

August 26, 2019

Dear Neighbors,

We are writing to invite you to a second round of “conversations,” based on the belief that our democracy depends upon the thoughtful exchange of ideas. If we spend time talking with each other, respectfully and patiently, we may discover the common values we share.

In the 1977 book *People Made it Happen Here*, the editors describe the efforts and goodwill of Hilltown residents who lived and worked for the common good of our community for more than 150 years. We believe that spirit of cooperation still exists in the Hilltowns today (as evidenced in the volunteer Firemen and their auxiliaries, the Good Cause Club, the Senior Van, Preston Hollow Beautification Committee, and the endless list of kindnesses that neighbors perform for each other matter-of-factly, whether it’s shoveling the walkway of an aging neighbor, or driving someone to a doctor’s appointment, or starting a fundraiser for someone whose house has burnt down, or helping each other find lost pets or children, or planting flowers in front of the library... the list goes on and on).

We are proposing that we build on that history of cooperation by engaging in a series of conversations based on the documentary film *American Creed* (available at <https://www.pbs.org/video/american-creed-ikwuqf/>) which some of you saw at the Carey Institute on 7/28. In this film a prominent Republican (Condoleezza Rice) and a prominent Democrat (David Kennedy) discuss and examine values we share as Americans.

Please join us for a “Living Room Conversation” in the Rensselaerville Library on 9/21 at 2:00, where we’ll engage with neighbors in small groups, in order to get to know and understand each other’s points of view and concerns better. Similar initiatives are going on in communities around the United States, as we all struggle to find a way to move forward based on our shared values.

If you are interested in joining us on 9/21 at 2:00 at the Rensselaerville Library, please email us at: director@rensselaervillelibrary.org, or just show up! Hope to see you there. More information can be found on the Library website at <https://www.rensselaervillelibrary.org/american-creed.html>

Sincerely,

Gail Haines

Linda Miller

Dianne Sefcik

Dennis Winslow

Kim Zimmer

