

2012-2013 REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL




BuildingPeace
EndingDiscrimination

PORTLAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Human Rights Commission works to eliminate discrimination and bigotry, to strengthen inter-group relationships and to foster greater understanding, inclusion and justice for those who live, work, study, worship, travel and play in the City of Portland. In doing so, the Commission is guided by the principles embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



March 12, 2014

To the Mayor, City Commissioners, and Portlanders:

On behalf of the City of Portland Human Rights Commission (HRC), I am pleased to provide this report on the work of the Commission during my tenure as Commission Chair from October 2012 to January 2014. The 14 month period during which I had the honor to serve as Chair of this important Commission brought substantial changes to our Commission structure and the manner in which the HRC attempts to carry out its ambitious mission.

As part of a strategic planning process for the period of 2012-2015, the HRC determined that it would be necessary to take a critical look at our policies and procedures and to make changes that would allow us to be more accessible, agile and responsive to community needs while, at the same time, being increasingly collaborative and engaged with our organizational partners, Portland's Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR), and City Council. Thus, my tenure as Chair has been quite process heavy, with substantial attention paid to the HRC's internal practices. The Commission has made tremendous progress thanks to the commitment of our volunteer commissioners, OEHR staff, and our City Commissioners and their advisors.

In addition to our inward focus, the past 14 months have seen the HRC address and advocate on numerous human and civil rights issues affecting Portlanders, including community and police relations, human trafficking, homelessness, immigrant rights, housing discrimination, and employee rights. In June 2013, the Commission hosted the first annual Human Rights Roundtable, which brought community groups working on human rights issues together for the first time to share their knowledge and experiences with the HRC and begin developing strategies for working together toward positive change. In December 2012, the Commission presented the inaugural, annual Emily G. Gottfried Human Rights Awards to an emerging leader, an outstanding organization and an individual in recognition of lifetime achievement. The Commission has also hosted and participated in events ranging from an award winning police training on issues of race relations, to human trafficking victim outreach and assistance, to the commemoration of the March on Washington.

It's been a busy 14 months and there's much more on the horizon for this volunteer commission. The HRC's goals will continue to be guided by the commitments made more than a year ago to be more accessible and responsive to community needs while continuing to partner, engage and collaborate with our organizational partners, bureau colleagues and City Commissioners. I would like to thank every City Commissioner for taking the time this year to speak with me directly about your vision for the HRC and for making your teams available for consultation and collaboration. I would also like to extend the HRC's very special thanks to OEHR Director Dante James for his continued support and encouragement, and to OEHR Program Coordinator Jeff Selby for lending his broad range of expertise to our cause. Finally, my sincerest thanks to Allan Lazo, my predecessor as HRC Chair. Without his leadership and unwavering dedication to the Commission's purpose, nothing that was accomplished during the past 14 months would have been possible.

Very Truly Yours,

Kyle Busse, Outgoing Chair

THE MISSION AND STRUCTURE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



The Portland Human Rights Commission was created in January 2008 after City Council accepted the report “A Framework for Action: Findings and Recommendations, Creation of Human Relations Entity for the City of Portland” (Framework for Action) by Resolution No. 36571.

The authors called for the creation of a human rights entity: “...in Portland, Oregon in 2007 we have no human rights entity that holds us accountable for fulfilling our commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

The HRC is comprised of 15 volunteer commissioners. Since 2013, the HRC has worked independently under the umbrella of the Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR). By ordinance, the Commission works toward the goal of ending discrimination and

bigotry in the City of Portland and promotes respectful relationships and understanding among all those who live, work, study, worship, travel and play in our wonderful city. In doing so, the Commission is guided by the principles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In 2012, the HRC began a strategic planning process and concluded that internal changes were required to meaningfully address the challenges presented by the difficult combination of the HRC’s ambitious mission and its composition as an all-volunteer body. After much debate and deliberation, the Commission adopted a new organizational structure with an emphasis on four primary strategies: Discovery, Visibility, Education and Advocacy.

These strategies reflect the core goals stated in the Framework for Action five years earlier.

To most effectively pursue these strategies, the HRC created three ongoing sub-committees: the Community Discovery Committee, the Policy Committee, and the Communications Committee. In addition to these committees, the HRC continues to be the proud home of the Community and Police Relations Committee, which was formed concurrently with the HRC in 2008 and has achieved great success and notoriety since that time. Additionally, the HRC has two ongoing task forces, which address the issues of human trafficking and housing rights.

Finally, in addition to modifying the HRC’s organizational structure, the Commission has recently updated its bylaws and action processes to reflect the changes being made on an organizational level, and also to achieve our ongoing goals of enhanced accessibility and responsiveness to community needs, as well as collaboration and engagement with our community and government partners.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS

Sonji Young, Chair
Linda McKim-Bell, Vice Chair
Mayra Arreola
Deyalo Bennette
Kyle Busse
Moloy K. Good
Ashley Horne
Allan Lazo
Abdul Majidi
Emanuel Price
Sam Sachs
Aimee Samara
Damon Isiah Turner



MAJOR EVENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

COMMUNITY AND POLICE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (CPRC)

The CPRC brings together members of Portland's diverse communities and its police officers to improve community and police relations, further an authentic community policing culture, and promote dignity, understanding, and respect in police and community interactions.

