



# American Ethical Union

*Inspiring Ethical Communities*

2 West 64<sup>th</sup> Street • New York, NY 10023 • [www.aeu.org](http://www.aeu.org)  
Phone 212.873.6500 • Fax 212-624-0203 • [office@aeu.org](mailto:office@aeu.org)

## ANNUAL SOCIETY REPORT

### Society Report for

The Riverdale Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture

Leader(s): Jone Johnson Lewis

President(s): Executive Team John Benfatti, Kay Dundorf, \_Diane Vigliarolo

Administrative Director/Office Contact: Grace Cobbinah

**Please provide brief updates on the following areas of your Society that occurred or developed in 2020:**

#### **Ethical Action:**

- Climate: We conducted several platforms on climate justice, including “Indigenizing Environmental Justice” presented by a subject matter expert.
- We continue to work closely with the Bronx Climate Justice North, our local climate justice group. Our Society was integral in the founding of this group in 2014.
- Racial Justice: held a board workshop retreat on Racial Justice, had a 4- week interactive program for members and the community using the “White Ally’s Toolkit”; continue to hold a monthly racial justice book group in cooperation with the North Bronx Racial Justice Group. Had a Sunday Platform entitled “Understanding De-fund the Police” using a subject matter expert .
- Economic Justice: We continue to share our Sunday platform contributions with an variety of community non profit organizations. One of our members’ coordinates food pantry donations to a community based location in our area. We provided food gift cards donated to us by a community group to some of our members in need.
- Development and Peace: We continue to support the work of The Bronx Parents of Pride. This group was created with a lot of energy from our Society. There was just poned in-person meeting in February 2020 before they needed to convert to Zoom. It continues to draw a number of people from the Bronx and elsewhere for support, education and advocacy.
- We recently held an outdoor, socially distant book swap and baked goods



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- fundraiser to benefit “Kids in Need of Defense” ( (KIND).
- Other: Our Ethical Green Team did a limited amount of work on our grounds in the Spring and Fall. Our “Ethics on Tap” continues to meet monthly on Zoom. We engaged our members to participate in “Reclaim Our Vote” Post carding for the November General Election and the Georgia Senate run off. We co-sponsored programs with community groups in support of democracy and a candidate’s forum for a Special Election of our City Council.
- Unfortunately, several programs have been suspended because of the pandemic: our Monday Overnight Homeless Shelter and our Monthly “Coffee Hour at Ethical”.

## **Ethical Education (children ages 2-13) & Youth of Ethical Societies (teens ages 14-18) & Future of Ethical Societies (young adults ages 18-35):**

Our Ethics for Children program includes children 10 years of age and younger. We suspended our in person programs for pandemic health reasons, our board members for ethics for children maintain contact with parents by text/ email. Occasionally, the children attend some sections of our interactive Sunday Morning Zoom. We held one Zoom program for children last summer. The parents and children of Ethics for Children were key participants in our recent fundraiser mentioned above. This reflects the work done by the two members who have kept the group connected throughout the pandemic.

### **Communications:**

- We continue to: send mass emails on Mondays with our events for the upcoming week
- We also send a Platform/ weekend email reminder on Friday’s
- We continue to update our website and Facebook page
- We continue to use the Elvanto database to keep track of Members, friends, community contacts, etc.

### **Finances:**

With our very small membership, we continue to be dependent on our endowment fund. We had no space sharing income because the building was closed. We obtained funding from the second round of PPP loans. We reviewed all office contracts and were able to reduce the costs of our monthly internet and phone service. Closing the building resulted in reduction of staffing. So, there was some reduction in personnel expenses.



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## **Membership:**

We added 2 members in 2020 and one in 2021. We have had consistent attendance on our Sunday Zoom Platforms, though our families with children are dealing with “zoom fatigue” and stay connected with us mostly in other ways. We have shared platforms with several other Societies, as well as participating in the All Society Platforms. We have had a few socially distant outdoor opportunities for people to come together to work on our grounds. Members stay engaged with us through their attendance at other society events and social activism in the Riverdale community, such as racial justice marches, climate justice work, voting rights, protect our election and supporting democracy.

## **New Developments:**

We closed our building due to the pandemic and have held Sunday Platforms on Zoom. We have had shared Sunday Platforms with a variety of other Societies. We added weekday programs: weekly “morning break” at the beginning of the pandemic to provide support and connection. We increased the variety of email pastoral care messages from our Leader Other programs included “Write your Own Legacy”, TED circles and monthly “New Moon Gatherings”. We accepted two resignations with regrets: our Community Outreach /Membership Director, and a Board Member. We hired a part time technical outreach coordinator to assist with activities such as Zoom platforms and postings to our website.

We had our building professionally inspected by a home inspector and researched general contractors to do the work. We focused on minority owned businesses in the area.

## **Goals for 2021:**

Reopen our building safely from the pandemic closure for the Society’s programs and our space sharers; determine which programs to continue/ repeat; maintain and develop connections with members and community groups.

Select a contractor and begin the necessary repairs to our building.