

The logo for the city of Bismarck, featuring the word "Bismarck" in a blue, serif font. The text is set against a white, ribbon-like banner that is tilted upwards to the right. A white, five-pointed star is positioned behind the top right corner of the banner.

# Mayor's Committee On Human Relations Annual Report



## 2011 Bismarck Human Relations Committee

Sonvy Sammons, Chair

Geraldine Teevens

Jane Halverson

Ian Schorr

Karla Buzick, Vice Chair

Brant Malsam

Brian McNeely

May 2012

## **MISSION of COMMITTEE**

The mission of the Bismarck Human Relations Committee is to protect and promote the personal dignity of all Bismarck citizens and eliminate any discriminatory barriers that prevent them from reaching their full human potential. We seek to make education and compliance a meaningful and visible strategy as we work to recognize the value of a diverse community.

## **GOALS of COMMITTEE**

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee has the following goals and objectives as defined in its Strategic Plan:

1. To exhibit leadership in the areas of civil and human rights
  - a. The Committee will be comprised of individuals that represent and are knowledgeable of diverse populations.
  - b. The Committee members will practice and model action that exemplify nondiscrimination, acceptance and respect of diversity.
2. To educate the public about civil and human rights
  - a. The Committee will implement a public education plan to identify and address issues.
  - b. The Committee will actively plan, sponsor and participate in events that promote and celebrate diversity.
  - c. The Committee will serve as a resource for educational materials.
3. To identify issues of principal concern in the area of civil and human rights
  - a. The Committee will provide access for public input.
  - b. The Committee will prioritize issues based on input received.
4. To recommend priorities and objectives about issues of community concern to the City Commission
  - a. The Committee will serve as a liaison in issues of civil and human rights between the community and the City Commissioners.
5. To advocate for compliance with federal and state laws regarding civil and human rights, including North Dakota Century Code Chapters 14-02.4 (human rights) & 14-02.5 (housing)
  - a. The Committee will provide information about current laws through multiple formats.
  - b. The Committee will maintain data regarding civil and human rights issues.

## **ESTABLISHMENT of COMMITTEE**

Bismarck Ordinance 5208 created the Bismarck Human Relations Committee and received final passage October 8, 2002. The Committee's purpose is to promote acceptance and respect for diversity through educational programs and activities and to discourage all forms of discrimination including protected class discrimination, ADA violations or other statutory or constitutional violations (Chapter 2-11).

## **APPOINTMENT to COMMITTEE**

The Committee consists of nine members who serve without pay. Member appointment is by the President of the Board of City Commissioners, and subject to confirmation by the Board of City Commissioners. Appointees serve three-year terms.

## **2011 & 2012 ACTIVITIES of COMMITTEE**

**In September of 2011**, the Bismarck Human Relations Committee co-hosted with BSC's Embracing Diversity Committee "Diversity University", Putting "U" in Community, a series of three panel discussions which began Monday, Oct. 17. Each event was at the Bismarck State College Student Union Prairie Room. The events were free of charge and open to the public. The Diversity University Series provided a rich opportunity for increased sharing among people of many traditions and provided an opportunity to deepen understanding and respect. The effort supported the mission of the HRC and helped to foster understanding and break down barriers by encouraging diverse groups to celebrate their traditions together. Topics presented were as follows:

- 1. Celebrating Our Diverse Faith Traditions** – A discussion of various faiths represented within our community featuring Reverend Jacob Kincaid, First Presbyterian Church, Dr. Nadim Koleilat (Muslim Faith) and Joy Wezelman (Jewish Faith)
- 2. New Americans – Opportunities and Challenges** – A discussion about challenges faced by refugees working to establish a home in North Dakota featuring Tracy Kuchan, Lutheran Social Services, New American Services Resettlement Coordinator.
- 3. Celebrating Our Diverse Faith Traditions** – A continuing discussion of various faith traditions represented within our community facilitated by Marv Mutzenberger, BSC Professor of Religion. Sammons, Human Relations Committee Chair.

Even though there was extensive publicity for the series, we would have liked more community attendance at the series. For those who did attend, the evenings were well-received. The Human Relations Committee will continue to co-host the series with BSC and continue working with other groups to increase attendance and awareness of this excellent community event. The dates for the next Diversity University are Sept 13, 20 & 27, 2012. The location for these next panel discussions will be at the BSC Student Union – Prairie Room. Hope you all can attend this next series.

**In December 2011**, the Bismarck Human Relations Committee selected Century 21 Morrison Realty as the recipient of the 2011 Humanitarian Award. Mayor John Warford and the Bismarck Human Relations Committee at the City County Building before an audience of approximately 30 realtors presented Jerry, Bill and Kay Schlosser with the Humanitarian Award. This award honors an individual, business or organization that has exhibited leadership in the areas of human and civil rights with a focus upon recognizing those that promote education to help identify issues and address human rights concerns. Century 21 Morrison was selected for their outstanding humanitarianism, support, and generosity in helping Pride Manchester House, a

private, nonprofit psychiatric residential treatment center serving North Dakota's youngest children with severe emotional and behavioral problems. Susan Gerenz and Sue Chaussee, of Pride Manchester House, were the nominees and stated in that nomination "Century 21 Morrison Realty responded to their wish list of many things; durable furniture, video games, a zoo membership, movie tickets, art, music and swimming lessons as well as a visit from Santa with gifts. Century 21 Morrison Realty also sponsors a summer charity auction with all proceeds going to local charity programs including the Pride Manchester House."