On April 16, 2013, the CPRC training subcommittee was awarded the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) Achievement Medal for its equity education work, which included training for addressing institutional racism and community demographics to all Portland Police Bureau Command Staff. The training was co-facilitated by a PPB Commander and Dora Perry, Policy Advisor to City Commissioner Amanda Fritz.

In addition, Dr. Joseph Graves, professor and the Associate Dean for Research at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University provided workshop segments during each day of the training.

In November 2013, the subcommittee conducted additional training to address institutional racism and community demographics to all Sergeants. The training was co-facilitated by a PPB Lieutenant and Caprice Hollins of Cultures Connecting, LLC, based in Seattle. Dr. Graves was also involved in the November training.



2013 HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDTABLE

Pursuant to the Commission's commitment to engage our community partners and advocate on behalf of Portlanders' human and civil rights, the HRC convened the first annual Human Rights Roundtable in June 2013. The Roundtable was designed to create the first-ever forum for HRC Commissioners and representatives of human rights advocacy groups to share their collective thoughts and experiences regarding human and civil rights issues affected Portlanders. The Roundtable was attended by representatives from more than forty advocacy groups, which shared with the

Commission the issues to which they are committed, the strategies pursued and challenges presented by those issues, and the role they believe the HRC and the City could play in order to address those issues.

Following the Roundtable, the Commission released a 32-page report, which included the findings and recommendations reached by the HRC in light of the input provided. The full Roundtable report and summary are available on the Commission website.

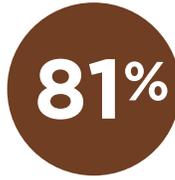


2013 HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Community participants were overwhelmingly positive when polled about their Roundtable experience.



“ROUNDTABLE OBJECTIVES ARE RELEVANT TO MY WORK.”



“I MET COMMUNITY LEADERS WHO COULD BENEFIT MY WORK.”



“I WOULD LIKE TO COLLABORATE WITH THE HRC IN THE FUTURE.”

EMILY G. GOTTFRIED HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

In December 2012, the Commission celebrated international human rights day by establishing the Portland Human Rights Awards, which would be presented annually for human rights achievement in Portland in the categories of:

- Emerging Leader
- Outstanding Organization
- Lifetime Achievement



The inaugural awards ceremony, which took place at NW Natural, was an inspiring and uplifting event that featured keynote speaker Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and was attended by community members and leaders; including representatives from Portland City Council, Multnomah County, the State of Oregon, and the United States Department of Justice. The inaugural award recipients were Chabre Vickers (Emerging Leader), the Oregon Human Trafficking Task Force (Outstanding Organization), and Kathleen Saadat (Lifetime Achievement).

All proceeds from the human rights awards ceremony are provided to charities designated by the award recipients. The event was conceptualized by HRC Vice Chair Emily G. Gottfried, who believed one purpose of the HRC was to lift up and celebrate the achievements of those who dedicate themselves to human rights in our community. Tragically, Emily

passed away just over a month after her vision became a reality.

In December 2013, the Commission carried Emily's vision forward and renamed the Human Rights Awards in her honor. The HRC further recognized Emily's inspirational human rights work by posthumously presenting her with the 2013 Emily G. Gottfried Human Rights Award for Lifetime Achievement, which was presented to Emily's husband, Jeffrey Gottfried, by Attorney General Rosenblum.

The Commission was also proud to recognize McKenzie River Gathering Foundation as the recipient of the 2013 Emily G. Gottfried Human Rights Award for Outstanding Organization and Aaron Ridings as the 2013 award recipient for Emerging Leader.

Hosted once again at NW Natural, the HRC was honored to host keynote speaker Representative Lew Frederick of Oregon's House District 43, who presented a moving speech to an audience of over 100 attendees, including the Mayor, Portland City Commissioners and their advisors, community leaders from organizations such as the Albina Ministerial Alliance and the Coalition Against Hate Crimes, and representatives from the state and federal Departments of Justice.

With Emily's legacy in mind, the HRC will continue to lift up and celebrate the achievements of human rights champions in our community through its annual presentation of the Emily G. Gottfried Human Rights Awards.

CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Consistent with the Commission's goal of being more accessible to the public and responsive to community needs, the HRC continues its effort to invite public participation at HRC meetings and events, to increase the HRC's physical presence in the Portland community outside the HRC's home base at the Office of Equity and Human Rights, and to enhance accessibility online through our website and social media. To that end, the HRC, its sub-committees and its task forces have spent considerable time interacting with the community.

MEETINGS IN THE COMMUNITY

- The CPRC has held its regular meetings in a variety of community settings, including NE Coalition of Neighborhoods, the Q Center, Rigler School in the Cully Neighborhood, and the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA). The CPRC has also tabled at numerous events around the City of Portland, including Community Fest 2013 at Jefferson High School.



