



Scotland Nash: Spurring Youth To Create Social Change with No Place for Hate

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 00:02
Hi, Scottie.

Scotland Nash 00:04
Hi, Maureen, how are you?

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 00:05
Great, thanks. How are you?

Scotland Nash 00:07
I'm good.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 00:08
Yay. I am excited. It is finally time for us to pull together and break through silos and really see how we can support shifting this paradigm of education. And I am so happy to have No Place for Hate schools, and the ADL here in the northwest, a part of this summit. So thank you for joining us.

Scotland Nash 00:30
Thank you for having me. I just love what's going on with this conference. I think it's going to be fantastic and just am thrilled to participate. So thank you.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 00:38
Yes. Would you please just introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about the wonderful work you're doing that's benefiting schools like mine?

Scotland Nash 00:47
Sure. So my name is Scottie, short for Scotland, Nash, and I am the Education Director for the ADL Pacific Northwest region. We serve Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska, and Montana. So we're across a lot of, or we're across a lot of states, a lot of land. And in the work that we do, we focus on anti-bias education and we do this in a variety of ways. But kind of the short end of the conversation is that we provide workshops and training for three different stakeholder groups, and all of it comes under our umbrella of No Place for Hate. So No Place for Hate is our free school-climate initiative, that is a student-driven initiative that is school-based. So the school



takes a commitment, or makes a pledge, to being No Place for Hate . Then students say, "What are some activities and things we can do to move our school campus from kindness to social action?" And there are variety of different activities that students propose and implement throughout the school. And then at the end of all of that, we award you with a banner, and you become part of our thousands of No Place for Hate schools that are actually across the country. And so that is the broad-based school climate initiative that is centered out of the school and student-driven. We like to supplement that school climate initiative with workshops. So we do anti-bias workshops for students, where they're learning how to understand things like microaggressions, and stereotypes, and what is bullying, and race, and culture, and identity, and different pieces. And we do workshops, in a similar vein with adults, where we talk about identity, and difference, and bias, and social action. And we have conversations with families as well. So all of those are opportunities that exist under our No Place for Hate umbrella.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 02:47

It's amazing. And you, Scottie, and your organization are such an inspiration to me, whenever I hop on one of the calls. I mean, I just had to invite you to the summit, because you personally are walking your talk. And I really appreciate how you unpack anti bias thinking, and how you get us to reflect on unconscious choices and behaviors we're making. And thank you for living what you're teaching.

Scotland Nash 03:18

Thank you. Yeah, I really try. I feel like a lot of this work is about self-first. So we've got to understand who we are and how we connect to all of these different systems that we are part of now. And race is one dynamic of that conversation, and we also have to think about class, and gender, and sexual identity, and gender identity, and all these different pieces. And if we understand who we are, I believe you can connect to people who are different from you and through that understanding, we can really build some bridges. And so I try. It's a constant internal conversation. It's a constant external conversation. But I think it's just essential that we all participate.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 04:04

Absolutely. And these essential components to the conversation, it feels like the institution of education, you know, that there's a break-down there, and this isn't even on some people's radar, let alone a part of schools. What do you think the break-down is, why aren't we, why aren't we making this a priority in our schools?

Scotland Nash 04:25

You know, I think that's an interesting question. I actually am gonna turn to give a shout out to Dina Simmons, who probably isn't listening but if she happens to be I just adore her. And the reason I'm going to use her is because they think that a number of years ago, a lot of our schools began to acknowledge that we needed to bring in some social emotional learning into



our schools. And it was something that in terms of like, mental shift and supporting students, people were finally ready to acknowledge needed to happen more explicitly in the school system. So we were talking about in elementary school, we talk about SCL curriculum, Ruler or Second Step, any one of those. Middle and high school, we talk more about trauma-informed, you know, education. And why I want to give a shout out to Dina Simmons is because she's really done a lot to bridge the conversation where social emotional learning is a critical piece. But the second critical piece is the anti-bias education and conversation that needs to take place with that, because a lot of the social emotional learning structures that we've had in place have been from that same white dominant discourse in which our schools were established. And so if we don't begin to break down those walls, and connect identity from a social emotional space, to identity from understanding who you are, your race, your class, your gender identity, your sexual identity, all the different pieces that come into making up your identity, then we're leaving a big piece out, because the social emotional learning is head, heart, hands, and so is anti-bias education. So that's what we need to do. And why aren't we there, is the question that I think is everybody's been asking over the last 18 months, since the murder of George Floyd really brought to attention what other people have known for a very long time. And so I think that with this new energy and understanding from an audience that is broader than those people who have been oppressed, whether you're talking about racial oppression, you're talking about sexual identity oppression, you're talk, I mean, it's continuing to happen, and there's a bigger conversation about it. And so I think that it hasn't happened because there wasn't a readiness, and now, we can't deny it anymore.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 06:44

I want to go a little into that pain point. What do you foresee would happen if we continued to deny this?

