



2017 Final Report to LBHEA

Corvallis SURJ: Showing Up for Racial Justice extends its gratitude to Linn Benton Health Equity Alliance for 2 grants in 2017. This year we were less active than in 2016 with regard to events and actions, but we were more successful in the important work of broadening our volunteer base, creating new ties with community leaders, and building our accountability to people of color.

Education of White People

National SURJ has modified its emphasis and now says that chapters should act as “training wheels” for white people who are new to racial justice activism—connecting them with groups led by people of color and preparing them to work as part of a multiracial alliance. This bolsters the view that Corvallis SURJ’s principal work is to educate white people about whiteness, institutional racism, classism, “allyship,” and much more.

SURJ 1 to 1 program: Uniquely among SURJ chapters, Corvallis SURJ now runs a free, individualized educational program. Pairs of learners select topics from [an extensive resource list of readings and videos](#), then have private discussions several times over 8 weeks. A local young woman was inspired to create the program when she heard other white people gasp in surprise when a black woman reported having been called the N-word in Corvallis.

SURJ 1 to 1 was offered twice this year, with about 30 participants per session, and the dates for Spring 2018 are already set. Participants meet at the beginning of the session for orientation, then again at the end to celebrate progress and suggest improvements to the program.

SURJ book group: Also new this year is a monthly book group that alternates between fiction and nonfiction. Its main purpose is to “call people in” to racial justice work. It is beginning to be successful in that way, as some members have become SURJ and/or NAACP volunteers. Meeting space was donated at first by First Congregational Church and then (after the church’s needs changed) by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. The group has [a reading list on Goodreads](#) that currently has 92 followers nationwide.

SURJ Families is a subgroup of national SURJ. Inspired by its publications, our chapter started a SURJ Families committee to help parents, grandparents, and teachers talk with children about race. The committee planned and publicized a conversation that was to be held in the spring. A leader of the local NAACP intervened, criticizing the publicity for not clearly specifying the audience (all parents or just white parents?) and criticizing the plan for not including an expert in the subject matter.

Naturally, SURJ took these comments to heart. The committee canceled its event and has since met several times with that NAACP leader to try to develop a more acceptable plan. In addition,

the committee chair and the entire SURJ leadership met with 4 leaders of the NAACP to discuss how SURJ might be better accountable to that organization. That effort is in its infancy and will be a major priority in the future.

“Know Your Roles”: SURJ was a major player in bringing “Know Your Roles: Training for Allies of Immigrants” to Corvallis in October and to Albany in December. Co-sponsors were Casa Latinos Unidos de Benton County (CLUBC), Community Action for Racial Equity (CARE), First Congregational Church of Corvallis, First Christian Church of Albany, Benton and Linn County Democrats, and LBHEA itself. The program was created and presented by the Rural Organizing Project (ROP) and the 2 sessions attracted a total of more than 120 people.

ROP’s Spanish-language companion program for immigrant families, “Know Your Rights,” was offered as part of the December event in Albany. It drew 7 people.

Having worked with CLUBC at these events, and having been part of the LBHEA leadership meetings for 2 years, SURJ has relationships that will allow us to be a good partner to CLUBC. In 2018 we intend to pursue ways to link SURJ volunteers with CLUBC’s committees.

One-time educational programs

- "Roleplaying: Responding to Racist Remarks and Actions" was offered at the Corvallis library, led by Mark Davis, Silvana Espinoza, and Shelley Moon.

SURJ has monthly community meetings in space donated by First Alternative Natural Foods. At some of these we offered political education:

- Discussion of a viral blog post by DiDi Delgado, "Whites Only: SURJ and the Caucasian Invasion of Racial Justice Spaces"
- “Racism: A Workshop for Changing Worldviews and Habits of Mind”
- “Race and Class: Exploring the Links”

Invited presentations

- Our Revolution Corvallis Allies (ORCA) invited SURJ to speak at one of their meetings about our work.
- First United Methodist invited a SURJ leader to speak on “How to Be a Good White Ally”.
- The Corvallis School District expressed interest in having SURJ train PTA/PTO leaders about white privilege, but nothing is definite.

The *OSU Barometer* interviewed a SURJ leader for an article about white nationalist activity in Corvallis.

Countering Organized Hate

- **Oregonians for Immigration Reform (OFIR)**, an extremist group that is funded by out-of-state white nationalists, continues to try to put anti-immigrant measures on the Oregon

ballot. Corvallis SURJ is part of a statewide coalition, One Oregon, that is organizing resistance to OFIR's work.

