



**TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes**  
**February 2, 2016, 8:00 AM**  
**Room 201, Westport Town Hall, Westport, CT**

**Attendees:** Dolores Paoli, Zoe Tarrant, Brett Aronow, Susan Ellis, Maggie Mudd, Catherine Onyemelukwe, Bernicestine McLeod, and Harold Bailey (Presiding)

**Guests:** David Vita, Catherine Lewis

Harold called the meeting to order at 8:06 AM.

**Approval of Minutes:** Susan moved that the minutes from our January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting be approved with amendments made by Zoe. Brett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The minutes will be posted.

### **New Business**

#### **What's Up?**

Many of us went to see James McBride speak at the Playhouse on Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup> – a program of WestportREADS (The Miracle of St. Anna) that was rescheduled from January 23<sup>rd</sup> because of bad weather. He presented a view of a world that Westport rarely sees by ruminating on race – how he was affected, how he feels about it. His main message was that we have much more in common than we have different, so we should capitalize upon that fact and act from that basis.

**Youth Engagement:** We have two students at Staples who are interested in being involved with TEAM Westport in some way. They would like to reach out to others who might want to be involved.

**Action:** Several of us will schedule a meeting with the students at Staples to discuss the logistics (teacher/advisor involvement, for example), considerations, and possible activities that such a group might pursue.

### **Old Business:**

#### **Programming:**

1. **Essay Contest:** We are contacting the judges. We may look at pushing the date back.
2. **WestportREADS:** Our TEAM Westport book discussion (Miracle at St. Anna) at Barnes and Noble on January 25<sup>th</sup> was small and intimate, but helped a lot in identifying the different characters and history relayed in the book. Kelle Ruden, Westport Library, led the discussion.
3. **2016 MLK celebration:** This took place on January 17<sup>th</sup> sponsored by a partnership of the Westport Playhouse, the Interfaith Council of Westport/Weston, and TEAM Westport, and it went very well. We have received very positive feedback; a relatively large crowd attended (an estimated 300+ people). Our speaker, Professor Marilyn Ford (Quinnipiac School of Law) gave a very powerful and empowering message. The student participants (the Staples High School Orphenians and students from the Regional Center for the Arts) and the Serendipity Chorale were superb. The Playhouse has already put this event on the schedule for next year!
4. **Westport Kids Need More Diverse Books:** This is still underway and is making headway. Recently there was a story on the news about a pre-teen girl of color in New Jersey who has requested 1000 black girl books since she would like to read something other than books about white boys and their dogs. People are sending her books from everywhere.



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We are still concerned about children's books that have children of color in them, but portray the children in the wrong way which may often be stereotypical. Teachers need to be sensitive to books with a negative message and also need to know how to guide children in having conversations.

5. James Baldwin: We are on target to host this program on March 12<sup>th</sup> at the Library. We are still in the process of locating a speaker to go along with the documentary.  
Action: David Vita will check with Karen Thorsen. Kelle Ruden is in contact with a potential speaker, but has not heard anything. We shall do press releases and create a FaceBook event for this. In addition, we should publicize in other venues.
6. Project Implicit (Feedback from TEAM Westport members): We'll discuss this at a meeting when Judy is present.
7. Playhouse/Interfaith: *The Invisible Hand*, by Ayad Akhtar, will be one of the productions at the Playhouse this summer (July/August). Discussions are planned after each performance. Our objective is that none should be done with a blind eye to the potential for generating Islamaphobia.
8. WestportREADS: On February 9<sup>th</sup> at 7PM the author of *Forgotten*, will appear at the Westport Public Library. This is a brand new book about black soldiers at D-Day. The author lives in France and is doing a book tour of the US.
9. TW Reads: We'll adopt a book (TW Reads). *The Justice Imperative* is a possibility. More people are now looking at mass incarceration across the political spectrum.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 AM.

The next meeting will be held at 8AM on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 in Room 201 of Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernicestine McLeod  
Secretary