## Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed this Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations. To that end, every member of society must keep this declaration constantly in mind and strive by teaching and education to promote respect for all these rights and freedoms.

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has stated in clear and simple terms the rights that belong equally to every person. **These rights belong to you. Familiarize yourself with them. Help to promote and defend them!**

1. Right to equality.
2. Freedom from discrimination.
3. Right to life, liberty, personal security.
4. Freedom from slavery.
5. Freedom from torture and degrading treatment.
6. Right to recognition as a person before the law.
7. Right to equality before the law.
8. Right to remedy by competent tribunal.
9. Freedom from arbitrary arrest or exile.
10. Right to a fair public hearing.
11. Right to be considered innocent until proven guilty.
12. Freedom from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence.
13. Right to free movement in and out of any country.
14. Right to asylum in other countries from persecution.
15. Right to a nationality and freedom to change it.
16. Right to marriage and a family.
17. Right to own property.
18. Freedom of belief and religion.
19. Freedom of opinion and information.
20. Right of peaceful assembly and association.
21. Right to participate in government and in free elections.
22. Right to social security.
23. Right to desirable work and to join trade unions.
24. Right to rest and leisure.
25. Right to adequate living standards.
26. Right to education.
27. Right to participate in cultural life and community.
28. Right to social order assuring human rights.
29. Community duties essential to free and full development.
30. Freedom from state and personal interference in the above rights.

# Human Rights Retrospective Project

A historical look back over the past 20 years from 1990 to 2011

Created 11/2011

# Human Rights Retrospective; Looking Back 20 Years

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Image above: Mayor Kitty Piercy

## City of Eugene's Vision

*Value all people, encouraging respect and appreciation for diversity, equity, justice, and social well-being. We recognize and appreciate our differences and embrace our common humanity as the source of our strength;

*Be responsible stewards of our physical assets and natural resources. We will sustain our clean air and water, beautiful parks and open spaces, livable and safe neighborhoods, and foster a vibrant downtown, including a stable infrastructure;

*Encourage a strong, sustainable and vibrant economy, fully utilizing our educational and cultural assets, so that every person has an opportunity to achieve financial security.

**Council Goals and Outcomes**

- Safe Community
- Sustainable Development
- Accessible and Thriving Culture and Recreation
- Effective, Accountable Municipal Government
- Fair, Stable and Adequate Financial Resources

## Human Rights Retrospective Project

## Letter from Mayor Piercy – Call to Action

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to enjoy this 20-year retrospective of Human Rights Commission activities, projects and accomplishments in Eugene. To bring this book to life with real and meaningful stories, many interviews were conducted with past and present commissioners, community elders, and engaged, caring and committed community members who were involved in Eugene's human rights efforts during both calm and turbulent social times.

The Human Rights Commission, over the past 20 years, has provided critical information and advice to the Mayor, City Council and public officials on homelessness, gender equity, racial and hate/bias incidents, accessibility and many other important issues. Eugene has a long history of supporting human rights, equity and inclusiveness, and in supporting a diverse community that is stronger because of our commitment to social equity, environmental health and economic prosperity.

This book illustrates the many accomplishments of the Human Rights Commission, from its early days through its evolution to the advisory body we know today. Using stories and images, this book validates the critical connections among the community, the commission, City government and elected officials.

As our world changes, it becomes ever more important to work together on issues of justice -- and to join in early intervention and to stand together and speak out when necessary against bias and discrimination.

We will continue to forge strong alliances and networks to build on the foundation laid by those who came before us. It's amazing to look back over the past 20 years and realize just how many things we've accomplished, and how many lives have been touched in positive ways. I hope you enjoy paging through history as you read about the work of the Human Rights Commission.

Image Above: Book Cover

This project was made possible by Vanessa Mousavizadeh, and City of Eugene staff Holly LeMasurier, Raquel Wells, and Michelle Mortensen.

Image Above: Window painting at the Human Rights Center on Willamette St.

## Who We Are and What We Do

**The City of Eugene values the dignity of all human beings.**
**We are committed to:**

- ensuring that human rights are a central part of every City program;
- respecting and reflecting cultural and individual diversity;
- fostering mutual understanding; and
- promoting inclusiveness, justice and equity.

The Human Rights Commission was first established in 1946. Over 100 volunteer community members have served the local government and community on the Commission. In addition to promoting and protecting human rights, the Commission works with partners to respond to urgent incidents, as well as to develop targeted projects to support the ongoing work of access, inclusion, education, and justice in Eugene. The Commission is currently comprised of 11 members, appointed by the City Council for three-year terms.

The purpose of this booklet is to recognize several key Human Rights Commission successes and to acknowledge the tireless efforts and achievements of commissioners and volunteers over the past 20 years. Simultaneously, we wish to inspire renewed community participation in he human rights work in the city that is still left to be done. We seek community leaders and advocates who are passionate about human rights, equity, justice, learning and livability, and look forward to the tapping the vast human resources of this community through service on the Human Rights Commission or other City boards and commissions.

As former Commissioner Gretchen Miller expressed, "The Human Rights Commission harnesses a huge amount of volunteer effort. . . What really makes the HRC go is all the volunteer time. . . . From this relatively modest input from the city, thousands of hours of unimaginable time and energy and skills are put in." Dedicated commissioners and other volunteers, as well as critical community collaboration and partnerships, sustain the Human Rights Commission and its projects. Recently, Commissioners made a commitment to incorporate the full range of human rights in all our work. In order to become a Human Rights City, it will take initiative, energy and input from new voices, and sources. Join us!

Image Above: Miriam Jordan at Latina Festiva de Musica, 2005

## Beyond Civil Rights: Why change what we've got?

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) has long fought to eradicate discriminatory practices within the Eugene community. The HRC has waged successful battles on several fronts as is showcased in this book. However, the HRC has also found itself confronting topics of human rights which do not conform to typical discriminatory practices and the civil rights model. A member of the Human Rights Commission, Ken Neubeck explained the limitations which the HRC is experiencing is rooted in the existing City human rights ordinance. The ordinance "only speaks to the protection of the rights of protected classes and basically is oriented around speaking to problems of discrimination. While it's called a human rights ordinance, it's really a civil rights ordinance. It's very compatible with the whole approach to the civil rights movement of the 1960s." While civil rights continue to be an important part of the HRC agenda, civil rights do not encompass the full spectrum of human rights.

Image Above: Flyer for the 60th Anniversary of UDHR and the Human Rights Start At Home Event.

"One of the things I appreciate about the HRC is that the members all bring in very honorable experience through community work. It's a beautiful collection of people but as I said they're already engaged in a lot of work beyond what they're supposed to be doing. . . ."—Jim Garcia

Image above: Chivy Sok, Guest speaker at the Human Rights Summit, 2010.

## A Human Rights City: Human Rights Start at Home

In 2006 the Human Rights Commission (HRC) considered expanding its definition of human rights. The commission immediately identified with this need to address the full spectrum of universal human rights, including civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights. The commission set up a Human Rights City subcommittee to address the implementation of a broad human rights agenda in Eugene. Then Commissioner Ibrahim Hamide explained that adopting the Human Rights City concept encompasses so much more than a name. "It's adopting a lens of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all it contains." Mr. Hamide suggested two areas in which the Human Rights City framework could translate into local initiatives included the need for secular homeless shelters and for trained first responders to cases which involve mental health crises.

The Human Rights City Subcommittee started by studying how other cities implement local human rights initiatives. Subcommittee members initiated conversations within the Eugene community and among City staff about the idea of implementing human rights locally. The subcommittee held a series of public forums, trainings, and meetings culminating in a Human Rights Summit in April 2010. The summit attracted nearly 300 people, 25 community group tables, and 18 organizations offering workshops on the work they were doing in the community related to human rights.

"The City of Eugene is also increasingly utilizing a human rights lens," Ken Neubeck said. "The City of Eugene staff has developed a five-year Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan which the staff began implementing in July 2009. One of the action items in the plan is to implement the human rights framework across all city departments. The city [of Eugene] has been very supportive all along."

Some community groups also are using the human rights framework and implementing it in their own community organizing work. Mr. Neubeck said, "Some of what the Human Rights Commission wants to do is to encourage this and for more community groups to adopt a human rights framework." Local organizations such as Mind Freedom International, Oregon Toxics Alliance, and Amigos Multicultural Services Center are adhering to a human rights framework. The range of issues that these three organizations tackle – mental health, environmental threats, and immigration rights – conveys how broad the constituency is for human rights work in the community.

