



**Ridgewood Ambassadors for Global Citizenship (RAG)
in co-sponsorship with
New Jersey Division on Civil Rights
present:
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion + Social Emotional
Learning in K-12 Virtual Program**

AGENDA

May 4, 2022

Opening Remarks

Tisha M. Leonardo-Santiago, Bilingual Community Relations Specialist, NJ Division on Civil Rights

Moderator

Rev. Mack Brandon, Community Activist, Interfaith Leader & Professor at Ramapo College

Panelists

- **Patrick Fennell**, Founder and President of Empowerment Solutions, LLC. / SEL Expert
- **Dr. Roszena Haskins**, Director of Equity Advancement at West Hartford Public Schools
- **Elissa Zylbershlag**, Director of Education and Training, NJ Division on Civil Rights

Questions and Answers

Closing Remarks

Anne Burton Walsh, Co-Chair of Ridgewood Ambassadors for Global Citizenship ("RAG").

Speakers & Panelists



Rev. Mack Brandon

*Community Activist, Interfaith Leader
and professor at Ramapo College
(Moderator)*

Reverend Mack Brandon is a professor of music at Ramapo College and a pastor at Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church in Ridgewood. He has been an inspiring leader in Ridgewood and beyond for many decades. Since the murder of George Floyd, he has held a community Zoom every Wednesday night at 8:30 p.m., interviewing guests of all walks of life, while integrating conversations about race and social justice.

[Rev. Mack's LinkedIn Profile](#)



Anne Burton Walsh

*Co-Chair of Ridgewood Ambassadors
for Global Citizenship ("RAG")
(Closing Remarks)*

Anne Burton Walsh is a co-chair of Ridgewood Ambassadors for Global Citizenship ("RAG"). RAG is a Ridgewood, NJ-based grassroots advocacy group that was formed following the murder of George Floyd. Its mission is to strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion within Ridgewood and beyond, and collaborate with community organizations interested in achieving similar goals.

Email: raglobalcitizenship@gmail.com

Social Media: [RAG's Facebook](#)

She lives in Ridgewood with her husband and three children, who attend Ridgewood Public Schools. She is also an active member of the League of Women Voters of Ridgewood, which supports diversity, equity and inclusion in our schools and in our community.



Patrick Fennell

Founder and President of Empowerment Solutions, LLC.

Patrick Fennell believes that the lens through which a person sees themselves and the world around them empowers them to define and achieve success. Patrick's mission is to assist schools and organizations to continuously strengthen the relationship between children, teachers, parents and mentors. His vision is the development of a positive culture and climate *FOR ALL* by deepening understanding and enhancing connectedness.

Patrick attains his mission and sustainable results through his **ABCD** principle – **A**ttitude **A**wareness and **A**ccountability yield **B**etter **C**hoices, which lead to your **D**estiny. His passion led to the founding of Empowerment Solutions, LLC in 2004 and the non-profit organization Empowerment Institute, Inc. in 2006. These dynamic companies have been the vehicle of change through which he has facilitated trainings, workshops, and mentoring programs for children, schoolteachers, administrators, parents and the community at-large. As a result, he has empowered people of all ages and backgrounds to learn from each other, gain an appreciation for one another, and fulfill their purpose at school and in life together.

Patrick is a Transformational SEL expert and also serves as a consultant with the School Culture and Climate Initiative at Saint Elizabeth University and the University Behavioral Health Center at Rutgers University. Patrick is devoted to the development of positive school culture and climate and connectedness through the maximization of parental engagement, establishment of impactful culture and climate teams, implementation of social and emotional learning/character development skills, utilization of mentors and strengthening of emotionally intelligent relationships between all school stakeholders in an equitable and inclusive environment.

When reflecting upon life, Patrick shared, “At the end of the day, my desire and motivation is to create life-long memories with my family, friends and acquaintances and contribute to their ability to truly *live* and not merely exist. I am thankful for their ability to do the same for me.”

