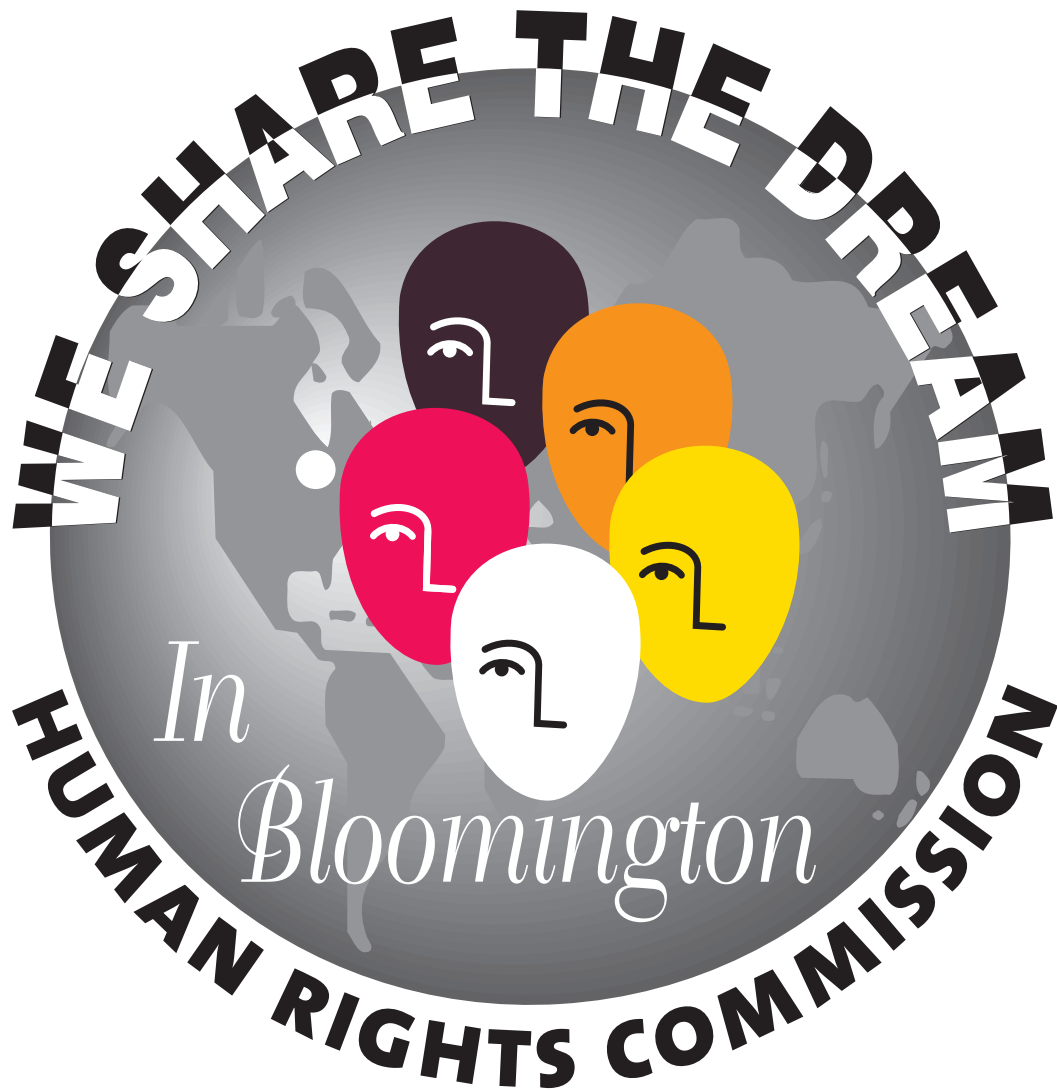


# Human Rights Commission 2016 Annual Report



1800 West Old Shakopee Road  
Bloomington, MN 55431-3027

# Bloomington Human Rights Commission

## 2016 Annual Report

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission has individually and collectively played an active part in many areas relating to human rights and equality during 2016. Activities included relationship-building with City Commissions/Boards and community organizations, educational events, school district involvement, participation in community activities, Commissioner education, and complaint mediation.

