

## SHARON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 14, 2024 — 7:00 p.m.

(Times below are approximate.)

1. 7:03 p.m. Attendance

Present: Toben Asklar (chair); Alison Kellom (vice chair); Bill Kondrath (clerk); Shelley Keimach; CP Pototsky; Chandu Krishnan; Kim Hokanson; Lajos Kamocsky; Wenxiao Tiano, Sharon School Committee liaison; Sgt. Chris Dumais, Sharon Police Department liaison (arrived about 8:00 p.m.) Hanna Switekowski, Select Board liaison (joined around 7:30 p.m.)

2. 7:05 p.m. Public **comment** period

Three Sharon residents Tamara BX, Mira BX, Richard Kramer spoke to the committee about speakers who were considered for presentations to Sharon Public Schools, and about their views on diversity, equity, and inclusion and the DEI Committee.

3. 7:12 p.m. Email correspondence

Because of the absence of the correspondence clerk, recent correspondence will be presented at the next meeting.

4. 7:15 p.m. Approval of DEIC meeting minutes from 2/8/24.

Lajos Kamocsky motioned the acceptance of the minutes of 2/8/24. Shelley Keimach seconded. Seven votes in favor. One Abstention (not present at the meeting).

5. 7:17 p.m. DEI training module with entry/exit survey for town committees: update

Bill Kondrath reported that he talked to Melissa Imbaro Wednesday and that 32 people completed the training. She will be sending out a reminder to those who had not completed the training. One person had reported that they had said that they were happily surprised that the training was better than they expected.

6. 7:19 p.m. Sharon's newest residents: update

Shelley Keimach reported that some of the new residents are becoming employed. There is still a large need for diapers.

7. 7:20 p.m. Juneteenth discussion

Shelly, Kim Hokanson, Alison Kellom, and Chandu Krishnan met with members of SREA and the Sharon Cultural Council. They are planning an event that will take place around Juneteenth (June 19) for an art show, including poetry and spoken word at the Sharon Community Center.

7. 7:22 p.m. SMS guest author appearance announcement and cancellation discussion.

The Chair of DEIC mentioned that there is a perception that DEIC that some groups are not recognized as marginalized groups and protected. They said that the Sharon DEI Committee works hard to celebrate and protect both our Jewish and Muslim neighbors. We celebrate and protect our Asian, Black, Indian, Indigenous, Israeli, and Latinx neighbors. We recognize, celebrate and protect our neighbors with disabilities, and our LGBTQ+ neighbors. We recognize our socio-economic diversity and try to bridge our socio-economic barriers. And this is not an exhaustive list. We care about our entire community as a whole. Sometimes recognizing our diversity causes discomfort. And that can be grating and erodes our sense of belonging in our community. At this inflection point, let's lead with empathy, nuance and understanding for each other, even when we feel differently. I believe all of us, not just people of one faith tradition, or race, or culture, can work together to bridge misunderstanding and to move forward. I truly believe that our diversity and our passion for what we believe makes Sharon a wonderful place to live. I wonder how others on the committee feel.

Kim mentioned the letter from the rabbi of Sharon today.

Chandu mentioned that the rabbis' letter was addressed to the Jewish community, Toben mentioned that the letter had been shared on social media and that they received it from their temple and asked for and received their rabbi's permission to share it with our committee.

At no point was the Sharon DEIC consulted about inviting or un-inviting the Muslim speaker at the middle school. It would be unusual for the School Committee or the SPS administration to consult with DEIC about a curriculum choice.

Shelley said that she hoped that there is a way for us to bridge the differences between the Jewish and Muslim communities and with the Jewish community as well.

Wenxiao Tiano, as the School Committee liaison to the Sharon DEIC, clarified that DEI school initiatives and DEI initiatives in the town are in different buckets. And the School Committee just on-boarded a new DEI Director. Even families with children in the schools, but without children in the middle school, did not receive the letter about the middle school speaker. These are not decisions that the School Committee has purview over.