# Human Rights City Framework

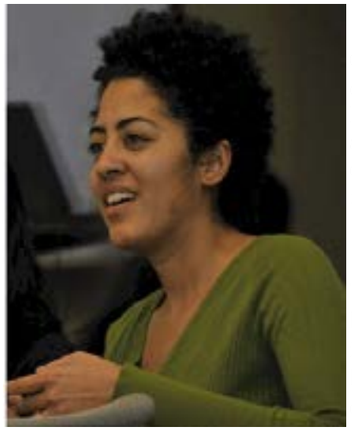


Image Above: Ejim Dike, one of three presenters on the Human Rights City Framework Training Panel.

One of the goals of the City of Eugene Human Rights Commission is that of "ensuring that human rights are a central part of every City program." In 2006, the Commission put the "Human Rights City Project" on its bi-annual work plan, an action approved by City Council. We are currently exploring ways that City government can implement international human rights standards and principles in its overall operations.

**The Human Rights City Framework Training Summary**

The City of Eugene's Equity and Human Rights Center held three three hour Human Rights Framework Trainings in February, 2011. The trainings generated helpful insights for future work toward implementing a human rights framework in our city. In total, more than 85 people attended the sessions.

Presenters provided a brief history of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the goals of its original framers, then shifted focus toward the importance of community based human rights organizing to encourage municipalities to strengthen their commitments toward the human rights framework. The presentations offered both strategies and best practices, and took note of the continued challenges faced by human rights organizers.

**Some of the themes captured from these training sessions are summarized below:**

- Create greater collaboration among Council, Commissions, Boards, and community members and groups in defining local problems and proposing possible solutions;
- Establish working partnerships and regular collaboration between HRC and other Commissions, Boards and Advisory Bodies;
- Establish systematic and proactive application of the human rights framework to new city policies and programs – perhaps an elaboration of the social equity piece of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL);
- Increase the collection of more meaningful and categorized data to assess city conditions with human rights implications;
- Use the human rights framework as an evaluative tool to assess impacts of city policy and programming;
- Launch pilot program with targeted efforts towards converting one Board or Commission into a human rights informed body;
- This could also be piloted by addressing a community concern through the human rights framework;
- Increase accountability for Council to uphold the human rights framework;
- Human rights report card;
- Annual analysis of human rights successes and failures in city policy and programs;
- Increase diversity in the profiles of Boards, Commissions and Advisory Bodies;
- Targeted outreach to encourage greater involvement of under-represented groups in city work.

Image Above: City Manager, Jon Ruiz talks with Ann Lehman, one of three presenters on the Human Rights Framework Training Panel.

"I look at HRC almost as I see Community Oversight of the police department. It acts as the oversight of the HR ordinance being followed. That the issues within the city of Eugene and the ordinance violations generally worked on with the commission and also to find and ensure that the ordinance language remains current. The Role of the HRC is to be the watchdogs of the ordinance."
– Jer Megowan

## Human Rights Framework Definition

**Refers to ways in which City government can implement international human rights standards and principles in its overall operations by:**

- Being proactive in identifying and seeking solutions to human rights problems and issues;
- Addressing human rights violations even when these violations can be considered unintentional or inadvertent;
- Establishing mechanisms to ensure active public participation in human rights problem identification and in establishing solutions;
- Being transparent and open about all government decisions bearing on people's human rights;
- Being publicly accountable for progress in remedying human rights problems by timetables, benchmarks, and appropriate measures; and
- Providing education to all people about their human rights and how they can seek redress for rights violations.

For more on Eugene as a Human Rights City, please visit www.humanrightscity.com

Image Above: A group of City staff attend the Human Rights Framework Training

Image Above: Ibrahim Hamide

As former Commissioner Ibrahim Hamide expressed so poignantly in a recent interview, "It's in the name. It's a *human* rights commission. It keeps the human element. Who are we? We are humans, and the Human Rights Commission reminds us that we have human rights, not civic rights, human rights and that they are inalienable rights. The city government or the county or state or federal government cannot take those rights from us. We are born with them. . . . That sounds like such a fundamental or elementary kind of thing that everybody should understand, but we forget."

"We forget that those rights need protection. The role of the HRC is to bring the preservation of those rights to the attention of people and to counter activities which contradict or ignore those rights. Without the Human Rights Commission, our human rights could easily fall through the cracks. The HRC maintains a pivotal role and I'm not sure there is anybody else that would safeguard it if its mission was not there."

Image Above: Human Rights Commissioners at a Work Planning meeting.

## EUGENE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEMBERS 1990-2010

| 1992 | FY 1995 | FY 1996 |
|---|---|---|
| Marshall Sauceda | Guadalupe Quinn | Donna Albro, |
| Carol Fernland | LeRoy Dickens | Kavi Luke |
| Bobby Green | Marshall Peter | Ron Chase |
| Alicia Hays | Rya Philips | Marion Malcolm |
| Myron Kinberg | Donna Albro | LeRoy Dickens |
| Gretchen Miller | George Russell | Gretchen Miller |
| Rico Perez | Ron Chase | Carol Fernlund |
| LeRoy Dickens | Ebon Brady | Marshall Peter |
| Marion Malcolm | Marshall Sauceda | Martha Fish |
| Arwen DeSpain | Carol Fernlund | Scott Seibert |
| Jeff Lewis | Scott Seibert | Margot Helphand |
| Jan Oliver | Bobby Green | Laurie Swanson Gribskov |
| George Russell | Laurie Swanson Gribskov | Shanisse Howard |
| Vivian Wearne | Neil Van Steenbergen | Neil Van Steenbergen |
| | Margot Helphand | Tyrone Jones |
| | Peter Wotton | |
| | Marion Malcolm | |
| **FY 1997** | **FY 1998** | **FY 1999** |
| Scott Seibert | Scott Seibert | Neil Van Steenbergen |
| Gretchen Miller | Gretchen Miller | Laura Stockford |
| Donna Albro | Donna Albro | Jennifer Boudin |
| Tyrone Jones | Favoure Miller | Ron Chase |
| Jennifer Boudin | Jennifer Boudin | Charles Dalton |
| Marion Malcolm | Ron Chase | Norma Dominguez |
| Ron Chase | Marshall Peter | Martha Fish |
| Scott Meisner | LeRoy Dickens | Gillette Hall |
| LeRoy Dickens | Martha Fish | Madeline Hoffman |
| Martha Fish | Sho Shigeoka | Bobby Lee |
| Margot Helphand | Gillette Hall | Marcy Middleton |
| Marshall Peter | Laura Stockford | Favoure Miller |
| Kevin Hornbuckle | Mustafa Kasubhai | Marshall Peter |
| Laura Stockford | Neil Van Steenbergen | James Dean Poynor |
| Shanisse Howard | Scott Meisner | Scott Seibert |
| Neil Van Steenbergen | | |

Image Above: Human Rights Commissioners at a Commission meeting.

## EUGENE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEMBERS 1990-2010

| FY 2000 | FY 2001 | FY 2002 |
|---|---|---|
| Gillette Hall | Marcy Middleton | Andrea Ortiz |
| Marcy Middleton | Andrea Ortiz | Sara Rich |
| Willie Blasher, Jr. | Bahati Ansari | Bahati Ansari |
| Ron Chase | Willie Blasher, Jr. | James Dean |
| Charles Dalton | James Dean | Steven Deutsch |
| Norma Dominguez | Steven Deutsch | Norma Dominguez |
| Diane Duke | Norma Dominguez | Martha Fish |
| Pat Farr | Pat Farr | Jean Grendler |
| Martha Fish | Martha Fish | Marcy Middleton |
| Andrea Ortiz | Jean Grendler | Gary Papé |
| James Dean Poynor | Gary Papé | Alexis Reed |
| Sara Rich | Alexis Reed | Jennifer Self |
| Ilisa Rooke-Ley | Sara Rich | Mo Young |
| Jason Thelan | Ed Ruttledge | |
| Bob Zenuch | Jennifer Self | |
| **FY 2003** | **FY 2004** | **FY 2005** |
| James Dean Poynor | Sara Rich | Carmen Urbina |
| Mo Young | Carmen Urbina | Sara Rich |
| Bahati Ansari | Elizabeth Aydelott | Surendra Subramani |
| Sheila Coats | Andrea Ortiz | Elizabeth Aydelott |
| Steven Deutsch | Norma Dominguez | Judith Castro |
| Norma Dominguez | Sidney Moore, Jr. | Rebecca Flynn |
| David Kelly | Sheila Coats | Jim Garcia |
| Mary Martinez-Wenzl | Judith Castro | Christina Greening |
| Marcy Middleton | Andrea Smith | Ibrahim Hamide |
| Andrea Ortiz | Ibrahim Hamide | Misa Kawai Joo |
| Sidney Moore, Jr. | Dwight Souers | David Kelly |
| Sara Rich | Misa Kawai Joo | Annette Leonard |
| Dwight Souers | Surendra Subramani | Dave Lottier |
| Surendra Subramani | David Kelly | Hugh Massengill |
| Neil Van Steenbergen | Megan Thompson | Jeremiah Megowan |
| | Hugh Massengill | Neil Van Steenbergen |
| | Marcy Middleton | |
| | Neil Van Steenbergen | |
| | Juan Carlos Monjaras | |
| | Mo Young | |

