

Bexley Minority Parent Alliance



MEETING RECAP

June 30, 2020

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

- **Welcome** - Bryan D.

- **BMPA Mission Statement / Purpose** - Manika W.
 - BMPA exists to empower Bexley minority students to achieve their full potential by providing support and advocacy, as well as influencing policy.
 - We do this by: (1) forming community among families with minority children; (2) supporting children, families, and district personnel; (3) advocating for students with district staff, board members, and community leaders; (4) guiding policy and training decisions.
 - All allies are welcome to join! You do NOT need to be a parent of a minority child to be interested in achieving our common goals.

- **Financials** - Jonathan B. - BMPA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and through donations and fundraising efforts (like our Chipotle fundraiser in January), we were able to provide two \$1,000 scholarships to graduating Bexley high school seniors this spring. Congratulations to Angelina Coles and Austin Smith, who were the recipients of the BMPA scholarships this spring. They are both outstanding students and community activists who are part of the newly formed Bexley Anti-Racism Project (BARP). Our goal for the upcoming academic year is to get back to an account balance that will allow us to continue supporting minority students. Our current budget is \$170.31.

- **Marketing Update**
 - **New Website** - Ahdra Y. - we posted on our Facebook group earlier this summer looking for help updating our website, which was created a few years back and is in need of a redesign. Nate R. volunteered his skills and met with us in June to discuss options for improving our site. A plan will be ready in about 7-8 weeks and we will have a better system in place to send e-newsletters to our mailing list (with an ability to subscribe/unsubscribe to updates).

 - **Social Media** - Tiasha L. - Link to our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1805025779709824/>. We add resources, events, and info regularly to our Facebook page, which you can join using the link above. With the website redesign, we should be able to send this info in an e-newsletter format or post more updates to our website, especially for people who don't use Facebook or the public. Our Facebook page is private (only members who join can view the posts). India K. partnered with Art with Anna (who has donated over \$500+ to the BLM cause) to offer a virtual canvas painting class on July 26, and more details about that will be posted to our Facebook site soon.

- **DEI Update** - Jess W. - The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) was reformed recently as a grassroots advocacy group since the earlier, city-led collaborative ended in late 2019. Akisa was a member of that collaborative and Bryan was a member as well, but has stepped down to focus his efforts on BMPA right now. The strategic plan



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adopted by the Collaborative was incorporated into the Mayor's Strategic Plan for the City, and the DEI group is working with the Mayor and the City to continue actively pursuing those goals and action items.

- **Bexley Living Magazine** - Jonathan B. – Bexley Living magazine recently featured Alissha Mitchell's family as the cover story and reached out to the Baker Family to have them featured in the upcoming July issue. They would like to highlight BMAPA and photograph a few key members who have worked on major initiatives (like our annual Circle of Excellence event in the spring), our families, and our scholarship winners. Kimmarie Martin (photography) will work with Jonathan to schedule a time for photos for that to be included in the August or September issue.
- **Bexley 4th of July Parade** - BMAPA had a float for the first time in last year's 4th of July Parade and the city reached out to everyone who participated in the previous year to ask about interest in this year's "socially distanced front yard parade." BMAPA will opt out of the parade this year. BMAPA also highlighted the importance of Juneteenth as Independence Day (celebrated as the end of slavery), with more significance than the 4th of July.
- **Bexley School District**
 - **Overview** - Bryan D.
 - BMAPA has submitted a proposal to the Bexley Education Foundation to provide diverse books to all three elementary schools in Bexley (4th and 5th grade). This would include books featuring families, children, and characters of color, but also diversity in all its forms. Leisan Smith is also working with the leadership team on anti-racist language and books.
 - **Kate Misar** - doctoral student at OSU with expertise education research (College of Education and Human Ecology), she will be helping BMAPA by contributing her knowledge and recommendations on improving diversity and inclusion through curriculum changes and other initiatives in our schools. She will be working with BMAPA specifically, not directly with the school district.
 - BMAPA had its first **recruitment** event earlier this year to meet prospective diverse candidates for Bexley City Schools' faculty and staff positions. We are hoping to have another event like this in the fall, but its timing and format will depend on the situation with COVID.
 - Two new faculty have joined - one new minority teacher (Jennifer Cedano) will be teaching Spanish in the high school, and Racquel Armstrong, who attended our event, will begin as the new Assistant Principal at the middle school this school year. Racquel is completing her doctoral degree at OSU in Multicultural & Equity Studies and has over a decade of experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion and in education.
 - Bexley City Schools is under a hiring freeze for this year and they are adjusting some school positions. All bus drivers have been offered positions with a third-party company. There was a lot of discussion in the recent school board meeting about the Theatre position and the realignment of Rebecca R.
 - There will be a **Non-Kindergarten New Family Orientation on August 13 at 6:30pm** via Zoom/virtually for incoming Bexley City Schools students. More information will be shared in July with new student families.
 - **Special Education Parent Mentor** – Rachael H – Rachael Holland is a special needs advocate and the Parent Mentor for Bexley City Schools. Rachael discussed the Parent Mentor Program, her qualifications (experience with IEP process and having a child who is on an IEP), and the services offered to Bexley School families who need help with the process. More details here: <https://www.bexleyschools.org/ParentMentorProgram.aspx>
- **Community Outreach**



