

**Minutes of the June 20th, 2019 Listening Session
Diversity & Inclusion Committee**

Approximately 25 people attended with representation from the Latinx community, and high school representatives from the Students Against Racism club at CHHS.

The session was facilitated by Rabbi Jaech, Pastor Lisa Miles, Susan Donahue.

After a brief introduction of the session and facilitators by Khamla Erskine, co-chair for COH Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The attendees broke off into smaller group discussions led by a facilitator. In the last 15 minutes of the session, we re-grouped and the facilitators summarized the group discussion.

Rabbi Jaech - Rabbi Jennifer Jaech became the Senior Rabbi of Temple Israel of Northern Westchester in 2006. She is an insightful leader and gifted educator who interprets the complexity of contemporary American life through the prism of our Jewish history and traditions. She enjoys teaching children and adults, both within our synagogue and in the broader community. Rabbi Jaech is active in interfaith work in the community with an emphasis on social justice.

Pastor Lisa, is an ordained UMC Deacon who is committed to issues of equity and social justice. She is the Affirmative Action Officer/Title IX Coordinator for Pace University, and also serves as the Associate Pastor of Administration and Community Relations for Tremont United Methodist Church in the Bronx. Pastor Lisa is committed to working across differences to create space for creativity and joy. She holds both a J.D and an M.Div. degree, and she is a certified mediator and a trained discrimination investigator.

Sue Donahue is a fellow Croton on Hudson resident and has over 20 years of experience facilitating group discussions on a wide array of topics. Sue works in the Human Resources Department at Pace University as the Director of Talent Development.

Ground rules for participants: listen respectfully, don't comment on the experiences people relate, ask questions that enable you to better understand the stories you hear. This means that we need to expect some discomfort if people say things with which we disagree. Please do our best to listen respectfully to everyone's views.

1) avoid blame and inflammatory language; 2) focus on ideas, not individual people

Questions asked during the smaller group discussions:

- (1) why are you here?
- (2) when have you felt at home in Croton?
- (3) Share an experience you had in Croton where you felt "othered" or excluded. What was the outcome?
- (4) What can we do better as a community?

Below are the outputs from the session:

1. Two recently arrived parents to COH with young children came to the session because they wanted to get a better understanding of the environment their children were entering.
2. Three participants noted people who have kids in COH were more likely to feel part of the community. For people who do not fit this profile, what would “welcoming” look like?
3. People expressed interest in meeting other members of the Croton community and wanting to know people on an individual level.
4. **Suggestions included:**
 - a. Provide information and welcome packets to new residents about resources available to new residents
 - b. Provide safe places to meet others in the Croton community through community gatherings
 - c. Educating the Croton community through a speaker series on subjects such as unconscious bias
 - d. Schools to help bring community together.
 - e. Cultural training for faculty. More diverse faculty that better reflects the community.
 - f. Provide programs that do not segregate communication to parents who’s first language is not English
 - g. Accessibility to gathering places
 - h. Affordable housing
 - i. Student involvement with Diversity & Inclusion
 - j. Work on a shared community project
 - k. Know how to respond to hate speech
 - l. How can the community help with getting to a “complete” census?
 - m. For people from Ossining but spend time in Croton, the access to Croton parks is overly restricted. Can they pay to use Croton parks?