

Subject: MASW HRTF meeting report

We made good progress at the meeting last week. We're finally getting specific on events we want to sponsor with the grant money, and Colleen Starkloff (with Max longtime leaders of Paraquod and now more focused on advocacy) gave us a better understanding of Universal Design.

MASW Human Rights Task Force

Report: 1:30 pm, Thursday, December 17, 2009

Center for Social Justice

Present: Eric Krekel, Don Love (reporting); by teleconferencing: Christine Woody, Bruce Alspaugh, Jenny Rafanan, Colleen Starkloff, Deb Hume.

1. Report of October meeting approved, with corrections offered by Nancy Browning.
2. Sparkplug Foundation Grant: we made tentative plans to start spending the \$5400 grant. Christine says it can cover speakers, travel, most expenses but not MASW salaries. We had been assuming it was restricted to immigrant and LGBT issues, but we may have some freedom.
 - a. We allocated \$500 to support Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates (MIRA) service provider training on Missouri laws affecting immigrants. One event was held in Warrenton 12/17.
 - b. MIRA Immigration 101, events aimed at combating the stereotypes of immigrants (that they don't contribute to local communities, take jobs, use benefits, etc.). We encourage MIRA to request support.
 - c. Don (and Eric and Nanette?) will work on an event in central Missouri following up on the Department of Justice Hate Crimes Symposium, featuring Lenny Ziskind or Larry Brown on hate groups. We mentioned including an element of human trafficking, but perhaps this should be a separate event. If this event goes well, we will do something similar at other locations. Grant money may be requested.
 - d. Don (and Eric?) will work on an event to cover the recent expansion of federal hate crime legislation to include attacks targeting sexual orientation, gender identity and people with disabilities. Department of Justice would probably furnish an expert. Colleen suggested a Paraquod panelist (Jim Tusher?). Bruce suggested AJ Bockelman at Promo, who has reported that money is available to train law enforcement officers on the new law. Grant money may be requested. Possible repeats at other sites.
 - d. Nancy is working with Rod Chapel, Jeff City NAACP, to bring Kevin Willmott, KC film director, to Jeff City (probably Lincoln U) in February or March, to screen and discuss *The Only Good Indian*, a dramatic exploration of racial conflict, assimilation and self-realization in 19th Century Kansas. We allocated \$200. This could repeat.

e. Racial Profiling. Columbia Police Chief Ken Burton has now said (post meeting) that he would like to talk about promoting the use of diversity training to curtail abuses of profiling. Don will work with Burton and a variety of organizations and individuals to find common ground, educate the public and advocate improved policies in localities and state-wide. Grant money may be requested.

Jenny reports that Kathleen Clark, Wash U Law School, should be a good ally on this topic.

f. Don will work on a Job Discrimination Forum aimed at employee rights. MCHR, Columbia CHR (Marie), ACLU (Dan) have expressed an interest in this. Also Paraquad, Promo and others? Grant money may be requested.

g. Don will look into an anti-bullying Forum in Columbia, with possible support from the grant.

3. Updates:

a. Springfield Human Rights Commission update: Carol sees some chance of viability.

b. Tasers: the main activists have switched to a Campaign for a Taser-Free Columbia; Don will continue to advocate better controls and support state-wide efforts.

c. Bullying/suicide prevention: David is working on a survey to be distributed by Facebook (?) in order to document the need for intervention in Missouri.

d. Centralia non-discrimination ordinance: Jess Orsini says it was tabled last month because of a low turn out; it's on the agenda for 12/21. Bruce suggests Boone County be the next target.

e. Annual Conference went well. I facilitated Nancy's presentation on diversity training.

Everyone, unfortunately, missed Colleen's presentation on Universal Design.

4. Other possible HRTF events/efforts

a. Universal Design. Colleen Kelly Starkloff briefed us on the elements of UD. A good example of UD is a bathroom that looks like a "normal" one but has plywood behind the sheet rock so grab bars can be mounted any place they're needed, and space has been left so a transfer seat can be set next to the tub: very little in extra expense, no visual demerits for a hospital look, but still easy to use by anyone, regardless of ability level - and adaptable to allow "aging in place." We support the idea of a

state-wide policy requiring UD for government-funded low-cost housing; we'll review Rachel Storch's bill when it's available.

Don will work with Colleen to arrange a presentation by her in central Missouri.

b. lobby days; let's do what we can to support each other's efforts on special HR topics

1. Promo Equality Day
2. ACLU lobby day
3. Mira Immigrant Rights Lobby day
4. Women's Health Day
5. Paraquad
6. others?

5. Legislative issues

A. Immigration: Missouri Dream Act, to allow graduates of Missouri high schools to pay in-state tuition at public colleges, regardless of immigration status.

Everything possible should be done on a state level to ensure that everyone is treated humanely, regardless of immigration status - for instance, continued moderation of the language in HB390 from 2009.

Human trafficking: legislation to support efforts to train and enable law enforcement officers and service providers to recognize victims and protect them.

English-only Legislation: all citizens need to share basic cultural principles, including a common language, but cultural diversity is a strength too; punitive laws shouldn't be used to force conformity (but a law requiring everyone to speak at least two languages would be fine). A bill prefiled by Cynthia Davis to require driver exams to be in English is punitive because people need to drive and recognition of highway signs is enough to ensure safe driving.

B. Accessibility: incorporate Universal Design in government-funded low-cost housing to ensure that units can be used by everyone. Bill being drafted by Rachel Storch.

C Law enforcement: TASERS should be studied for safety and appropriateness in law enforcement, with state-wide standards set for their use and officer training if they are found safe and appropriate.

State-wide standards for the training of law enforcement officers should be required to reduce the harm of unconscious biases (profiling).

Medical marijuana: a bill will be filed that decriminalizes position of small quantities.

D. Discrimination: discrimination should not be permitted to result in unequal access to health care.

No discrimination should be allowed based on sexual orientation of gender identity.

Schools should be allowed to set behavioral standards and train teachers and staff to address bullying aimed at the groups most likely to be bullied: minorities, students with disabilities, and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender) students.

E. Fair Taxation: taxes should at least be proportional to income, with low-income earners paying no higher a percentage than high-income earners. Progressive taxation is preferable.

F. Food Stamps: federal law restricts distribution of food stamps to felons (or maybe just felons convicted of drug crimes). States can opt out of this provision; Missouri should do so, feeding more hungry people (and their hungry children) and putting more federal dollars in circulation in Missouri. Wilson sponsored a bill last year.

G. Human Sexuality: students should be taught how their bodies work.

Pregnant women and children in low income families should be supported (health care, day care, etc.).

H. Budget concerns; the worst human rights violations will probably occur as expenditures are cut; every effort should be made to protect those most vulnerable.

6. Next meeting: 1:30, Thursday, January 28