

Dear Selectmen,

February 19, 2016

Thank you for offering the Diversity Task Group an opportunity to speak to you about our "Unconscious Bias" and "Stereotypes: A Conscious Look at Race, Faith, Gender and Orientation" events. Unfortunately our meeting – a vital planning session -- is scheduled at the same time as your meeting. So in this letter, I'd like to provide some additional information for you about our spring events.

How and why did we decide to offer these events?

Several Diversity members had been discussing Harvard's Implicit Bias Project and taking some of the Project's bias tests online. One of our members suggested that we offer "Unconscious Bias" as a foundational piece of our efforts to help our community become aware of the hidden biases we all hold. We know Chief Ryan has trained many of his staff in this subject matter. Our speaker was willing to give the presentation without fee as long as we do not video or audio tape it. We have been planning this as our Spring Event. As of February 19, we have 21 confirmed co-sponsors that include Town organizations – youth organizations among them – and houses of worship. We expect several other organizations to join the sponsor list.

Last fall Diversity discussed topics that we might ask True Story Theater to present in partnership with us as part of TST's Living Brochures Project. Given a disturbing event at Spy Pond in late Spring 2015 and some events Chief Ryan had told us about, we decided that Stigma and Stereotype were important themes. In January 2016 we offered "Stigmas" to an audience of 50 people. Our Diversity Group took "Being An Active Bystander" training for our benefit and for us to see if we wanted to offer it widely. As a result, we will offer "Stigmas" again on May 10 and "Being An Active Bystander" on May 25. These events will be co-sponsored by Arlington Council on Aging, Arlington Disability Commission, Arlington Human Rights Commission, Housing Corporation of Arlington, and Mystic LGBTQ and Youth Support Network -- all groups that serve populations subject to stigmatizing.

Also in the fall, I met a friend from Concord who told me about the "Stereotypes" photography show and other resources that might be of interest to Arlington. I contacted photographer Kevin Briggs to see if we could bring his exhibit to Arlington, and then began the search for sites for the show. After viewing the show when it was at Harriet Tubman Galley in December, two of us were even more firmly committed to bringing this powerful exhibit to town, especially during our Spring events. (These now also include Diversity's co-sponsoring a panel on "Identity" with Robbins Library as part of Arlington Reads Together). Arlington Center for the Arts enthusiastically agreed to host the show in their Gibbs Gallery. ACA is a new partner for Diversity.

We have been excited about the confluence of efforts and events that have led to a strong focus on stigmas, stereotypes, and identity. We are also excited about the willingness – sometimes eagerness – of organizations to co-sponsor these events. Many of them have told us that the issues we are focusing on are ones they too are working on at this time.

We hope you will become a co-sponsor for these two major events. ACA will produce flyers at the end of this week (2/22-26). All sponsors not confirmed prior to printing will be listed on ACA's website. Diversity can continue to add sponsors to the "Bias" flyer for another week or so.

Sincerely,

Mary Harrison, Diversity Task Group

Confirmed Co-sponsors of "Stereotypes": Arlington Council on Aging; Arlington Disability Commission; Arlington Human Rights Commission; Arlington International Film Festival; Arlington Police Department; Arlington Youth Counseling Center; Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition; The First Church in Belmont Unitarian Universalist Social Action Committee; Highrock Covenant Church; Housing Corporation of Arlington; ManKind Project of New England; Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday Observance Committee of Arlington; Mystic LGBTQ and Youth Support Network; Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is in Arlington

For co-sponsors of "Unconscious Bias" see attached flyer.



# Arlington Vision 2020 Diversity Task Group

Presents

## UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Every day we make thousands of decisions, both big and small. Some, such as how much toothpaste to squeeze when brushing our teeth, have become so routine that we're hardly even aware of them. Others, such as choosing a job or a spouse, we make with great deliberation.

This seminar explores the mistakes that our minds make even when making big, important, thoughtful decisions, and how—without realizing it—our minds can lead us to behave in ways that don't align with our personal values.

This seminar isn't about dividing people into good and bad, us and them. Rather, it is an entertaining and interactive look at how our brains evolved in a world that presented us with very different choices from the world in which we live today. It is about identifying and understanding our unconscious biases, and learning how we can make smarter decisions in our families, careers, and communities.

**Presenter:** Christopher Dial is the Lab Manager of the Social Cognition Laboratory in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University. His work is focused on identifying, understanding, and managing unconscious biases. Christopher has worked and consulted in psychological sciences for more than a decade.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2016**

Doors open 7:00 p.m. Program starts 7:30 p.m.

**ARLINGTON TOWN HALL 730 MASS AVENUE**

Come by MBTA bus #77 or park in Town lot bordered by Pleasant & Chestnut Sts in Arlington Center

[www.arlingtonmadtg.org](http://www.arlingtonmadtg.org)

**Co-sponsors:** Arlington Council on Aging; Arlington Disability Commission; Arlington Human Rights Commission; Arlington International Film Festival; Arlington Police Department; Arlington Youth Counseling Center; Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition; Calvary Church United Methodist; Center for Jewish Life Arlington-Belmont; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; The First Church in Belmont Unitarian Universalist Social Action Committee; First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington; Highrock Covenant Church; Housing Corporation of Arlington; ManKind Project of New England; Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday Observance Committee; Mystic LGBTQ and Youth Support Network; Park Avenue Congregational Church, UCC; Robbins Library; Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is in Arlington; St. Agnes Parish