

OHIO COUNSELORS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

"THE ARC OF THE MORAL UNIVERSE IS LONG, BUT IT BENDS
TOWARD JUSTICE." - DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Greetings from the President

SHANICE LOCKHART
OCSJ PRESIDENT 2021-2022

It's October, meaning this is our last quarterly newsletter before 2022. In this edition and hopefully more editions to come, we will do our best to bring awareness to social justice issues impacting a variety of groups and populations. Since the release of our last newsletter, there have continued to be drastic social justice issues occurring in our country. Advocating for women's rights, standing up against the mistreatment of immigrants, and combating racial injustices aren't easy issues to tackle one at a time. When so many issues occur simultaneously, counselors may ask "What can we do?" or "Are we doing enough?"

Before I get into how I personally answer those questions I wanted to highlight an incident [trigger warning] that recently occurred that led me to reflecting on those questions...

Just a couple of weeks ago, on September 30th, Mr Clifford Owensby, an African American citizen of Dayton, Ohio was pulled over by a few Dayton Police officers for a traffic stop. Mr Clifford Owensby was asked to provide his license and he complied. Mr Clifford Owensby was asked to roll up his window more so they could test his window tint and he complied. Mr Clifford Owensby was asked the age of the child sitting in the back seat and he complied. Mr Clifford Owensby was asked to turn off his car and he complied. Mr Clifford Owensby was asked to step out of his car and that was the only request that he was not able to comply with... Mr Clifford Owensby is a paraplegic. Mr Clifford Owensby was asked repeatedly to step out of his car and he repeatedly informed the officers "I'm a paraplegic". Mr Clifford Owensby sensed the situation escalating and at a few points even asked for the officer to call in his supervisor and the officer angrily denied that request. (Continued on page 2)



IN THIS EDITION

GREETINGS - P. 1-2

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY - P. 2

SOCIAL JUSTICE AT AOCC - P. 3

SOCIAL JUSTICE SPOTLIGHT - P. 4

BOOK REVIEW - P. 5

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES - P. 5

FUNDRAISING - P. 5

Greetings from the President (continued)

SHANICE LOCKHART

The officer was on record saying “You can cooperate and get out of the car or I’ll drag you out of the car”. Mr Clifford Owensby was indeed dragged by his arms and hair out of his car while yelling for help. Mr Clifford Owensby was handcuffed, dragged again, and shoved in the back of a police car.

As difficult as that may have been to read, it was also very difficult to watch. It is not easy to see anyone treated unjustly and when it happens so often and so close to home those questions of “What can we do?” or “Are we doing enough?” begin to circulate.

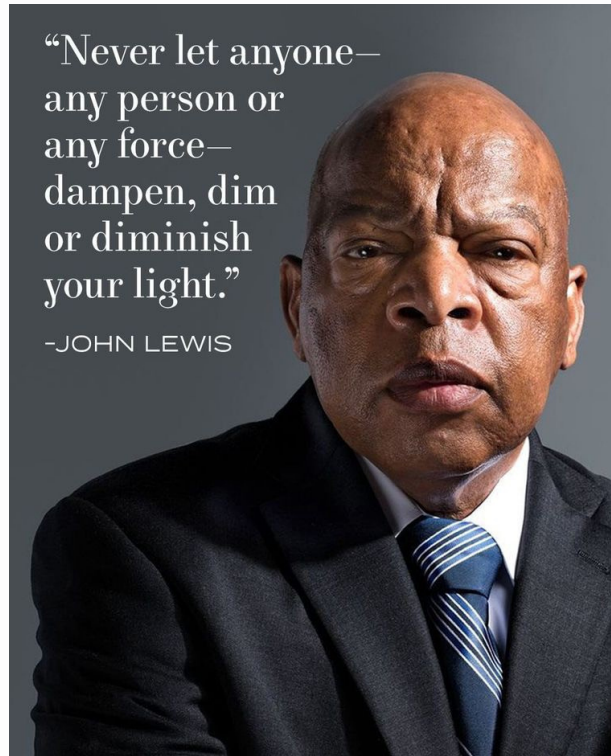
“What can we do?” The one step I believe in taking that we ALL can take together is spreading awareness. Although Mr Clifford Owensby’s story became a national headline, we should continue to use our voices and platforms to speak out against the injustices that may not get as much notoriety.

“Are we doing enough?” I believe beyond speaking out we can take our advocacy to another level. One step to take is to collaborate with other professionals and organizations. As I reflect on OCSJ’s last board meeting, I recall one of our board members suggesting a collaboration with rehabilitation counselors to open up more opportunities to advocate for individuals with disabilities. I also reflect on the work of the Dayton NAACP. I am thankful to them for formulating an 8-point proposal to reform the criminal justice system (<https://bit.ly/2X0vWfb>) back in 2020 to try to prevent incidents of injustice like the one that occurred with Mr Clifford Owensby. One of the points included “an emphasis on mental health assessments, de-escalating conflicts and improving community relations in the core training of officers”. Although this 8-point plan is not implemented statewide, that does not mean it can’t be implemented on a larger scale. Collaborations with those who value the importance of mental health and social justice are essential to bringing about change in our society. There are people and organizations who have been in this fight for social justice long before many of us were born so we can connect with them for their guidance and wisdom.

