**Social Issue Spotlight Series: Voting Rights**

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:02:04

We have some really fantastic speakers on the line today. And I want to make sure we're making the most of their time. And so we're gonna go ahead and get things started. But if people jump in late, that is completely fine. Everyone is welcome.

So I want to start things off with just a general thank you. We're really, really excited to talk more about this topic and to learn from our great nonprofit leaders on this subject. So as we get some logistic notes out of the way, and some introductions flowing for the taproot staff members, as well as the nonprofit speakers on the line, I definitely welcome everyone who's an attendee for today, please go ahead and introduce yourself using that chat box at the bottom of your screen. Let us know your name, where you're joining from, and if you feel comfortable sharing, We'd also love to hear why this cause is important to you. Why are you interested in voting rights? What are you hoping to learn more about it? So get those introductions going in the chat. And feel free to share your LinkedIn profile, networking connections, always always encouraged here at taproot. So use that space to get the chat going.

Alright, so as you introduce yourself, I just want to say on behalf of the Taproot team, welcome again to today's event, social issue spotlight voting rights. We're excited to have you here for this lunch and learn. Or it might be a breakfast and learn if you're joining from the west coast. So welcome again. as you might have heard from past taproot offense or emails announcements, our organization has really invested heavily in volunteerism research and user feedback and nonprofit feedback as well. This year, and one of our overall learning suspend that folks in our community crave more knowledge about an exposure to the social issues that nonprofits are tackling. So greater access to information about the urgency of the challenge the people that it impacts, and the really creative, community driven grassroots solution solutions that nonprofits are employing, that will help us create additional cross sector understanding, empathy, and pro bono connections, right.

And since we're not the experts, tapper does, elevating the voices and work of our nonprofit partners through a series of social issue spotlight panels. This is actually our second topic. If you're here to talk about voting rights to learn about voting rights, then you're definitely in the right place. And we have a recording from our first panel that was on the topic of health care access available. And if you'd like the link to that, if you'd like to check it out. We have some staff members on the line who'd be more than happy to provide you with that link.

So today, Taproot is joined by a panel of a few of our nonprofit partners. This is going to be a really open conversation on the challenges impacting voting rights, civic engagement, and how nonprofits are addressing disenfranchisement and other aspects of this pressing social issue. So we'll also discuss how these organizations can use your support right now, through pro bono consulting through or through things like donation or hands on volunteers in the days, weeks and months ahead. So really appreciate everyone who submitted questions upon registering for this event. We'll be using those those questions to kick off our panel and to get the conversation flowing. But don't be a stranger, use the chat box, use the q&a box to ask additional questions throughout.

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And we may invite you off of mute to ask that question or expand on that question if we have time at the end. So again, a few logistical reminders, we are recording this panel and we will share out that recording with everyone who registered. We are also going to ask yourself to keep yourself muted while our speakers are answering questions or discussing things amongst themselves. But again, if you have a really great question, I will call you out and invite you to unmute yourself and talk directly to our speakers towards the second half of our event. And if you need any tech assistance throughout today's panel, please shoot a private chat to my taproot colleague on the line Meghan Gillette, Megan, if you can give a little wave just to let folks know. So Megan would be more than happy to assist with any tech issues that you're experiencing. Okay, so with those logistics out of the way, I want to get things rolling out

My name is Kimberly Swartz, my pronouns are she her hers, and I'm located in Charlotte, North Carolina. And I'm Taproot Foundation's director of community engagement. I'll be your moderator throughout today's panel. I'm also just an individual who is really passionate about civic engagement and the power that each citizen wields in making our country's kinder, stronger and more supportive places to live. So I'm genuinely very excited to learn from each of the wonderful speakers that we have on the line today. So if anyone is new to taproot and does have any questions about Taproot Foundation, again, this panel is not about taproot. It's about some of our nonprofit partners. So we're not going to spend too much time talking about our nonprofit. But if you have any questions, I have so many taproot colleagues on the line who'd be more than welcome are more than happy to answer them in the chat. So rather than me take more time to speak about taproot direct those questions in the chat, and we'll definitely get answers to you either during this event or offline.

