

# Larchmont Mamaroneck Human Rights Committee's 36th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Commemoration

On January 17, 2024, at Hommocks Middle School in Larchmont, students, parents, and community members gathered for the Larchmont Mamaroneck Human Rights Committee's 36th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Commemoration.



HRC MLK Event Speaker Jeff King

The program began with the words of Jeff King (no relation to Dr. King), a proud alumnus of Mamaroneck High School and current Town of Mamaroneck Councilman, explaining what this community has meant to him and his family and his thoughts on this occasion. From his parents' decision to move from Mount Vernon and their segregated school district to Mamaroneck, to the dark day in April 1968 when MLK was assassinated, to a summer vacation in the south with his grandparents, King shared relevant and powerful memories.

He reminded the students that they are the leaders of tomorrow who must carry on the values of MLK and "fight for a country that embraces the good in all of us". King spoke of the power of music as a source of "solace and strength." He spoke of his belief that we shall overcome discrimination in our society and schools, gun violence, the atrocities of October 7th, and the threat of genocide. Using many quotes from Dr. King, others and lyrics from familiar music, Jeff King left the audience inspired with confidence that we can move into the future with hope.

Following Jeff King's presentation, MHS students, Jaheim Bent and Autumn Carino, facilitated a conversation with Mamaroneck School's Jenny Rodriguez (Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging), and Leon

Whyte and Bonnie Sloofman (District Equity Task Force Leaders). The District leaders spoke to how educational equity and a sense of belonging is being looked at in every aspect of the school district. The mission of the DET "is to identify, acknowledge, and dismantle the systemic barriers that prevent equity and access for all...". The staff spoke about incremental progress in areas of curriculum and policy, and is using data to assess the progress. Their goal is to make our schools safe, inclusive environments where all children feel loved, are respected, have dignity and a sense of belonging so that all students can achieve.



Mamaroneck's new school district superintendent, Dr. Charles Sampson introduced himself and described his own goals for the District and the centrality of Dr. King's vision for our schools.

MHS students Isabella Bigatao, Gabrella Bailey, Autumn Carino, and Kaylee Taylor performed relevant and inspirational music and original poetry, accompanied by teachers Steph Chinn and Bill Derby.

This year's Community Honorees were Neighbors for Refugees, accepted by Michael Reichgott, and Westchester Jewish Coalition for Im-

migration, accepted by Holly Rosen Fink. Both organizations have roots in our community but have spread their work of resettling refugees throughout Westchester and beyond.

The program was presented in partnership with C.U.R.E. (Coalition for Understanding Racism through Education) and the Community Resource Center and hosted by the Mamaroneck School District.

To see a video of the program: go to LMC-TV and search Local Events under the Youtube icon. For information on becoming a member of LMHRC write: LMhumanrights@gmail.com.

## David Bander Named Executive Director of the Emelin Theatre for the Performing Arts

The Emelin Theatre for the Performing Arts is delighted to announce the appointment of David Bander as Executive Director. David joins the Emelin after serving as Managing Director at Kirkland Performance Center in Kirkland, Washington for over 10 years. A passionate non-profit arts executive, David believes that the arts are integral to building and enhancing community, and that in turn, community is vital to the success of the arts. David holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from Seattle University.

Emelin Board President Mark Ettenger stated, "David brings a unique blend of skills and experience to the Emelin coupling both a lifetime dedication to the arts and a strong operational and systems background with a digital orientation. Importantly, our Board believes David will be a superb catalyst for broadening our audience and programming to reflect the changing demographics and increasing diversity of Westchester."

David was recently named as one of 425 Business – a business magazine serving the Seattle surrounds – "Top 40 Under 40," highlighting his professional work as well as his community involvement. He has sat on Boards of Directors for multiple non-profits including community theatres and the Greater Kirkland Chamber of Commerce. A member of several performing arts advocacy organizations, David's first act as Executive Director was representing the Emelin at the Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) Conference in New York City, earlier this month.

"I am honored to join the Emelin Theatre team and look forward to contributing to the rich legacy that the organization has built over the years. As we move forward, my primary goal is to uphold the standard of excellence that the Emelin Theatre is known for, while also exploring innovative avenues to enhance our offerings and engagement with the community."

Founded in 1972, the Emelin is an intimate 267 seat non-profit venue presenting world-class performing arts to Westchester County and beyond. Each season the Emelin presents numerous events including all genres of music, comedy, dance, family theatre and school programs, and independent and contemporary film. Throughout the year, we host many community events and serve as a venue for area performing arts schools and programs. Presenting more than 125 performances annually for a multi-generational audience of over 25,000 people and engaging hundreds of artists, we are a true community and regional resource. The Emelin provides a broad range of performing arts of the highest integrity in an accessible venue at affordable prices and is proud to serve the needs of our diverse audiences by offering them rich cultural opportunities that inspire, entertain, and educate.



David Bander

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