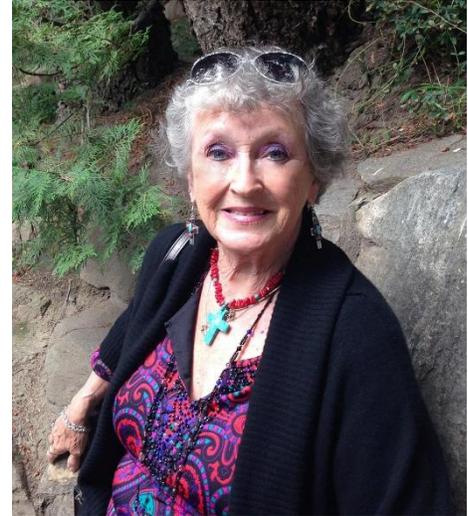


If there is one consistent thread that runs true in every successful organization that is built through volunteer/grassroots efforts, it is a person who ends up being the heart and soul of the organization. They have a true passion for the mission and the internal drive to ensure it succeeds and continues to grow.

For the CiVIL Project, that person is Pat Whitfield, and the Wenatchee Diversity Advisory Council hit the jackpot when this lady came on board! I had the pleasure of sitting down with Pat to talk about the CiVIL Project, the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), and about one hundred other things that will have to wait for another blog!



What is your role with the DAC and the CiVIL Project?

I joined the Diversity Advisory Council in 2014 and became the Chair of CiVIL in 2017.

What is the purpose of the Diversity Advisory Council?

Our Mission is to ensure that Wenatchee is a community where diversity is welcomed, valued and celebrated. The Diversity Advisory Council advocates recognition, respect, inclusion and celebration of the greater Wenatchee area's diverse people. We report to the City Council of Wenatchee and every January we recognize people in our community that have advanced diversity in our community.

It's important to realize, too, that "diversity" is not just about ethnicity. It includes people of different socioeconomic levels, sexual orientations, ages, religions, political beliefs, and the list goes on and on. What the CiVIL Project wants to promote is starting difficult conversations with respect for all the parties involved.

What was it in your background that made you decide that the CiVIL Project was something you wanted to be a part of?

I'm a retired educator, [*FYI, "retired" is a funny term for someone as busy as Pat to use. In addition to working with many volunteer organizations, she also teaches public speaking at Wenatchee Valley College*] having worked at every level from elementary educator to college dean. I worked in many underserved Native American communities, but the Sister City Program is where the passion for promoting diversity and interaction between cultures really began to grow.

I was very interested in the opportunity to have children from two different cultures have the chance to interact with each other. It was striking to me that the cultures of two cities (Redondo Beach and Ensanada) that were really not so far apart physically had cultures that were so very different. It was such an amazing opportunity to introduce children to a way of life that they wouldn't even know existed otherwise, and a chance for them to learn at a young age that "different" does not equal "bad".

What are your goals for the CiVIL Project?

Now that the groundwork has been laid, I would like to be more actively engaged in community outreach and increase visibility for the organization. I want to encourage community conversations at all levels between people with diverse, yet thoughtful, points of view. I believe that respectful dialogue is the path to finding common ground and I want to promote that in Wenatchee.

Does anyone stand out locally as doing a great job promoting diversity?

The Community for the Advancement of Family Education (CAFE') is doing a great job promoting diversity locally. They have community events and scholarships, and they are always seeking to serve the community. Alma and Jorge Chacon run the organization and they're really on the right track.

What resources would you point people to if they want to learn more about CiVIL discourse?

Check out [Better Conversations, A Starter's Guide](#). It's a free PDF to download and a great place to start learning.

How can community members get involved with the CiVIL Project?

Contact me [*her email is chalkduster1@yahoo.com*] and I'll invite you to a meeting.