So now, I'm delighted to introduce our speakers, our real leaders for today's conversation, and I'm going to kick things off by introducing the League of Women Voters of Alameda. They're a nonprofit who celebrated their 100 year anniversary in 2020. Which, I mean, can we get like a virtual round of applause that is just incredible, incredible milestone. They're an educational and political organization made up of women and men who worked to empower voters and defend democracy. And today we're joined by two of their leaders, one of which Sheila Durkin is going to be happening in in just a few minutes. She was running late from a previous engagement, but she's a marketer and marketing research professional who began a second career in the nonprofit space after volunteering and retirement for a few different causes. Her focus at L WC is civic engagement projects directed towards young and first time voters. We're also so happy to be joined by Lindell or excuse me, Linda bit off, who is the chair of the Youth Outreach Services Committee for the League of Women Voters, and she's a retired administrative law judge who has a passion for civics education and voting rights, which led her to volunteer with the LW see where she lives. And she's also has deeply entrenched Roots in the nonprofit community. And I'm sure if you, you asked, she would love to tell you more about each of the different causes that she's involved with. So welcome, welcome. Welcome to the L WC, thank you so much for being here.

Our next nonprofit that we'll be hearing from is inform your community. There are nonprofit who focus on educating through fun, free and meaningful events. They're creating an Informed Electorate through really intentional mission driven work that's related to the four C's civics, civic engagement, civility, and civil rights. And so really pleased to be joined by Dr. Stacy Carrillo, who is a former college professor and an expert in stereotypes and the role they play in our society. She's also the founder and leader of inform your community. So we're very lucky to be joined by her today.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:10:37

And then our final nonprofits speaker for today's event is the Coalition for racial equity and social justice, who is a nonprofit organization, but they're also a safe place for people to engage in authentic conversations about racial and social inequality. They provide education and training, and use that as a catalyst for large scale social change. And we're lucky enough to be joined by several members of their team today. The first of which I'll name is Roberta Brooks, who is a program coordinator at their nonprofit and also a steering committee member as a practicing speech language pathologists, or excuse me, I completely butchered that word, but I hope you'll excuse me, she's spent many, many years working in stroke and traumatic brain injury discipline, and she worked to promote greater access to services for all Americans with lifelong health care needs, regardless of their backgrounds or ethnicities, and that's part of which part of what led her to the work that the coalition is doing. Our next speaker from the coalition is Dr. Bernadine, who is a longtime community advocate and activist for justice and equality. And she founded the Coalition for racial equity and social justice in 2020. In response to the horrific Murder of George Floyd. And so I'm sure will be a wealth of wisdom, knowledge and also active activation for each of us on the line today. So really looking forward to hearing more about that founding story, Dr. Bernadine.

And then our final representative from the coalition is Dr. Patricia Franklin, who is a program coordinator and steering committee member at the coalition. She has a many decades long background in clinical care and removing health care barriers to entry. They are also heavily involved in mentorship programs and various nonprofit causes. And again, I'll mention, I'm sure if you ask a question about what else they're involved in, they'd be more than happy to tell you about those additional passion projects that there's so I just really want to say, thank you so much to each of you for being with us today. I already see some questions going on in the chat, some sharing of website links, we will definitely make sure to share out all all the different ways you can connect with each of these wonderful women and the nonprofits that they lead or serve, following today's event. So please stay tuned for that.

Alright, so without further ado, now that we've gotten through those wonderful introductions, each of these folks, I want to pose our first question, and this is open to all of our panel members. We're curious to learn more about why do you do what you do? Why were you called to working in this space? And I think, Stacey, I would love if we could begin with you and your organization as the founder of inform your community.

15:14:00

Thank you so much. And thank you so much for having me on this panel along with such amazing other presenters who are here today, really just wonderful to meet all of you. And so why did i Why did I get into this space. So I've been arguing with people on Facebook for about 10 years, that was kind of like my part time job was arguing with people on Facebook. And because I have this strong communication background, it's what my PhD is in. It's also what I teach, particularly like conflict management and public speaking and interpersonal communication and business communication, I, I always would fight those fights to the end. So I wouldn't, you know, I'd be one of those people who wouldn't let that bullet bone go until I could figure out what was at the heart of those conversations. And those disagreements. And, and ultimately, what I found over those years and years of having those arguments is that a lot of those arguments, were really misunderstandings about things that were very, very basic. And it just took us a long time to like, get into it enough to realize like, Oh, I didn't realize that what that meant. Well, I didn't realize this issue affected that many people, you know, you know, and so all of these kind of basic ideas were at the heart of this misunderstanding.

And, you know, I look around and see all these amazing nonprofits that do such great good work on single issues, at really high levels. And, and I thought, you know, what, even I, you know, with my PhD and my books, and starting the nonprofit and all this, I was just really intimidated by going to some non some events, about issues that I don't really know about, frankly, I'm often intimidated, you know, to some event, where I'm not the expert, I really don't know that much about the topic. And those folks, they're leading these, these presentations, or on these panels or at these events who just know so much. And I'm not just talking about the presenters, but the attendees too, who already know so much about a topic. It's scary to even go let alone say anything, let alone show my ignorance about a topic. And so I started thinking what the nonprofits that are doing good work in the world aren't doing is educating folks at the very entry level, like what is some basic information that people need to know about issues that are really important to civic engagement to getting people to the polls to vote, to getting people to engage in educated discussions before they start fights before they start hating their relatives and not talking to friends anymore?

