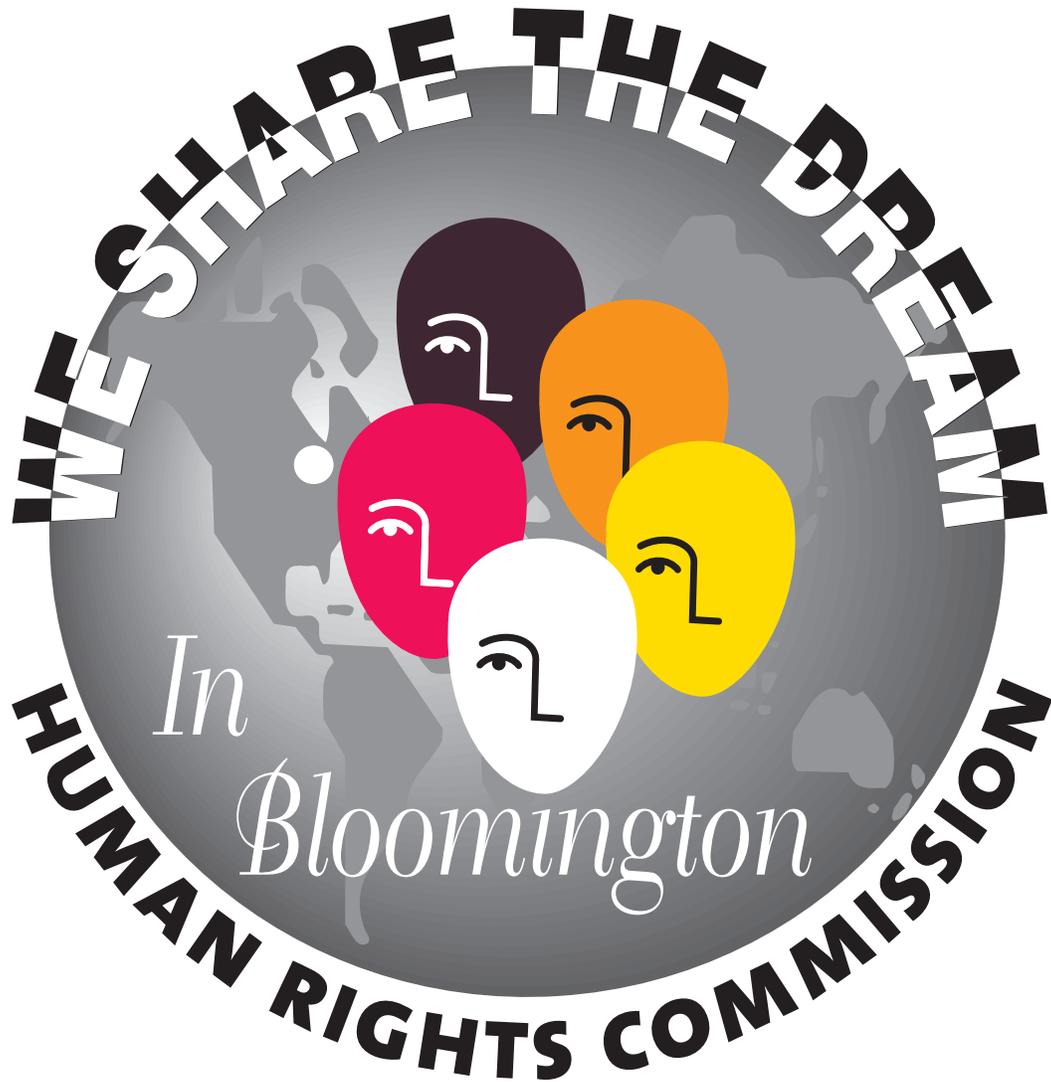


Human Rights Commission 2014 Annual Report



1800 West Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431-3027

Bloomington Human Rights Commission

2014 Annual Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission has individually and collectively played an active part in many areas relating to human rights and equality during 2014. Activities included relationship-building with City Commissions/Boards and community organizations, educational events, school district involvement, participation in community activities, Commissioner education, and complaint mediation.

PURPOSE

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission advises the Bloomington City Council in matters of human rights and equal opportunity for all people in our City.

