

MASW Human Rights Task Force
Meeting Report: 1:30, Thursday, August 26, 2010
Center for Social Justice
606 East Capitol, Jefferson City

Attending: Betty Cooper, Eric Krekel, Carol Zablocki, Nancy Browning, Scott Chapman, Christine Woody (by phone), Don Love (reporting)

1. **Racial Bias in Law Enforcement** , aka Profiling

a. Harris events went well in JC, Columbia, and St Louis. Evaluations showed attendees left interested in getting involved. Carol found David Harris impressive, with his non-confrontational approach, relying on data to show that profiling doesn't work. Nancy says she's gotten positive responses from people at Lincoln U. The JC police chief's response was positive.

b. The major areas to work on are:

Reducing racial bias in vehicle stops by providing resources to communities and working with the AG's office.

Improving the training officers receive so that it actually shows up in better behavior. We set aside money to help the KC officers/trainers to a presentation in central Missouri.

Preparing for Harris's visits to KC and Springfield, for which he has been paid; Don has had trouble getting dates out of David Harris.

Showing the Ten Rules video to groups to help citizens know how to assert their rights.

The Holocaust Museum has \$500 to do programming outstate.

c. We spent all the Sparkplug Foundation grant money and filed a report. Don received payment for miles traveled; he's holding this as a slush fund for other expenses.

d. It was a lot of work, but it was nice to have money to spend. It may be fairly easy to get small grants to fund specific efforts, especially if the money goes primarily to programming. Christine will watch out for this sort of grant.

Racial profiling in traffic stops is probably the easiest aspect of this problem to deal with; when we start seeing some progress, we need to use the momentum to work on racial bias in retail stores, the workplace, housing, etc. Bias in arrests is just the tip of the problem in the legal system; bail isn't granted without bias, and then there's legal representation, the prosecution, the judge, the jury, sentencing, probation, etc.

2. **Updates:**

a. **Springfield Human Rights Commission**

The Springfield Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations has been developing a work plan to implement its new strategic plan. The Commission has met with the city's legal department to go over the process that needs to be followed to initiate and follow through on any ordinance changes. The Commission will be working with the Southwest Center for Independent Living to changes the city's building code to include Universal Design on the construction of all new low income housing, as well as any new rehabs. The Commission will be working with PROMO to implement expansion of the protected categories in city ordinances to include sexual orientation

and gender identity. The Commission has contacted area colleges/universities to see if they can get student interns to do several research projects for actions plans. On September 10th and 11th Commissioners will be attending a two day conflict resolution class sponsored by MSU.

b. **Tasers:** The Columbia Taser-free group gathered enough signatures for their initiative. City Council voted unanimously against the proposal, so it goes to a vote in November.

c. **Universal Design.** Columbia HRC staff are still interested in making this a priority, and the subject of a spring symposium. Leslie Anderson, Columbia Services for Independent Living, and Don expect to work with them on a major effort to get everyone (builders, city staff, advocates, etc.) working together. Springfield has had a longstanding interest. We should start developing a statewide strategy to affect policies. Last year Rachel Storch sponsored HB1737 to require UD in government funded housing. It received a hearing at which home builders association representative said that they didn't like the bill but would welcome one that wasn't so specific about what was required (probably referring to a national standard, which sounds like a better idea anyway) and perhaps allows builders to do more units if they are UD (which would allow them to recoup extra expenses). Rachel isn't running for re-election, so we need to look for a new sponsor. Don will contact Columbia legislators.

Perhaps we could get a small, program-only grant to fund experts to do presentations on UD in different parts of the state.

Perhaps University Extension offices would promote UD.

3. Other Events/issues

a. **Universal Design Summit**, St Louis, 10/9-12: <http://stlouis.uds4.org/>

b. **Fair Housing:** Columbia HRC would like us to work with them on this.

c. **Foster Care:** much more needs to be done to keep foster care kids from crashing when they age out. Specific objectives: get the Department of Corrections to track former foster youth who end up in prison in order to document the need for better programs, and obtain Adoption Resource Center funding for all of the state, not just St Louis and KC. See DeAnna's comments below.

d. **Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.**

e. **Restorative Justice and Youth Promise Act.** Betty Cooper, who is active in Department of Peace efforts, recommends we get involved with restorative justice, which is a process to involve those who have a stake in a specific offense and to address harms, needs and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible. See her comments on YPA below.

4. **Priorities and Goals for 2010-2011.** We tweaked these. Here's the result:

The Human Rights Task Force is committed to advocacy and education efforts that guarantee equal rights and equal opportunities for all persons, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, health, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, class, religion, or immigration status.

TASK FORCE GOALS FOR 2011

- Facilitate new collaborative efforts and enhance existing partnerships in order to create a more unified voice for equality in Missouri;

- Support legislation that would create a more equitable and just state;
- Carry out educational events, including but not limited to public forums that promote acceptance and understanding.
- Work for progress on immigrant rights, tolerance of those using English as a second language, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, equal employment opportunity and fair housing, state-wide standards for the use of TASERs, profiling by government agencies and private businesses, religious tolerance, universal design and the challenges faced by those “aging out” of foster care.

