



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 37 NUMBER 2

Visit our website: www.essexethical.org

FEBRUARY 2017

SUNDAY PROGRAMS

Programs are subject to change without notice. All are welcome. Programs begin at 11 a.m. 973-763-1905

Feb. 5 Suruchi Saini: **“Bringing ease and peace to your daily life”**

Suruchi Saini will offer guidance on how to manage challenges that we face at home, at work and in community. Her presentation will include a yoga stretch, some mindfulness exercises and a brief meditation, all techniques that ease stress, and help us bring more balance into our lives. She says that these ancient practices help almost everyone to focus and become calmer, and better manage mood swings, anxiety and depression-related symptoms.

Suruchi Saini is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Certified Clinical Trauma Professional (CCTP) with Holistic approach. For over 10 years, she has been conducting workshops/seminars on Holistic Living, Mindfulness and self-development in various organizations/schools/conferences, utilizing research in Psychology and Neuroscience, along with Yoga Philosophy.

She also has extensive experience in counseling and providing psychotherapy to groups, individuals, couples and families. She practices at Holistic Bonfire, Hoboken, and CMI Somerset. Also, she serves on NAMI Middlesex board & on advisory committee for SAMHAJ and SAMHIN, NJ. She earned her Master's degree in Counseling from University of Texas at San Antonio.

Feb. 12 Amy Blake: **“Family Education Program”**

This month The Educational Initiative will explore our family trees. Where are we from? Who are our ancestors? What role have they played in our lives, even today? Together as a whole community we will begin to explore these questions.

We will be joined by **Reggie Harris**, a truly gifted and inspiring storyteller. Reggie's storytelling ranges from the historical, cultural base of the Underground Railroad and the Modern Civil Rights Movement to stories that frame the rich context of our American past and present. He is also a master of sharing inspiring personal tales of lessons learned in the twists and turns along life's moments of discovery. Today he will share with the adults the story of his family, his history. It is quite a story. While Reggie is sharing with the adults, children will be making their own family trees. Please have children bring pictures of family members as well as any information they'd like to share about their family. Please check out Reggie's website: <http://reggieharrismusic.com/>

Amy Blake is an elementary school teacher who creates a classroom where peace is learned, valued and nurtured with the hope of all students taking and using this education as they walk forward in their lives.

Amy is passionate about modeling and teaching “big ideas” through all aspects of the curriculum. Using literature, reading, writing and the arts, Amy is hoping to model and grow “global citizens,” children with an honest desire to know and think deeply.

Amy believes that if children (adults

as well) were taught how to ask the big ethical questions and internalized the inquiry process, we can change the world. She believes the world will change if we just ask three questions as a “big umbrella” for everything: Is it safe? Is it kind? Does it show respect? Take the personal and put it into the philosophical and we are all on a level playing field.

Feb. 19 E. Betty Levin: **“Aging as a Spiritual Practice”**

Deepening my previous “Wisdom of Aging” presentation, this talk will discuss issues of meaningfulness, celebration, regrets, forgiveness, adaptation and new beginnings, even in one's 50s. Betty explains: “*Aging as a Spiritual Practice*, by Lewis Richmond, represents a climax to a trilogy I was fortunate to have gifted to me: *Being Mortal*, by Atul Gawande, and *When Breath Becomes Air*, by Paul Kalanithi.”

E. Betty Levin, a member of the Essex Ethical Culture Society for over 50 years, was introduced to the Movement in Chicago by her Orthodox Jewish surrogate mother when she was eleven years old. At Essex, she has served as president, Board of Trustees member and membership chair. She was previously founder and director of the Society's Educational Center, a community school offering innovative humanistic courses and varied creative arts for all family members. She currently serves on the Planning Committee for the emerging Family Education Program, with the goal of helping parents raise their children to become global citizens.

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County

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Editor's Note

Newsletter articles, announcements, etc., not to exceed 150 words in length, must be received by the eighth of the month for inclusion in the following month's edition. Submit items to: Howard Gilman, newsletter editor: gilman.howard@gmail.com.

If you put something for the newsletter in the EC office's mail slot or in the mail, please also email or call me to be sure I know about it, especially if your item is time-sensitive.

Editor reserves right to edit for length, clarity and content. Opinions offered in this publication are those of the authors.

**...act so
as to elicit
the best
in others
and in
ourselves**

Feb. 26 Rana and Huda Shanawani, Hanna Cox, and Talia White: "Helping Syrian Refugees make a new life in New Jersey"

Rana Shanawani and her mother Huda (if timing permits) together with teenagers Hanna Cox and Talia White will tell us about their work with Syrian refugees who have settled in New Jersey. While the two youngsters have been tutoring the children, helping them learn English and tackle other school subjects, the Shanawanis have been assisting the adults with everything from housing to language, employment, and cultural adjustments.

Rana Shanawani has been working on founding Refugee Outreach International (ROI), a nonprofit which secures local technical resources for refugees both in the US and overseas. Rana will discuss some of the challenges that local Syrian refugees have been experiencing here in NJ, and her experience at a Syrian refugee camp in Greece.