And so that's where I came to this space from my eclectic background. I had a crafting business for many years. You know, I was a teacher. I have such a strange background. And so having a nonprofit that was focused not just on one issue, like most nonprofits, but on many, many, many issues, really unlimited issues. But only at the intro level, I call it the one on one level and do that do it in fun ways, because I learned as a college professor, you're not going to get anybody to try to engage with the information. If you don't try to, you know, especially the more complicated exactly the more complicated the information is, the more fun you have to make it. And so really making our events we have six programs, children's crafting adult craft and movie nights networking event, where we do games, online games, we have a shopping event with handmade items for that our volunteers make. And then of course, more traditional things like a speaker series, but we try to make them fun. So really emphasizing fun, we say 51%, fun, 49% information. And that's how I got into the space.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:17:46

I love that. And I'm wondering why no one gave that same advice to some of the professors I had in college. Think about how much easier business statistics would have been. But and I think it relates so much to what we're trying to accomplish in this discussion room today. Right? How are we trying to break down this really, really complicated issue of disenfranchisement, and people using wielding their right to vote at the polls, and people groups of folks who have historically been blocked or limited from wielding that power? How are we breaking that really complicated topic down into something that's easy to understand and feels okay to talk about. So I really, really appreciate you breaking it down in such a great way. And Stacey, we're definitely going to want to share some of those links to your speaker series and those crafting nights after this. So please send those links in and we'll share them out with everybody on the line. So Linda, I wonder if I could turn that same question to you, what led you to this space, what drives the work that you and the League of Women Voters are doing on a day to day basis?

15:19:02

Sure, thanks. And thanks for inviting us to be a part of this impart Porton panel. And it's so exciting to meet other organizations that are doing things that are similar to us, that I hope we can have a great relationship with in the future. It's sort of interesting, because I had sort of some, you know, thoughts plan. But after listening to Stacy's comments, I want to sort of like, I think I want to just start by joining in with that, because it's really sort of a similar thing that started with me. I mean, I got involved in volunteering and politics when I was 16. And Wisconsin, you know, when, you know, the days of Jim McCarthy and the anti war movement, and have been involved ever since in one way or another, I ended up going to law school because I very foolishly believed that if I became a lawyer, I could change the world took a while for me to learn that that wasn't going to happen.

So I had to keep working in other ways to do that. Spent a lot of time while practicing law and then going on the bench as a judge, understanding how important the rule of law is, but also understanding that you need to meet people where they are. And so I've designed a lot of different curricula. And I've also done a lot of adult education. I've taught in colleges, universities and clubs, to judges on a number of different items. But it just, you know what, and I continue to do all the political work. So when I retired, I decided that you know, what was so important in this country, which was just going in a direction that I didn't understand, as a political science major in college, and a judge who was committed to the rule of law. I'm like, what is happening? And I started doing some research and realizing that, you know, when we started putting all of our emphasis on STEM education, we stopped teaching civics. So we have this whole group of young people that have no idea what the political history is of our country, and the struggles that people have engaged in for so long. That it that they don't understand that we're about to lose it all. So you know, I'm thinking about it. It's like, I don't know, I have a 25 year old daughter, and I'm like, Why does she have fewer rights than I did? You know, I was left out in the streets. You know, I'm fighting for abortion when I was 18. I mean, and I'm 70 I mean, this like, what is this? What is this world coming to?

So I decided that I really wanted that my focus where I could contribute the most would be to work trying to find a way to work with youth in a long term capacity by helping them understand civics and in order to you have to understand civics, you have to understand our political history in order to be an effective participant in our democracy. And they have all of these barriers to doing that. You know, if you've read some of the studies they have our youth, people under 30 have the lowest voting percentage in the country. They found that the reason other studies have found that one of the reasons they don't vote is they don't really have the information and they have all this disinformation. So um, you know, some of the things that just really sort of, you know, blew my mind has questions like, How do I register to vote? And I'm like, you're on your phone every day? How can you not figure out the information is there so Okay, so here's a barrier, we have to figure out how we can get to them, and show them how to register to vote? Well, okay. But you know, if I don't understand everything that's happening on all these ballot measures, and the candidates, and what do I do about that? If I don't vote on everything, then my boats not going to go from, you know, you know, where are you getting this information from? So it's really basic going back to what Stacey said, it's really basic information. And it's our job in the absence of good civics education to get that out. So that's my passion. So when I did that, I, you know, I hooked up with a woman who had really wonderful skills in terms of producing videos and educational materials. And we put together this, it's sort of amazing.