5. MASW Annual Conference: 11/4/10

6. Next meeting: 1:30, Thursday, September 23, 606 E. Capitol, Jefferson City.

Foster Care from DeAnna Alonso-

-Does the Federal Chafee system work? This is the program that is designed to assist foster youth "aging-out" of the system. Unfortunately, the program has not been able to address the needs of all the youth in Missouri. The staff was cut and programs are failing. Foster youth are dropping out of high school and having children instead of pursuing post-secondary education due to a lack of support. Not to mention their incomes are extremely low-at this point.

I have a few stats to help:

- More than half of youth aging out of foster care has not graduated from high school. Only about one in eight has graduated from a four-year college.

- Twelve to 18 months after leaving the system, only about 38 percent are employed, and fewer than half have ever held a full-time job.

- Of those who have been employed, their median salary is less than the wages of a full-time worker receiving minimum wage.

- More than a third of young people leaving foster care suffer emotional disturbances and the behavioral problems that often accompany them, including truancy, social withdrawal, running away from care, and engaging in risky behaviors.

- Half report that they have used illegal drugs; a quarter report that they have had encounters with the criminal justice system, in many cases problems related to alcohol and drug use.

- Birth rates tend to be quite high among young women who have been in foster care—between 40 and 60 percent within 12 to 18 months of the time they leave the child welfare system.

- Among young men, approximately 25 percent report that they have fathered a child within this timeframe.

- Many young men and young women experience homelessness at least once after leaving foster care.

-Tracking Foster Youth in the DOC

Currently there is no mechanism to track former/emancipated or homeless foster youth who are entering into the DOC in Missouri. This would be helpful to determine the length of time from emancipation to incarceration and to determine the areas that need to be addressed to keep our foster youth (our next generation) out of prison.

Is there a way to add this in the current database they use? SR400 I believe or

can we add it as a line item on the intake form?

I have only found one other state that tracks this-California. They indicate that over 70% of DOC inmates are former foster youth.

HB11-ARC funding (Adoption Resource Centers)

Currently St. Louis and KC are the only two areas in Missouri that are recognized through Missouri CD and either LINC or ARCHES. It is imperative the entire state is fully represented by funding. We are not an hour glass state.

Here are two descriptors for YPA from Betty Cooper:

The Youth PROMISE Act (HR 1064/S 435) is bipartisan legislation that will give our communities the support and funding they need to effectively address youth violence issues. By specifically focusing on violence prevention and intervention strategies, this bill ensures we are funding programs that save lives and give every young person the opportunity to meet his or her potential. It interrupts the cradle to prison pipeline-- by supporting proven prevention and intervention strategies.

The Youth PROMISE (Prison, Reduction, through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education) Act provides one of the most comprehensive and powerful set of resources ever used to approach the tragic challenges of youth violence and delinquency. It amends the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to establish a PROMISE Advisory Panel to assist the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in: (1) assessing and developing standards and evidence-based practices to prevent juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity; and (2) collecting data in designated geographic areas to assess the needs and existing resources for juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention.

It authorizes the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to award grants to local governments and Indian tribes to: (1) plan and assess evidence-based and promising practices for juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention, especially for at-risk youth; and (2) implement PROMISE plans, developed by local PROMISE Coordinating Councils (PCCs), for coordinating and supporting the delivery of juvenile delinquency and gang prevention and intervention programs in local communities.

It establishes a National Research Center for Proven Juvenile Justice Practices to provide PCCs and the public with current research and other information about evidence-based practices related to juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang prevention and intervention.

It directs the Administrator to award grants to: (1) allow institutions of higher education to serve as regional research partners with PCCs; and (2) hire and train law enforcement officers as youth-oriented police to work with PCCs, other community-based organizations, and high-risk youth. Establishes a Center for Youth-Oriented Policing.

Mynisha's Law – It authorizes any local government or Indian Tribe with a PCC to submit an application to the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for designation as a Comprehensive Gang Prevention and Relief Area.

It authorizes the Attorney General to award grants to partnerships comprising state mental health authorities and local or private entities to prevent or alleviate the effects of youth violence in urban communities with a high or increasing incidence of such violence.

Prevention Resources for Eliminating Criminal Activity Using Tailored Interventions in Our Neighborhoods Act of 2009 or the PRECAUTION Act – It establishes the National Commission on Public Safety Through Crime and Delinquency Prevention to: (1) carry out a comprehensive study of the effectiveness of certain crime and delinquency prevention and intervention strategies; and (2) make initial and final reports on such strategies to specified federal and state officials.

It authorizes the Director of the National Institute of Justice to make three-year grants to public and private entities for the implementation and evaluation of innovative crime or delinquency prevention or intervention strategies.

It amends the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to authorize grants for the creation and expansion of state, local, and tribal juvenile witness and victim protection grants.