



Local League Awards

LWVNJ Convention 2019

COLLABORATION AWARD

Criteria:

1. A project or activity that was done in collaboration with at least one other organization between May 2017 and the present.
2. The project needs to have educated the public on an important issue, advocated for a local league program item, or solved a local problem in a way that would not have been possible alone or separately.
3. The collaboration with another organization (or more) brought heightened visibility and a synergy of resources that made it %more than the sum of its parts.+

Submit a one-page description of your project, including:

1. What the project sought to achieve and to what extent you achieved that goal.
2. Names of the other organizations with which you cooperated.
3. Evidence that collaboration heightened the League's effectiveness and increased its visibility.

Local League Township of Ocean

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Return this form with supporting material by February 4, 2019 to Pat Thompson at thompson@lwvnj.org.

League of Women Voters of the Township of Ocean

Get Ready to Vote – Voter Information Session for Neptune Residents, September 26, 2018

This project was undertaken in collaboration with The Midtown Urban Renaissance Corporation (MURC) and Martin Luther King Jr. Presbyterian Church (MLK Church), two organizations committed to supporting and empowering residents of Midtown Neptune. MURC reached out to LWVTO for help designing a program to increase voter turnout in the Midtown Community (Township Districts 9 & 11). This community of primarily lower-income African American people has the largest number of registered voters in Neptune and consistently the lowest turnout. MURC wanted to design a program that would identify and reduce barriers to voting.

In joining the project, we at LWVTO sought to reach underserved voters in our area and introduce the League of Women Voters to this community. We hoped to establish permanent partnerships and increase the diversity of our activities. Often, we find that we are “speaking to the choir”. In this project, we stepped out of our comfort zone to bring voters from this community into the conversation. We are very pleased with the results.

To make this program a reality, a ten-member team (including five active members of LWVTO) worked together intensively during a six-week period. We created an interactive evening program that began with the 45 participants at tables of 6 to 8 sharing a pasta dinner, followed by breakout discussions for participants to identify issues they considered most important for their community. Each group shared issues and priorities, which we recorded on flip chart pages. We then presented an organized program with PowerPoint slides and handouts explaining the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of government, the rules regarding voter registration, and detailed information about what the local ballot would look like, and the rights voters have if they are challenged at the polls. Many participants were surprised to learn that important elections occur every year (and not only during Presidential election years).

We invited participants to commit to vote in November and provided registration forms for them to take into the community. More than 100 voter registration forms were taken. Participants also brainstormed ways to assist fellow community members in reaching the polls on election day.

Evidence of the program’s success includes the following:

- MURC has become an ongoing partner. The program is highlighted on its website: <https://www.neptunemurc.com/home/2018/09/voter-issues/>
- MLK Church has invited us to continue to offer programs at its site, including hosting a candidates information night before the election.
- Two young women (in their 30s) who are members of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, decided they wanted to be able to conduct voter registration events; we provided training and they registered two dozen new voters in early October.
- Three of the women on the program planning team (including the executive director of MURC) have now become active members of LWVTO.
- A press release and photographs were distributed to the local weekly paper and to online news outlets.
- Through MURC, we were introduced to the Monmouth County Cotillion Committee, and have agreed to provide a program to the high school students in their Spring 2019 cohort.
- The project organizing team has refined the formal program and is prepared to support teams interested in delivering it in other communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this program that has meant so much to us.