### PURPOSE

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission advises the Bloomington City Council in matters of human rights and equal opportunity for all people in our City.

The Commission is dedicated to ensure all people of Bloomington have equal opportunity and rights as defined by the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Chapter 363A of the State Statutes. The Act makes it illegal to discriminate in the areas of:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aiding and Abetting | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business            | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Credit              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education           | <input type="checkbox"/> Reprisal              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment          |  |

The Minnesota Human Rights Act makes it illegal to discriminate against a person because of:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Marital status    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creed                           | <input type="checkbox"/> National origin   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Color                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Race              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dependence on public assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sex               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Familial status                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual preference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Commission status         |  |

## ACTION CATEGORIES

Using these Guiding Principles, Human Rights Commissioners chose four (4) categories from “Building Inclusive Communities, An Action Guide for City Leaders,” published by the League of Minnesota Cities. Those categories are as follows:

- 1. Cultural Competence**
- 2. Equality**
- 3. Leadership**
- 4. Public Relations**

Remarks describing the intent of each selected category and descriptions of our activities related to each category in which the Human Rights Commission engaged follow

- 1. Cultural Competence:** “Cultural competence is a willingness to learn and listen. It is a being welcoming and dropping defenses. It is asking rather than assuming. It is a permanent way of changing how community issues are communicated and approached.”

Commissioners take an active role in learning about people who live and work in our community as a means of understanding and appreciating other points of view.

- **Attended educational workshops and conferences:**
  - Chairperson attended the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual MLK Holiday Breakfast at the Minneapolis Convention Center on January 18<sup>th</sup>. The Keynote Speaker was the Governor of Massachusetts, Deval Patrick.
  - Chairperson attended the annual State of the City Luncheon at the Radisson Blu on March 16<sup>th</sup>.
  - Commissioners attended the U.S. District Court’s Open Doors Program, “Slavery By Another Name”, a TPT documentary film at Bloomington Kennedy High School on April 28<sup>th</sup>.
  - Chairperson attended the Finding Common Ground Between Public Safety and Racial Justice – All for the Common Good public forum on September 14<sup>th</sup> at the University of St. Thomas Law School.
  - Chairperson attended Planning for Resilient Cities Metro Workshop on October 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - Chairperson attended workshop on the Olmstead Plan focusing on housing and services for persons with disabilities on November

- 1<sup>st</sup> at Bloomington Civic Plaza sponsored by Human Services and ARC.
- Chairperson attended “Voices Heard 2016: A Conversation Between Youth and Cops”, sponsored by the Multicultural Advisory Committee on November 2<sup>nd</sup> at Bloomington Kennedy High School.
- Chairperson attended the City of Bloomington’s Advancing Racial Equity Cohort Graduation on December 7<sup>th</sup> at Bloomington Civic Plaza. Nineteen other governmental jurisdictions participated in the year long training.
- Chairperson attended the Minnesota Department of Human Rights Symposium on December 8<sup>th</sup>. The Symposium featured workshops on employment, law enforcement, and economic development.
- **Asian Pacific Heritage Month**, a Proclamation was presented at the May 2<sup>nd</sup> City Council meeting. The Asian Pacific Legal Experience Exhibit took place May 3<sup>rd</sup> – May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Bloomington Civic Plaza Lobby.
- **Heritage Days**, the Bloomington Human Rights Commission had a booth at Heritage Days on September 17<sup>th</sup> at Nativity of St. Mary’s Church. Co-sponsored four multicultural groups providing live entertainment on the Family Stage. Co-sponsors were Joint Community Police Partnership (JCPP), Bloomington Historical Society, and Bloomington United for Youth (BUY).
- **International Day of Peace**, in recognition of International Day of Peace, September 21<sup>st</sup>, the Bloomington Human Rights Commission accepted a Proclamation at the September 12<sup>th</sup> Bloomington City Council meeting. Flora Tsyukayama, former Human Rights Commissioner and local Peace Advocate, accepted the Proclamation.
  - Hosted a Naturalization Ceremony on September 14<sup>th</sup> with the U.S. District Court. 140 naturalized citizens from thirty-eight (38) countries were represented.
- **Native American Heritage Month**, a Proclamation was presented at the October 24<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. Jim Jones, Interim Director of the MN Indian Affairs Council, accepted the Proclamation. Collaborative partners include the Bloomington Historical Society, Cultural Arts – Parks & Recreation, U.S. District Court, and the American Indian Affairs Council (AIAC).
  - The Bloomington Human Rights Commission sponsored “Why Treaties Matter” Exhibit November 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> and November 15<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> at the Bloomington Civic Plaza Lobby.
  - Coffee with the Curator on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and November 14<sup>th</sup> featured Exhibit Curator Jim Jones, Interim Director of the MN Indian Affairs Council led a guided tour of the Exhibit.