- Earlier this year OFIR floated Initiative Petition 5, a voter suppression initiative. SURJ distributed flyers about IP5 prior to a League of Women Voters meeting and at the Farmers Market (the latter in partnership with ORCA).
- OFIR dropped IP5 and is now circulating petitions for IP22, which would eliminate Oregon's "sanctuary" law. SURJ is working to have Corvallis residents sign a pledge not to support IP22; these names become part of One Oregon's database of potential donors and volunteers.
- **White nationalist activity**, mostly stickering, flyering, and sidewalk chalking, slithered into Corvallis after the presidential election. CARE and SURJ members collaborated to respond in several ways:
 - Put "counter-chalkings" on downtown sidewalks
 - Started a No Hate group to plan responses to any future white nationalist activity, including the possibility that an OSU student group, Turning Point, or other organization will invite a hateful speaker or rally to Corvallis. This group is currently in limbo because its leaders joined Rapid Action Community Response, a new group organized by ROP.
 - Purchased and distributed bumper stickers that welcome immigrants to Corvallis.

Mobilizing White People to Take Action

- Via email and social media, we publicized innumerable city and state rallies, vigils, and counterprotests (as well as presentations, trainings, and national webinars) led by people of color).
- We organized carpools to Causa's Immigrant Rights March and Rally in Salem, Causa's May Day March in Salem, and a Dalles-area rally for hunger strikers at an ICE detention center.
- At one of our community meetings we distributed materials about the campaign to preserve the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center in its present space. At another meeting, representatives of the new OSU student group Here to Stay told their stories and told attendees how to support a clean DREAM Act. We followed up both meetings with email and Facebook appeals to entire base.

Other Community Networking and Support

- A staff member of Diversity and Cultural Engagement at OSU is in the early stages of creating a racial justice coalition in the Corvallis area, and she invited SURJ leaders to meet with her. We are excited about the prospect of being part of that network and helping to link it to the LBHEA.
- SURJ spent \$250 to co-sponsor the Corvallis Changemakers conference ("for women and their allies") and paid for 2 of our younger leaders to attend.

- As we did in 2015 and 2016, SURJ sent several representatives to the annual ROP caucus. In addition to the organizing lessons we learn there, the weekend-long meeting is increasingly important to us because ROP is so active statewide in organizing against ICE, militia activity, and white nationalists.
- SURJ had a contingent at the first-ever Albany Pride Parade.
- It's not particularly exciting to make cash donations, but we consider financial support to be an important role for white "allies."
 - At a SURJ community meeting, attendees donated \$152 for Diverse Books for Corvallis Children, a small grassroots organization run by a community member. The SURJ leadership team matched that with another \$152. The funds supported the purchase of books about Arabic-speaking people and Muslims for elementary school classrooms in Corvallis.
 - When representatives of Here to Stay visited a SURJ community meeting, attendees donated \$66 to support the group's work.
 - Over the year the SURJ leadership team gave \$1250 to the NAACP (as itemized on page 5). We also solicited volunteers for Juneteenth.

Flying on Our Own

In the past 2 years, SURJ has received and spent \$5900 awarded to us by LBHEA (see page 5 for 2017 expenditures). Words cannot express our original surprise and continuing pleasure that a government-funded organization wished to support our organizing.

LBHEA gave us a strong foothold to continue long enough to build a solid base of supporters. We have a website, a mailing list of more than 300 active subscribers, a large Facebook group, a Twitter feed. We recently raised \$350 via a joint fundraiser with CARE, and we have received multiple generous donations from members, from First Congregational Church, and at community meetings, as well as free meeting space. Our current bank balance is close to \$3000, and most of our activities (aside from sponsorships) do not require much money.

For 2018, SURJ is not soliciting grant funding from LBHEA. However, we will stay involved in the Coalition, and we look forward to being part of LBHEA's health-related mission and support for groups led by people of color.

Original 2017 \$2500 Grant

- \$800 – Silver sponsorship of Corvallis/Albany NAACP Freedom Fund banquet
- \$200 – Donation to Corvallis NAACP Juneteenth celebration to aid w/ costs
- \$250 – Donation to Corvallis NAACP “Living the Black Experience” series to cover refreshments
- \$152 – Donation to Diverse Books for Corvallis Children
- \$50 – Rural Organizing Project (ROP) annual dues
- \$135 –Registration for 4 people to attend the annual ROP Caucus and Strategy Session
- \$134 – Immigrant Welcome Stickers for Not in Our Town group
- \$117 – Printing new brochures
- \$125 – 5% fee to fiscal agent (Rural Organizing Project)
- \$55 – Website domain name and hosting fees
- \$64 – PO box
- \$130 – 2 library meeting room rentals
- \$187 – Dinner for meeting of SURJ and NAACP leadership
- \$150 – 2 tickets for NAACP Freedom Fund banquet for SURJ lead team members

Total: \$2549

2nd 2017 \$500 Grant for Know Your Roles Trainings

- \$110 – Design costs for event flyers
- \$43.50 – Refreshments on October 14
- \$346.50 – Lunch on December 9

Total: \$500