There are always steps we can take to shine the light of justice on the darkness in this world. For the remainder of this year, I encourage you, my fellow advocates, to take those steps; spread awareness and collaborate.

“Never let anyone—
any person or
any force—
dampen, dim
or diminish
your light.”

—JOHN LEWIS



MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Tell us what you'd like to see from OCSJ. Complete our membership survey [here!](#)



Social Justice at AOCC

LAURA DUNSON AND CHRISTINE BANKS-VANALLEN

All Ohio Counselors Conference is just around the corner, and we at OCSJ are thrilled about the exciting sessions addressing social justice and advocacy. So many of the sessions explore topics of justice and equity with clients, and we wanted to take a moment to highlight a handful of them. If you're headed to AOCC this year, take some time to check-out some of these exciting presentations!

Wednesday:

- 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM — Decolonizing & Decentering Oppressive Structures: Social Justice in School & Clinical Counseling with Bhudayal Arjune, Kayleena Brashear, Danielle Culpepper, Colette Dollarhide, Tanya Middleton, Erin Parsons-Christian, and Sarah Shrewsbury

Thursday:

- 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM — School to Prison Pipeline: Compounding Barriers for Underprivileged Populations with Derek Lee and Erin Parsons-Christian
- 9:45 AM - 11:00 AM — Bi-Erasure: An Intersectional Examination of the Clinical Needs and Experiences of Clients who Identify as Bisexual with Halle Branscum, Stephanie Dracar, & Samantha Gress
- 12:15 PM - 1:15 PM — Advocating for Your Role as an Elementary School Counselor with Kathryn Gastaldo and Felice Kassoy
- 12:15 PM - 1:15 PM — Counseling BIPOC Older Adults: Population Needs & Practical Intervention Strategies with Tahani Dari, Ellise Raghavan, and Tyler Thomas
- 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM OCA FEATURED SPEAKER — Co-Conspirators Counseling During Times of Unrest! With Dr. S. Kent Butler
- 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM — School Counselor Advocacy with Your Local School Board, with Sammi Birri, Douglas Cook, and Amanda Glorioso
- 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM — How Counselors Can Advocate to Reduce the Perpetuation of Trauma within the Foster Care System with Jackie Dell, Liz McClure, and Vanessa Sinclair
- 4:15 PM - 5:15 PM — Bringing Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to your Elementary Tier 1 Comprehensive Program with Rebecca School

Friday:

- 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM — Why You Need CIT (and Why CIT Needs You) with Jeff Futo and Emily Ribnik
- 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM — RAMPing for Advocacy with Megan Daley, Cristina Foster, and Jennifer Yost
- 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM — Self-Advocacy: Neurodiversity Course and Support Group as Best Practice with Tema Krempley, Briana Miller, and Erin Powers
- 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM — Setting up a School Pantry: A Step by Step Guide with Deb Gray and Robin Stutes
- 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM — Best Practices for Providing Transgender Affirmative Counseling with Emmett Drugan and Joseph Krivos
- 1:15 PM - 2:15 PM — Intervening with the Direct and Indirect Effects of Opioid's Crisis on Students with William DeMeo
- 1:15 PM - 2:15 PM — Understanding Colorism: The 'ism' that Counselors should Know About with Tiffany Hairston and La Tasha Sullivan
- 1:15 PM - 2:15 PM — Hidden Burdens: Understanding and Addressing Transgenerational Trauma with Alicia Hall, Victoria Kress, and Christy McAllister
- 1:15 PM - 2:15 PM — The Current Mental Health Landscape in Ohio: Resources to Help Youth Navigate COVID-19, Racial Tension & Political Unrest with Nancy Gillespie

This is just a sampling of some of the stellar sessions scheduled! For more information on the fantastic array of topics, visit <https://aocc.site/>

OCSJ would like to thank SAIGEO and their President Chase Morgan-Swaney, LPC, NCC, CWC for inviting us to cosponsor a CEU webinar on September 29, 2021 - Working Affirmatively with Queer and Trans People of Color. We wanted to express our gratitude to the guest speaker, Shannon McLaughlin LISW-S, for sharing her expertise and knowledge. We also would like to thank SAIGEO members Gene Dockery, LPC, NCC and Mariah Payne, LPC for taking lead on the Application to Counselors portion of the webinar.



Social Justice Spotlight: Shining the Light on Marginalized Populations

SHANICE LOCKHART OCSJ PRESIDENT

In past editions the spotlight has primarily focused on organizations that are doing social justice work in the community. For this edition I thought it would be informative to not only spotlight organizations doing the social justice work but also spotlighting the populations that are impacted by them.

I spoke with Mr Ahmad Hamad, who is currently employed as a Management Consultant in Cleveland, OH. Outside of his daily work tasks, Mr Hamad uses his voice to bring light to issues that directly impact people within his cultural community. Mr Hamad is a Palestinian-American Muslim and he graciously offered his time to provide some insight on his lived experiences.