- Macaroni at Midnight on November 15<sup>th</sup> featured a reception and presentation by Dr. Don Bartlette who shared his inspiring story growing up as a Chippewa Indian and how one person changed the course of his life. The program also featured a historical perspective of American Indian culture in Bloomington.
- The Bloomington Human Rights Commissions co-sponsored with the Racial Equity Cohort a Lunch and Learn for City employees on November 15<sup>th</sup> with Dr. Don Bartlette.

Monthly programs included:

- Randy Quale, Parks and Recreation Manager, and Julie Farnham, Senior Planner, presented the Minnesota River Valley Strategic Plan at its meeting on January 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Jaylani Hussein, Executive Director of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) spoke to the Commission at its meeting on February 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Jamie Verbrugge, City Manager, recapped to the Commission the State of the City Presentation, “Better Together” at its meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Cindy Jean-Baptiste, Health Specialist – Planner, spoke about Health Equity at its meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Elizabeth Tolzmann, Assistant City Manager, presented on Core Racial Equity Training, the Community Engagement Project with the School District, and ToPs training and HPO training at its meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Julie Farnham, Senior Planner, spoke about the City’s Comprehensive Plan – Forward 2040, Taking Shape Together at its meeting on June 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Alejandra Pelinka, Director of Creative Placemaking & Community Engagement, spoke about new initiatives in the community at its meeting on July 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Chief Jeff Potts of the Bloomington Police Department and Doug Belton, Community Liaison to the Joint Community Police Partnership program spoke at its meeting on August 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Melissa Manderschied presented on the Open Meeting Law and the role and responsibilities of serving on an Advisory Commission at its meeting on November 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Kim Vlavisavljevich, City Councilmember, spoke at its meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

**2. Equality:** “Improve cross-cultural understanding and acceptance.”

- **Accepted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Proclamation** at the City Council January 4 Meeting and January 11 School Board meeting.
- **Co-sponsored Black History events:**
  - **“Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot”**, a screening and panel discussion on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Distinguished panelists included Dr.

Joyce Ester, President of Normandale Community College, as moderator, Dr. Artika Tyner, Professor at St. Thomas University, Sue Sheridan Tucker, Executive Director, League of Women Voters Minnesota, and Ann Kaner-Roth, Deputy Secretary of State (MN).

- **Exhibit on Frederick Douglass**, Exhibit is scheduled February 8<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at Bloomington Civic Plaza in honor of Black History Month. Exhibit was planned in 2016 and scheduled for 2017.
- **Dialogues on Racial Equity**, are planned for 2017 after Beyond Diversity training occurs involving Commissioners. Current partners include Bloomington School District, Oak Grove Presbyterian Church, City of Bloomington Racial Equity Cohort and Bloomington Public Health.
- **“Hispanic Legal Rights Exhibit”**, Exhibit is scheduled for October 2<sup>nd</sup> – October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at Bloomington Civic Plaza. Exhibit was planned in 2016 and scheduled for 2017.
- **Accepted International Human Rights Day Proclamation** at the December 5<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting and November 28<sup>th</sup> School Board Meeting.

**3. Leadership:** “Being a successful leader of a multicultural community also means recognizing and fostering leadership in others.”

