



Bismarck

Mayor's Committee On Human Relations Annual Report for the Year 2010



Bismarck Human Relations Committee

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MISSION

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

The Human Relations Committee has five main goals. They are:

1. To exhibit leadership in the areas of civil and human rights;
2. To educate the public about civil and human rights;
3. To identify issues of principal concern in the area of civil and human rights;
4. To recommend priorities and objectives about issues of community concern to the City Commission; and
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).

ACTIVITIES

In the beginning of 2010, the Human Relations Committee awarded its inaugural Humanitarian Award for the year 2009. The Humanitarian Award honors an individual, business or organization that has exhibited leadership in the areas of human and civil rights with a focus



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upon recognizing those that educate, identify issues and address human rights concerns. The recipient of the 2009 was Carrie Grosz, who works with at-risk and underprivileged teenagers through her Carrie's Kids program. In December of 2010, the Human Relations Committee selected The God's Child Project as its 2010 Humanitarian Award recipient. The God's Child Project is based in Bismarck and works in countries

around the world to alleviate the effects of poverty and to combat human trafficking. Mayor Warford led the presentation of the 2010 award in an event in which he also recognized UN Human Rights Day. Nominations for the humanitarian awards were solicited from the community, and both awards received media attention.

In the month of September, the Human Relations Committee hosted weekly presentations at the Bismarck Public Library in a series titled Diversity University. The presentations featured speakers followed by discussion with audience participants. Topics included disability issues,

gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender issues, mental health issues, and the Hispanic experience in North Dakota. Although there was some publicity for the series, we would have liked to have seen more community attendance at the series. For those who were present, the evenings were well-received. Since that time the Human Relations Committee has been approached to continue the series and consider working with other groups to increase attendance and awareness.



In November of 2010, the Human Relations Committee sponsored an essay/poetry contest on the topic of human rights which was open to Bismarck students in grades four through six.

The winner of the contest was Natalia Beal, a fourth grader at Northridge Elementary School. Natalia was recognized by Mayor Warford and the Human Relations Committee at the committee's January, 2011 meeting.

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The Human Relations Committee meets the third Monday of every month in the first floor conference room of the City-County Building. All meetings are open to the public, and the public are given an opportunity to offer comments at committee meetings.

2011 has started strong, and the Human Relations Committee will continue its activities of 2010, 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 2010 proving to be a 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.