Mr Hamad shared "Being visibly Arab and Muslim are enough to be tossed in the umbrella term as 'terrorist' ". Mr Ahmad expanded the discussion on how having his identity recognized as a Palestinian is another layer to the discrimination and xenophobia that he has encountered being in America. "I think another challenge that many people don't know about is not having our identity recognized". Mr Hamad further explained how his identity has been politicized to the point that even claiming his identity as a Palestinian can spark an argument or lead people to question his stance on America's politics with Israel. Mr Hamad believes people's focus should be on the humanitarian crisis that is causing devastation to thousands of children and families.

Considering all the challenges faced by many Arabs and Muslims, it is important for counselors and counselor educators to be aware of any resources that are available to serve the population. Mr Hamad expressed not being familiar with many organizations that are serving the Arab-Muslim population which speaks to the necessity of why there needs to be more advocacy efforts in place. Mr Hamad did highlight how the Islamic Center of Cleveland (ICC) has been a beneficial resource to him and many others. The ICC hosts a monthly food drive to donate fresh produce and also opens a free clinic for basic medical care on the weekends. Recently, the ICC hosted a Community Mental Health and Wellness Fair.

As with many religious groups, places of worship also tend to be the places where people seek out emotional support as well. In the case of many Arab-Muslims, their places of worship are more accessible than a mental health provider. There are limited counselors of color and even more limited counselors who speak foreign languages. Mr Hamad shared how difficult it was for a member of his family to find a counselor. After going through multiple therapists his relative was finally able to find someone who understood their culture and also spoke Arabic in the same dialect. Mr Hamad expressed an understanding that every counselor will not learn to speak Arabic but he emphasized the importance of counselors and other mental health professionals to take the time to learn about the variety of lived experiences within the Arab-Muslim community. "All of the refugees and immigrants from the middle east are not the same, it's not just simply a language barrier - there are different histories and different traumas".

Mr Ahmad Hamad shared his lived experiences with me not only as a friend but as a passionate advocate and I thank him for taking the time out to help OCSJ shine a light on one of the many populations that are marginalized in our society.

Islamic Center of Cleveland:
<https://www.facebook.com/iccleveland/>

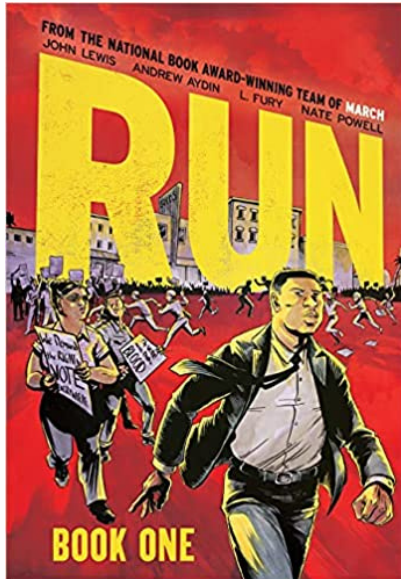
Palestine Children's Relief Fund: "PCRF envisions a world where all children in the Middle East have access to quality medical care, regardless of nationality, religious or political affiliation, and specialized health services for children are independent and developed at the highest standards" <https://www.pcrf.net/>

Institute for Muslim Mental Health: "Our broad vision is the long-term mental health and well-being of Muslim communities supported through preventative interventions and education which is accessible, culturally relevant and academically sound."
<https://muslimmentalhealth.com/>

Interested in bringing awareness to a social justice initiative, a social justice organization, or a particular advocate for social justice? If so, please send an email with your recommendation to OhioCSJ@gmail.com with "Social Justice Spotlight" as the subject. Your recommendation may be featured in our next quarterly newsletter!

Book Review: Run by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin

CHRISTINE BANKS-VANALLEN



Run (Book 1) is the sequel to John Lewis and Andrew Aydin's powerful *March* trilogy -- a series of graphic novels chronicling the late John Lewis's life as an activist in the Civil Rights movement.

Run explores Lewis's life and activism after the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Although many narratives about the Civil Rights movement end with stories of victory, *Run* centers on the often-untold story of the fragility of victory; namely, nurturing the movement's newly won victories in the face of resistance and opposition from both those who believed the movement had gone too far, and from those who believed it had not gone far enough. This tenuous balance continues today in our political and educational discourse. In the face of these omnipresent tensions, Lewis calls on us, that "First you march, then you run."

Run embraces the power of narrative, and offers an engaging, thought-provoking, and visual look into a remarkable man's experiences in a remarkable time.

Run (Book 1) is available for purchase [here](#).

As of October, we have a total of 65 active members within OCSJ! Interested in getting more involved? We would love to have you join. We actively meet several times a year and have been active in creating presentations for conferences and community events.

Fundraising

Ohio Counselors for Social Justice is paying homage to the late John Lewis, a former U.S. Representative who spent much of his life getting in "Good Trouble" for the sake of justice.

We are currently selling short sleeve and long sleeve tee-shirts. All profits will be donated to the Ohio Justice Foundation, a statewide nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that civil legal aid is available to all low-income and underserved Ohioans.

Visit our website at <http://ohiocsj.org> or the <http://teespring.com/stores/ohiocsj> to order a shirt today.