Image Above: Human Rights Commissioners voting during a meeting.

| EUGENE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEMBERS 1990-2010 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **FY 2005-2006** | **FY 2007-2008** | **FY 2009-2010** |
| Carmen Urbina<br>Sara Rich<br>Surendra Subramani<br>Elizabeth Aydelott<br>Judith Castro<br>Rebecca Flynn<br>Jim Garcia<br>Christina Greening<br>Ibrahim Hamide<br>Misa Kawai Joo<br>David Kelly<br>Annette Leonard<br>Dave Lottier<br>Hugh Massengill<br>Jeremiah Megowan<br>Neil Van Steenbergen | Annette Leonard<br>Surendra Subramani<br>Paloma Reza, Vice Chair<br>Carmen Urbina<br>Elizabeth Aydelott<br>Mary Otten<br>Rebecca Flynn<br>Jim Garcia<br>Christina Greening<br>Ibrahim Hamide<br>Misa Kawai Joo<br>Dave Lottier<br>Hugh Massengill<br>Jeremiah Megowan<br>Jon Belcher | Ibrahim Hamide<br>Twila Souers<br>Ken Neubeck<br>Rosa Chavez<br>Mary Otten<br>Christina Greening<br>Jon Belcher<br>Annette Leonard<br>Nehali Dave<br>Mo Young<br>Misa Kawai Joo<br>Keevan Labowitz<br>Linda Hamilton<br>Neil Van Steenbergen<br>George Brown |
| **FY 2011** | | |
| Linda Hamilton<br>Toni Gyatso<br>Melissa Mona<br>Ibrahim Hamide<br>Martha Fish<br>Ken Neubeck<br>Ann-Marie Lemire<br>Michelle Maher<br>Elizabeth Andrade<br>Raydeen Cuffe<br>Lorraine Kerwood<br>Matthew Beecher<br>Autumn Lovell<br>Ron Burley<br>Iva Boslough<br>Keith Mason | <br>Image Above: Human Rights Commission Booth at the We Are Bethel Event. | |

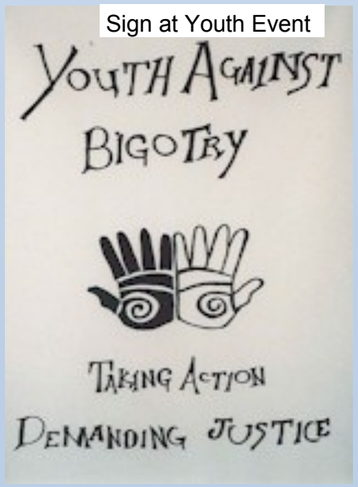
HRC Retreat, 2009

Transgender Awareness Class

# Honoring Our Successes!

Outreach to Homeless at Local Dining Room

We are Bethel Event Booth



Sign at Youth Event

## Striving for Accessibility and Inclusion

Image Above: Gathering at the Accessibility Road To Freedom Bus Event.

The Human Rights Commission Committee on Accessibility (HRAC) recommends policies and actions to improve accessibility in transportation, public services, places, events, and employment opportunities. The committee has played an important role in supporting Eugene's leadership in accessibility. As former Commissioner Marshall Peters explained, "Eugene is ahead of many other parts of the country. I certainly believe that we are one of the most, if not *the* most, accessible cities in the United States."

The Committee on Accessibility has achieved great strides to make Eugene a more accessible city in terms of architectural design and the promotion of universal design. The Committee on Accessibility has identified needs for barrier-free access and accessibility improvements. One strategy is to leverage the use of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to underwrite accessibility improvements. Solutions have ranged from public education and best practices recommendations, such as wrapping pipes under sinks in restaurants, to more extensive projects involving technical, architectural upgrades such as elevators and ramps, to ensure buildings are accessible.

The committee also supports efforts to connect site designers with persons with disabilities in productive community engagement. Marshall Peters expressed how the committee "played an instrumental role in organizing community input around the creation of the Hilyard Community Center. It was really an absolute model for how a building could be designed that would be fully accessible to people with disabilities."

As part of that process, the architects of the Hilyard Community Center, with the assistance of the Lane County Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC), convened public meetings to consider features that would make it as accessibility-friendly as possible. "The Hilyard Community Center was a landmark accomplishment of the Committee on Accessibility" because of the intersection of architecture, accessibility, and community input from the start of the design process, Peters reflected. "The Hilyard Community Center has become emblematic of a meaningful public commitment to quality space that works well for people with disabilities."

Image Above: Speakers at the Accessibility Road To Freedom Bus Event.

"For me the issue of diversity is humanity. We must recognize each other as human beings with all the variations that we have. The HRC advocates for this position. It is the role of the HRC to advocate for providing opportunities and equity for everyone. "
— Surendra Subramani

The committee has focused on access to City programs, services and participation in decision-making, for example calling for the availability of assisted listening devices (ALDs) in the Hult Center to assist patrons who are deaf and hard of hearing during performances. Meeting rooms, especially where public meetings are held, were recommended to be equipped with ALDs.

Image Above: Woman with stroller at a local event. Providing access to all helps those with and without mobility challenges.

A recent significant initiative focuses on widespread implementation of audible pedestrian signals which help persons who are visually impaired navigate key areas of the city, particularly those housing public services. The committee regularly provides input on comprehensive housing, land-use, and transportation policy and plans. The committee also has celebrated leaders who encouraged improved access through the presentation of "Barrier Awareness Day" awards. Another initiative is exploring options for people who use wheelchairs to have access to 24-hour taxi cab service. The committee led work on our local animal code to protect certified service dogs from certain dangers and harms.

Image Above: Blind woman in crosswalk with her service dog after new Audible Pedestrian Signals were installed.

These are some key examples of the important, widespread, positive impact that the Committee on Accessibility continues to have in the Eugene community. What is more, as former Commissioner Hugh Massengill reflected, HRAC remains "remarkably open door for disabled members of the community to voice concerns or questions" in addition to maintaining an important advisory role to the City of Eugene staff.

"It is the role of the Human Rights Commission to advocate for providing opportunities and equity for everyone. Certain people might see various things as special treatment, but what is special from a dominant group because you don't benefit from it is *necessary* for another group. Hypothetically, take for instance, you walked here, but a person in a wheel chair. . . We have got to make it accessible for them to get to c
we have got to make "special" accessibility ramp
treatment? It's essential, not special."
– Surendra Subramani.

Image Above
Surendra Subramani

## What is "Communities of Color?"

Originally conceived by former City Council and former Human Rights Commissioner Bobby Lee in 1999, the City's Executive Directors, and staff involved in diversity work, have met annually with representatives from the communities of color. The meeting provides a forum for attendees to give the organization feedback and input on the effectiveness of our diversity efforts, as those efforts impact service to that segment of the community.

Individual councilors, the mayor, City staff and Human Rights Commissioners have attended a number of fundraising events and community events organized by ethnic and cultural segments of our community. Examples include the Asian Celebration, Fiesta Latina, LCC's Native American Powwow, the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner, Centro Latino's Noche Cultural fund raising dinner and the Asian American Foundation's annual fund raising dinner. Attendance at these events provides direct access to members of the communities of color and helps strengthen relationships.

"Regarding the importance of communities of color –" There is no end to the education needed to keep everyone on the same page...." — Andrea Ortiz

Image Below: A group of friends gather at the Human Rights Center.

## Community Observer Network

Image Above: Gathering supporting immigration reform at the new Federal Courthouse, 2010.

The Community Observer Network is a network of unpaid community volunteers trained to respond to public rallies, demonstrations and protests in the community. Volunteers are trained to become impartial observers and recorders of activities, escalation, sequence of events, and behavior at events. Community Observer Network seeks to protect freedom of speech, contribute to a fair and informed judicial process, and support a community environment in which all voices can be heard. The model is borrowed from similar programs at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Colorado. The Community Observer Network started as a pilot program through the Office of the Dean of Student Life at the University of Oregon in 1990.

