



American Ethical Union

Inspiring Ethical Communities

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ANNUAL SOCIETY REPORT

Society Report for The Ethical Society of Austin

Leader(s): None

President(s): Jon R. Meador

Administrative Director/Office Contact: None

Please provide brief updates on the following areas of your Society that occurred or developed in 2018:

Ethical Action:

To better coordinate and prioritize our Ethical Actions for the year, membership voted for three UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on which we were to focus our efforts for 2018: Reduced Inequalities (SDG #10), Climate Action (SDG # 13), and Good Health and Well-Being (SDG #3).

Our big event for 2018 was the First Annual United Nations Declarations of Human Rights event held on the South Steps of the Capitol in December. We took turns reading each declaration and invited members from different organizations like the Interfaith Action of Central Texas. We had about 30-50 people attending. We began volunteering with an organization named “Humanists at Work,” which organizes a give-away to the homeless community of Austin the third Sunday of each month. We have anywhere from 1-4 people participating every month. We collect money each week going to the local food bank. We again increased our monetary donations during our “Month of Giving.” These funds were matched by Society funds and we provided over \$2,590 to several separate non-profit organizations including the Ugandan Humanist School, International Rescue Commission, KIVA, 350.org, and People’s Community Clinic. We had several members join the MKL Day March and the March for Science. All of our weekly programs tend to support one or more of our Ethical SDGs. For example, we had the following programs in 2018:

- The Eight Commitments;
- Programs on Ethical Dilemmas using Arthur Dobrin’s book, “Ethics for Everyone”;
- Presentation from Texas Gun Sense;
- Climate Action and the Backfire Effect;
- Humanity’s Space Frontiers by Chris Cassell, PhD, of Deep Space Industries member of the Ethical Society of Silicon Valley;
- Two presentations on ethics from a Buddhist perspective;

- Getting Our Hands Dirty: The Ethics of Community Gardens;
- Ethical Consumerism;
- The origins of the American Ethical Union;
- Good Health and Well-Being;
- Declaring Human Rights for All.

Ethical Education (children ages 2-13) Our SEEK-program attendance has been spotty. We've lost several families with children. On average, we might have 2 children per month attend our SEEK program. Our SEEK instructor attends nearly every Sunday so she is there when we have walk-in attendees with children. We continue to develop our program to meet these changing circumstances.

Youth of Ethical Societies (teens ages 14-18) N/A

Future of Ethical Societies (young adults ages 18-35): N/A

Communications: We have maintained and improved our website, Meetup, and Facebook presence. We added an Instagram account in 2018. We maintain our web-based calendar. We have weekly emails sent to members and friends that identify both upcoming ESA programs and ethical action opportunities.

Finances: We collected about \$16,700 in 2018 just covering our expenses with about \$500 to spare. We have approximately \$30,000 in cash and \$200,000 in a 401K plan.

Membership: We ended the year with 30 members. We have on average about 2-3 visitors per month. We try to follow up with each visitor. We have "greeters" whose job is to notice when a new person walks through the door and greet them, get their name, ask them to sign in, and make them feel welcome. We all try to visit with new people.

New Developments: Thanks to the efforts of a small, dedicated group of members, we were able to present Hugh-Taft Morales for two talks, one on racism, the other on ethical culture. We purchased two tabling clothes, one 6 foot cloth and the other 8 foot, and have attended several events handing out material and speaking with people about the community.

Goals for 2019: We've hit many of our goals for 2019. We're excited about our new website. We are now using G-Suites with each member having a personal email account. We're in the process of purchasing new t-shirts with our new logo, the happy human logo. We also plan on getting new signs for the building and sandwich signs for the front. We will soon begin working on our Second Annual United Nations Declaration of Human Rights event, which will be held in December on the South steps of the Capitol. We plan on reading each declaration in English and one other foreign language. We will focus on getting new members. We might try to have an off-site event in the fall in addition to our United Nations event.