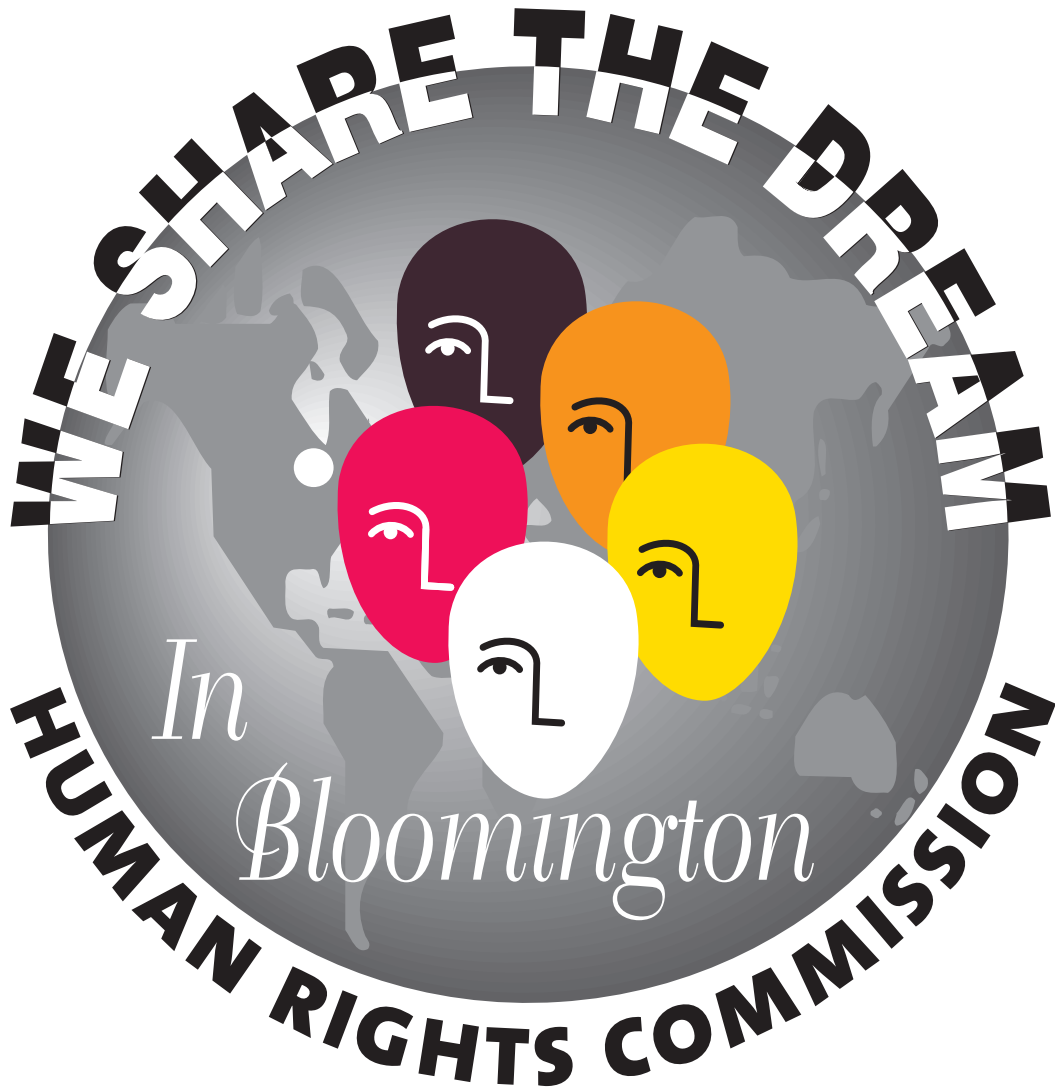


Human Rights Commission 2017 Annual Report



CITY OF
BLOOMINGTON
MINNESOTA

1800 West Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431-3027

Bloomington Human Rights Commission

2017 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 equity during 2017. 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. Equity**
- 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:**
 - Commissioners attended the Second Founding Program that is part of the Open Doors Program with the U.S. District Courts that covers the 13th Amendment (abolishing slavery), the 14th Amendment (giving citizenship to newly freed slaves), and the 15th Amendment (giving the right to vote) on January 31st at Normandale Community College.
 - The Chairperson attended a two day Beyond Diversity training provided by the Pacific Educational Group (PEG) on February 27th and 28th.
 - A Commissioner attended the annual State of the City Luncheon at the JW Marriott Hotel - MOA on March 22nd.
 - A Commissioner attended the State Human Rights Commissioner Kevin Lindsey’s speech on current human rights challenges in Minnesota on April 19th.
 - A Commissioner attended a Program featuring Kent Nerburn who spoke on “Reflections From My Time With Native People” on May 3rd.