So we joined the league of women voters, because they're really, they're nonpartisan, they're well respected. as you said, Kim, they've been around for 100 years, and do really good work. And nobody knows about the great work they they've done. And it's like, people think it's just a bunch of old ladies that are not associated or relevant. And in today's world, and that's part of what we want to let people know is not really true. So anyhow, what we did is we decided that we had to meet people where they were the same way Stacy's group does. And so we created a game and I'll put the, put it in the chat the URL, but it's really easy. It's called verify a dot buzz, go check it out. We recruited a software engineer to help us do it. And we now have over 60, games, individual games on voting, news, literacy and civics. And we have voting information for 13 states right now. A 14 state will go live next week, we're working on the 15 state, we're trying to get it all together. But also, we realized that you know, kids don't, how do you figure out whether what you're reading is true or not. And kids are like, they live on their phones. And they just keep sending out things that they read. And so disinformation is going all over the place. So we wanted to, so we created it in a game format. And I'll talk more about the game later. But that's sort of what the passion is, is that work with a good organization that has a good reputation and trying to get the kids where they are? Because they're the future of our country? So you have

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:25:33

thank you so much for that. And I was actually chatting with Megan earlier this morning about how cool those quizzes and games were. So definitely, we'd love to hear more on that topic. And please everyone, check out that link in the chat. And we'll we'll share it after the fact too. But I'm already just from our two first speakers. There's a real through line forming here of basic education and making that basic education as accessible and as engaging as possible. So I'm going to turn it to our final nonprofits, Speaker Coalition for Justice and, Dr. Bernadine, I would love to start with you as the founder of the organization and then maybe we can go in and pop in and hear from Pat and Roberta as well. But same question directed towards you. Why do you do what you do? What led you to the formation of this nonprofit? Oh, and you might be muted. So I'm gonna go ahead and try to unmute you, Bernadine. Let me see.

15:26:40

Okay, great. All right. Thank you, Kimberly, is such a great question. And thanks for you know, getting all of us together. It seems as if we have a common thread here about what you know, we all do in this space of advocacy and activism. For me, I found you know, my husband and I came to the US several several years ago to study and we ended up staying We're both a background, we were born and raised in Nigeria and West Africa we are there is nothing like racism or discrimination. And we may have an ethnic rivalries, but it's not what you know, we experienced here in terms of marginalization and discrimination against people of color. And, you know, we've struggled with that over the years with children in school, we live in a suburban school, suburban area, where, in fact, as when my children were growing up, they were the only black kids in school, and we experienced all kinds of issues. I have a background in educational leadership and policy from Columbia University in New York, and we had to fight for our children to be placed in in, you know, high, you know, high quality and high level education, opportunities for them. It wasn't given to them, because of, you know, racism in the country.

But fast forward in 2020, when George Floyd was killed, by then I had retired from working in a department of education in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, I decided, something needed to be done, what could that be? I have a background in education by training and experience. And frankly, I believe that one of the ways to address the issue of racial discrimination and racism in our country in our society is through education, creating awareness and understanding of the history of this country, and the lived experiences of people of color, especially black Americans. So I reached out to a few people that I know and decided to find to found the Coalition for racial equity and social justice, to create a space a safe space, to bring people in our community together, to engage in authentic and meaningful discussions about racial discrimination and racism in our communities. And in this country as a whole. We're only two years in the making.

And, you know, I've lucky to have committed people like Dr. Frank Franklin and Roberta Brooks, who accompany me on this journey. as a host of other people. We've made significant impact in in our community, frankly, nationally, we do host national it guests because series on the second Monday of the month, where we will expose the nationally and, frankly, overseas also by in 20, during the Biden Harris inauguration, when they were doing their integration, where somehow our Coalition for Justice was made known to them and were invited to join the national event for Martin Luther King Day that year in 2021. So we're having people log into our guest speaker series, on the second Monday of the month, from all over the world from Sydney, Australia, from Israel, Mexico, you name it. So that's what we're about. And we're also currently working on launching diversity, equity and justice education in our school districts, which we have secured to funding for from a local organized foundation and also from County, Montgomery County, the American pandemic recovery fund. So we'll be going into our school districts, we've developed a program an eight week lesson that will be going and working with students in the school district during school as educating them because as Linda mentioned, unfortunately, our children are not being taught civics, they are not being taught the history, the true history of this country. And we, you know, we need we feel that we need to get those children at a younger age.