The Commission is dedicated to ensure all people of Bloomington have equal opportunity and rights as defined by the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Chapter 363A of the State Statutes. The Act makes it illegal to discriminate in the areas of:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aiding and Abetting | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Credit | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Reprisal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment | |

The Minnesota Human Rights Act makes it illegal to discriminate against a person because of:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age | <input type="checkbox"/> Marital status |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creed | <input type="checkbox"/> National origin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Color | <input type="checkbox"/> Race |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dependence on public assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Sex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Familial status | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual preference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Commission status | |

ACTION CATEGORIES

Using these Guiding Principles, Human Rights Commissioners chose four (4) categories from “Building Inclusive Communities, An Action Guide for City Leaders,” published by the League of Minnesota Cities. Those categories are as follows:

- 1. Cultural Competence**
- 2. Equality**
- 3. Leadership**
- 4. Public Relations**

Remarks describing the intent of each selected category and descriptions of our activities related to each category in which the Human Rights Commission engaged follow

- 1. Cultural Competence:** “Cultural competence is a willingness to learn and listen. It is a being welcoming and dropping defenses. It is asking rather than assuming. It is a permanent way of changing how community issues are communicated and approached.”

Commissioners take an active role in learning about people who live and work in our community as a means of understanding and appreciating other points of view.

Commissioners’ sponsored/co-sponsored the following:

- **Commissioners attended “Changing the Face of Immigration”,** sponsored by the League of Women Voters at Penn Lake Library, May 27.
- **Hosted “Homeless is My Address, Not My Name,”** a free exhibit at Bloomington Civic Plaza, July 7-August 7.
- **Accepted International Day of Peace Proclamation,** at the September 8 City Council Meeting.
- **Co-sponsored a Naturalization Ceremony** with the US District Courts, District of Minnesota, US Citizenship and Immigration Service, and Bloomington League of Women Voters at Bloomington Civic Plaza, welcoming 172 new citizens from 54 different countries who live in southern Hennepin County, September 15.
- **Co-sponsored “Our Journey to America, Untold Stories of Minnesota Immigrants,”** with Bloomington League of Women Voters, presented a panel of five immigrants including Human Rights Commissioner, Hanna Haileyesus, who shared their stories of coming to America at Normandale

Hylands United Methodist Church, October 21. One hundred thirty people attended the event.

- **Minnesota Department Human Rights Symposium** featuring the latest in employment Supreme Court decisions, equal pay, education and opportunity and criminal justice, December 10.

Monthly programs included:

- Ron Dubis of the Social Justice committee, Oak Grove Presbyterian Church spoke on the “Girl Rising” program, January 27.
- Oliver Smith, Community Liaison for the Joint Community Police Partnership and Multicultural Advisory Committee presented his annual report, February 24.
- Karmit Bulman, Executive Director, spoke about the Conflict Resolution Center’s Programs/Trainings for youth, March 17.
- Mark Bernhardson, City Manager, recapped the State of the City address, May 19.
- Rick Kaufman, Executive Director of Community Relations, Bloomington Public Schools, spoke on the Family Engagement Plan, August 18.
- Ellen Kennedy, Executive Director of World Without Genocide and Member of the Edina Human Rights and Relations Commission, Jessica Kingston, Director of the St. Paul Department of Human Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity and Former Chair of the Edina Human Rights and Relations Commission, and Courtney Thomason, Participant in the World Without Genocide High School and College Institute and Student at Normandale College, spoke on designating the month of April as Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.
- Julie Hertzog, Pacer’s National Bullying Prevention Center spoke about their program, October 20.
- Andrew Mosca, Minnesota State Council on Disability spoke on state-wide planning celebrating the 25th anniversary of passing the American’s with Disabilities Act, November 17.

2. Equality: “Improve cross-cultural understanding and acceptance.”

- **Accepted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Proclamation** at the City Council January 6 Meeting and January 14 School Board meeting.
- **Co-sponsored Black History events** with the United States Court for the District of Minnesota, Ramsey County Historical Society, Bloomington Historical Society and the Minnesota Twins:
 - **Historical Exhibit: “They played for the Love of the Game: Adding to the Legacy of Minnesota Black Baseball”** at Bloomington Civic Plaza February 3-28.