- A Commissioner attended the State Human Rights Summit on diversity, inclusion, engagement, and best practices on October 4th.
 - The Chairperson attended the Exhibit, “Race: Are We So Different?” at the Minnesota Science Museum. The Exhibit takes a cultural and scientific look at race throughout history.
- **International Day of Peace**, in recognition of International Day of Peace, September 21st, the Bloomington Human Rights Commission accepted a Proclamation at the September 11th Bloomington City Council meeting. Monica Williams, one of the original Peace Pole Committee members, accepted the Proclamation.
 - Celebrated the 10 year anniversary of the Peace Pole at Bloomington Civic Plaza and rededicated the Peace Pole with the World Citizens Organization at a ceremony before the September 11th City Council meeting. A plaque was also placed by the Peace Pole.
 - Hosted a Naturalization Ceremony on September 12th with the U.S. District Court. 119 naturalized citizens from thirty-seven (37) countries were represented.
 - Sponsored local author John Noltner as a Keynote Speaker on September 21st with the focus of his talk on his second book, “A Peace of Mind America”, featuring people from around the United States exploring the meaning of peace, one story at a time. A corresponding American Stories Exhibit was located in the Civic Plaza Lobby, September 13th – October 1st.
- **Welcome Dinners**, a team of 34 community members, along with the Human Rights Commission and the Human Services Division met throughout the fall and will begin sponsoring meals in January 2018 to be held throughout the community. The Welcome Meals are built around food, language, and social interaction. A \$5,00.00 grant was received from the Bloomington Crime Prevention Association (BCPA) to help underwrite the expenses of the dinners. The grant will support the project by enabling everyone in the community, regardless of income level, an opportunity to participate in the Welcome Dinners.
- **Lunch and Learn/Community Event – Transgender 101**, on June 20th, the Human Rights Commission co-sponsored with Diversity In Government (DIG) Ellie Krug, who offered a learning event to City employees on what it means to be “trans” and how to be more welcoming as more transgender people are “coming out”. The session was titled, “Transgender 101”. An estimated 100 employees attended the event. In the evening, Ms. Krug presented “Transgender 101 and Gray Area Thinking” in the Schneider Theatre. An estimated 125 residents attended the event.

Monthly programs included:

- State Human Rights Commissioner Kevin Lindsay educated the Commissioners on the State Human Rights Act 363A on January 30th.
- Nick Kor, Director of Civic Engagement for the Minnesota State Department of Human Rights, spoke on Community Engagement on February 27th.
- Doug Belton, Community Liaison, Joint Community Police Partnership (JCPP) and Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) spoke to the Commission on March 20th.
- Londell Pease, Senior Planner for the City of Bloomington, spoke about the Prehistoric Native American Site Protections in Bloomington on April 17th.
- City Manager Jamie Verbrugge recapped the State of the City address on May 15th.
- Pastor Jeff Groen from Evergreen Church spoke about the Immigrant Hope program located at the Church on June 19th.
- Diann Kirby, Director of Community Services, presented the Citizen Survey results on August 23rd.
- City employees Tyeastia Green and Mat Kvidera presented their recommendations for the 2018 HRC Work Plan with a focus on LGBTQIA issues on September 18th.
- Molly Moilanen from ClearWay Minnesota spoke to the Commission about Tobacco 21 on October 16th.
- Kris Wilson, Assistant City Manager, presented the Racial Equity Vision statement on November 20th. In addition, Julie Farnham, Senior Planner at the City of Bloomington, provided an update on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Bloomington.

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

- **Accepted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Proclamation** at the City Council January 9th Meeting and January 9th School Board meeting.
- **Co-sponsored Black History events:**
 - **Frederick Douglass from Slavery to Freedom: The Journey to New York City – February 17th, 2017**, The Bloomington Human Rights Commission co-sponsored with DIG a national traveling exhibition for Black History Month titled *Frederick Douglass from Slavery to Freedom: The Journey to New York City*. It was on display in the Civic Plaza Lobby from February 8th to February 28th. Residents could view the display and City of Bloomington employees participated in a facilitated discussion.

- **“Hispanic Legal Rights Exhibit”**, was October 2nd – October 20th, 2017 at Bloomington Civic Plaza. The Exhibit was co-sponsored by the U.S. District Court – District of Minnesota.
- **Accepted International Human Rights Day Proclamation** at the December 4th City Council Meeting and November 27th School Board Meeting.
- **Children of Immigrants Art Exhibits**, a committee of twenty-four committed people representing the HRC, Public Health, residents, non-profits, the faith community, libraries, and the Arts, have been planning in 2017 and will be implementing Art Exhibits in 2018. The exhibits will feature children’s art pieces which express their concerns and experiences as a child of immigrants. Additionally there will be discussion groups and panels which are meant to promote community conversations to support the exhibits.