Scotland Nash 06:51

I think that's a, you know, I don't know. I think that if we continue to deny this, we continue to harm individuals. And I think that it would behoove all of us to acknowledge that when we're harming one person, we're harming a lot of people. So I have two white sons, and they have a lot of privileges. And I have conversations with them about it all the time, because I didn't when I was their age, so I didn't understand the extent of who I was, and how it impacted my interactions with people, and then the outcomes from all of those interactions. And so when I was a teacher 15, well, probably 20 years ago now, while I was trying to disrupt the system, I wasn't dismantling the system, because I didn't truly understand what I didn't understand. And so it's been this journey in the last 15, 20, probably 15 years of realizing, it's about the conversations I have with kids, so that they're disruptors. It's about the conversations I have with colleagues, so we're disruptors. Because if we continue to perpetuate these systems of oppression, nothing's going to change. And if nothing changes, that opportunity gap that we all talk about is going to continue. The hate violence is going to accelerate, the lack of connection



is going to be exacerbated. So I feel like if we don't, the divides are going to get bigger, and with bigger divides becomes bigger conflict. And we don't need that.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 08:37

Absolutely, we don't. This whole summit is about activism. And we know we have to step it up if we want the changes that we say are needed. So why you, Scottie? Why did you become a change activator and an agent for transforming schools?

Scotland Nash 08:58

Yeah, you know, it was interesting. I had a wonderful conversation the other day with somebody and asked me the same question. And I used to pinpoint it to a handful of years ago, when I was having my aha and I looked at my boys, and I said, you know, throughout the election process a number of years ago, there were just a lot of indicators that race was still a problem, that sexism and gender identity was still a problem, that all of these pieces were coming out in a political space and place in a very public way. And so I thought that that was the moment that I was having my aha and choice to make a difference and, you know, bring it to my kids, but realized it was sooner than that. And I think it was because of my students when I was teaching. I think it was them, who made me start to recognize a lot. I had students who were undocumented immigrants who were in high school and were in the US on their own and fighting for a strong public education while they were working and balancing school, and the admiration I had for them. I had students who were refugees, and were coming here to the US for an acknowledgement of freedom and opportunity. And so creating those, make a difference projects, and spaces in places for my students, is I think, what really inspired me to start to think about, okay, my making a difference is the interaction with my students. It's the interaction with my colleagues, it's the interaction in my day-to-day world, because education is a system of change. So I think that's super important.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 10:49

Absolutely. What are some of the results of ADL and No Place for Hate school, their school initiatives and their efforts? What are some cool things you're seeing happen?

Scotland Nash 11:01

I will say I love, now is the time of year where schools are starting to share with me things that they're doing to just impact change. And in this virtual space, people have talked about some of the connections it's brought, so I love that. I think that part of No Place for Hate is simply around meaningful connection building. Super important. I think that at one high school, they, student community, who was the No Place for Hate committee, led a campaign to get their school name changed. And, you know, super important. Then they led an entire community event where people from all over the school district, as well as the broader community, were invited, where they talked about their learning and their experiences with bias and why it was so important to talk about it in school. So we think it's seeing in students the love, the passion, the energy to



connect with people. And I'm sure that everybody here today can think about that too. And I think this would be such a great time to celebrate something that you have seen or heard in your students who are stepping up towards change. Like, what has inspired you to keep doing the work?

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 12:15

Absolutely. Throw it in the chat, just a shout out, a celebration, because a lot of people are doing the hard and necessary work.

Scotland Nash 12:23

Definitely, definitely. I get to support it, but I'm not, I feel like the teachers are doing it.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 12:29

I just have to say, because our students are participating in this. I love how you have so many resources available. Our kids love making a social justice playlist and comparing Glory to I forget the other song they were comparing it to.

Scotland Nash 12:47

That's so cool the music that they were doing, I loved it.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 12:49

Yes, yeah. And looking at lyrics and all of that. Those were student-led Zoom sessions that are, that we teachers were doing professional development while our kids were leading it. You provide so many resources that it's really stuff that we can personalize and our kids can own. And I don't know that we would have been able to do it in the midst of a pandemic without so much support already provided. So thank you for that.

Scotland Nash 13:16

I will say, it's my colleagues. I mean, being a national organization, we have some really smart and thoughtful people, we have lots of meaningful conversation and we generate lots of resources to support students, to support teachers, and to support families. And so one of my favorites that all you know, yes, the lesson plans were they were, you know, creating a playlist, and thinking about poetry, and the, the power of words. So we have lesson plans. But I will say, my two favorites: one are the table talks that we have, because teachers can use them in the classroom, families can use them at home, students can use them with each other, but it's about current issues, they ground themselves in common, factual information, and then have opportunities to ask questions and dive deeper and just engage in really rich dialogue. And discussion we know is at the heart of this change. The second are our Books That Matter. So if you're ever wondering, what book do I want to read next? Or what book do I want to recommend to my kiddo? Or what do we want to do as class read? We have a really wonderful curated list of books, curated by topic, curated knowing that we have representative authors.