15:31:22

Students youth diversity program is targets students in grades six through eight or nine. Because we've I feel that by the time they get to junior high and high school, they extreme it's when have already grabbed them from us. So we need to start from young to try to teach them the true history to teach them who they are, who they are, their identity, diversity, justice, and also encourage them to use their voices and to take action so that by the time they get to 18, they register to vote and make their voices heard about issues that affect them. So that's what we're about. And I'll stop there. I let Rebecca, add to that. Thank you.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:32:08

Yeah. Why don't we turn things to Dr. Franklin first?

15:32:12

Yes. Hi, everyone, thank you so much for having this important forum today. It's, it's encouraging for sure. To me, I, I'm a clinician, I'm a physician by training, and I was in academic medicine for many years. And health equity problems, you know, were of visible, you know, and all at all layers in our healthcare systems. So I dealt with that on an ongoing basis, personally, individually with my patients, but also collectively in committees to try to, to move the needle forward and make changes. But I'm retired now, and I was looking around for something to do. And lo and behold, I started to with the with the COVID, I started to watch zoom programs, as we all did. And I came across a little organization, a grassroots organization called Coalition for Justice. And I was just, you know, entranced by what they were doing and the work the quality work that the and the presenters and the information that was coming out. And so I just kept coming back. And So lo and behold, here I am. But I was thinking, I think the thread definitely is education. There's a lot of misinformation, a lot of ignorance out there at all levels, and also hit a you know, whether we're, we're well educated or not. There's a lot of misinformation. And it seems like that's really the, you know, the status quo these days.

So our job is in part to get the truth out there to inform people and let them make their own decisions. And I think that the two things that would come to mind though, is empowering people and making it relevant. I remember when I was a child growing up in Brooklyn, New York. The first political action I ever remember ever taking was when I was about 11 years old, they had opened a large medical center in our neighborhood, they built it from the ground up brand new in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. And it's still there today, Woodhall. But the mayor at the time, Mayor Koch made a statement on on camera saying that there was a delay in the opening year, it was like a years delay. And then it just kept dragging on. And finally, he made a comment on camera one day, and he said, Well, I think this health center is too good for the neighborhood. Well, that got my attention. Yeah, I'm I wasn't interested in health care at all. I was a science nerd. But I wasn't in health care. But I remembered that and I turned to my parents, and I'm like, what, what did he just say, and I got my pen and paper. And I scratched out something. And then I typed it on my old typewriter and did my white out and corrected it. And I sent him a letter. And I told him that if he didn't change his attitude and open that health center, we were going to be protesting in the streets. And my mother and father did that. And sure enough, within a matter of months, that help center was opened. So that was civic action. But I'd had to be relevant, to be empowered. And I think that that was those are the key components, we have to be educated about what we're talking about, and provide that information. But we have to make it relevant to those that we're trying to reach and to empower them to action. So that's that was that this is a beautiful forum today. I'm very happy to be a part of

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:35:36

how we're so happy to have you a part of it. And I actually wrote down a question that I want to loop back to in a little bit, because we did have a someone from our audience submit a question before this around how they can get their teenagers get their children involved in this. And that point you just posed about I remember, when I made my first political action, I think I would love for all of us to just reflect on that for a moment and think about what was our political first political action? What was our first foray into into using our power as citizens? And how could we use that to just as you just mentioned, Pat, make things feel relevant and engaging and accessible to young people. And use that as a way to get them to start owning their own power. So let's sit on that for a bit and return to it in a little while because Roberta I'm so excited to hear from you and and what led you to this space.

15:36:34

Well, thank you again, for putting together this amazing panel. It's a wonderful experience. And I'm actually also have worked in healthcare for all of my life. And even though communication is my issue, I am passionate about language. I'm actually not a person who's comfortable speaking publicly. And also very, by nature, sort of like live and let live. You know, I'm non judgement. Well, I, and so for, for as long as I can remember, you know, I've just sort of kept hoping and thinking that, you know, the right, right. Again, I'm non judgmental, I'm saying, right, but that common sense will prevail, and that people will learn to live and let live and and then the the, the message that kept getting louder and louder is, you know, if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem that that, you know, it finally sunk in. And, you know, I'm a person that had civics in school and actually still remember the jingles, the Schoolhouse Rock video, which is a wonderful video about how a bill becomes law, that that stayed with me. But again, when I sort of retired from full time work, I thought, you know, I need to find a place where I can really sort of get comfortable speaking out. And I think that I have particular strength in trying to deliver messages is as even keeled as possibly, which makes me a very long winded speaker a lot of the time, but I'm having an opportunity to sort of like really practice and develop those skills about saying what's important and why it's important. And realizing that, that, you know, even though I certainly I grew up in, in, in the Midwest, in the St. Louis, which was actually, the, the community was fairly diverse. So there was not, you know, a full opportunity to see exactly how things really are. And then I moved to Boston, and you could really see how things are. And so I was actually attending a wonderful series of lectures at a local community college about, you know, what, you know, how to educate yourself and how to get the message out. And one of the other people in the group happened to mention the Coalition for Justice and how much he was, how, how much he was learning and what a welcoming group it was. And so I that's how I got involved. And it really is that idea of, you know, for me that what's what's so special about the coalition is we're we're certainly tackling discussions that are that are hard discussions, but it's done in a you know, in a very caring and respectful environment. And, again, just really thrilled to be here today. Thank you so much.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:39:45