With diversity, can come friction. Who can host and moderate discussion?

CP Pototsky said that even as a student at the high school, they had not received the letter from the superintendent. They received it only from Toben. CP had heard some students ask: Why was the speaker uninvited, and perhaps it was no longer safe for the speaker to come. Her book wasn't about Israel/Palestine, why did that become part of the discussion? It was about her being a person of color at a prestigious academic school system.

There was a lot of misinformation circulating, and some parents were concerned for their children's safety. The schools are aware of the misinformation, and they need to find some way to address that.

Kim said that she has a middle school student and would like to see students have some input into the discussion as appropriate without dumping it on them. Her experience is that difficult dialogues work best when there is some large forum discussion, which quickly moves into smaller groups where people can get to know one another as people and where it can be on-going and not one event. She said, her family moved to Sharon for the racial, religious, economic and other diversity.

Wenxiao, speaking as a parent—not as a School Committee member—said that she wanted to be sure that education of her children was foremost and that sometimes influences from outside become distractions to fundamental education.

Lajos Kamocsky said that he has a student in the middle school. His child had heard that some students were not going to school on Monday because of the event. Lajos appreciated the letter from the rabbis, which looked forward and how there can be repair.

Kim and Wenxiao both acknowledged the dimensions of this issue that go beyond education of children at the school. Shelley, as the co-president of the Sharon Pluralism Network (SPN) would like to speak with members of that group to see if they can offer some help with the wider community dimensions outside the school.

Toben suggested that perhaps SPN might talk with some members of DEIC about how to look forward and think about healing. They thanked the members for having a difficult conversation. Toben handed over the chair to Alison while they attended to their children.

## 8. 7:56 Announcements and upcoming events

### Information and Disclaimers from DEIC Observances and Events

The Sharon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee does its best to list events and observances representing our diverse community and country. If you would like to see a holiday or event included in these slides, please use the DEIC submission form:

<https://www.townofsharon.net/diversity-equity-inclusion-committee/webforms/submit-your-event-to-be-displayed-on-the-deic-calendar>

You can reach out to the Sharon DEIC through email changed. [note: the town webmaster has changed the email to [DEICcommittee@townofsharon.org](mailto:DEICcommittee@townofsharon.org)]

Religious observances are taken almost exclusively from the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL's) Calendar of Observances. That document notes: "The calendar includes significant religious observances of the major faiths represented in the United States. It can be used when planning

school exam schedules and activities, workplace festivities and community events. Note that Bahá'í, Jewish and Islamic holidays begin at sundown the previous day and end at sundown on the date listed."

The ADL notes: "The calendar notes U.S. holidays that are either legal holidays or observed in various states and communities throughout the country. Important national and international observances that may be commemorated in the U.S. are also included."

A listing of events for March – May can be found at:

[https://www.townofsharon.net/sites/g/files/vyhlf3801/f/pages/march\\_to\\_may\\_events\\_observances\\_2.pdf](https://www.townofsharon.net/sites/g/files/vyhlf3801/f/pages/march_to_may_events_observances_2.pdf)

9. 8:10 p.m. DEIC Strategic Plan check-ins

Chandu asked for clarification about item 3.3 in the Strategic Initiatives "Participate in DEIC member 'Area of Knowledge' presentations at least quarterly during DEIC meetings." We have not been doing this regularly. This could be members of DEIC or non-members. Shelley offered the example of Kim and Bill offering statistical analysis of the recent training survey or Allison offering art.

10. 8:15 p.m. Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of meeting

Toben will check with Walpole about their Juneteenth celebration.

Kim will be liaison both ways for Commission on Disabilities

Sgt. Chris Dumais mentioned that the Police Department was aware of the discussion regarding the middle school speaker and was prepared to offer support for the event if it occurred.

Select Board Member Hanna Switekowski mentioned she is a liaison to the Council on Aging and encouraged DEIC members to be involved as liaison's to other committees and boards.

