friends Society) on how to intervene in public instances of hate speech including racist, anti-Black, anti-Muslim, anti-Trans, and other forms of oppressive interpersonal violence and harassment while considering the safety of all parties. It can be one tool on the way towards building strong communities that resist institutionalized racism and violence.
  + Jeff and Tammy met with two IW instructors and we are planning to offer this training during two class periods in two separate classes in April.
    - Wednesday, April 4th at 10
    - Friday, April 6th at 11
    - Monday April 9th at 10 and 11
  + Please let me know if you would be interested in attending or participating as a facilitator.
  + Jeff and Tammy will be meeting with the IW instructors on Tuesday, February 6th at 11 AM at the Science Hall Room 107 in the basement to start planning the classes. Feel free to join us if you can and are interested in participating.
  + Dina will check on opportunities to use the training with the school district
  + Tammy will send the Curriculum to Emily, Dina, Trey and Johanna. Let Tammy know if you would like to review it as well.
* IW International Conversation Café – Fred Miller shared information about a biweekly opportunity for international students and community members to interact with discussion and games while enjoying dessert. The focus is to connect the community and the international students as well as giving the students the opportunity to practice their English skills. Feel free to attend any or all of the remaining café events at the Tiger Den in the Student Union)
  + Thursday, January 25th from 7 to 8 PM
  + Thursday, February 8th from 7 to 8 PM
  + Thursday, February 22nd from 7 to 8 PM
  + Thursday, March 8th from 7 to 8 PM
  + Thursday, March 22nd from 7 to 8 PM
  + Thursday, April 5th from 7 to 8 PM
  + Thursday, April 19th from 7 to 8 PM
* We also discussed repeating our 2017 International Potluck Dinner that brought together IW students and community members in celebration of the cultures represented in Mt. Pleasant. Jeff Fager will check with IW to determine the availability of the Social Hall for an event possibly on Sunday, March 25th.
* Refugee Simulation – Joy Lapp has engaged her students in holding an IW event that would also be open to the public using the simulation materials that Emily Situmeang developed. Thanks much to Emily for her work on the simulation as well as using her graphic design skills to help IowaWINs with flyers and logos. Emily is relocating to Florida so we will be missing her smiling face at our meetings but greatly appreciate her offer to continue providing graphic design for us. It has been a pleasure, Emily, and we wish you the best in your new home.
* Educational film/discussion event ideas. We discussed planning a series of events that might include:
  + Scholar in Residence – Beth Howard of our group had suggested that Pastor John Pavlovitz  (<https://johnpavlovitz.com/>) who recently wrote a book called A Bigger Table about  building community might be available for a speaking event.
  + Genesis of Exodus – This film is now available for public viewing. We discussed holding the event at the local theatre but also discussed holding it at the International Room in the Chadwick Library where it would be easier to hold discussion after the film. Sam Riepe was unable to attend but volunteered to coordinate dates for the film with the theatre and to obtain the DVD.
    - The Genesis of Exodus: The Roots of Central American Migration
    - Link to trailer: <http://storymap.genesisofexodusfilm.com/index.html>
    - Link to film: <https://genesisofexodusfilm.com/>
    - Link to resources: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/>
  + Two other shorter films could be used in conjunction with a meal or meeting. Possibly trying a noon time option to reach different people. We can discuss ideas and timing to use these films at our next meeting. Possible good options for speaking engagements.
    - To Breathe Free
      * Short documentary and winner of "Best Documentary Short" at the Covellite International Film Festival 2017: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” To Breathe Free follows the 5-year journey of a Syrian family fleeing the war in Homs to the refugee camps in Jordan and starting a new life in Washington, D.C.
      * <https://vimeo.com/225871896>
    - Locked in a Box
      * “Locked in a Box” is an award winning short documentary that follows the stories of individuals held in the U.S. Immigration detention system and those who visit them. The film traces the lives of individuals who fled their homelands in search of safety and freedom only to end up in U.S. prisons under a mandatory bed quota system run by Immigration Customs & Enforcement.
      * <https://vimeo.com/145351153>
* Funding potential: Humanities Iowa could be a source of funding for these community discussions. Tammy has reached out to Chris Rossi - <https://www.humanitiesiowa.org/>
* Trey asked that we add an agenda item at our next meeting to discuss cryptocurrency and how it can be used to directly support refugees in other countries.

**Next meeting: Wednesday, February 7th at 7:00 PM at the First Presbyterian Church.**

Thanks,

Tammy Shull

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