

Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council  
P.O. Box 744  
Concord, MA 01742

www.cchumanrights.org



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# Climate for Freedom



The Newsletter of the Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council, Inc.

## Spring 2017

*The Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council is a community organization of volunteers working together to foster respect, understanding, good-will and conciliation among individuals and groups in the community. It is dedicated to the belief that all people are entitled to dignity and respect. The role of the Human Rights Council is one of education and advocacy.*

### Officers

Ronni Olitsky, Co-Chair  
Rob Morrison, Co-Chair  
Louisa Paushter, Secretary  
Libby Kurten, Treasurer  
Hedi Charde, Newsletter Editor  
Lorell Ambrose, Webmaster

### Members at Large

Marybeth Barker  
Sibylle Barlow  
Court Booth  
Debra Cannally  
Maura Clarke  
Maryellen Freeman  
Charisse Gilmer  
Sue Gladstone  
Nancy James  
Keith Jones  
Liz Morrison  
Marie Myers  
Sarah Napier  
Arthur Walker  
Patricia Waters

## Remembrance event to feature film about the Holocaust: *Exile and Community: The Life of Carola Domar*

The Annual Holocaust Remembrance event will take place on April 30th at 7pm at the Town House.

In lieu of a speaker, there will be a one-hour documentary film shown, *Exile and Community: The Life of Carola Domar*, sponsored by the CCHRC.

Filmmaker Susan Reider explains: "Although this oral history is told by an elderly woman and her grown daughter, the account is largely communicated from a young person's perspective—

Carola escaped Germany as a teen and came to the United States on her own. A chapter of the piece is devoted to the sense of community and purpose she finds in her neighborhood of Conantum in Concord."

Her story of exile and community has particular relevance in the context of current mass migration.

For more information, visit CCHRC's Facebook page.

## Letter from the Co-Chairs

The Concord Carlisle Human Rights Council (CCHRC) has seen marked increased in inquiries and visits to our website and FaceBook page, and the CCHRC continues to follow up on local incidents of human rights abuses and to support the victims of these specific incidents. Beyond the local sphere, human rights are under attack from multiple fronts: From the rise of white right-wing supremacists, to immigrants and their children threatened with deportation, to proposed budgetary cuts to programs that largely impact the poor, the human rights impact is immense. There are many other legal and social issues that are changing at a dizzying rate: reproductive rights, pollution control, global warming, equitable education, labor standards, and of course, the composition of the Supreme Court, to mention but a few.

It can all be a bit daunting and dispiriting, but in response to these affronts to our human rights, a new spirit of activism is developing. There are dozens of local grassroots organizations springing up to defend causes that are dear to us. Each week we read a new appeal from groups of concerned citizens who have banded together and are eager to do something to make a difference. There is so much going on that it is hard to know where to pitch in and help. Each member of the council has individual concerns, but we gather monthly to lend each other support and to discuss initiatives that we can advocate for collectively.

After much discussion, the CCHRC has thrown its weight behind the movement to designate Concord a "Welcoming Community." We support the current Concord Police policy of not inquiring about a person's immigration status. We hope that by codifying specific and limited protections we will help protect the human rights of immigrants that live and work in our community.

These are trying times, but they are also times that force us to examine what is valuable to us as a society. We have an opportunity to enact changes that defend our core ideals and principles. We encourage our fellow citizens to embrace this renaissance of social protest and activism. Get involved and be heard!

*Ronni Olitsky & Rob Morrison*  
Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council Co-Chairs

## Celebrating Dr. King's Legacy

by Louisa Paushter

We began the year of 2017 with an evening that lifted the spirit and inspired hope. On Wednesday, January 11, 2017, the CCHRC honored Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy during its 24th annual celebration event. Choruses of all ages gathered with the community at The Fenn School to lift their voices in celebration of MLK, Jr., singing folksongs, spirituals, and gospel. Our host was Concord Carlisle High School graduate and Abby Fund member, Charisse Gilmer Alouidor. Performing musical selections this year were the Fenn Treble Chorus, the Willard 5th Grade Chorus, the Boston Children's Chorus, spoken word poet Lisa Lee, and the Joyful Voices of Inspiration Chorus.

The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday is a national day of service, with the hope that communities across



The Boston Children's Choir performs at the Fenn School during the MLK event.



Spoken word poet Lisa Lee performs at the MLK event.