10. 8:18 p.m. Appreciations, regrets, and learnings

11. 8:25 p.m. Adjourn Kim moved that we adjourn and Lajos seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

These minutes are provided as a *guide* to the meeting that took place. For a complete account of the meeting, people are referred to the video that is available at Sharon Cable TV (<https://sharontv.com/programs/government-meeting/>).

# Sharon Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Upcoming Observances & Events

## Information & Disclaimers

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## Sources of Observances & Events

Individual community submissions, Sharon DEIC announcements, and Sharon Public School's Dispatch newsletter

Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Calendar of Observances 2024:

<https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/calendar-of-observances-2024.pdf>

GLSEN's School Year Calendar: [https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/GLSEN\\_School\\_Calendar\\_2023\\_24.pdf](https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/GLSEN_School_Calendar_2023_24.pdf)

## March is

### NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



**March 11-April 9: RAMADAN • Islamic**

**March 14:** Sharon DEIC meeting, virtual, 7 p.m.

**March 15:** MIAA Div 2 Boys Basketball Final, Sharon vs. Malden Catholic. \$19, Tsongas Center, Lowell, MA, 6 p.m.

**March 17:** ST. PATRICK'S DAY • Christian

**March 18:** CLEAN MONDAY • Eastern Orthodox Christian

**March 19:** VERNAL EQUINOX

**March 19:** SHSTC performs Middletown. SHS Auditorium, 4 p.m.

**March 20:** NOWRÚZ • Zoroastrian (Bahá'í)

**March 20-24:** NATIONAL LGBT HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

**March 21:** INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

## March (cont.)



**March 21:** TWO-SPIRIT & INDIGENOUS LGBTQ+ AWARENESS TO CELEBRATION DAY

**March 21:** METG Theater Festival Finals featuring SHS Theatre Company. Back Bay Events Center, 180 Berkeley St., Boston, 8 p.m. <https://metg.org/high-school-festival/2024-finals.html>

**March 24:** PALM SUNDAY • Western Christian

**March 24:** PURIM • Jewish

**March 24:** Purim in the Shuk. Friendship Circle & Chabad of Sharon. \$12 child/\$20 adult/\$65 family max. Chabad of Sharon, 162 N. Main St., Sharon.

**March 24:** Fun Fair. Cottage Street School Gym. 12-4:30 p.m. [www.cottagept.org](http://www.cottagept.org)

## March (cont.)

**March 25:** HOLI • Hindu

**March 26:** HOLA MOHALLA • Sikh

**March 26:** KHORDAD SAL • Zoroastrian

**March 26:** Paint night with Kashmica Sarkar. \$35, Sharon Public Library, 5:30 p.m.

**March 29:** GOOD FRIDAY • Western Christian

**March 30:** Dustin Strong 5K Fun Run. SHS Track, 1-3:30 p.m.

**March 30:** *Beau McCall: Buttons On!* Opening with the artist including discussion of exhibit's pop culture and social justice themes. Fuller Craft Museum, 455 Oak St., Brockton, MA. 3-5 p.m. <https://fullercraft.org/programs/beau-mccall-buttons-on-opening-reception/>

**March 31:** EASTER • Western Christian

**March 31:** CESAR CHAVEZ DAY (4/1/2024 observed)

**March 31:** INTERNATIONAL TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY



The METG: Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild

Congratulations to our 14 State Finalists! We will see you in Boston!!



MIAA BOYS' BASKETBALL: SHARON 64, BEDFORD 63

## Sharon boys extend their magical run with a berth in the Division 2 state championship

By Nate Welter Globe Correspondent. Updated March 12, 2024, 10:22 p.m.





## SHS HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE COMPANY'S JUNIOR DRAMA PROGRAM PRESENTS: **PURE IMAGINATION** MUSICAL REVIEW

The Junior Drama program will begin the week of March 25, 2024 and students will either rehearse on Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays, based on their session. We are looking for each session to have an equal number of students. If there is a significant imbalance, we may ask students to change sessions. Rehearsals will be held at Sharon High School and the performance will be held on Saturday, May 18, 2024.

