



Local League Awards

LWVNJ Convention 2019

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT AWARD

Criteria:

1. A project or activity done or a procedure implemented to engage and retain new members.
2. The work must have been done between May 2017 and the present.

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

1. Specifics about new member engagement including how many members were engaged, how they were engaged, and what their engagement looks like.

Local League Township of Ocean
Contact Name Peggy Dellinger
Email peggydellinger@gmail.com Phone 732-531-9264

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

2019 Membership Engagement Award Application

League of Women Voters of the Township of Ocean

February 4, 2019

BACKGROUND

In late 2017, in response to the dramatic increase in interest in the political process after the 2016 election, the Board of the League of Women Voters of the Township of Ocean held a series of meetings to lay out a strategy to address the new landscape. In addition to a new governance model and a list of specific priorities, we defined two overarching goals: 1) defend our democracy [as laid out in our priorities], and 2) develop the next generation of LWVTO leadership. Our membership has grown 140% in two years (25 to 60). Both goals required that we engage and develop this new talent.

BASIC APPROACH

Our assumption is that new members were joining League for a reason: to do SOMETHING about what they viewed as a threat to our democracy. They were attracted by our reputation and wanted to be in action in a meaningful way, a way that fit their interests and the time they had to give.

SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

We did the expected things: trained members and prospective members in voter registration and included them in drives. We created a “prospective member process” that ensured anyone expressing interest received a follow-up welcoming email with information about what we were up to and inviting them to come to the next meeting. We created a “new member process” to ensure that new members are welcomed with a phone call and assigned a Board member mentor (not yet fully implemented) to extend personal invitations to meetings and to offer one-on-one orientation. We redesigned our membership form to include a survey of interests. We created a “scholarship” fund (mentioned on the membership form) so that no one is excluded for financial reasons. We kept our dues low (\$40) for the same reason.

We also created a project to engage members and potential members. We set out to enlist volunteers to populate VOTE411.org with all the municipal, school, and county-level races in Monmouth County. In the end, we engaged 43 members and potential members and covered 37 of Monmouth County’s 53 municipalities (70%)—a total of 72 races. Here’s how it worked:

- We involved the membership of all three Monmouth County Leagues—and invited the public.
- We worked with the County Clerk to overcome barriers to election information and created a master list of all Monmouth County races, candidates, and contact information (no emails).
- Assigned a single-point-of-contact to handle the interface to the VOTE411.org system (eliminating the need for volunteers to learn the system and avoiding this as a barrier to participation)
- Held two workshops to engage and train volunteers. Held a fun “auction” to divvy up races. At the second workshop, volunteers shared stories and tips (particularly on hunting down emails and encouraging candidates to participate)
- Created an email mail list of VOTE411.org to regularly update the volunteers and congratulate them on our progress
- Promoted VOTE411 to the candidates and public—including appeals to the major parties to encourage their candidates to participate, VOTE411 business cards, outdoor signs, and a public service ad for VOTE411 in *NJMonthly*.

Our Monmouth County VOTE411 initiative gave members an opportunity to DO SOMETHING--to defend our democracy in a specific, visible, manageable way, adapted to their time and talents. Due in part to our VTOE411 project, we have engaged new members: five now serve on our Board.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

1) VOTE411 PSA, 2) Workshop flyers, 3) VOTE411 Checklist for volunteers



VOTE411.ORG[®]

ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

Your personal, non-partisan voter's guide.
See that you're registered. Find your polling place.
Learn who's running and why.



people

and the brother of Hoboken Mayor Ravinder Bhalla, would expect nothing less, given the diligence and self-discipline he remembers the attorney general cultivating as a kid in Glen Rock.

"He's a grinder. He's a hard worker," says Singh, a senior program officer at the Open Society Foundations (financier George Soros's international grant-making network). Bhalla, 44, is New Jersey's first Sikh mayor and Grewal's best friend. Singh, who lives in Hoboken next door to his brother, is a few years older. Grewal and Bhalla looked up to Singh because he went to law school and worked in the public interest. That didn't sit all that well with both sets of their Indian immigrant parents.