The responsibility of a community observer is said to be easy to explain but more difficult to carry out and requires training and practice. Community observers identify themselves by wearing a brightly colored badge or T-shirt. They do not converse with others at events but can hand out explanatory fliers and take notes. If escalation occurs, observers remain involved in the incident but observe and record significant activity from all sides. When necessary, the observer will write an impartial and documentary report that outlines the events leading up to and involving critical incidents. In addition, observers are available to report their findings in person at formal or informal civil, administrative, or legal action.

"...HRC has been a conduit for community members to know and work on their passions, but it is also a conduit to city services. It's the access point and the guidelines of how the Human rights program works... " — Andrea Ortiz

Councilor and former Human Rights Commissioner Andrea Ortiz reflected on the importance of the Community Observer Network in a recent interview. She remembered June 1, 1997, when environmentalists protested the removal of 40 trees at the corner of Broadway and Charnelton that would make way for a parking garage. "The mayor ordered trees taken down at seven in the morning while City Council was out. People were tear gassed. A guy fell out of a tree and broke both of his wrists. Police were macing people all over the place." Ortiz feels that the Community Observer Network volunteers played an important role protecting the protestors, the community, and the police. Observers are like "Switzerland," Ortiz explained. They observe what happens from a neutral standpoint and report their findings through official channels, thus providing an important community service.

Image Above: Observers and supporters at the immigration reform gathering in 2010.

## Facing Hate

Image Above: Eugene joins the NOT in OUR TOWN movement against hate and bias activity.

The Human Rights Commission has long addressed awareness of and response to hate crimes in Eugene in collaboration with law enforcement, public, and non-profit agencies. The Commission raised public awareness through education campaigns and included presentations to schools and civic groups as well as multiple public forums, marches, and workshops. In February 2001, the Commission collaborated with federal, state, and local organizations to organize the Oregon Hate Crimes Conference. The Commission played an integral role in organizing and sponsoring the conference. The conference attracted over 600 law enforcement officers, educators, and community advocates. The theme was "Eliminating Bias Crimes: Healing our Communities." Presenters included Judy Shepard, mother of Matthew Shepard, U.S. Senator Gordon Smith, experts on aiding educators and faith communities in responding to bias events, and the investigators who worked on the murders of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd.

In a recent interview, Eugene City Councilor and former Human Right Commissioner Andrea Ortiz reflected, "The conference was part of a push nationwide to say 'not in our town, not here. This is what we don't want.' The Anti-Hate Conference was an overview and an affirmation to not let these things happen in our community. We learned about what to look for, how to identify trends [which might lead to hate crimes]. [The conference] was an opening of Pandora's box of all the things happening in different communities regarding hate crimes. . . . At the time, this was cutting edge stuff."

Image Above: Discussion at Anti-Hate Forum, 2010.

The Eugene Police Department and the Human Rights Commission collaborated in various ways to speak out against hate crimes during the Oregon Hate Crimes Conference. The then Eugene Police Chief Jim Hill and Human Rights Commissioner Chair Marcy Middleton agreed to develop a strategy to look at racial profiling in retail businesses. Eventually, a groundswell of support for anti-hate crime legislation led to the enactment of hate crime legislation. As Councilor Ortiz explained, "Before, people would go to the police and complain about hate crimes, and they'd say there is no law against it. Now there are laws against hate crimes, and as a result there have been no egregious hate crimes in our community for nearly 10 years." The City of Eugene's *Bias and Hate Incident Response* is a two-pronged approach of proactive interventions, such as leadership messages and targeted education, as well as effective reporting and response.

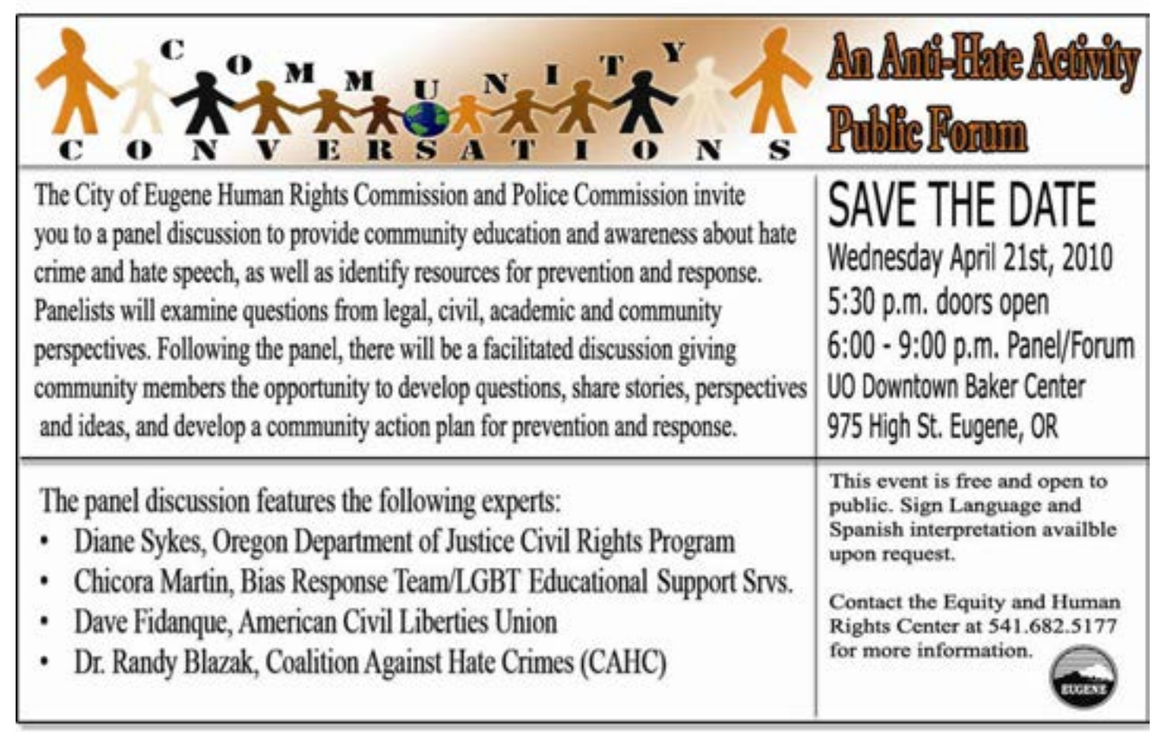
The Human Rights and Police Commissions conducted a public forum on hate crimes in April 2010 convening many of the major partners working in hate response and education. The committee working on this public forum developed an anti-hate resolution, and presented and discussed the draft resolution at the forum. The resolution was discussed as a model for other local agencies to develop statements or policies resolving to address hate, bias, prejudice, and intolerance in their organizations. City Council unanimously adopted a resolution opposing hate violence and strengthening our responses to hate. The resolution augments Eugene's successful implementation of best practices in hate response and highlights our community's leadership in this area.

## Hate/Bias Crime Reports (7/1/2009 to 3/31/2011)

*Data Provided by Eugene Police Department*

| Year | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RACE | 3 | - | 6 | 9 |
| SEXUAL ORIENTATION | 1 | 13 | 2 | 16 |
| RELIGION | 3 | 6 | 1 | 10 |
| NATIONAL ORIGIN | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| POLITICAL AFFILIATION | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| COLOR | 1 | 1 | - | 2 |
| PHYSICAL/MENTAL HANDICAP | - | - | - | - |
| AGE | - | - | - | - |
| ECONOMINC/SOCIAL | - | - | - | - |
| ***GRAND TOTALS*** | **8** | **20** | **11** | **39** |

Image below: Flier from Anti-Hate Activity Public Forum, hosted by the City of Eugene in 2010



**COMMUNITY COALITON FOR ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS**
**Community Partners**

ACLU OF OREGON
AMIGOS MULTICULTURAL CTR
BASIC RIGHTS OREGON
BETHEL SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMUNITY ALIANCE OF LANE COUNTY
LANE COUNTY CAUSA
CENTRO LATINOAMERICANO
CITY OF EUGENE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CITY OF EUGENE
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4j /JOBS FOR JUSTICE
JUVENTUD FACETA
LANE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
LATIN AMERICA SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE
MINDFREEDOM INTERNATIONAL
NEXTSTEP RECYCLING
OREGON TOXICS ALLIANCE
PAN ASIAN COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
PHILIPPINE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LANE COUNTY
SPRINGFIELD ALLIANCE FOR EQUALITY AND RESPECT
TRAUMA HEALING PROJECT
U OF O CENTER ON DIVERSITY & COMMUNITY
SIEMPRE AMIGOS ASSOCIATION
WAYNE MORSE CENTER FOR LAW AND POLITICS
WINNEMEM SUPPORT GROUP OF OREGON

# Human Rights Summit 2010

On April 10, 2010, the Community Coalition for Advancement of Human Rights and the City of Eugene's Human Rights Commission worked collaboratively to host the Human Rights Community Summit – "Human Rights Start at Home."