Oh, that's great to hear. Thank you so much. I want to go back to this question that one of our registrants posed around, I know that this is important, and I want my children to know that it's important and I want them to get involved. But also, we all know, you can't, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't force them to drink. Right? So how are some ways I'm wondering if we can just do like a rapid fire perhaps to go around and share like one tip one way that a child or maybe someone who's more of a young adults, if we're thinking about a high school, high school student, what's one way that we can get them thinking about this, get them educated on this or get them involved in taking action here. And, Sheila, I see that you have down the line, and I'd love to pull you into the discussion. Do you have a tip for anyone who has a child a team that they're looking to, to engage in this work?

15:40:48

Oh, hi, thanks, Kimberly. And thanks to everyone. I've been really inspired by listening to some of the last speakers since I came on. The one thing that I always keep thinking about in terms of getting other people involved is the term outreach. And I learned a long time ago that outreach doesn't mean that you reach out to them, it means that you go to them and find out what it is that motivates them. And that you try to then address what is important to them. So we have found in in working with high school students, for example, that there are some specific areas that they're very passionate about. One of them of course being climate change, one of them being gun control, one of them being reproductive rights, some others being diversity, equity and inclusion. They are a really passionate group of people. You just need to know and find what their passion is, I think.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:41:51

Yeah. Yeah. And I think there's a three line there from one of our previous speakers as well. When they're talking about relevance, that relevance is going to be the key for getting people on involves Dr. Stacy, I'd love to hear your thoughts. Maybe one one way a teen or a child could get involved or a tip for parents on on how to make them motivated to get involved.

15:42:19

I recently attended a panel, it was at Cooper Union. And Maya Wiley was one of the speakers former mayoral candidate and well, I forget the other speaker, but there was a writer from The Daily Show who was there. In any case, it was great event. And one of the things that was said at the event was, there shouldn't be no party without, without an action item. And I thought that was so brilliant, really, it was so brilliant. And it was, I believe it was the writer from the former head writer from The Daily Show who had said that, and that's so our children's events are really for all ages. And we incorporate with the craft, whatever the craft is, we're talking about some major issue. So we just had a crafting event for kids about indigenous peoples day, we have one that's coming up for David the dead, that we're going to be talking about Mexican culture. And so you know, whatever we're doing, we can have some activity, where we talk about why we're doing this activity, you know, something of relevance. So that's, that's my tip. And we and we restrict stay true to that as an organization as well.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:43:34

All right, Doctor, Franklin, I know you and I were chatting a little bit about this topic before the event kicked off. So I would really love to hear your thoughts or advice on that.

15:43:45

You're putting on the spot now.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:43:47

I am putting you on the spot.

15:43:49

Well, I just think that my experience and I agree it has to it has to be meaningful. But it can be fun, too. But I think that anything that pulls at your heartstrings and gets you motivated and activated. You know, I'm not a I'm an internist. So I do adult medicine so great. I've been Bernadine would be the better person to ask about this age group. But I think that they're adults. I mean, I think you have to meet them where they are. That's true. And just talk to them. You know, respectfully, I think, you know, you have a conversation sometimes with younger people and we kind of are condescending, or we assume that they don't know something or they're just in their heads all the time or on their phones. They have a lot of to say and they have their you know, they, they want to engage with older people, but they don't know how.

So we have to sometimes be the one to reach out and have that conversation and not sort of be negative about the social media part. I think we tend to sort of bash that too much. And then they pull away they feel as though we're you know, that we're alienating them, which we are. So I think we need to also be up on some of this stuff, too. I don't, I don't know about I've heard of Tik Tok, I don't, I've never engaged with it. But you know, know a little bit about the lingo know about what's what the young people are involved with, so that you can at least have a conversation where you can speak the same language and and then go from there. But they want to learn they need to, you know, and I think that we need to set that foundation and we we sometimes we have to extend ourselves I think would be the key part and just meet them where they are.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:45:26

Yeah, meet them where they're at. I really, really love that. And actually, we had some great ideas come in from Roberta. So Roberta would love to invite you to come off of mute in case. There's anything additional, you wanted to say on that topic or any questions on the topic you wanted to pose to some of our presenters. And it's totally fine. If you want to say, keep the conversation the chat. Hello, yes, hello.

