

MASW Human Rights Task Force
Meeting Report: January 28, 2010

Present: Carol Zablocki, Nancy Browning, Stephanie Pate (MASW intern), Eric Krekel, Dan Viets, Christine Woody (by phone), Don Love (reporting)

1. **Sparkplug Foundation Grant:** we're not very good at spending money, having had no experience. We may need to come up with something glitzier in order to spend all the money. Christine will find out exactly what the stipulations of the grant are: what we promised to do, what the deadline is, possibility of extension, required reports.

a. Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates (**MIRA**) \$500 allocated. Christine is working on a Columbia service provider event. Stephanie and a fellow student interning with Centro Latino are interested in a Columbia event focused on English-only legislation.

b. Lenny Ziskind and/or Larry Brown (both of whom have indicated an interest) on **hate groups**, with human trafficking included as an example of barriers to an accepting society. Larry will be speaking in JC this month, at an interfaith gathering. Don will urge KC Chapter to set something up with Lenny, since that's where he lives.

c. Enforcing **hate crimes laws** with input from local police, Department of Justice, MHRC and representatives of target groups. Stephanie and Don have made initial contacts for a JC event.

d. Kevin Willmott's **The Only Good Indian** (<http://www.theonlygoodindian.com/>), documentary about 19th Century Kansas with a bounty hunter after a Native American. Nancy and Rod Chapel, Jeff City NAACP president, have arranged a 4 pm, 3/4, showing at Lincoln U Langston Hughes Theater. 114 min then q and a with director. Dinner after with Willmott is possible. Nancy will write a statement for grant documentation. We'll set up an MASW table, and collect evaluation forms. \$200 allocated.

e. **Racial Profiling.** Don is scheduled to talk with Columbia police chief Ken Burton 2/4. The next step will be a forum with experts explaining diversity training, the problem of unconscious biases in officers and the prospect to reducing the abuses of profiling. (After the meeting, Don met with Burton; we seem to be in agreement about the problem and a strategy for improvement. We (Don for HRTF) will round up experts to lay out the elements of a diversity training program that can help officers with unconscious bias. Burton will work on implementation. We will build a coalition of groups to support the effort and educate the public.)

Here's an interesting website with tests to reveal bias:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/>

(Don's meeting with Burton went well. Don will line up support from academics and social justice groups.)

f. **Job Discrimination Forum** aimed at employee rights. MCHR, Columbia CHR (Marie and Steve Hollis), ACLU (Dan) have expressed an interest in this. Don will follow up.

G. **Human Trafficking:** Nanette Ward is thinking about possible programs.

H. **English Only:** it is important that everyone learn English, but policies that punish people who don't are unnecessary and often harmful. Stephanie and a fellow student interning at Centro Latino will work on an event.

2. Updates:

a. **Springfield Human Rights Commission** update: Carol sees progress:

The City of Springfield Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations has been dormant since June 2009, but will start having monthly meetings starting February 17. Strategic planning meetings to redefine the HRC and its goals have been underway since Sept 1, 2009; this group is made up of eleven Commissioners, as well as other concerned citizens. The HRC no longer has fulltime city staff support, but does have 2 employees devoting about 20% of their time to help the HRC. The budget still stands at \$1000, but SHRC is looking into transferring some of the city's HUD funds to help with operation costs.

The final draft of the strategic plan is being edited. The HRC will be active in the following areas: 1. coordinated efforts with MASW, RECCR, EEOC, other state/federal agencies; 2. community education and outreach; 3. coordination with the business community/Business Leadership Network; 4. fair housing; 5. Universal design for residences and public accommodations; 6. coordination with schools; 7. advocate for sexual orientation and gender identification protections in city ordinances and policies re: housing, employment, public accommodations; 8. encouragement of diversity; 9. disenfranchised population/homelessness; 10. handle citizen complaints re: employment, housing and public accommodation. The strategic plan needs to be presented to City Council for approval, which hopefully will be April/May.

Don and Carol will contact Jackie Brown about activating MASW members in support of HRC initiatives.

b. **Tasers**: The Taser-free group is building support in Columbia for a ban, with backing from MASW Central chapter. Joan Bray has offered SB590 which creates a task force. Webber and Roorda have offered HCR 30 which creates a legislative committee to study "less lethal" (or "less than lethal") weapons used by law enforcement.

c. **Bullying/suicide prevention**: Don needs to get busy.

d. **Centralia nondiscrimination** ordinance was defeated by a 5-2 vote. We would support work on a Boone County ordinance, but the county may not have this power. Promo and Columbia activists are contemplating an effort to add transgender to the Columbia non-discrimination ordinance; We support them.