The summit event was an action item on the FY 10-11 Human Rights Commission work plan, a plan that the Eugene City Council endorsed. Guided by its work plan goals, the Commission has been engaging in outreach and educational activities to raise awareness of universal human rights principles across the community and to encourage broad community discussion of ways in which these principles could be implemented by local groups and institutions, including the City of Eugene. The implementation of the human rights framework is also an action item in the City's five -year Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan.

Image Above: Human Rights Summit 2010, room full of guests.

In the 12 months leading up to the April 10 summit, Human Rights Commissioners and numerous other community volunteers contributed many hours of their time planning and organizing the event. They formed and participated in task groups on Program Planning, Arrangements, Fund Raising, Tabling, and Publicity and Outreach. Over 60 community members, including Commissioners, were involved in making the summit happen.

**The goals of the summit were as follows:**

1. Increase awareness of the human rights framework and its local relevance;
2. Include all groups in the conversation about human rights, especially youth;
3. Educate on what the City of Eugene and Lane County are doing for human rights;
4. Hear from community groups on pressing human rights needs;
5. Encourage discourse about ways to implement the human rights framework in local government, community groups, and area institutions; and
6. Move the City of Eugene forward toward becoming a "Human Rights City" while developing a broader "Human Rights Community."

"One of the things I appreciate about the HRC is that the members all bring in very honorable experience through community work. It's a beautiful collection of people...they're already engaged in a lot of work beyond what they're supposed to be doing. . . ."—Jim Garcia

Image Above: Human Rights Summit Key Note Speakers, 2010

The summit morning program included speakers addressing human rights and a facilitated discussion of local community human rights issues of particular importance to summit attendees. The afternoon program included 21 participatory/action-oriented workshops presented by local community organizations framing topics from a human rights perspective, followed by a closing social celebration. During the course of the day we had musical entertainment, participatory art, tabling by 25 different groups and organizations, and many opportunities for attendee networking and collaborating.

The Community Coalition's fundraising goal was to work with sponsors and partners who embraced and supported previously successful human rights efforts, such as the Mental Health Human Rights Conference in 2006 and the annual December 10th Human Rights events celebrating the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A total of 270 people attended the summit, a number well beyond our expectations. Participants included local elected officials, city and county government managers and employees, staff from local social service agencies and from major area institutions, people from local social justice advocacy groups, area educators, members of spiritual communities, Eugene neighborhood association members and leaders, and a wide array of other community residents. A few people came from as far away as Florence to participate.

By all indications, the Human Rights Community Summit was a remarkable success, not only in terms of the unexpectedly high level of attendance. It was also successful in terms of the obvious energy that summit participants brought to the morning facilitated discussion and to the afternoon's 21 well-attended community group-led workshops. Each of these workshops provided participants with concrete ways to continue working on specific human rights issues in the local community once the summit was over.

"...All governments need an entity to check it. The HRC helps to hold elected officials accountable for what they do and say. It helps elected officials maintain a certain level of cultural competence." "The city of Eugene has been a model of human rights advocacy, supporting people of color and those with gender differences." –Bobby Green

Image Above: Human Rights Summit Attendees

Image Above: Commissioners talking at a work planning session.

"Being a commissioner gives you staff support and support from fellow commissioners...it helped me connect to other people in the community in a whole new way."
– Mo Young

Image Above: A commissioner writing during a discussion about the work the Commission focuses on.

## Human Rights Support System

The Human Rights Support System (HRSS) was active from 1994 to 2006 and was an "incredible success" according to then Commissioner Neil Van Steenbergen. It consisted of volunteers who agreed to be trained as human rights advocates for the community. HRSS educated people about their rights and how to exercise them. It was also a support network for people who had been subjected to harassment or discrimination. The trained advocates agreed to provide technical and emotional assistance to people who may have experienced discrimination or harassment or who had general complaints or inquiries.

According to Van Steenbergen, at its peak, HRSS averaged 100 cases a year engaging organizations such as Lane Transit District, Eugene Police Department, school agencies, and various government agencies. It grappled with homelessness, neighborhood complaints, landlord tenant disputes, work place issues, and access to services and process issues, complaints, concerns and receive assistance.

Every advocate went through training, including domestic violence survivor support training and advocacy and police academy training. Police training was relevant because before the Police Auditor was established in 2005, about 25 percent of HRSS cases were related to the Police Department, according to former Human Rights Commissioner Neil Van Steenbergen. Commissioner Van Steenbergen suggested that HRSS was one of the first programs in the country that facilitated mediation between complainants and a police department. Another type of specialized training was designed to ready advocates to help Spanish speakers navigate court processes through the *Paso a Paso Program*.

The HRSS approach utilizes an empowerment model. The purpose of the trained advocates was not to solve problems for people. Instead the advocates asked, "What would you like to have happen and how can I help you make that happen?" Commissioner Ken Neubeck reflected on the efficacy of this model recently: "The empowerment model helps people capture back a sense of control over the situation. Sometimes all people need is knowledge about how the system works or what choices are available." An advocate might offer to brainstorm about how to outline or draft a letter, or might offer to edit a letter that a person has written.

An advocate might accompany a person to visit a government agency with a complaint. An advocate does not, however, solve problems. Rather, she or he offers support and information about choices and resources.

This empowerment model is what makes HRSS different from services usually available to people with concerns or complaints in a community. As Neubeck highlighted, when people who feel like something bad has happened to them are given some tools to address the problem, they often realize that they can address problems like this on their own, or with attentive support. Thus, HRSS "was creating a power base of people in the community who would otherwise be totally marginalized and totally disconnected and totally disempowered." Essentially, HRSS strengthened a community by giving choice or recourse to those who felt they had none and reminded them that "they do have power, worth, and dignity, as well as the ability to protect [those assets]."

Image Above: A group of people meet in the Atrium Building to talk about Human Rights Commission work, including the Human Rights Support System.

Image Above: Human Rights Booth at the 2005 PRIDE Festival in Eugene,

"If it weren't for the HRC in Eugene, I wouldn't have stayed here to live. I feel protected and supported because of the work that it does and the good people who are part of it." –Jim Garcia

Image Above: Rainbow flag is a symbol of peace and acceptance to many communities, agencies and groups.

## LGBTQ Equity

The City of Eugene Human Rights Ordinance provides for a Domestic Partner Registry, through which unmarried couples (same sex or otherwise) who share a relationship of mutual support and commitment may document their relationship. Eugene has maintained a Domestic Partner Registry since 2003 because Eugene's Human Rights Commission and others fought for it. While "local registries are symbolic in nature and confer no legal rights," they pave the way for regulatory changes at the state and federal level. In this case, a local battle did eventually translate to an official change in legal status with a change in Oregon state law in 2008. The Oregon Family Fairness Act significantly changes the legal status of Domestic Partners, giving them all of the rights and responsibilities currently available to married couples.

Former Commissioner Gretchen Miller chaired the Human Rights Commission's successful effort to include sexual orientation in Eugene's anti-discrimination ordinance of 1993. In 2002, the Human Rights Commission held public hearings. It did extensive research and worked with the City Attorney to draft an ordinance. Having listened carefully to community concerns in four community forums, a public hearing, and a work session the City Council passed an amended ordinance in November 2002. This amended ordinance included the addition of the Domestic Partner Registry. As then Commissioner Miller reflected, the Human Rights Commission dedicated substantial time and resources to address the inclusion of sexual orientation and domestic partnerships in the anti-discrimination ordinance; and, without such focus and coordination, the ordinance would never have passed.

