

We had a great meeting last week; having a few more people at the table allowed us to step forward on several fronts, instead of having to be content to make assignments to consult with our experts before continuing the plan at the next meeting.

One of the strengths of MASW is that it allows people focusing on specific issues to make new connections and discover ways to broaden their efforts.

MASW Human Rights Task Force
Report: 1:30 pm, Thursday, September 24, 2009
Center for Social Justice

Present: Bruce, Jenny, Eric Krekel, Nathan Gerth, Christine Woody, Nancy Browning, Don Love, and, by telephone: Bruce Alspaugh, Marie Glaze, Jennifer Rafanan

1. Updates:

- a. Springfield Human Rights Commission: no resolution.
- b. Tasers: The Coalition is frustrated by Columbia Police Department's reluctance to release incident reports, which we speculate would indicate that officers haven't yet figured out that they must be much more restrictive in their use of tasers, treating them as the lethal devices they are. Members of the coalition are seriously concerned that a death could still occur from taser use in Columbia, and are determined to head it off. The Coalition is putting pressure on Boone County officials. Moberly now has a moratorium on tasers. ACLU is still supporting a bill that would study tasers and at least set state-wide standards for their use.
- c. Bullying/suicide prevention: Scott Perkins and David Huddlestonsmith continue to work on the issue.
- d. Centralia non-discrimination ordinance is about to have an open hearing.

2. Sparkplug Foundation Grant

- a. If Bob and Christine verify that the terms of the grant permit, HRTF will provide \$500 to support Missouri Immigration and Refugee Advocates effort to train service providers in Warrenton (12/17), Columbia and possibly other sites to provide maximum benefits while complying with current laws. A vacuum exists on this information. No official guidelines were developed when Missouri laws were changed two years ago. MIRA has been developing its presentation for over a year.

Possible collaborators in Columbia might be the Columbia Health Department, Missouri Care Health Plan, and Columbia Refugee and Immigration Services. MIRA has been working on an "Immigration 101" effort in Kirksville to ease community tensions by providing opportunities for different groups to learn about each other. HRTF might be able to help with this sort of program too.

MIRA has also collaborated on trainings on the legal rights of immigrants across the state. See the website: [Welcome to MIRA | Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates](#)

b. hate groups

Eric reports: “Bill Whitcomb said that the DOJ, the Columbia NAACP, the FBI, the Columbia Police Department, the Anti-Defamation League and the Missouri Police Chiefs Association were sponsoring a Hate Crime Symposium in Columbia on November 5th from 9:00 until 3:30. He said the agenda wasn’t too set at this point and that perhaps we too could be a co-sponsor or try to dove-tail our event with this.” Eric will stay in touch with Whitcomb to see if we could be included. We could follow up with our on program in a few months. And we could see if similar programs could be held in other locations.

Don mentioned the event to A.J. Bockelman of PROMO.

Larry Brown and Leonard Ziskind have said they would participate in our efforts. Eric reports that Southern Poverty Law Center’s Intelligence Report has a review of Ziskind’s new book.

Rod Chapel, Jeff City NAACP, would like to have a screening of Kevin Wilmont’s The Only Good Indian in conjunction with the Michael Fosburg’s Incognito, a dramatization of his experience growing up white then finding his father was black, to be held 11/20. HRTF and/or Central Chapter could cosponsor.

Other collaborators: Francine Pratt (Springfield NAACP), Ozark Community Action Group (Springfield and West Plains).

c. Racial Profiling: Jenny reports Kathleen Clark, a Washington University professor, plans a panel discussion on profiling 10/8, in which she will participate. Jenny believes training for officers and retail workers in cultural sensitivity can make a significant difference in profiling. Missouri state attorney general online report reports of arrests give an indication of local profiling. MIRA has been involved in distributing complaint forms to service providers in St Louis County and St Charles; clients fill out the forms when they have been discriminated against. The reports give a more detailed picture of what’s involved in profiling. Marie thinks the new Columbia police chief may be open to the idea of addressing profiling. It would be especially helpful to be proactive, beginning diversity training before an incident has polarized the community. She will see if Columbia NAACP would be interested in developing a program.

3. Possible HRTF events

a. A job discrimination forum in Columbia.

Columbia HRC has changed its education focus; they will take the message to employers individually, saying, these are the laws in place; we don’t want you to have a problem.

HRTF is still interested in hosting a forum in Columbia targeted at workers, with the intention of explaining what their rights are, how to avoid discrimination, how to respond effectively to discrimination if it occurs, etc.

b. Universal Design; after the presentation at MASW Annual Conference we will see if that content can be adapted to presentations across the state.

4. Annual Conference

- a. workshops on Universal Design and Diversity Education.
- b. scholarships are available
- c. HRTF will meet during lunch

5. Other issues

- a. Lincoln University Faculty Senate voted unanimously for a policy of non-discrimination on sexual orientation and gender identity, in objection to the personnel office's determination that the policy was not necessary.
Bruce suggested that complaints to LU's accrediting agency might be effective.
- b. Debi Word, LU professor and Central Chapter officer is working on an MASW student group at Lincoln. They would be good allies.

6. Next meeting: 1:30, Thursday, October 22