[Patrick's LinkedIn Profile](#)

For more information about his professional development or speaking engagements, please call him at **917.642.5882** or email him at patrick@empowerment-solutions.com.



Dr. Roszena Haskins

Director of Equity Advancement, West Hartford Public Schools

Dr. Roszena Haskins is the Director of Equity Advancement for the West Hartford Public Schools in Connecticut. She has over 20 years of experience as a preK-12 special education teacher, district-wide administrator and higher education instructor. Dr. Haskins is a social justice advocate with a strong passion for equity, diversity and inclusion. Among her many accomplishments is the development and oversight of a district-wide *Equity and Diversity Council (EDC)*, the *One Community for Equity* parent, educator and community network and the high school *Future Educators of Diversity* pipeline program. Dr. Haskins was also instrumental in the West Hartford Board of Education's adoption of *Educational Equity Policy 1800*, described as the lens to guide future actions.

[Dr. Roszena's LinkedIn Profile](#)

Dr. Haskins was honored with the *2021 George Coleman Excellence in Equity Award* for her successful and ongoing district and town work in promoting equity in education and within the West Hartford community. She was recognized by the State Education Resource Center for “demonstrated commitment and courage to ensure all students, especially students of color and culturally and linguistically diverse students, are valued and respected in their school experience.”



Tisha M. Leonardo- Santiago

*Bilingual Community Relations Specialist,
New Jersey Division on Civil Rights
(Opening Remarks)*

Tisha M. Leonardo-Santiago is the Bilingual Community Relations Specialist in New Jersey Division on Civil Rights' Community Relations Unit. A second-generation Latinx Hudson County native and a first-generation college graduate earning their undergraduate and graduate degrees in Criminal Justice from New Jersey City University.

In 2017, Tisha joined DCR as a Bilingual Investigator in the Enforcement Unit, served as the bilingual subject matter expert for the New Jersey Bias Investigation Access System (NJBIAS) Project that launched in November 2020, and now serves as the Statewide NJBIAS Community Liaison for the online complaint portal. Tisha is based in Newark, and primary counties are Bergen, Hudson, Hunterdon, Passaic, Sussex and Union. Tisha leads their unit's strategic planning and programming initiatives on breastfeeding, pregnancy, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, national origin, nationality, ancestry, and religion (Islam). Tisha serves as the subject matter expert on Youth, Higher Education, Prisons and Policing, Latino/a/x, LGBTQI+, Muslim and Immigrant communities. They also serve as the DCR Youth Ambassador Program Coordinator.

E: Tisha.Leonardo@njcivilright.gov
DCR Website: njcivilrights.gov
Facebook & Twitter: @CivilRightsNJ

[Tisha's LinkedIn Profile](#)



Elissa Zylbershlag

Director of Education and Training, New Jersey Division on Civil Rights

Elissa Zylbershlag (she/hers) is an educator who has specialized in anti-bias education since 2005. She is currently the Director of Education and Training at the Division on Civil Rights. She has also served as the Director of Conflict Resolution and Anti-Bias Initiatives at the New Jersey State Bar Foundation, where she developed and wrote five curricula for K-12 schools, and as a National Trainer for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). In 2020, Elissa was designated as a Senior Facilitator in ADL's anti-bias programming and Holocaust education sectors for her excellence in facilitation skills. This is a nominated designation bestowed upon only 10% of trainers nationally.

E: Elissa.Zylbershlag@njcivilright.gov
DCR Website: njcivilrights.gov
Facebook & Twitter: @CivilRightsNJ

[Elissa's LinkedIn Profile](#)

Elissa has a B.A. in Religious Studies from Ithaca College and a M.Ed. in Multicultural Education from National University. She also holds a certification in Applied Positive Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. She is passionate about working to prevent bias and discrimination through education and is always ready and willing to have difficult conversations. Elissa loves to travel and lives with her husband, two children and their dog in Springfield, NJ.