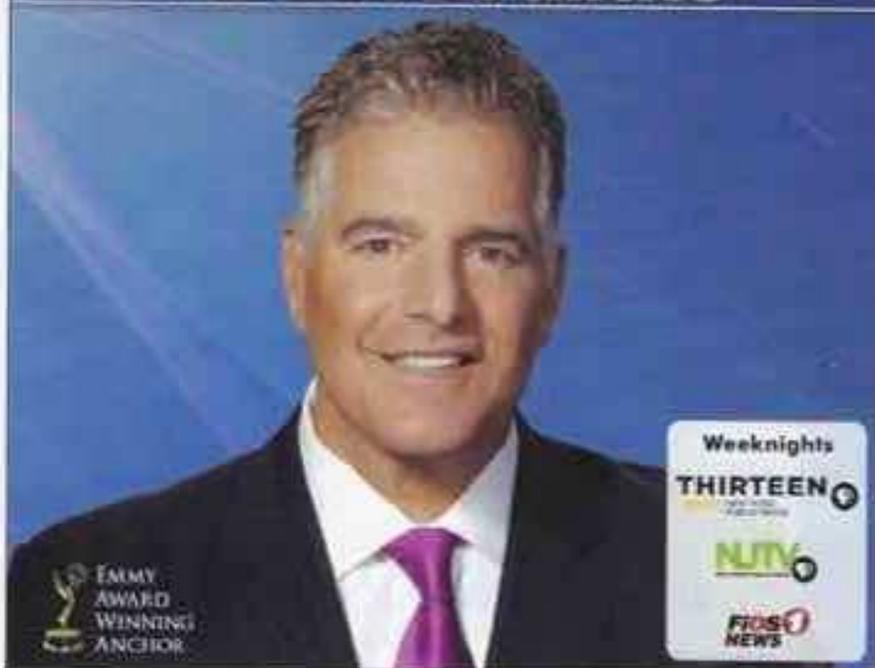
"The fields we all entered were novel for our families," Singh says. "I was the guinea pig for Gurbir and Ravi in that I thought, *What can one do with a law degree?* The path of being a lawyer to fight for the public interest wasn't the preferred path of my immigrant parents, who wanted me to make money. But Gurbir and Ravi probably thought, *Asar's doing it, maybe we can do it, too.*"

Grewal, an only child, was a self-described "army of one" with a penchant for *Law & Order* marathons and, according to Singh, making up rap songs with his buddy Bhalla. "One time Gurbir and Ravi and I were at these tennis courts in Fairfield," he says, "and some other kids were making fun of us for our appearance, and we were giving it back to them, and lo and behold Ravi and Gurbir came up with this rap about having Sikh pride and nowhere to hide."

Grewal's parents arrived in the United States from India in the early 1970s; both are naturalized U.S. citizens. His father is trained as an electrical engineer, his mother has a background as a bookkeeper. They are semi-retired, but still live in New Jersey and often see their granddaughters—ages 9, 7 and 5. "The first generation of any immigrant group is just trying to lay down roots," says Grewal. "The second generation has the luxury to do something different. To start giving back."

That is in keeping with the values of Sikhism, a monotheistic religion started in the 16th century that claims 27 million followers (2 percent of India, a country of 1 billion, is Sikh). "If you look at Sikhism and distill it to its essence, we believe in selfless service to others. During pro-

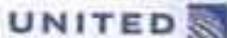
One on One with Steve Adubato



Funding provided by:

verizon

njea





VOTE411.ORG WORKSHOP

6:30-8:30, Monday, July 16, 2018

Eastern Branch, Monmouth County Library
1001 Rte. 35, Shrewsbury

VOTE411.org is an online guide developed by the League of Women Voters to offer *nonpartisan* registration, ballot, and candidate information tailored to the individual user. If you are concerned about the state of our democracy and want to do something to empower and educate voters, here's your chance. We need to populate VOTE411.org with information about Monmouth County and local-level races for the upcoming election cycle. Come learn what's involved and, if you choose, sign up to do your part.

All (not just League members) are welcome.

RSVP1wvtonj@gmail.com

Check **LWVTC.ORG** for details.

League of Women Voters

The Township of Ocean, Greater Red Bank Area, and Western Monmouth



VOTE411.ORG

WORK SESSION

6:30-8:30, Wednesday, August 15, 2018

**Eastern Branch, Monmouth County Library
1001 Rte. 35, Shrewsbury**

VOTE411.org is an online guide developed by the League of Women Voters to offer *nonpartisan* registration, ballot, and candidate information—tailored to the individual user. This session is a follow up to our July Workshop—but **you do not need to have attended the July workshop to join the effort to populate VOTE411.org with information about Monmouth County and local-level races for the upcoming election cycle.** If you are concerned about the state of our democracy and want to do something to empower and educate voters, here's your chance. Join us August 15.

All (not just League members) are welcome.

Check LWVTO.ORG for details.