- **2016 Omar Bonderud Award:**
  - The 2016 Omar Bonderud Award was presented to Normandale Community College for its work by the Presidents Council on Diversity, LBGQTQIA topics, Interfaith Panel, and National Exhibits and Programs.
- **Leadership Training:**
  - Assistant City Manager, Elizabeth Tolzmann, facilitated the StrengthsFinder training to help Commissioners identify their strengths and learn how to apply them to their work and the community around them on October 17<sup>th</sup>. The training featured the book, “Strength Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow” by Tom Rath.
- **PACER Unity Awards:**
  - The Bloomington HRC and PACER honored students and community members who had gone above and beyond to address bullying on May 25<sup>th</sup> at Bloomington Civic Plaza. Recognition was given to those who had made outstanding contributions to address and prevent bullying.
- **2016 All City Volunteer Breakfast**
  - Commissioners attended the 2016 All City Volunteer Breakfast on April 9<sup>th</sup> at the Knights of Columbus Marian Hall.

- Chairperson spoke to fifteen special needs students 18 – 21 years old at the Bloomington Transition Center on November 29<sup>th</sup>. He presented information about the Human Rights Commission and self advocacy.

**4. Public Relations:** “Increased visibility will allow more citizens to access our services and increased communications will keep the Commission aware of events and trends in the community.”

- Sponsored a booth at the Community Resource Fair sponsored by Metro South on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Sponsored a booth at the Career Fair held at Kennedy High School on March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Sponsored a booth and gave out informational/educational materials at the Annual Egg Hunt sponsored by Parks and Recreation and the Optimists at Normandale Lake Bandshell on March 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Judged the Diversity & Peace Day T-shirt Logo Contest and awarded prizes with a presentation at the April 18<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting and the April 25<sup>th</sup> School Board meeting.
- Sponsored a booth and gave out information/educational materials at Family Fun Day hosted by District 271, Office of Educational Equity, on April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Co-sponsored Diversity Day at Bloomington public high schools on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Wing Young Huie, a professional photographer who documents people in culturally diverse and changing urban landscapes was the Keynote Speaker. The Commission also sponsored a booth at the event. Collaborative partners include the Bloomington School District 271’s District Diversity Advisory Council (DDAC).
- Co-sponsored the Diversity Day Peace Run with Jefferson and Kennedy High Schools on May 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Sponsored a booth and gave out informational/educational materials at Kite Day on May 7<sup>th</sup> at Valley View Playfields.
- Sponsored a booth and gave out informational/educational materials at Olson Middle School’s Diversity Day on May 20<sup>th</sup>.
- National Night Out, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, provided mediation brochure to Bloomington neighborhood groups.
- Sponsored a booth at Business Day at City Hall on September 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Sponsored a booth and gave out informational/educational materials at Heritage Days on September 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Commission member served on the District 271 Diversity Advisory Council (DDAC).
- Commission member appointed to the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Planning Committee.
- Commission member appointed to the Community Center Task Force.

- Sent out monthly E-Subscribe newsletter to community members about Commission news and activities.
- The HRC postcard is available in several languages (English, Chinese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese).
- Publicized HRC news in the Bloomington Briefing, Sun Current, Government Access Channel, City of Bloomington Outdoor Message Signs, HRC at community events, City's webpage, Facebook/Twitter, and information was given to Hennepin Public Libraries located in Bloomington.

## **Mediation**

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission offers mediation services to its citizens regarding human rights. Commissioner Kane is a qualified mediator. Eleven (11) inquiries were received and processed.

## **COMMISSION COMPOSITION**

The Commission is comprised of 7 adult members and 2 youth members. The adult members are appointed for 2-year terms and the youth for 1-year terms. All members have full voting privileges. The City provides staff to assist the Commission.

### **Commissioners:**

Zavier Bicott  
Maureen Carlson  
Sheila Fishman  
Dennis Kane (Chair)  
Daniela Kunkel (Youth)  
Jared Leese (First Vice Chair)  
Johnathon McClellan  
Savannah Salato (Youth and Second Vice Chair)  
Ibrahim Yusuf

### **Direct Staff**

Staff Liaison: Lorinda Pearson, Manager, Human Services Division  
Work Plan Support Staff: Tracy Smith, Administrative Coordinator, Human Services Division  
Emily Janssen, Coordinator, Human Services Division  
Staff Secretary: Heather Lambert, Administrative Assistant, Human Services Division