"The Commission gave me language to use around the work I thought was important and I figured I should be doing....it really provided me with structure and language so I could tell people about it"
– Mo Young

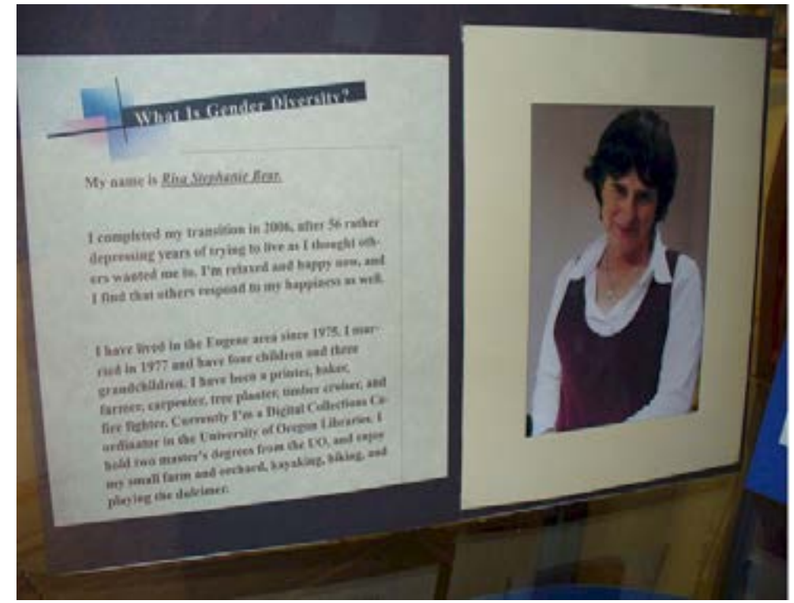



Image Above: Story board of Risa Stephanie Bear

## Gender Identity

Regrettably, efforts to include gender identity and persons who are transgendered in the protected classes were unsuccessful. To continue these efforts, in 2003, the Human Rights Commission created a Gender Identity Work Group, which worked to educate the City organization and community on transgender issues. The work group delivered dozens of presentations, developed a media packet and other informational materials, and networked with school officials. The commission worked extensively with other organizations to inform the public of the need to protect transgendered peoples within the city anti-discrimination ordinance. Coalitions with Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Community Alliance of Lane County (CALC) and Basic Rights Oregon (BRO), among many, were important as part of the outreach and education on such rights.

According to former Human Rights Commissioner Jer Megowan, the goal of including protections for the transgendered community was to help people feel comfortable and safer in self-identifying. The Human Rights Commission engaged in conversations about health and employment needs, gender-neutral bathrooms, safety issues, and how to approach gender identity issues within schools. The commission representatives held meetings and canvassed widely, educating about the need for protecting our transgendered community.

Image Above: Story board of Sheila Coats

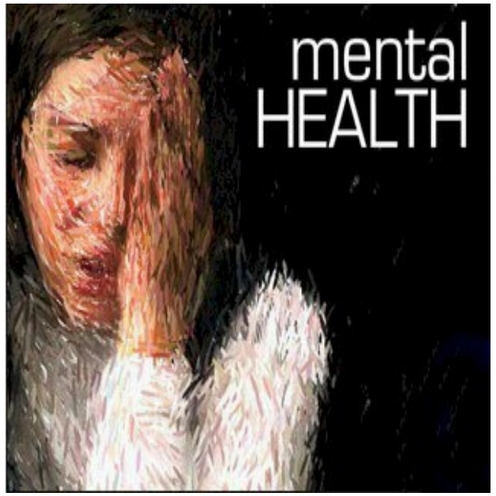



Image Above: Artist rendering of a person expressing Mental Health impacts.

"...The worst thing that can happen is when one lives in an illusion that everything is okay and you always point your finger across the way to Springfield" and say that is where the lack of equity resides. . . . It's always been the role of the HRC to poke through the illusion that everything is fine...." — Surendra Subramani

Image Above: Pills and Mental Health spelled out on tiles.....medicine is only part of the equation.

## Mental Health Conference & Choice in Mental Health Care Resolution

Community members with mental health needs, those who are part of the mental health system, have long been victims of horrendous human rights violations. Some mental health caretakers do not believe that mental health consumers should have the right to reject treatment (including electro-shock therapy), the right to choose what happens to them (e.g., confinement), or the right to select which psychiatric medication to take. Further, consumers are often without representation. Mental health consumers do not feel that coercing people to take drugs or undergo treatment without a voice in those choices is anything other than a human rights violation. The Human Rights Commission recognized this need and created a subcommittee to confront the treatment of mental health consumers in Eugene.

The subcommittee hosted a series of forums. The goal of the forums was to show that "People in the mental health system deserve to be empowered; they deserve to know the truth about what's going on and to get the best care and just to be heard," explained former Commissioner Hugh Massengill. The forums invited the community to listen to various experts in mental health and human rights fields and then asked the community what they thought. At the forums various speakers spoke about the need for the City to become aware of human rights problems within the mental health community, especially among the very poor.

Those forums led to a city-wide conference about mental health and human rights. At the Mental Health Conference, Eugene's Human Rights Commission sought to educate the public about the ways in which the mental health community deserves to be treated in accordance with human rights standards. Its second purpose was to invite the community to educate the commission on what the community thought and needed as far as helping those with mental and emotional problems. According to former Human Rights Commissioner Hugh Massengill, the conference "was the first time in the city of Eugene when mental rights and human rights were linked up. "

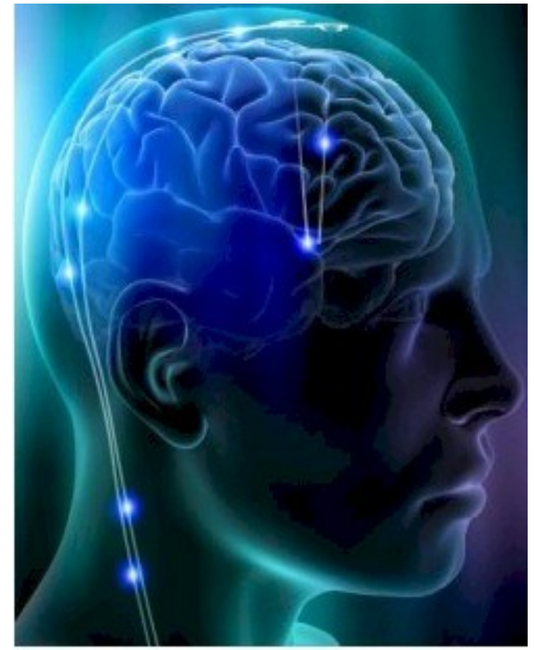


Image Above: Human Brain Synapses at work as a person thinks.

"The HRC has folks who have the skill to listen to communities who are marginalized and to be able to bring that voice to the commission meetings. It's based on all of us sharing the idea that marginalization happens to all communities and thinking about how we can be advocates for those who are marginalized." –Jim Garcia

Image Above: War Against Memory group meeting in the Eugene City Council Chamber.

"The Mental Health Conference ignited a community-wide conversation and from that came the energy to construct and present a resolution to the City Council which was eventually passed in October of 2009, affirming that the City of Eugene endorses human rights within a [mental health framework]. It asked that everyone within the city do everything they can to look at the human rights of mental health consumers."

"[The conference] was a very important step [in recognizing mental health consumers' needs in our community]. It showed first of all that it is possible for a community to come together and say we want to defend the weakest part of our community. It took several years, at least 50 meetings, and at least five forums leading up to the conference to pass the resolution; it was very encouraging to the mental health community to see such a thing happen." The Human Rights Commission's work says, "We care about this part of the community which isn't traditionally part of the discussion. We're going to work on making your problems known and help you feel empowered and have your human rights protected." – Former Human Rights Commissioner Hugh Massengill

***City Council RESOLUTION NO.4989***

***A RESOLUTION AFFIRMING THE CITY'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE.***

***BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EUGENE, a Municipal Corporation of the State of Oregon, as follows:***

***Section 1.*** *All mental health service providers within the City of Eugene are encouraged to incorporate self determination and consumer choice as much as possible, with accurate information provided to consumers and to families about those choices. Special emphasis should be placed on providing diverse alternatives in treatments, including non-drug alternatives, whenever possible.*

***Section 2.*** *All mental health service providers within the City of Eugene are urged to offer a full range of choices designed to assist in complete recovery.*

## Police Collaboration

Image Above: EPD officer with kids.

"Before the Civilian Review Board and the Police Auditor existed, the Human Rights Commission was a powerful force for keeping the police responsive to community, supporting police human rights training, and taking community relations and complaints seriously.