League of Women Voters

The Township of Ocean, Greater Red Bank Area, and Western Monmouth

VOTE411.org Checklist

Monmouth County 2018 Election Cycle

	WHAT	BY WHEN
1.	Select the elections you'd like to cover from the list of Monmouth County municipal and Board of Education races.	
2.	Locate the candidate information (Name, party, address) for each of the races you're covering. Both the Board of Education and municipal candidate lists are posted on LWVTO.ORG. (Members Only Page, password league1920, "VOTE411 Toolkit).	
3.	Track down candidate emails. A sample letter to send candidates explaining VOTE411 and requesting their emails (on LWV letterhead) is available on LWVTO.ORG. (Members Only Page, password league1920, "VOTE411 Toolkit). (NOTE 1)	
4.	ONLY IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO USE THE DEFAULT QUESTIONS (Note 2), create 3 to 5 questions to ask the candidates.	
5	IF YOU HAVE TIME, research and prepare background information on the elected offices: <i>office name; length of term; salary; unexpired term, if applicable (available on list of candidates—step 2 above); size of governing body; form of government (for municipalities)</i> . (Call the local Board of Ed or town hall.) We have a generic description of board of education responsibilities that will be added to school board races,	
6.	<p>WHEN YOU HAVE ALL THE CANDIDATES' EMAILS OR HAVE EXHAUSTED ALL AVENUES TO FIND THEM, send the information you do have (the output of steps #3, 4, 5 above.) to Ted Dellinger (ted.dellinger@gmail.com):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate names and emails • If you have it: description of the office • If you are not using the default, your 3-to-5 questions for the candidates <p>IF YOUR LIST OF EMAILS IS NOT COMPLETE, indicate this in your message to Ted, along with a brief description of your search for the missing information and COPY Peggy Dellinger at peggydellinger@gmail.com (Note 3)</p>	
7.	Ted will email invitations to the candidates from VOTE411 within two weeks of receiving your list. The invitation comes from ted.dellinger@gmail.com with the subject line "Invitation: League of Women Voters VOTE411." It contains a unique link that the candidate will use to enter data into VOTE411.org. Ted will "publish" the race at the time he emails the invitations and candidate responses will be visible to the public as soon as they enter them. Candidates can enter—and edit—data in their profiles up to the cut-off date we have set (one week before the election). (NOTE 4)	
8.	Once the race has been "published (made visible to the public)," monitor the website for candidate responses and alert Ted (ted.dellinger@gmail.com) if a follow-up reminder needs to be sent. When candidates have entered their information, consider sending an email thanking them for their participation. To monitor, go to VOTE411.org and enter an address in the election district.	
9	Use all available media to promote VOTE411	

NOTES

1. The candidates enter their biographical information and answers to our questions directly into VOTE411 via a link emailed to them. We need to get their email addresses and send them to Ted. You can see a copy of the invitation the candidates will receive (with a description of VOTE411, instructions, and a link) on LWVTO.ORG, “Members Only” Page, VOTE411 Toolkit.

Tips for tracking down emails: Contact candidate campaign headquarters, party headquarters, municipal clerk or board of education business administrator. Check municipal or board of education websites (for incumbents), LinkedIn, Facebook, findpeoplesearch.com and other online white pages.

(Starting in 2019, candidates are required to submit emails when they file.)

2. **Generic questions for municipal races (used as default if you do not submit questions to Ted):** What are the major challenges facing the community and how would you propose to address them if elected? What qualifies you for this position, both personally and professionally? What factors are critical to the quality of life in your community and what would you do to improve or preserve them?

Generic questions for Board of Ed races (used as default if you do not submit questions to Ted): What are the major challenges facing the district and how would you propose to address them if elected? What qualifies you for this position, both personally and professionally? What factors are critical to the quality of education in your district and what would you do to improve or preserve them?

3. We will send the invitations to the candidates for whom we have emails, even if we do not have emails for all. For this reason, it is critical that we keep careful records of our due diligence in tracking down emails—hence the need to document this in your message to Ted and copy Peggy. Hopefully, as candidates see or hear of their opponents’ VOTE411 presence, they will send their emails to us. Candidates can enter or change their information on VOTE411 up to our cut-off date, one week before the election.
4. A copy of the VOTE411 invitation is available on LWVTO.ORG “Members Only” Page, VOTE411 Toolkit.

The candidates enter logistical/biographical data (website, campaign address, campaign phone, campaign email, Facebook, current elected position, education/qualifications, years in the community). They enter the answers to our questions. Responses have a 1500 character limit (about 200 words).

5. VOTE411.org gives the user personalized data. To see what is available to a voter in a specific election district, you need to enter an address in that district. You can use the address of a public building (library, town hall, school, etc. or even a candidate’s address). This allows you to see what a user will see and check which candidates have entered data.