And when they're chosen as books of the month, they actually come with discussion guides, for families and for teachers. But it's just, it's, you know, we all love to read. And sometimes we're like, what do we read next? And how do we read black authors who are writing about black life, and how do we read authors who are from various Asian descent writing about their experiences? And we just we pulled together fantastic book lists.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 14:51

The books that I've previewed that you've sent out to our school, I'm impressed. Graphic novels, all, you know, elementary, high school. You really have done your homework, and it's impressive, and our students are enjoying them too. So thank you.

Scotland Nash 15:05

Good, good, good, good.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 15:07

So if you had a magic wand and could really transform education along the lines of anti-racism and biases and prejudices, what would you wish for our schools?

Scotland Nash 15:25

I'd wish that schools would take the work that they're starting seriously and deeply enough, that they say, "Now that we know what we know, what are we going to do?" And then actually do it. So my magic wand is that I think a lot of schools are beginning the conversations. I mean, you think, you know, we have the ADL start a lot of conversations and a lot of schools. But if I had a magic wand, it wouldn't be that the work would be done. It would actually be that the people in the building, do the work to make the change that's necessary to have more equitable systems, to look at the policies, to look at the hiring practices, to look at the curriculum, to look at the schedule of the day, and ask the questions that we have resisted answering genuinely. Does a six minute, six period day with 50 minutes, 50 minute teaching blocks, does that really make sense for all of our students? And if it does, do we need to have different conversations about the start of the school day or the end of the school day? How do we value work experience in terms of a school schedule? What, how are we truly acknowledging when a student's not turning in their work? What is our homework policy and why does that policy exist, and how are we unpacking that? Do we have representation in our teachers? And if we keep saying only white teachers are applying, I say, "Where are you posting your open positions?" you know. So I think it's about, I don't want the work to be done, because I think doing the work connects us to the work. So learn how to have the conversation, and that's what, you know, ADL anti-bias work is, like we help you learn some of the great vocabulary and essential vocabulary to engage in these tough conversations, and then have them and make the change. And don't be scared. It's necessary.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 17:23



Yes, yes. So for listeners today, attending the summit, what would be maybe just even a baby step people could take today, this week, to really help these conversations become a norm?

Scotland Nash 17:42

I think, depending on your starting point, it's a little bit different. If you have never had anti-bias training in your school, that is more than check the box, where it's like actual opportunity to engage in reflection on your own identity and how you connect to your colleagues and understanding "What is bias?" And what are your own biases? And how do they show up? If you haven't done that work, I think that your first next step is to find someone who can facilitate that work with you. I don't think anyone in your building should facilitate it, because I think everybody should participate in it. So even if you're an expert, find somebody to help facilitate. So I think if you haven't done that work, that's your first next step. If you feel like you've done that work, then coming up with the space and time for people in the building to make the necessary change. So creating the schedule, creating the time for teachers to genuinely unpack their curriculum, for the hiring team to genuinely look at, "What do our job postings look like and where have we sent them?", to look at your policies around expectations, but to actually pick a project where you know you're perpetuating the systems of inequity, and pick one, and by the end of the year, make sure it is a reality that it has been changed.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 19:14

That's a great starting place. One project, one area of inequity. Take it on.

Scotland Nash 19:20

Yep. I mean, overhauling the whole system isn't going to happen overnight. If it would, then we wouldn't still be, you know, looking across the country at so many schools that are still living in a model from the agricultural revolution, right? So I think that one one thing is a great place to start.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 19:40

Agreed. Where can attendees find more information and your resources?

Scotland Nash 19:47

Yeah, so if you want to connect with me specifically, I think my email and contact information is broadly available snash@adl.org. But if you want to look for our broader resources that the ADL offers, it's adl.org/education. And you will find so many resources to help you. And if you're in the Pacific Northwest, and you specifically want some training and some workshop opportunities, and some facilitated conversations, you can also go to the seattle.adl.org website. But we have 25 regional offices across the country. So wherever you're joining us from, we have someone who can support you in this work.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 20:33



Love it. And Scottie, thank you for helping us break down our silos of educational innovation and work together as this collective. And now Scottie and I are going to head over, you just need to click the link at the bottom, to head over to the Facebook group. And we're going to go live and Scotty will be able to answer more questions. And we want everybody to head over and type in one action step you're going to take so that we can get our conversation started. Thank you.

Scotland Nash 21:04

Thanks Maureen. See y'all soon.