Human Rights Commission collaboration with the police involved multiple levels of activity--some very public and challenging as the HRC worked with the Police Commission...some internal but public and open such as anti-bias training as well as [mediating between] police and minority communities…The HRC was an important voice in addressing police treatment of the homeless, evidence of racial profiling . . ., treatment of youth downtown, and much more." – Former Human Rights Commissioner Steven Deutsch

Some important ways in which the Eugene Police Department (EPD) and the Human Rights Commission have and continued to collaborate on human rights issues in the Eugene community:

- The HRC partnered with the EPD in the development of the Racial Profiling Data Collection Project;
- The HRC facilitated and participated in numerous diversity training sessions with the Police Department, including training for new police recruits and newly promoted sergeants;
- The HRC continues to connect with the police through Human Rights Commission participation on the Police Commission and a police liaison at HRC meetings;
- The HRC and EPD collaborated on the Human Rights Support System;
- The HRC and EPD worked together in a Public Assemblies Group to respond to community gatherings and protests related to U.S. foreign policy in Iraq;
- EPD hosted and HRC supported a Communities of Color Symposium (2002/2003);
- EPD hosted and HRC supported a Youth and Police Symposium;
- HRC and the Eugene Police, along with many community organizations, supported Oregon's "181 laws" which separated the work of local law enforcement agencies from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.; and
- The HRC and EPD jointly developed a police policy regarding requests for and use of social security numbers during contacts with community members. As part of this effort, the HRC administered a professional services contract (requested by the EPD) to coordinate outreach activities between the EPD and the Latino and Spanish-speaking communities.

Image Above: EPD Officers at a Community Event.

## Continued Collaboration

Since 2006, Eugene has benefited from a Civilian Review Board (CRB) and Police Auditor, due in part to the Human Rights Commission's efforts to advocate for these essential City programs. Councilor and former Human Rights Commissioner Andrea Ortiz explained what it was like before the CRB and Police Auditor were instituted: "Now we have the CRB and the external Police Auditor. We can file a complaint and they'll get back to you. Back then you could file a complaint, and they [the police] would say thank you very much and that was it. . . . The CRB has provided a mechanism to deal with complaints and inquiries. Someone very knowledgeable about the law will take the time to explain the law. He won't give advice, but we explain where people stand in relation to the law."

The Human Rights Commission and the Eugene Police Department continue to collaborate on and communicate about various critical community issues.

Image Above: Candlelight Vigil

## In Response to September 11

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Human Rights Commission staff and its volunteers helped members of impacted communities process their thoughts and feelings. Staff and volunteers provided direct support to community members including Middle Easterners, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, educators, youth, and peace activists. Human Rights Commission representatives initiated contact, coordinated communication, advised on organizational development, and provided a liaison service to government and law enforcement. The commission staff also produced community education packets on vulnerable communities and people targeted in hate crimes and connected community leaders with law enforcement officers and safety consultants.

Commission members and staff initiated and coordinated a vigil held at Cuthbert Amphitheater on the evening of September 11. Staff initiated and coordinated a press conference on September 13, calling for patience and tolerance. Over 25 leaders from the faith communities, educational institutions, law enforcement, and elected officials participated. Staff aided faith community leaders in developing an interfaith memorial service and candlelight vigil held in conjunction with the Eugene Celebration.

According to former Human Rights Commissioner Steven Deutsch, "The HRC reacted immediately with a press release widely circulated, joined a city leaders press conference, participated in vigils at the mosque, attended the trial of a person charged with attacking a Sikh; met with the Chief of Police to support non-cooperation with FBI in a national surveillance program targeting young Muslims, Arabs, etc. These efforts continued in a variety of ways, some public, some behind the scenes, and some in coalition with other [community] groups."

## Skinner Butte Cross Removal

From the moment it was erected in November 1964, without permission and on city property, to 1996 when the Ninth Circuit Court ordered its removal, the 51 foot concrete Skinner Butte Cross was a controversial landmark in Eugene. Citizen groups opposing the presence of the cross on city property convened in 1964, and in 1965, 10 Eugene residents filed a suit to remove the cross. A battle ensued both in the Oregon court system and in newspapers and town meetings to varying degrees over the next 32 years.

The Circuit Court consistently ruled that the cross should be removed, whereas the Oregon Supreme Court twice concluded that the cross could remain. In 1970, Eugene voters approved a charter amendment designating the cross as a war memorial in an attempt to distinguish it as a secular symbol. The Ninth Circuit Court eventually concluded in 1996 that a Roman cross is a universally understood representation of Christianity, however designated, and oversteps the line between church and state when displayed on public property.

The Skinner Butte Cross case reflected two areas of contention. First is the issue of religious symbols on public property, which is a constitutional question. The second is the issue of showing preference of one religion over another, which is a human rights issue. By publicly endorsing one religious symbol, people with other religious preferences may feel unwelcome. As Minister Carl Nelson expressed during a public meeting about the cross in December 1964, by publicly endorsing the cross, the City of Eugene "makes second class citizens of those with inherently different religions and of those who in good conscience have no religion at all."

Once the Ninth Circuit Court clarified the constitutional aspect of the case by ruling that the cross be removed, the Eugene Human Rights Commission quickly stepped in to facilitate the court order to remove the cross. The Human Rights Commission carefully navigated the cross removal reactions, acknowledging the loss felt by those in the community with an emotional connection to the Skinner Butte Cross as well as supporting those for whom the Skinner Butte Cross represented religious intolerance.

Gretchen Miller volunteered to chair the Human Rights Commission in 1996. In a recent interview she reflected on the divisiveness among community members at that time. Tempers flared and testimonials flowed forth as Eugeneans expressed how they had depended on the Skinner Butte Cross for guidance and solace over the years. Eventually, the Human Rights Commission, along with other vital community leaders such as Reverend Dan Bryant of Eugene's First Christian Church and Reverend Gary Powell of Coburg United Methodist Church facilitated the peaceful removal of the cross. Miller concluded that the peaceful removal of such a divisive and powerful symbol in the Eugene community "would not have happened without the Eugene Human Rights Commission."

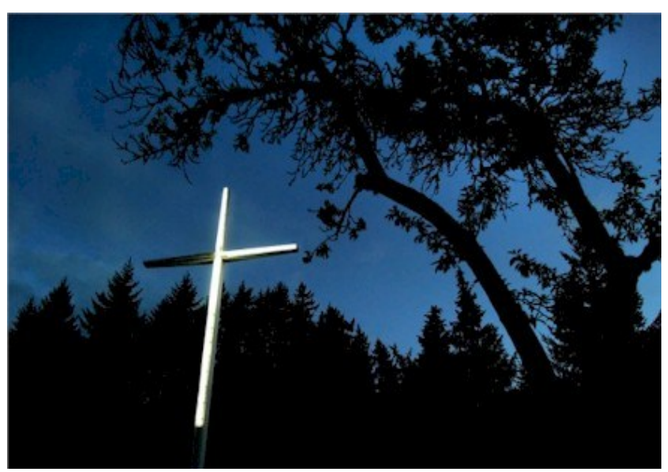


Image Above: Skinner Butte Cross at night

## Youth Study Circles

Image Above: Youth Forum

In 2001 the Human Rights Commission (HRC) adopted a model of community engagement focused on race issues and looked to a best practices model designed by the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC). SCRC provided training and printed material, as well as a roadmap to establishing study circles, at virtually no cost.

How does a study circle work? Eight to twelve community members form a diverse coalition. These members meet regularly over a period of weeks or months to address a critical public issue. The goal is to find solutions to problems everyone can agree need to change. At the end of a round of study circle meetings (about two months), all the study circles gather at a single large community meeting to deliberate on the ideas which surfaced during the smaller circles. At the large meeting, facilitators work to help the community develop strategies for action and change.

Former Human Rights Commissioners Mo Young and Mindy Frisbee adapted the Connecticut study circles model into youth study circles about race. With the help of a SCRC representative, and with the Human Rights Commission as a co-sponsor, they made study circles more accessible to a young audience. From 2006-2008, Commissioners Young and Frisbee successfully led youth study circles in Thurston High School, North Eugene High School, Agnes Stewart Middle School, and the University of Oregon. One student, Renae Reyna, who participated in the youth study circles, went on to join the HRC's Education and Outreach Committee as a youth representative. The City of Eugene and other public agencies continues to lead study circles in the Eugene community.

> "I started on the commission when I was 19, so I didn't know how to put words to things I was doing. The Commission gave me language to use around the work I thought was important "
> – Mo Young

The Youth Study Circles were well received by both administrators and participants. Student feedback was 95 percent positive. School administrators have been pleased with the ways in which study circles have given youth the language to identify and confront racism in their lives by peaceful means. Former Commissioner Young felt that "the biggest success story was at Thurston High School." Thurston High School administrators adopted the Youth Study Circles model and implemented it on their own.

As former Commissioner Mo Young put it, "Once you give people tools to talk about things that are happening to them, and the framework to understand that maybe things are related to racism more often than we like to think, then they want to talk more."