15:45:54

Okay. I've just, I just hopped on for a few minutes just to hear what was going on on this topic. But voting has been a strong interest of mine. And because of there's so many, I mean, you know, we just need the information, I found that a lot of people in my communities were not voting. And so I kind of wondered, well, why aren't we voted, people would think that it didn't matter. A one vote does matter. It does matter. One vote can make the difference. One voice can make the difference. I've experienced it myself. And what I did as an adult was join some local things like I had some local activities in my neighborhood. Then I also joined like a commission City Commission. And I'm not a person that likes to be out front talking a lot about a subject but what happens is I'm one of those people that get an aha moment. And I salute Soon, people are going to be talking and a solution will pop in my head. And I found out those solutions, even if it was just one thing that I said could change the whole meeting, it could change the whole thing, because maybe people hadn't thought of it in that one way that, you know, like I said, the answer, maybe a popped into my head. So I'm not a person that just, you know, gets on and talks a whole lot. But I've enjoyed what I've heard so far. And, but that's what I've done. And then also in the local un, I'm not involved with the local un now. But a lot of people said, well, it doesn't matter at the UN. But I found that even there that worked, even to the national and the local union, I would go there to the meetings. And what happened is the same thing, and I didn't, you know, solution would pop into my head. And it changed the whole outcome of the meeting.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:47:59

Can't be afraid to use your voice.

15:48:03

One voice can change a thing. Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:48:07

I really appreciate that. Roberto, thanks so much for hopping on. And, you know, you bring up this really, really great point that we haven't touched on too much yet around. How can we each individually, not just use our vote, use our power, get our kids involved, get our family members involved? But are there other places? Can we go volunteer? Can we get our community members? What can we do on the streets out in the community to assist this cause? And so I would love to go around to some of our featured nonprofits today and just talk about any opportunities you have available to work with or support your organization. And if there's anything that folks need to keep in mind when volunteering for voting rights, nonprofit, Bernadine, I would love to start with you first if your game.

15:49:00

Yeah, thank you. I really liked the last question and all the answers, you know how, you know, to get the young ones involved, you know, what's like, relevance relatable, committed meaningful, that's really great. But in terms of working with other organizations, actually, that's we're we're doing that in Pennsylvania, with the Coalition for Justice, we were working with. We have an organization I serve on the advisory commission, the Montgomery Bus County, collaborative, that's also the Pennsylvania Health Network, access network, Pennsylvania Health Access Network, and also about our foundation, we're working with these three organizations, to get people to register to vote to educate people, as we all know, people of color, especially black folks, very distrustful of our government based on, you know, decades of experiences with the government. So like in Philadelphia, you know, it's difficult to get black folks out to vote because they feel that their voice, their voices, or their words really do not translate into meaningful opportunities for them are changing what's happening in their communities, but we're going out and educating them on Saturday, actually, in Philadelphia, next Saturday, next Tuesday, in Philadelphia, will some of us are going with the power of foundation, to for an events on registering, getting people out to vote, educating people about the issues, and also letting them know what kind of assistance they can have some people who don't drive or don't have cars, and and with all the gerrymandering that's going on around us, some polling stations, closed down and distance from the polling station have increased for some people of color. So there's the problem of transportation, how to get to the polling stations and what I do. So we do, you know, work with them on those logistics to get them out, to get their voices heard and to, you know, to vote on issues that affect them. So that's some of the things we're doing. We're really active in, in doing that, you know, because this current election for us in Pennsylvania is a very important election. Democratic governor is finishing his last term. We have some important seats in the Senate and the House, that we need to make sure that the right people are voted in, you know, in November.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:51:51

Yeah, the midterms are approaching. It's this really relevant time for this conversation and a really important time for each of us on the line. And for all those who are listening to this recording. Think about to Get to Dr. Bernstein's point. How can you can you assist with the logistics of even getting people to the polls? There's a lot of large portion of our population that's homebound. Think about how you can help your neighbors, get themselves to the polls, think about how you can get your college students signed up for an absentee ballot. Right, so they can mail it in and stent. So just that focusing on logistics really, really important point. So I appreciate that advice. Linda, I wonder, could I jump to you to hear your thoughts on? What are some ways that folks can volunteer to support this cause or your organization specifically in the months ahead?