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

- **GARE**
 - The Chairperson was selected and participated in a year long program, Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). It is a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.
- The Chairperson participated in the Bloomington Police Hiring Panel to select candidates from diverse backgrounds to be paid by the City while they attend school and training to hopefully become a Bloomington Police Officer.
- **Success Day at Normandale Community College**
 - Commissioner Jared Leese participated February 28th, 2017 at Normandale Community College in the 8th annual Success Day. The day is dedicated to sessions on leadership, finance, education, and wellness. Commissioner Leese talked about his path to leadership and to provide career advice.
- **Community Meetings**
 - Commissioners participated in two community meetings at Assumption Church, December 18th, 2016 and February 12th, 2017. Over 350 people were in attendance at each meeting. The purpose of the meetings was to reach out to the Latino community. The HRC was represented as well as Public Health, Hennepin County Public Defender’s office, and the Mexican Consulate.

- **Immigration Community Workshops**
 - Commissioners participated in Consensus Workshops on April 4th, 2017. The purpose of the workshops was to learn about concerns as well as to gather feedback on how the City can respond. The workshops were eye-opening and very impactful. A presentation on the outcomes was given to the City's Executive Leadership Team on April 25th, 2017.
- **2017 All City Volunteer Breakfast**
 - Commissioners attended the 2017 All City Volunteer Breakfast on April 22nd at the Knights of Columbus Marian Hall.
- **PACER Unity Awards**
 - The Bloomington HRC and PACER honored students and community members who had gone above and beyond to address bullying on May 25th, 2017 at Bloomington Civic Plaza. Recognition was given to those who had made outstanding contributions to address and prevent bullying.
- **Statement on Immigration**
 - Commissioners collaborated with the School District and the City to develop the "Statement on Immigration" which was accepted by the City Council and School Board at its joint meeting on May 30th, 2017.
- **Training on Immigration**
 - Assistant City Manager, Elizabeth Tolzmann, facilitated training, "Immigration 101" on July 17th, 2017 to Commissioners.
- **State Department of Human Rights Summit**
 - The Department of Human Rights sponsored a Summit on October 4th, 2017 on diversity, inclusion, engagement, and best practices. The City of Bloomington was featured at the "Best of Human Rights Commissions and Community Diversity" session.
- **Racial Equity Vision Statement**
 - A representative from the HRC worked on the Vision Statement for the City's internal Racial Equity Plan, November 20th.
- **2017 Omar Bonderud Award**
 - The 2017 Omar Bonderud Award was presented on December 4th to Artistry for its intentional effort to reach out to diverse populations ensuring access to the arts through a wide variety of programming.
- **State Department of Human Rights Symposium**
 - The Department of Human Rights Symposium was held December 12th and 13th, 2017. The Bloomington Human Rights Commission presented a session at the Symposium titled, "Using Art to Build Community."

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.”

- The Chairperson spoke to the Social Justice Committee at Oak Grove Presbyterian Church on January 5th.
- The Chairperson spoke at the request of Chief Potts to the Normandale College Law Enforcement Program on January 24th.
- Sponsored a booth at the Bloomington Block Captains Workshop at Bloomington Civic Plaza on March 18th.
- A Commissioner participated in a Career Fair at Kennedy High School.
- 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 April 15th.
- The HRC sponsored a booth at Children’s Day/Book Day at Pond Family Center on April 29th. The event celebrated children and provided opportunities for them to connect to diverse books and programming.
- Judged the Diversity & Peace Day T-shirt Logo Contest and awarded prizes with a presentation at the May 1st City Council meeting and the April 24th School Board meeting.
- Co-sponsored Diversity Day at Bloomington public high schools on May 5th. 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 5th.
- Sponsored a booth and gave out informational/educational materials at Olson Middle School’s Diversity Day on May 19th.
- Sponsored a booth at the Kenyan Community of Gotabgaa Conference at Jefferson High School on June 24th.
- Sponsored a booth and gave out informational/educational materials at Kite Day on July 22nd at Valley View Playfields.
- National Night Out, August 2nd, provided HRC materials to Bloomington neighborhood groups.
- A Commission member spoke to the Latino Childcare Network at Assumption Church on August 19th.
- A Commission member participated and gave out school supplies at the Back to School event at Potters House on August 26th.
- The Chairperson was a guest speaker at the Bloomington Transition Center for developmentally disabled and intellectually challenged young adults on November 29th.
- A Commission member served on the District 271 Diversity Advisory Council (DDAC).

- A Commission member served on the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Planning Committee.
- A Commission member served on the Community Center Task Force.
- A Commission member serves on the One Bloomington Inclusion and Equity Action Group.
- Olson Middle School displayed “Faces of Bloomington”, the Human Rights canvas collage of photos depicting the rich diversity of people who live in Bloomington.
- 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. Commissioners Kane and Bly are qualified mediators. Twenty-six (26) 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:

Prairie Bly
Najma Dayib (Youth)
Sheila Fishman
Nicholas Jenkins (First Vice Chair)
Dennis Kane (Chair)
Deborah Kastner
Jared Leese (Chair)
Chelsea Reynolds
Savannah Salato (Youth and Second Vice Chair)

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

Amanda Crombie, Coordinator, Human Services Division

Division Administrative Assistant: Heather Lambert, Human Services Division