3. DeAnna Alonso has a resource center in Jeff City for **foster care** kids and families. Her priorities are better services for kids who are aging out and better distribution of resources statewide; St Louis and Kansas City take everything.

4. **Legislation**: Don will communicate support to bill sponsors. Please share information on bills important to you.

a. **Universal Design**. Rachel Storch has presented HB1737, calling for UD in government funded affordable housing: HRTF supports it. Don will see if Columbia HRC would collaborate on a Columbia program. We might also help with an event for legislators at the capitol. The bill gives an explicit list of features to be included in a new or rehabilitated affordable housing unit. The list give a pretty good indication of what UD entails. I imagine existing standards are more or less as explicit, but these do some tweaking to insure improved utility. Here's the definition of UD it gives: ""Universal design", the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design." Here's the bill:

<http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills101/biltxt/intro/HB1737I.htm>

b. **Medical Marijuana**: HB1670 filed with 16 supporters including Republican Schaaf from St Joe. It would allow a referendum. **HRTF supports it.**

c. **ACLU bills**:

1. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (**TANF**) SB 607, 615, 725, 821 all call for drug screening for TANF recipients based on reasonable suspicion. Reasonable cause doesn't meet the constitutional standard of probable cause, and there are better ways of dealing with drug abuse. **HRTF opposes.**
 2. HB1257(Smith) allows charges against women whose **use of drugs results in harm to fetus/baby**. The bill would encourage abortions. Pro-life and civil liberties groups oppose.
 3. HB1478 (Hughes) Authorizes the **expungement of criminal records** including convictions for any nonviolent crime, misdemeanor, or nonviolent drug violation. Current law leaves the conviction on a person's record even if the person has received clemency. Online data bases make the issue moot. **HRTF supports.**
 - d. **Food Stamps:** Yvonne Wilson has two bills that would allow restoration of food stamp eligibility to people convicted of drug violations, and their families. SB612 and SB613. **HRTF supports**
 - f. **MIRA:**
 1. HB1231 (Davis) requires **drivers test to be in English**. **HRTF supports**
 2. SB783(Justus) Dream Act: MO HS grads get **in-state tuition** regardless of immigration status. **HRTF supports.**
 3. HJR64 would require government **ids for voting**, which puts an unnecessary burden on elderly and low-income voters Mira oppose; **HRTF opposes.**
 - g. There are a number of **death penalty** bills. HB1683 (Deeken) would suspend executions during a study. SB599 (Bray) repeals the death penalty. HB1413 (McGhee) requires the Attorney General to do a number of things that expose the cost of death penalty prosecutions. HB1415 (McGhee) provides counsel and other help to people seeking clemency. HB1550 (Calloway) prohibits death penalty imposed because of race, and permits use of statistical evidence by defendant. **HRTF supports all.**
 - h. The big issue is the **budget and taxes**; the biggest violation of human rights is going to come from cuts to programs low-income families need to have a basic level of health and security. The tenets of human rights demand that Missouri have an equitable tax system, not a sales tax (HJR56) that puts no tax on income the rich don't spend (or don't spend in Missouri).
 - i. HB1488(Jones) **amends human rights act** making it harder to prove discrimination; could threaten federal funding to MHRC because Missouri law wouldn't meet federal standards. **HRTF opposes.**
5. Lobby days; let's do what we can to support each other's efforts on special HR topics
 - a. ACLU lobby day Tuesday, February 16
 - b. Mira Immigrant Rights Lobby day Tuesday, 2/23
 - c. MASW Student Advocacy Day, Tuesday, March 2
 - d. Promo Equality Day, Wednesday, March 24
 - e. UD, aging, disabilities, etc.
 - f. League of Women Voters
 - g. MASW Economic Justice TF on fair taxes
 - h. foster care
 - i. others
 6. Other events:
 - a. Universal Design Summit, St Louis, 10/9-12: <http://stlouis.uds4.org/>
 7. Next meeting: 1:30, Thursday, February 25.

