

The Unity Circle Club

The Unity Circle Club meets bi-weekly with Ms Lindskog from 3 – 4:30 pm

We met 2/7 and the main topic was Black History Month. We began our meeting with a video conference w/ Mrs Margaret, (Peggy), Dias. Mrs Peggy as she is affectionately known by the students in our club, is the Executive Director of IT Service Assurance, Computing and Information Technology Services @ UMass Dartmouth. She is a Cape Verdean woman and is very involved in the UMass Unity House and the NAACP UMass chapter. For over a year, she has supported our club and values the students' energy and enthusiasm. We have been able to have many respectful conversations addressing the students' questions about race in our current society.

We began our discussion with a conversation about the 2 showcases we decorated for Martin Luther King Jr's birthday and for Black History Month. Mrs Dias asked 2 questions about the showcases:

- What did the kids learn from putting the showcases together?
- What did they like most about decorating them?



The kids responded that they liked the way the showcases came together over the 1 ½ weeks we spent completing them. They also were surprised to see all of the faces of many black historical figures they hadn't ever heard of before. They didn't know many of the famous men and women whose pictures we used to put the showcase together. Beyond Martin Luther King and President Obama and Rosa Parks, most of the figures involved new learning. They told Mrs Dias about the picture they put up of the 4 black young men, (the Greensboro four), sitting at the Woolworth lunch counter to protest restaurant segregation.



Greensboro first day
Ezell A. Blair, Jr. (now Jibreel Khazan), Franklin E. McCain, Joseph A. McNeil,
and David L. Richmond leave the Woolworth store after the first sit-in on
February 1, 1960.



(Current picture of Jibreel Khazan)

They were surprised that prior to the 60's, black people in the south could not sit at a restaurant and eat where white people ate. We talked about the economic power that marginalized groups of people have, as evidenced in the successful bus boycott started by

Rosa Parks and many others. Mrs Peggy surprised the students by telling them she knew 1 of the young men who sat at the lunch counter, Jibreel Khazan, who lives in New Bedford. She has met with him and has heard him speak multiple times. Although he is elderly now, he has spent his lifetime as an advocate for social justice.

- We spoke again with Mrs Peggy about the importance of allies in the fight for social justice. The students shared that they were aware that it takes strength to stand up for what is right, and they had newfound respect for the civil rights activists they learned about. Mrs Peggy commended the kids for their energy and involvement.
- The students read a short essay during the morning announcements to inform the rest of the students about the significance of Black History Month, and reminded them to take a moment to look at the showcases.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ztY_pisolsBvxVzkcZLRXY1Js8FdUvdZy9yPlhJx_l/edit

The next meeting of the Unity Circle Club is 2/26 @3:00 pm.