> "We have ideas but we don't have the capacity to implement those ideas. We have the vision because we've been there with the community, with students for example. We hear their voices. We can strategize about what needs to get done...."
> –Jim Garcia

Image Above: Kids Support Event

# A look at the Next 20 Years

## Human Rights Listening Project

In April, 2011 the Human Rights Commission and Equity and Human Rights center staff embarked on the Human Rights Listening Project. This project was aimed at exploring the strengths and limitations of the current structure of the Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Ordinance and their relevance to the current needs of the community. Staff and Human Rights Commissioners coordinated a series of public outreach tools and events including several topic-focused listening sessions, a community survey, stakeholder interviews, and tabling at community events. Community outreach efforts engaged over 650 participants and included past and present Human Rights Commissioners, community elders, youth (including homeless, at-risk and in school), homeless populations, and communities of color.

As part of this process, case studies of other cities were performed. The study profiled a sample of municipal human rights programs and citizen human rights commissions throughout the nation as a point of comparison for the City of Eugene as it evaluated its own program. Cities in this study were chosen on the basis of reasonable comparability in terms of population size, economic and racial demographics to Eugene. Programs were profiled in several parts: the Commission or citizen body, the affiliated office or staff within the city organization and the enforcement mechanism or process outlined in the City Human Rights Code or Ordinance. The components of the citizen Commissions considered include the following: structure of the Commission, associated committees and relationship to City Council, as well its role in enforcing City Code or Ordinance. Data associated with city staff, the number of staff, specific job titles and responsibilities, operating budget and relationship to the citizen Commission were used to assess the organizational component of the human rights or equity program in place.

Image Above: Group Tabling Exercise

The last phase of the project involved analyzing the information collected from the community outreach and translating it into recommended changes in the structure of the Human Rights Commission and the City Human Rights Code. University of Oregon Community Planning workshop performed independent analysis of the information collected and brought together local experts to form a "think tank" to help refine the information. Initial options and ideas from this phase were passed on to the Human Rights Commission and city staff to develop draft recommendations to bring to council.

The final analysis took place in August, September and most of October culminating with draft recommendations presented to City Council on October 24, 2011. City Council adopted the draft recommendations as presented by the commission. The commission also used the information from this project to develop its FY 12-13 work plan which was presented to City Council and approved in November, 2011. Commissioners and staff invested significant amounts of time and energy into this process. We are excited to see the concepts and ideas taking shape through attainable and realistic goals outlined in the Human Rights Commission two-year work plan – FY 12-13.

# Human Rights Commission FY 12-13 Work Plan Outline

## FY12/13 Work Plan Focus

**The Human Rights Commission's work plan is focused upon the following main goals:**

- **Engage in education, outreach, and collaborations fostering respect for social equity, and civil and human rights in the community.**
- **Maintain strategic HRC liaisons and engage in cooperative endeavors with the community and with City of Eugene advisory groups that support human rights and social equity.**
- **Effectively address selected human rights and social equity issues of concern to the community and City.**

***Note: Each goal area listed below has specific action or task items associated to it. Due to space constraints, the full Work Plan details are not listed here, but can be viewed on our website at www.eugene-or.gov/hrc.**

## GOAL 1

- **1.1 Present International Human Rights Day annually**
- **1.2 Hold human rights events in collaboration with the Community Coalition and others**
- **1.3 Provide human rights education through speakers and workshops**
- **1.4 Respond to requests for HRC event sponsorships and financial assistance from community groups; present awards for human rights contributions**

## GOAL 2

- **2.1 Advise and work with City Council**
- **2.2 Increase the effectiveness of HRC liaison relationships**
- **2.3 Work with Equity and Human Rights Board**
- **2.4 Work with Police Commission**
- **2.5 Work with Sustainability Commission**
- **2.6 Work with Neighborhood Associations**
- **2.7 Support the creation of a City of Eugene Disability Advisory Committee**
- **2.8 Work with Police Auditor's Office and Civilian Review Board**
- **2.9 Work with Equity and Human Rights Center on ombudsman program that addresses community member human rights concerns**

"Its' kind of unheard of that cities put money into a program like Eugene's HR Commission. There is nothing in legislation by state mandate that says we have to have an HRC. That is a community value.... "
— Andrea Ortiz

## FY12/13 Work Plan Focus Continued

## GOAL 3

- **3.1 Respond to and advocate on community issues around homelessness**
- **3.2 Respond to and advocate on youth issues in our community**
- **3.3 Respond to and advocate for the removal of impediments to immigrant integration within the Eugene community**
- **3.4 Respond to and address the issue of systemic and individual racism**
- **3.5 Respond to and address hate and bias activity within the Eugene community**

# Implementation Plan

*Overall Accountability for Work Plan*

**For Goal 1 –** HRC would handle the implementation of this goal as a large group during their business meetings.

**For Goal 2 –** Chairs track the overall goal area and 2 (one primary and one back up) commissioners sign up for each assignment and check in on these assignments on an annual basis.

**For Goal 3 –**Objectives become small work groups. These work groups would consist of at least two HRC members and they would recruit community members or organizations or city staff to help achieve the work. We suggest the following groups:

Work Group on Youth

Work Group on Homelessness

Work Group on Integrating Immigrants

Work Group on Hate/Bias/Individual and Systemic Racism

"HRC members continue to be a very very very important voice within the city." – Marshall Peter

As outlined above, the tasks proposed for this year's work plan are clearly aligned with the commission's role and objectives as described in its charter. The group continues to be forward thinking in its work strategies and responsive to issues facing our community. The projects detailed in this work plan are designed to ensure a thorough, deliberative review of important issues in our community that require the attention of the Human Rights Commission and organization. These new and ongoing projects make for a full and ambitious work plan. However, the commission will accommodate work plan changes as directed by the City Council or as necessary to respond to emerging community concerns.

Image Above: Booths and people at the PRIDE Festival, 2005

## How You Can Help

Image Above: Five Interns who volunteered in the Equity and Human Rights Office in 2010.

If you feel strongly about how your city government works, get involved!

Join a committee, board, neighborhood group, or commission:

- Human Rights Commission
- Civilian Review Board
- Budget Committee
- Planning Commission
- Police Commission
- Sustainability Commission
- Toxics Board
- Lane Regional Air Protection Agency
- Library Board
- Neighborhood Matching Grant Department Advisory Committee
- Whilamut Citizen Planning Committee

For information on how to apply for a City advisory group, call the City of Eugene City Manager's Office at 541-682-5010 or visit the Boards and Commissions web page at: www.eugene-or.gov/boardsandcommissions.

Join a neighborhood association. The City of Eugene has 23 recognized neighborhood associations. These groups are advisory bodies to the City and other boards and commissions on issues dealing with land use, transportation, public safety and other matters affecting neighborhood livability. Neighborhood associations engage hundreds of residents in volunteer activities in any given year through neighborhood cleanups, improvement projects, and education and advocacy activities.

Volunteer at the Eugene Police Department. The Eugene Police Department's Volunteers in Policing Program partners citizens and police in support of our crime prevention and community policing efforts. As a Eugene Police volunteer, you will have a front-row seat for behind-the-scenes operations of law enforcement. Volunteers provide assistance in every division of the department. Examples of assignments include the Squad Car Maintenance Team, Seniors on Patrol, Crime Prevention Unit, Records Section, Subpoena Service Team, Huckleberry Patrol (graffiti abatement), Public Information Office, Crime Analysis Unit, Forensic Evidence Unit, Image Retrieval Team, Property Control Unit, Cold Case Squad and role playing for training scenarios. Most assignments require one 3 to 4 hour shift/week for three months of service.

Volunteer time or resources. There are many tasks that are needed for a single public event and City projects. Call a City department or program office you are interested in and inquire about volunteer opportunities or ways to get involved. Check the latest City activities at www.eugene-or.gov.

Intern for the City. If you're a student looking for ways to make a difference in your community, you might consider an academic internship in the City Manager's Office or other City departments. More information is available at www.eugene-or.gov/cmointern.

# THANK YOU!

To the Eugene community, to past and present Human Rights Commissioners, volunteers, City Council, City of Eugene staff, and community partners (too many to list) for all the help, support, networking, brainstorming, collaboration, intelligence, compassion, advocacy, care, kindness, time, energy and talent you've extended to the Human Rights Program, to the Human Rights Commission and to the efforts to support, uphold and advocate for the advancement of human rights in our community.

"...Regarding the existence of the HRC – "I would characterize it as necessary. No one should ever leave home without their advocacy group in human rights." — Bobby Green

*Thank you to everyone who helped make this project possible!*