- In December 2013, the HRC co-hosted a screening of the film *Safe and Sound?*, a collection of short documentary videos addressing police violence in the City of Portland, specifically in our communities of color. The screening was followed by a panel conversation among human rights commissioners and community members on this difficult and important topic.



- August 28, 2013 marked the 50th anniversary of the historic March on Washington. To commemorate this milestone, human rights commissioners volunteered and marched alongside their fellow Portlanders on August 25, 2013 in an inspirational event which culminated in a rally at Waterfront Park.
- In October 2013, the Commission's Human Trafficking Task Force (HTTF) co-hosted an event in Wood Village that provided free initial legal services to immigrant communities. Providing legal services with regard to both immigration status and possible crime victim status is an effective way to identify potential trafficking victims and survivors and to provide them with the essential services they require. Speaking to communities where trafficking is prevalent is also an effective strategy in dispersing information about social programs and legal assistance that may be available to victims and survivors in those communities.
- In December 2013, the HRC co-sponsored the United Nations Association celebration of the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. HRC Vice-Chair Linda McKim-Bell was a featured speaker at the event, the theme of which was "Women United."

PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT HRC MEETINGS

The HRC sets aside time at every meeting to accept public testimony. In the past year, the Commission has heard compelling testimony on issues ranging from the rights of Portland's homeless population to Portland's potential status as a "conflict-free minerals" city. The HRC would like to thank everyone who has attended and participated in Commission meetings, including representatives from Voz Workers' Rights Education Project, Sisters of the Road, the Conflict Free Minerals Initiative, Oregon Falun Dafa Association, *Street Roots* and the Portland Commission on Disability.



IMPROVED WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

In addition to enhancing HRC visibility and accessibility, 2013 was a banner year for the HRC's online and social media presence. The progress made in this regard is primarily the work of OEHR Program Coordinator Jeff Selby, who has staffed the Commission on a part time basis since January 2013.

Among Jeff's many contributions are a vastly improved HRC website that is intuitive and easy to navigate, allowing users to find HRC reports, news releases, letters to City Council, agendas, meeting minutes and more. Jeff has also created a framework for an ongoing community human rights events calendar and a library that will allow the HRC to be a clearinghouse for human and civil rights information and documents relevant to the City of Portland. These additional functions were explicitly noted by the community as areas of need during the Human Rights Roundtable. Finally, Jeff has reinvigorated the HRC's social media presence by administering the Commission's Facebook and Twitter pages and keeping them current and relevant with continuous updates and photos from HRC programs and events.

SPEAKING OUT

In addition to the Commission's commitment to public outreach, education and community dialogue, the HRC also participates in and initiates important community conversations.

The HRC:

- advocated to City Council in support of the Voz Workers' Rights Education Project Five-Year Plan for a Permanent Home
- published an op-ed in *The Portland Tribune* on respecting the individual rights of Portland's homeless population, arguing we should be careful not to equate homelessness with lawlessness
- advocated to City Council in support of plan to move Right 2 Dream Too rest stop to alternate location in Pearl District, and to enter into agreement waiving fines levied on current rest stop location property owner
- advocated to City Council in support of the City of Portland's proposed paid sick time ordinance requiring protected sick time for Portland employees
- advocated in support of House Bill 2639, which sought to end housing discrimination against Section 8 voucher holders. Published an op-ed in *The Oregonian* criticizing that newspaper's argument against House Bill 2639
- endorsed proposed Multnomah County resolution calling on the U.S. Congress to "Bring Our War Dollars Home" by reducing military spending and redirecting funds to critical domestic needs, including services for veterans
- advocated to City Council in support of the Independent Police Review Board's effort to strengthen oversight of the Portland Police Bureau through proposed changes to city code
- advocated in support of Oregon Coalition for Humanity's "Conflict Free City Initiative," which seeks commitment from City of Portland to take into account the origin of minerals used in the manufacture of goods purchased by the City
- advocated for veto of Senate Bill 215, which would have superceded a 2012 state board of education ban on the use of tribal mascots in public schools

ON THE HORIZON

The past 14 months have been exciting at the HRC, featuring a combination of significant human rights advocacy as well as substantial internal modifications.

The HRC is thrilled to have elected Sonji Young as our current Chair, who is being supported by an experienced executive committee, including Vice-Chair Linda McKim-Bell.

Ms. Young is a dynamic and passionate leader who is primed to take the HRC to the next level. Be on the lookout for HRC's annual events such as the Human Rights Roundtable and the Emily G. Gottfried Human

Rights Awards, but also for new projects such as an HRC Newsletter, an updated website featuring improvements to the community human rights events calendar and human rights document library, educational and outreach events addressing housing rights and human trafficking, an increased presence at City Council hearings, and much more.

As always, the HRC continues to strive toward greater inclusion and collaboration with our community partners, enhanced responsiveness to community needs, and improved communication with our elected leaders.



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