## Suitcase Stories Live

by Sue Gladstone

On April 5th, the Concord community overwhelmingly supported Resettle Together, Concord's *Suitcase Stories Live* event at the Umbrella Community Arts Center. The sold out evening supported refugees in New England through the work of the International Institute of New England (IINE). IINE has helped to build vibrant communities in New England by welcoming refugees and immigrants and providing them education and a guided pathway to careers and citizenship. Support for the Concord event, in addition to the 350 ticket holders, were sponsors *Reasons to Be Cheerful* and the *Franz W. Sichel Foundation*.

*Suitcase Stories* is a live performance series that features foreign and US-born residents sharing refugee and immigrant stories. The series is produced in partnership with

the IINE and Massmouth. For over 97 years IINE has invested in the future of our towns and cities by preparing refugees and immigrants in the social, economic, and political richness of American life through active citizenship. Each year IINE serves nearly 2,000 refugees and immigrants across three sites in Boston and Lowell, and Manchester, New Hampshire. The mission of Massmouth is to promote the timeless art of storytelling in Massachusetts. Founded in 2009, Massmouth hosts popular monthly slams and special storytelling events throughout Greater Boston.

IINE Resettle Together Network is a growing network of community partners assisting IINE in creating welcoming communities for refugees, and providing immediate and long-term support to individuals and

the nation are inspired to engage in activities and projects that will "strengthen communities, empower individuals, bridge barriers and create solutions" to some of the nation's most pressing problems. As a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. King once said, "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." This statement bears repeating daily, particularly as many today face the same social issues King gave his life pressing the nation to address. From issues of justice and empowerment, love and peace, and issues of equality and poverty, there is much work to be done.

In 2017, let us consider how we might better serve our neighbors and our communities. Let us focus on love, with a plan of action that might meet another's tangible need or need of the spirit.

families. Concord Resettle Together is part of this vast network and was pleased to present *Suitcase Stories Live*. To learn more or support IINE, visit [www.iine.org](http://www.iine.org).

The Concord event was the first in a series of *Suitcase Stories Live* around Massachusetts. If you missed this terrific evening, visit [www.iine.org/suitcasestories](http://www.iine.org/suitcasestories), or see below a list of future performances:

**Sunday, May 7 at the Regent Theater, Arlington, MA**

**Thursday, June 1 at U-Mass Lowell, Lowell, MA**

**Thursday, June 22 at TripAdvisor Headquarters, Needham, MA**

**Thursday, September 14 at WGBH Headquarters, Boston, MA**

## Concord Carlisle Human Rights Council Honors The Nature Connection

by Hedi Charde

On December 5, 2016, the CCHRC presented The Nature Connection with its Climate for Freedom Award at the annual Human Rights Breakfast at the Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concrd. The award is given every two years in recognition of a local organization that fosters a climate of freedom in its work and mission. In its mission to "support the human spirit by offering and building connections between people and the natural world", The Nature Connection serves at-risk youth, people with disabilities and the elderly who have little or no connection with nature.

Executive Director, Sophie Wadsworth, accepted the award on behalf of The Nature Connection. After showing a brief video about the work of the organization, Wadsworth explained that at The Nature Connection, "we believe everyone deserves access to nature. It is our birthright." According to

Wadsworth, nearly 80,000 people in Massachusetts wake up in facilities with limited or no access to nature. The Nature Connection's work, then, is to bring nature and nature-assisted therapy to as many people as possible. She discussed nature's unique capacity to teach and to heal, highlighting many wonderful stories. In one particularly poignant story, she told of a bird named "Tilty", who could not fly but who could sing a beautiful song. Tilty accompanied volunteers to many site visits, and one girl took a special liking to the bird. After listening to Tilty sing her song and learning that she could not fly due to her crooked neck, the girl exclaimed, "I may have bipolar disorder, but I can still sing." The girl had made a connection, helping her to better cope with her disorder.

For more information on The Nature Connection, visit [www.nature-connection.org](http://www.nature-connection.org)



Sophie Wadsworth accepts the Climate For Freedom award from CCHRC co-chairs Rob Morrison and Ronni Olitsky.



## Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council

We are a tax-deductible, non-profit organization. Please consider a donation online or with the envelope provided to help us continue our work in education & advocacy.

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**Annual Holocaust Memorial Observance**  
**April 30 2017**  
7:00PM  
Concord Town House  
Concord, MA

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In lieu of a speaker, there will be a one hour documentary film shown, *Exile and Community: The Life of Carola Domar*.

This 90 minute event, sponsored by the Concord Carlisle Human Rights Council, is free and open to the public. It will open with a blessing by Rosalie Gerut of Kerem Shalom and conclude with brief Q & A period with the filmmaker.

Refreshments will be served.