Tuition is \$120.00 and all proceeds go to covering the costs for the production as well as fundraising for the SHS Theatre Company. Parents with multiple children participating will pay the normal fee for the first child and \$50.00 for each additional sibling.

Please scan the barcode to learn more information and download the registration form. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email [shjunior@shs.net](mailto:shjunior@shs.net) or the SHSTC Advisor, Meg Dussault at [mdussault@sharonschools.net](mailto:mdussault@sharonschools.net).



## PAINT NIGHT

*Friends of the Sharon Public Library*



LED BY LOCAL ARTIST  
KASHMICA SARKAR

MARCH 26, 5:30-7:30 P.M.  
COST: \$35  
SHARON PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM

TO REGISTER, SCAN THE QR CODE OR GO TO  
[BIT.LY/SPRING24PAINT](https://bit.ly/spring24paint)



[FRIENDSOFSHARONPUBLICLIBRARY.ORG](https://www.friendsofsharonpubliclibrary.org)

The Friendship Circle & Chabad of Sharon invite you to

Wear a costume  
Win a prize!

# PURIM in the SHUK

OBSTACLE COURSE & GYMNASIUM FUN!

**SUNDAY**  
14 Adar - March 24  
4:00-6:00PM

**CHABAD OF SHARON**  
Function Hall  
162 North Main St., Sharon

Hear the Megilla  
Falafel & Shawarma Dinner  
Balloons  
**INCREDIBLE OBSTACLE COURSE!**  
by premier gymnastics  
Face painting  
Make Your Own Spice Blends  
Hebrew Name Bracelets  
Mitzvah Mural for Israel  
Get ur picture taken @ the Kotel  
COMMUNITY MUSIC FUN!

\$12/child \$20/adult \$65 fam max  
Sponsorships \$180, \$360

Limited Seats

RSVP: [SHARONFRIENDS.COM/PURIMINTHESHUK](https://sharonfriends.com/purimintheshuk)

## COTTAGE STREET SCHOOL FUN FAIR

GAMES / RAFFLES / PRIZES / CAKES / CAFE / MUSIC  
ANIMAL EXHIBIT / FACE PAINTING / GLITTER TATTOOS

Sunday, March 24 at 12-4:30 PM  
Cottage Street School  
Gymnasium

[www.cottagepo.org](https://www.cottagepo.org)

**DUSTIN STRONG  
5K-FUN RUN**

T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE

March 30<sup>th</sup>

Sharon High School Track  
1:00-3:30pm  
5K Heat: 1:15-2:00 pm  
Fun Run Heat: 2:10 - 3:00 pm  
Donations online or at the booth

FREE REGISTRATION

Register at [dustinstrongus](https://dustinstrongus.com)

Dana-Farber  
Cancer Institute

**Registration is still open for  
STAR Assistants!**

STAR Summer Camp still has availability for 7th and 8th graders (2023/2024 school year) to participate in STAR Camp as STAR Assistants! Our STAR Assistants work with Counselors to set up and run activities for younger campers while also having opportunities to participate in their own activities with peers!

STAR Assistants gain valuable experience under the mentorship of our veteran STAR Counselors and attend for a reduced tuition of \$1,250.00!

The dates for STAR Camp are June 24th to August 2nd (closed July 4th) at Sharon High School. STAR Camp visits Lake Massapoag three times a week and attend weekly field trips.

To learn more visit: [www.sharoncommunityeducation.com](https://www.sharoncommunityeducation.com) or call Sara Norton at (781) 784-1574 x 5

Feedback wanted!

