

“It’s time for us as adults to shut up and listen”

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing July 17, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the George Floyd killing* 

Michele Downing is a Social Worker and RN, a grandmother of two, interested in social and environmental justice, a resident of the Lehigh Valley for fifteen years, the last six years a resident of West Bethlehem.

Gadfly is sharing his “journey” as he is opening himself up to viewpoints and perspectives relevant to “the nation’s searing reckoning with racial inequality” spurred by the murder of George Floyd.

Viewpoints and perspectives that should inform the important discussions we hope to have in Bethlehem.

Michele passed this link on as “Gadfly worthy,” and I am so thankful.

Gadfly has spent the early morning listening to students-of-color voices. And tremendously moved.

Ce-Ce Gerlach, member of Allentown City Council and prominent voice on racial issues, organized “Our Voices Matter! Students from Allentown, Emmaus and Parkland School District speak their truths!”

These are not Bethlehem voices, but there is no doubt shared consciousness.

You gotta listen.

It’s easy enough to listen to a short segment at a time.

Begin minute 1:48 with Gerlach intro.

The students were posed several questions to prompt discussion.

- What are your thoughts on the funding of police, and the policing in schools **(min. 15:09 and min. 59:50)**?
Remember that BASD boss Joseph Roy as recently stated, “We will undertake a review of the purpose, rationale and outcomes of our School Resource Officer program.”
- Does your education matter to you, and do you feel it matters to the people in charge of educating you, such as teachers, and school district administrators, and etc.? **(min. 25:25)**
- What are your thoughts on the curriculum currently being used in your schools? **(min. 40:33)**
- Do you think the Black Lives Matter movement is just a trend, and what are you as youth leaders going to do to insure that this work continues? **(min. 1:05:05)**

Gerlach conclusion: 1:27:27

One hopes that the two youths on the NAACP Community Advisory Board are similarly articulate.

Emerson, “Self-Reliance”: “Do not think that the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! In the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.”