Rana is currently the Executive Director for the Women's Center for Entrepreneurship Corp. in Chatham, NJ (WCEC). Before working at the WCEC, she was a non-profit consultant helping international organizations in strategic management. In 2004, after working as a UN consultant for several years, she served as the CEO of BIDAYA, a chapter of the Prince's Youth Business International in Syria providing under-served entrepreneurs with training, micro-loans and mentoring. During her tenure there she received the Takreem Achievement Award for Best Young Entrepreneur and was selected to meet with



Talia White and Hanna Cox

President Barack Obama and Secretary Clinton at the Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship. Ms. Shanawani has received her Masters in Public Health from Johns Hopkins, and her Bachelors in biology from Cornell University. "I see all development work, through a health and human rights lens. When socioeconomic human rights are secured, it cascades into public health improvement for all."

Born and raised in Damascus, Syria, **Huda Shanawani** came to live in the United States when she was 16, with her new husband. She finished her college education while raising four children and learning everything she could from what the free culture of America offered.

She has been translating for the official courts of New Jersey for over 30 years. Teaching Arabic privately for many years led Huda to her starting the Arabic program at Union County College after receiving her Masters degree. She has been teaching Arabic at the college for several years.

Over the years, Huda has visited family in Damascus. She creates art work with references to the vivid landscapes and vibrant cities she grew up with.

Talia White and **Hanna Cox** are juniors at Columbia High School. They got involved in helping the refugees through a group at Talia's synagogue. Among other efforts, Hanna and Talia have sought to organize a collection of hygiene products at their school.



Meredith Sue Willis, Abby Cotler and Patricia Canning were presented with Beloved Community Awards at the South Orange Community Organization Martin Luther King Celebration January 8th.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Feb. 10 Folk Friday

Sing together through the hard times ... Bring acoustic string and rhythm instruments. Join in playing, singing or listening with us. Bring

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	February 2017	1	2	3
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9 am - Tai Chi Chuan with Rich Mullen 11am - Suruchi Saini: "Bringing ease and peace to your daily life" 12pm - Social Action Committee Meeting		11 am - Chair Yoga	3pm - ECSEC Board Meeting		Folk Friday 7:30pm	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9 am - Tai Chi Chuan with Rich Mullen 11am - Amy Blake and Reggie Harris: Educational Initiative - "Family Trees"		11 am - Chair Yoga				"United we sing" event - date and 2pm time tentative
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9 am - Tai Chi Chuan with Rich Mullen 11am - Betty Levin: "Aging as a Spiritual Practice"	President's Day	11 am - Chair Yoga				
26	27	28	1	2	3	4
9 am - Tai Chi Chuan with Rich Mullen 11am - Rana and Huda Shanawani, Hanna Cox, Talia White: "Helping Syrian Refugees make a new life in NJ"		11 am - Chair Yoga				

some refreshments to share. 7:30 pm second Fridays of the month, through June. Everyone is invited!

Feb 18 "United we sing" event

– DATE AND 2 PM TIME TENTATIVE –
A chance to gather and sing and organize our community in order to preserve human rights and democracy. For information about this (or Folk Friday), contact: (973) 763-8293, lnovemsky@comcast.net.

SOCIAL ACTION

Excerpts from Jan 8 Meeting



Ingrid Hill (*left*) of People's Organization for Progress will be honored as our **Local Hero** for 2017. We are considering April 9 or May 14.

Syrian Refugee Families · We are awaiting response from Huda Shanawani about having some of our young people get together with the Syrian girls. Lisa is working with a Syrian refugee family separate from Shanawani's organization. Zia and Lisa will be reaching out with an idea for a get-together and sharing under the auspices of our committee and the Ethics for Families program.

AEU Ethical Action has asked us to support the following statement: "Our government should be free from the corrupting influence of big money in politics and solely dependent upon the people. I declare my support for pro-democracy, anti-corruption reforms, including voting rights protections, citizen-funded elections, and a constitutional amendment to overturn

Citizens United." The committee is to get in touch with AEU Action and ask if it can be made more specific.

Similarly, we want more information about opposing the Pilgrim Pipelines Project. [Two parallel pipelines, between Albany, NY and Linden, NJ]: Bakken shale oil would be sent south; flammable refined products (including kerosene) would be sent north.] If constructed, the pipelines would threaten our drinking water, risk the safety of dozens of communities, and promote fracking and worsening climate change.

We agreed we would all learn more and make a statement or take an action at the next meeting. For individuals to learn more, go to <https://stopilgrimpipeline.com>

Our next meetings are February 5 and March 12, 2017.

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

516 Prospect Street
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040

For information, call 973-763-1905; visit our web site: www.essexethical.org; email: ecsec.nj@gmail.com

Please remember to bring canned or boxed food items for the **Food Pantry** box in our front hall. Donations go to the NJ Food Bank. **Children's Books** to be donated to the Parenting Center for children of need. **Winter Coat Collection:** clean coats, jackets and sweaters to the collection box in the small sunroom off the parlor to be distributed through Valley Settlement House.

For Syrian refugee families in Elizabeth, NJ – The only things we can accept: cooking oil, olive oil, laundry detergent and cleaning supplies; must be unopened. (Collection box in the small sunroom off the parlor).

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