Jerry, Bill Schlosser, Kay Schlosser, Jerry Schlosser  
& Mayor Warford

**In March 2012**, the Bismarck Mayor's Human Relations Committee recognized Crystal Mills and BreAnn Sullivan; both fifth grade students at Dorothy Moses Elementary School for their outstanding entries in the Human Rights Essay and Poetry Contest. Students in grades 4 – 6 were invited by the Bismarck Human Relations Committee to write an essay or a poem about human rights. Crystal's winning essay spoke of "a country united by not discriminating against each other...America's freedoms and its makeup of every heritage from around the world." BreAnn's winning poem expressed how "we should all be free to stand as one in liberty." Mayor Warford recognized both students at a ceremony held March 19, 2012, 1:15

p.m., at Dorothy Moses Elementary school in Ms. Barb Fix's classroom with their classmates, family members, and Human Relations Committee members where both received an award for their essay and poem. Mayor Warford also encouraged the students to rededicate themselves to the principles of respect for human rights and freedom, of belief in non-violence, and of commitment to improving our City and nation through community service.



Mayor Warford, Brian McNeely, Crystal Mills, BreAnn Sullivan,  
Sonvy Sammons & Ms. Fix

### **GOING FORWARD**

2012 has started strong, and the Human Relations Committee will continue its activities of 2011, exploring potential partnerships with area groups who share interests with the Human Relations Committee, expanding the community's knowledge of the committee by attending and participating in community activities and events, and exchanging ideas with human relations committees in peer cities. With 2011 proving to be a another year of growth and turnover for the committee, we are looking forward to beginning to stabilize and work as a committee to achieve our goals and fulfill the mission set forth by the city of Bismarck. Gloria David continues to keep the committee on track and her assistance is greatly appreciated.

### **COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES & LOCATION**

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee meets on the third Monday of each month (except on holidays) at 5:15 PM at the City and County Office Building, First Floor Conference Room, 221 North 5th Street, Bismarck, ND. Meetings are open to the public and accept public comment.

# "Diversity University"

## Putting "U" in Community

All events are FREE and the public is encouraged to attend

**Monday, October 17**

*"Celebrating our Diverse Faith Traditions"*

**BSC Student Union • Prairie Room • 7 p.m.**

*A discussion on various faiths within our community featuring Rev. Jacob Kincaid, First Presbyterian Church, Dr. Nadim Koleilat (Muslim Faith) and Joy Wezelman (Jewish Faith)*

**Monday, October 24**

*"New Americans – Opportunities and Challenges"*

**BSC Student Union • Prairie Room • 7 p.m.**

*A discussion on the obstacles refugees face working to establish a home in North Dakota featuring Tracy Kuchan, Lutheran Social Services, New American Services Resettlement Coordinator*

**Monday, November 7**

*Celebrating Our Diverse Faith Traditions*

**BSC Student Union • Prairie Room • 7 p.m.**

*A continuing discussion on various faiths within our community facilitated by Marv Mutzenberger, BSC Professor of Religion*

Diversity University is sponsored by:



# HUMAN RIGHTS ESSAY & POETRY CONTEST

**\*CALLING ALL STUDENTS IN GRADES 4 – 6!**

**\*CHOOSE TO WRITE AN ESSAY OR A POEM!**

Bismarck students in grades 4 – 6 are invited by the Bismarck Mayor's Human Relations Committee to write an essay or a poem about human rights.

**All entries must be postmarked or e-mailed and received by the Human Relations Committee by 5:00 p.m. March 8, 2012.** Please limit entries to one page. Two outstanding entries will be selected, one essay and one poem.

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee (HRC) sponsors this contest to heighten awareness of human rights amongst students in the community. The mission of the Human Relations Committee is to protect and promote the personal dignity of all Bismarck citizens and to eliminate any discriminatory barriers that prevent them from reaching their full human potential.

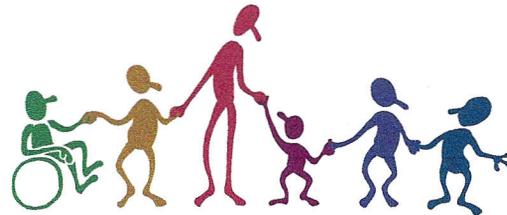
OUTSTANDING ENTRIES WILL BE RECOGNIZED AT A CEREMONY ON **MARCH 19, 2012** WHERE BISMARCK MAYOR JOHN WARFORD WILL PRESENT THE SELECTED ENTRANTS WITH A SPECIAL AWARD. THE SELECTED ESSAY OR POEM WILL BE DISPLAYED ON THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WEB SITE\*

[www.bismarck.org](http://www.bismarck.org)

\*All submitted items and content become the property of the City of Bismarck and may be used for the non-commercial purpose of illustration, display or publication.

## Submit entries to:

City of Bismarck  
Human Relations Committee  
221 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Bismarck, ND  
58506-5503  
E-mail: [gdavid@nd.gov](mailto:g david@nd.gov)



Students are encouraged to visit the United Nations website [www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/](http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/) to learn more about "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and related documents. Additional information on Human Rights Day may also be found at [www.un.org/events/humanrights/2007/](http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2007/).

**We should all be free to stand as one in liberty**

**We will all have equal rights, just because of the liberty  
lights**

**When the Pilgrims came here, they had a sudden tear**

**They could tell freedom was near.**

**By: BreAnn Sullivan**

**We as a country are united by not discriminating against each other. We are peaceful to each other by not judging what we are. We must love our freedom of voting and driving. We don't have slaves to do our work; we do it ourselves. We as a country don't have to have arranged marriages. We are free to marry whomever. We don't get away with killing; we go to prison and we taxpayers have to pay for them as long as they live. We as Americans are made up of every heritage from around the world. We came to America for freedom and we have some of what we want, but the world is not free anymore. We are in debt, but together we can get out.**

**By: Crystal Mills**