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- **BARP Update** – BARP is the Bexley Anti-Racist Project and the group’s mission is to actively combat racial inequality through education, mobilization, and amplification in order to support people of color in the Bexley community and nationwide. BARP is made up of people of color and white allies who are current students or graduates of Bexley High School, and they have organized a number of recent events and initiatives (in person and online/on social media) to further their mission. BMPA is here to support however they can and to work together with BARP to achieve their goals. More info at <https://bexleyarp.org/>. Student Voices were amplified when BARP took ownership of the Mayor of Bexley’s Facebook page on Juneteenth and can be found on their website: <https://bexleyarp.org/amplify>.
- **Children’s Programming** - India K. - Please let us know if there are events or activities you would like to see in the future for children/students. The next event is a virtual canvas painting evening hosted by Art with Anna for BMPA on July 26, with details to come on Facebook.
- **St. Alban’s Unity Prayer Vigil** – Erica D. - St. Alban’s is in Bexley (on Drexel) and is organizing a community event in September to recognize the church’s complicity in racism. They are going to create a family guide to further educate members and the community on the importance of inclusion and diversity. Contact Erica Drewry if you have suggestions about diverse books, movies, shows, etc. that could serve as educational resources for families.
- **Bexley Minority Alumni Group** - Bryan D. - there is a Bexley Minority Alumni Group that is working with BMPA and we can connect with them as a resource for possible mentorship opportunities in the future.
- **Culture and Conversation Series - Hispanic Heritage Month** - Bryan D - we had an event in May (rescheduled to be virtual due to COVID) for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, with guest Helen Yee invited by Akisa. Helen’s grandfather opened one of the first Chinese restaurants in Columbus, and her family runs Bexley’s Wing’s Chinese restaurant. If anyone is interested in helping plan something for Hispanic Heritage Month, please let us know (Sept. 15-Oct. 15).

▪ Next Steps

- **Weekly Conversations** with the city – Jonathan B – BMPA is having regular meetings with the city and the Mayor to make sure that the initial conversation that occurred on June 11 isn’t the end of the discussion. The City reviewed their policies related to Use of Force and “8 Can’t Wait” and they were following 7 out of the 8 recommendations. They don’t have any past instances of using the 8th policy and have removed it since their review in response to the local and national dialogue around policing and equity. The City approved all of the 8 Can’t Wait recommendations. BMPA went through the 470+ comments to the Facebook live chat on June 11 and responded to each individual concern. The goal is for small group conversations to occur so that residents (people of color) can share their experiences related to racial discrimination and mistreatment in Bexley and educate other community members. These meetings would be recorded for the city and police to learn from, but a concern was voiced as to the importance of providing a safe space for those who have been victimized to share their trauma. The option to pause recordings, or to offer two different types of “listening sessions” (public and recorded; or private and not recorded) were suggested as alternatives.
- **Sept BMPA Meeting with the city** - Manika W. - BMPA is planning to collaborate on another Community Conversation, improving upon the first event. Some of the criticisms of the June 11 event were that the voices of people of color were not prioritized or amplified enough. A virtual format may still be necessary due to COVID.

▪ Community Conversation (open forum for discussion)



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