- **Free Movie: “42,”** based on the life story of Jackie Robinson, at Creekside Community Center, February 3.
 - **Special Lunch Event:** Baseball Historian, Frank M. White, shared stories of Black baseball players in Minnesota and throughout the Midwest, Creekside Community Center, February 7.
 - **Coffee with Curator:** Frank M. White provided tours and presented personal stories about the Exhibit at Bloomington Civic Plaza, February 7, 14, 19, and 25.
 - **Special book display** at Penn Lake Library featured Jackie Robinson film screenings, February 18 and 22.
 - **Community Event, “Black Baseball in Minnesota and the Beginning of the Minnesota Twins in Bloomington”:** Restaging Jackie Robinson’s signing with the Brooklyn Dodgers, speakers, and special exhibits at Bloomington Civic Plaza, February 27.
 - **Student Exhibits and People of Color in Baseball** display at Oxboro Library.
 - **Sponsored at Bloomington Civic Plaza in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of passing the Civil Rights Act 1964:**
 - Freedom Riders Exhibit from the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History: June 23—July 6.
 - Freedom Riders Music Event: “Music through the Struggle” featuring Bettie Mae Fikes, former leader for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Freedom Singer, and “Queen of Blues,” shared her reflections, June 26. Seventy-three people attended the event.
 - Accepted Proclamation for the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, July 2.
 - **Co-sponsored “Girl Rising,”** film viewing reflecting abuses suffered by young women throughout the world, and guest speaker, Sherry Mohamed, a Somali refugee, at Oak Grove Presbyterian Church with its Social Justice Committee, October 11. One hundred people attended the event.
 - **Accepted Human Rights Day Proclamation** at the December 1 City Council Meeting and November 24 School Board Meeting.
- 3. Leadership:** “Being a successful leader of a multicultural community also means recognizing and fostering leadership in others.”
- Commissioners held a retreat on April 21st, led by Tim Anderson, Director – Teaching and Learning, Bloomington School District. Activities and discussion focused on “How To Build An Ideal Community”.

Awards:

- Selected recipients for the Omar Bonderud Award. Recognized Frank M. White for his work promoting Dred and Harriet Scott and Blacks in Baseball during Black History Month. Recognized Cornerstone Advocacy Service for its services to address human trafficking. Sponsored the December 1 reception and recognition ceremony.

4. Public Relations: “Increased visibility will allow more citizens to access our services and increased communications will keep the Commission aware of events and trends in the community.”

- Participated in District Diversity Advisory Council (DDAC) through a Commission liaison.
- Attended Fifth Annual Sustainability Conference: “Perspectives in Human Trafficking, featuring the Spotlight Series: Where Alumni Shine” at the Argosy University, Eagan, February 20.
- Participated in the Egg Hunt and Family Fun Walk, with booth and information materials, Normandale Lake Bandshell, April 19.
- Participated in Kennedy High School, 1st Annual Community Resource Fair, April 24.
- Co-sponsored Diversity Day with Independent School District 271 involving Jefferson and Kennedy High Schools and Olson Middle School throughout April and May:
 - Recognized Schyler Widerski, Jefferson High School student at the April 21 City Council meeting and April 28 School Board meeting for winning the Diversity Day 2014 t-shirt logo design.
 - Dave Anderson (Famous Dave’s) presented “Against All Odds.”
 - Booth and materials as a part of interactive display booths at all three schools.
 - A Peace Run, Walk and Roll involving 600 Bloomington high school students, May 2.
- Attended presentation given by Bob Peters former HRC member and recipient of the Omar Bonderud Award, who talked about his book, “A Dive Too Deep” at Oxboro Library, May 17.
- Attended, distributed, and spoke at 15 National Night Out Get-Togethers August 5.
- Sponsored booth and materials distribution at Heritage Days Celebration on September 20th and featured entertainment provided by Kukkiwon Taekwondo Academy, Pan Dimensions Caribbean steel drummers, and CAAM Chinese Dance Theater.
- Attended, with booth and informational materials, Creekside Open House October 4.

Mediation

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission offers mediation services to its citizens regarding human rights. Commissioners Rice and Kane are qualified mediators. Thirteen (13) complaints/inquiries were received and processed.

COMMISSION COMPOSITION

The Commission is comprised of 7 adult members and 2 youth members. The adult members are appointed for 2-year terms and the youth for 1-year terms. All members have full voting privileges. The City provides staff to assist the Commission.

Commissioners:

Whitney Batterson (Second Vice Chair/Youth)
Daniela Kunkel (Youth)
Sheila Fishman
Dennis Kane (Chair)
Yasin Osman
Mary Rice (First Vice Chair)
John Doble

The Commission has four (4) vacancies as of December 31, 2014.

Direct Staff

Staff Liaison: Lorinda Pearson, Manager, Human Services Division
Staff Secretary: Heather Lambert, Administrative Assistant, Human Services Division