

March 5, 2020 - SUMMARY
ADR New Beginnings Conference Call

PRESENT: Kerry Hayes, Chief-of-Staff to Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke, Akivah Ahavah Ben Joseph (Flip), Earl Berkun, Bishop John Bulinda, Protus Bulinda, Howie Comen, Shirley Comen, Jonny Harris, Robin Lebron, Deborah Levine, Sridhar Rangaswamy, Father Robert Seay.

Chattanooga's Mayor Berke conceived of the idea of a Council Against Hate in 2018 after discussions with European counterparts on how they are dealing with a rise in hate related incidents. An executive committee of approximately 18 individuals was formed representing key sectors in the community that would become individual action teams: education, business, law enforcement, religions & culture, media, and data research.

The executive committee's initial meeting included presentations by the regional offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The purpose was to begin to educate the committee about the activities of hate groups in the area and online. Since this first meeting, there have been large meetings open to the public and quarterly meetings of the executive committee, and smaller meetings of each action team where they develop programs and discuss their progress.

In addition there has been ongoing podcast interviews of leaders creating a welcoming environment and counteracting hate. The podcast project is in partnership with the American Diversity Report and the local university. This system provides a template for others to replicate, inserting the relevant issues and individuals as needed.

QUESTIONS

1. How to deal with campuses that have become breeding grounds for hate-related speech and actions?

It's a fine line to walk without stepping on civil liberties. Hate is tough to police, to discourage. So much begins online, without consequences. It's hard to tell youngsters that what they think is funny actually has real life consequences. It's better to make cultural alternatives welcoming people into our values. If we involve students and give them responsibilities for campus environment, they can influence other students.

2. New Orleans' mayor wants to know how to start a Council Against Hate. Can there be another conference call?

There is information on the ADR about forming a Council: <https://americandiversityreport.com/new-beginnings-council-against-hate/> and these minutes should be helpful. We can do a conference call on Zoom so that we can see each other. We'll try to include others of the 14 mayors who signed the Interfaith Harmony Proclamation. Send some dates and times she is available and we'll work around them.

3. How do we include our Africa team in a Zoom call?

Professor Kahara and Dr. Joe are involved in the funeral for family member. Let us know when they could participate in another conference call. However, a Zoom call is long distance which requires fundraising.

NEXT STEPS

- Flip is working on a phone system that is easy to use for making fundraising calls and will making calls in California.
- Bishop will get non-profit number to Flip
- Howie will work with the painter, Sandy Frazier, and will sell prints from her painting to fund raise.
- Robert has contacts that he'll look into for fundraising in Houston and New York.
- Robyn will work on a survey of best practices for faith-based organizations.
- Deborah will compile minutes and send to conference call participants.