Sharon Public Schools has completed a draft update to the

[BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN](#)

Please take some time to review the Plan (available by clicking on the link, above)

We want to hear your feedback - community input prior to final publication will be carefully reviewed

You can provide your feedback by completing and submitting the [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Community Feedback Form](#)

Feedback forms will be accepted between March 1 and March 15, 2024

## April is

ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

GENOCIDE AWARENESS MONTH

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

**April 1:** EASTER MONDAY • Christian  
**April 2:** WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY  
**April 3:** Sharon Rotary Club. Trivia Night Fundraiser. \$150/team (4 players), register by March 15. Castle Island Brewing, 31 Astor Ave., Norwood, 6-9 p.m.  
**April 5:** Sharon Youth Baseball and Softball Assoc. (SYBSA) Season Opener. SHS Peckham Park field, Sharon High School, Pond St., Sharon. 4:30 p.m.  
**April 6:** LAILAT AL-QADR • Islamic  
**April 10:** EID AL-FITR • Islamic  
**April 10:** NATIONAL YOUTH HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY  
**April 11:** Sharon DEIC meeting, virtual, 7 p.m.  
**April 12:** DAY OF SILENCE  
**April 13:** VAISAKHI (also spelled Baisakhi) • Sikh

## April (cont.)

**April 17:** RAMA NAVAMI • Hindu  
**April 20-May 1:** FESTIVAL OF RIDVÂN • Bahá'í  
**April 22:** Earth Day  
**April 23-30:** PASSOVER/ PESACH • Jewish  
**April 23-29:** ALA's NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK  
**April 24:** THERAVADA NEW YEAR • Buddhist  
**April 24:** ARMENIAN MARTYRS' DAY  
**April 26:** LESBIAN VISIBILITY DAY  
**April 28:** PALM SUNDAY • Eastern Orthodox Christian







**May is**

**JEWISH AMERICAN  
HERITAGE MONTH**

**ASIAN PACIFIC  
AMERICAN HERITAGE  
MONTH**

**MENTAL HEALTH  
AWARENESS MONTH**

**May (continued)**



**Come to the next Boosters meeting!**

@ 7:00 pm, Wednesday, March 13, SHS Room 1108

Sharon High Boosters is a non-profit, volunteer organization that fosters school spirit and supports SHS Athletics. We fund SHS athletic team needs that are not covered by user fees and grant scholarships to student-athletes.\*

Join us to learn how you can help,  
or visit [SharonBoosters.com](http://SharonBoosters.com) to learn more

\*Our past purchases include: Basketball Shooting Machine, Baseball/Field Hockey Scoreboard, Indoor Practice Time for Spring Sports, Golf Cart for Trainer, Stadium Field "Snack" Shack/Ticket Booth, Sailboat, Baseball Batting Cage, Tennis Windcreens at Sharon Middle School, Championship Banners Hanging in the Gym, Continuous Funding for Various Athletic Teams Equipment Needs

**May 1: INTERNATIONAL WORKER'S DAY**

**May 1-5: NATIONAL TEACHER APPRECIATION  
WEEK**

**May 2: HOLY THURSDAY • Eastern Orthodox Christian**

**May 3: HOLY FRIDAY • Eastern Orthodox Christian**

**May 3: WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY**

**May 5: PASCHA • Eastern Orthodox Christian**

**May 5: CINCO DE MAYO**

**May 5: NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR  
MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN,  
GIRLS, AND 2SLGBTQIA+ PEOPLES**

**May 6: YOM HASHOAH • Jewish**

**May 7: INTERNATIONAL FAMILY EQUALITY DAY**

**May 9: ASCENSION DAY • Western Christian**

**May 9: Sharon DEIC meeting, virtual, 7 p.m.**

**May 12: MOTHER'S DAY**

**May 17: INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST  
HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA, AND BIPHOBIA**

**May 19: PENTECOST • Western Christian**

**May 19: AGENDER PRIDE DAY**

**May 21: WORLD DAY FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

**May 23: VISAKHA PUJA • Buddhist**

**May 23: DECLARATION OF THE B'ÁB • Bahá'í**

**May 24: PANSEXUAL AND PANROMANTIC DAY**

**May 26: LAG B'OMER • Jewish**

**May 27: MEMORIAL DAY**

**May 28: ASCENSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH • Bahá'í**