15:52:46

I'm thanks, Kim. We have a lot of ideas. And we need a lot of help, because we are a really small organization with really big goals. But I'm going to defer to my colleagues Sheila Durkin, because she's all prepared to answer that question.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:53:03

Perfect Sheila.

15:53:06

Yeah, we, we actually, as Linda said, you know, we're trying to scale up. as far as our outreach to specifically young and future would be new voters with our online game, we've been, we've been successful in introducing it into our schools and have it accepted as a resource at the State Office of Education for California. But there are so many other areas where we would like to expand our reach. And we'd really love to have some help in, in marketing the program to other cities, counties states. The other thing is we have we have some technical support needs because we do have a retired newly retired software engineer that helped us to develop the program initially, and he basically wants to do some other things, and not spent as much time working on on the program.

So we're going to put together some specifics in a project that will that we will be posting on taproots website that will give more specifics about the kinds of, of tech skills we need, because I don't have them at the top of my head, but I can, I can put that together. So the other thing is just people who have an interest in education, and civic, and maybe have some writing skills, we would really love to have some volunteer help with researching and writing some of the questions that we have, because it's a big job. There's about 1000 questions now, in the game. And I think Linda probably already told you that we have, I think we're approaching 15 states. So we have a ways to go yet. We've been working on this for a couple of years, but but we would really, we'd love to talk to anybody who has an interest in civic engagement, or education, we can definitely find some job that they they would be able to, to help us with. And the last thing I just want to mention as a league of women voters number is if there's something that you there is something that you can do to help your community and one of the things is when you're talking to people make sure that you ask them, Are you registered at your current address, because there's so many things going on now, with voter suppression and changes in voting laws, that that people really need to double check that they are registered so that they can vote so there won't be any surprises at the at the polling place. So I would just ask everybody, if you know if you can just ask that question of all of the people that you know, just to double check that.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:56:03

Yeah, that is such powerful advice. And we'll we'll make sure to underline that in our follow up key takeaways are you registered to vote at your current address? Really, really helpful. And also, just to note for folks on the line, folks that are listening in after the fact we are going to be sending out kind of a follow up one pager with links to different opportunities to get involved with these great nonprofits. Some of those are going to be the open taproot plus listing. So I know, Sheila, you just mentioned, you're finishing up a listing, Roberta, you and I were talking about finishing up a listing just this morning. And so we'll keep working on that page. And we'll try and we'll get it out by the end of the week so we can get those links in front of our volunteer community members. Now, Stacy, we have a few minutes left and I want to make sure that we hear your thoughts on this really important question too.

15:56:57

Thank you. I was just going to say that we currently have some opportunities posted on this route. We're very excited about it and it was great working with as Megan and with taproot to get those posted, so we're very excited about them. And just in general, a great way to get people involved in a kind of mutually beneficial way is a lot of our projects involve marketing related stuff on social media related stuff, graphic design related stuff. And all three of those are amazing skills that if students or young professionals want to enhance their own resumes, those are even senior professionals or retired folks who want to enhance those skill sets, it's a great opportunity to kind of mutually learn, and or use their experience, they already have on very kind of important ways that all nonprofits can can use marketing, graphic design, social media outreach. So check out our post on taproot already.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:57:49

Perfect. And we'll help direct people to your posts and Stacy and, and to our other nonprofits on the line as well. We're really looking forward to hopefully helping you make connections with our volunteers, whether there's pro bono connections, or there's more folks showing up to you all the great speaker series that are coming up. So I see some folks are having to jump for their next meeting. So let's go ahead and we'll wind things down for this conversation. But I do really want to highlight and underline, we are going to try and share out contact details LinkedIn profiles websites, so that everyone can continue connections and continue the conversation after this. We recognize that 60 minutes is not nearly long enough to dig into voting rights as a whole. And so let's think of this as one on one, maybe, like, even 100.5. Maybe we're not even at the one on one level yet when it comes to voting rights and awareness and why this issue is so important. So we really hope this can be a catalyst for everyone who's listening in or who was able to join, to go out and seek more resources to go out and seek deeper connections with each of these wonderful nonprofits that were so generous with their time and passion today. So I want to say a very sincere thank you to Stacey and Roberta and Bernadine and Pat and Linda and Sheila, really appreciate you spending your time with us and appreciate all the work that you're doing day in and day out. And thank you everyone who tuned in, you say

15:59:28

and thank you all the wonderful help and support. We really appreciate it.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:59:33

It's quite literally our pleasure. It's why we do what we do. So we really appreciate you all. Thank

15:59:40

you.

**Kimberly Swartz** 15:59:41

All right, have a great rest of your day everyone. Bye now. Bye bye