

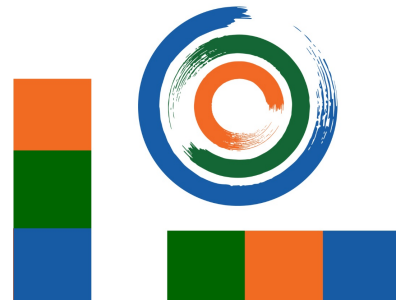
## October 2023 Newsletter



### October is Coalition Month!

Since 1998, the towns of Maplewood and South Orange have recognized the month of October as a special time to celebrate our progress toward building an integrated and inclusive community, to host pro-integrative events, and to inform residents about the on-going work of the Coalition. This month's events include our gala and fundraiser-*Celebrating Integration*, a collaborative event with SOPAC called *SOMA Neighbors Connect*, the Schools Committee's annual *Board of Education Candidates' Forum*, and the new *Integrated Art Circles*. See details below. **Join us!**

#### OCTOBER IS COALITION MONTH



### Celebrating Integration: Growing Our Commitment to Equity & Inclusion

**When:** October 12th, 7 pm

**Where:** Orange Lawn Tennis Club

**Honoring:** Dr. Ahadi Bugg-Levine & Gail Safian

**Featuring Live Music:** Essex Funk Collective

We are so excited to be together again this year! Join us for an evening of fellowship, food, music, a live auction, and fun as we raise funds to support our work in the coming year. **Purchase your ticket today here!**

We are grateful for our growing list of sponsors including The Able Baker, Jespy House, Durand-Hedden House and Garden, the Tugentman Family in honor of the CHS Scholarship Fund 100th anniversary, Fred & Susan Profeta, and Kelly Quirk. There's still time to become a sponsor. **Click here for details.**



### Board of Education Candidates' Forum Monday, October 9th, 7:30 pm, Marshall Elementary School

Although this year's election for members of the BOE is uncontested, it's important to know the candidates' positions and to vote in the November election (**information for voting in person or by mail is here**). The Schools Committee is hosting this opportunity to meet with the candidates to hear their views on school district issues related to our mission of racial integration, equity, and inclusion for all students. **More information here.**



### SOMA Neighbors Connect: Breaking Barriers, Building Bonds Event

## October 23, 2023 at 7:00pm – 10pm, SOPAC Loft

The Residential Committee is hosting this event to bring SOMA residents together to engage in dialog on local issues, foster racial integration throughout the community, share block party and other neighborhood collaboration ideas, and more. [Register here today](#) for this opportunity to meet new people and bring ideas back to your block!



## WGEL Recipient Offers Perspective on Moving to SOMA

The Coalition on Race has made 4 Wealth Gap Equalizer Loans (WGEL) in the last year. Recipient Noelle Perez generously shared her perspective: "As one of the first WGEL recipients, it's important to me to express my appreciation for this program and to see and be a part of an initiative that prioritizes equity, diversity and racial integration. This community has met and exceeded my expectations in ways beyond the loan program. It makes my heart happy to see my son thrive, meet new people and have neighbors as friends. It's been this way since our first day here." [Read the full article here.](#)

- **Interested in learning more about the loan program for a friend, family member, or a client?** The Wealth Gap Equalizer Loan is a unique financing solution designed specifically to help qualified Black and non-white Hispanic applicants overcome common barriers to homeownership in SOMA. [View a virtual information session here](#)



## Town Hall on Housing & Development in SOMA Video Is Here

There is much to learn about housing and development through the lens of racial equity and integration. Residential Committee member and local realtor Luis Estrella prefaced this informative dialog with South Orange Village President Sheena Collum and Maplewood Mayor Dean Dafis with these thoughts: "These towns... are places where the conversations around race, class, and culture are not only welcomed but celebrated. It is this commitment to open dialogue that fosters understanding, breaks down barriers, and paves the way for genuine connections." [Watch the video here.](#)



## Integrated Art Circles Continue—Register Today

Reserve your spot for the October and November Circles today! [For details on each circle and to register, click here.](#)

**Journey to Percussion/Shekere with artist: Ahmondylia Best begins Oct. 7th**

Learning to play the beaded gourd instrument known as a shekere can take you on a journey of percussion ranging from exhilaration to meditation. Participants will explore traditional rhythms, tone, tempo, improvisation and composition as a group and in solo performance.

**Abstract Art & Movement with artist Jasmine Carter: November 3rd and 10th**

"Outside The Lines" is an interdisciplinary art experience showcasing movement and abstract art. Dancer and educator Jasmine Carter will lead the group through creative communication to explore

### Integrated Art Circles 2023



vulnerable and honest conversations about diversity and social inequalities while building community.

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## Update on Reparations in NJ

Congregation Oheb Shalom hosted a Social Justice Symposium called **Unraveling the Path to Reparations** with speakers Jean-Pierre Brutus, PhD., Senior Counsel, Economic Justice Program, NJ Institute for Social Justice, and Kelly Harris, PhD., Senior Staff Director, Center for Africana Studies, University of Pennsylvania. In addition, Ryan Haygood, president & CEO of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, spoke on WNYC about the work of the **New Jersey Reparations Council** which will make recommendations for reparative justice policies in New Jersey. All the speakers called for people to deepen their understanding and to ask their elected representatives to support the NJ Task Force on Reparations. To learn more, see our video [Taking a Closer Look at Reparations](#) with Khalil Muhammad and Laurie Beacham.



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## Kelly Quirk, Coalition on Race Board Chair, Celebrated as 'Community Leader'

Patch has partnered with T-Mobile to celebrate "community leaders" in New Jersey, including South Orange-Maplewood. The most recent acknowledgment went to our amazing Board Chair Kelly Quirk in this article: [\*\*SOMA Community Leaders: Nonprofit Advocate Fights For Justice, Equity.\*\*](#) The staff and trustees wholeheartedly agree!



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## Community Events

- **South Orange Community Day, Sunday, October 8, 2023, 1- 3 pm, Meadowland Park**

South Orange Community Day is an annual event that showcases our businesses, volunteer organizations, and local government to all residents. [Details here.](#) Look for us there!

- **Hispanic Heritage Month – HOLA FEST 2023 Information**

Each year, the United States observes National Hispanic Heritage Month. This year's theme is "Latinos: Driving Prosperity, Power, and Progress in America." Throughout the month, communities across the country celebrate the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. This year's **Hola Fest** is Saturday, October 14, from 4 - 8 PM along Irvington Avenue in Seton Village, South Orange. It includes food trucks, music, art, face painting, and more! [Get Hola Fest details here....](#)



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## Coming Up in November...

**Preschool Open House**, November 14th. Check our website for location and details soon.

973-761-6116 | [soma@communitycoalitiononrace.org](mailto:soma@communitycoalitiononrace.org)  
[www.communitycoalitiononrace.org](http://www.communitycoalitiononrace.org)

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Visit our website

South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race | P.O. Box 1309, Maplewood, NJ 07040

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