APRIL 09, 2014

COLUMBUS, INDIANA

2013 ANNUAL REPORT COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

2014 J. Irwin Miller Human Rights Art Contest Winner High School Division:
Akina Minamikawa
Teacher: Mimi Hageman-Bingham

Human Rights Commission

Columbus, IN

The mission of the Columbus Human Rights Commission is to lead Columbus in building and maintaining an inclusive community by:

- enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance;
- educating the public;
- challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality; and
- empowering community members to advance this mission.

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Columbus Human Rights Ordinance, Rules & Regulations

Ordinance

It is the public policy of the City to provide all persons an equal opportunity for an in education, employment, public accommodations and acquisition through purchase or rental of real property including but not limited to housing. Equal educational and employment opportunities and equal access to and use of public accommodations and equal opportunities for acquisition of real property and access to credit as defined in Indiana Code, 24-4.5-1-301, are declared to be civil rights.

The practice of denying these civil rights to a person by reason of race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry of such individual is contrary to the principles of equal opportunity stated in this chapter and shall be considered discriminatory practices.

The promotion of equal opportunity without regard to race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry through enforcement, public education and other reasonable methods is the purpose of this chapter. It is also its purpose to protect employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, property owners, real estate brokers, lending institutions and insurance companies from unfounded charges of discrimination through the professional investigation and resolution of complaints. This chapter shall be construed broadly to effectuate its purpose.

The Municipal Code of the City of Columbus, Indiana § 9.24.020

Rules & Regulations

Through its Rules & Regulations Sections II, III, and IV, the Human Rights Commission prohibits discrimination on the basis of:

- age
- sexual orientation
- gender identity

In the areas of employment, housing, education, public accommodation or credit. Age, sexual orientation and / or gender identity complaints are processed through the Commission's Voluntary Mediation Program.

Columbus Human Rights Commission
Organizational Structure

Volunteer Commissioners:	Term Ends:
Gilbert A. Palmer (Chair)	2014
Ian Kohen (Vice-Chair)	2016
Trena Carter (Treasurer)	2014
John Roberts (Secretary)	2014
Rhea Baker-Ipek	2014
Greg Lewis	2015
Anthony McClendon	2015
John Stroh	2015
Annette Barnes	2016*
Kelly Benjamin	2016*
Richard Gold	2016*
Rosalind Pegram	2013
Shiva Rallapalli	2013

City Council Liaison:	Tim Shuffett
Commission Attorney:	Jeff Logston
Staff:	
Director:	Lorraine Smith
Deputy Director:	Aida J. Ramírez (hired 11/13)
Deputy Director:	Frances L. Jordan (resigned 08/13)
Secretary:	Betsy Schuette

* Appointed 04/2014

Chairperson's Report

GILBERT A. PALMER,

Chairperson

Dear Mayor Brown, Members of the Columbus City Council and Columbus Residents:

The Commission continues to work with an ever-evolving and ever-changing world of human rights and diversity. True to its mission, the Commission works:

"To lead Columbus in building and maintaining an inclusive community by:

- Enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance
- Educating the public
- Challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality and
- Empower community members to advance this mission."

This is a hefty mission and a challenging one! Just enforcement alone is a challenge considering the ever-changing legal landscape, but the Commission also takes on the role of attempting to effect attitudinal change within the community. Both are necessary in order to create a truly Welcoming Community. The role of effecting that change comes in the form of many different parts that the Commission staff and Commissioners play in the community. The staff has in 2013 served in a number of board capacities in order to provide insight into the connection between various community projects and initiatives and the diverse communities that exist in Columbus. Director Smith continued in her last year a member of the Heritage Fund Board and as the chair of the Outreach Committee.

During 2013, the Commission continued to try and balance enforcement of the ordinance with trying to change the attitudes. The Commission wrapped up its initiative "Adventures in DiverCity" where community members participated in a program to introduce them to the diversity that exists in the community in which they live! An outgrowth of the program was a community diversity calendar that opened the eyes of many community members who had new awareness of Columbus' depth and breadth of diverse communities which reside here. 2013 saw a record number of attendees of its Annual Dinner meeting which provided the Commission's largest venue in which to educate the public but empower community members to advance its mission. Will Miller who introduced the concept of Welcoming Community took the community to the place where it all began. In addition, the community was able to recognize Owen Hungerford for his foundational work decades ago which helped create the Commission and which serves as a reminder that the work still exists. The dinner served a testament to the support of human rights a core value in Columbus. The Commission weathered staffing and personnel changes in 2013 which impacted the office as with any gaps in staffing, but as it always has, the Commission will regroup for 2014 reinvigorate and continue on with its mission and its goals.

— Gilbert A. Palmer

Director's Report

LORRAINE SMITH,

Director

"Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom. A man can't ride unless your back is bent." — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Director's Message and Farewell

To the Columbus Human Rights Commissioners, Mayor Brown, City Council, and the Columbus Community:

After 27 years of working for the City of Columbus and with the Human Rights Commission, I will be retiring to spend more time with family – the time is right. I am unsure of what the "second act" will hold in store for me, but I will always cherish my time working as a public servant and in particular for the Human Rights Commission. I will continue to give back to this community and City government, which has given much to me and my family. Through my years of experience, I have no doubt that this community truly cares about making Columbus a welcoming community for all! I have witnessed how public and private sectors come together to build upon a tradition of excellence and innovation. Heritage Fund-The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County, Irwin-Sweeney-Miller Foundation, NAACP, CAMEO, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, IUPUC, are just a few entities which have continued to work on human rights and diversity, albeit in different ways – different paths, but all leading to a "Welcoming Columbus."

The Commission had its beginnings in 1962, and it has weathered the storm under challenges at various times because it has always been in the very capable leadership of its volunteer board. City Council has always appointed board members who bring the skills, experience, and talent that it needs to supervise the office and to handle challenges as they arise. It is that effective board governance that has made me proud over the last 27 years. Also, and importantly, Commissioners are selected for their dedication, commitment and sincere interest in the work of the Commission. To Gil Palmer, it has been my pleasure to have served under your supervision as Chair for close to 20 years. Your leadership, professionalism and commitment to the Commission work are exceptional! The City of Columbus and the Commission have been served well under your guidance.

City government is comprised of a mosaic of departmental entities which provide the foundation to its community. That foundation includes providing fundamental pieces to its community life involving for example, effective law enforcement, street maintenance, clean and safe drinking water, and safe and affordable housing. But experience and research tell us that openness is also key to creating a vibrant, high functioning community – one that is supported through its city government's policies, laws and practices. That is the role the Commission constantly strives to achieve every year.

Looking ahead to 2014, the Commission will continue working for the people who have nowhere else to turn when they are faced with alleged discrimination; the Commission will continue to provide local technical assistance to businesses and landlords who need assistance in determining what the law requires in order to provide equality opportunity in their place of business or housing facility; the

Commission will continue to work on issues that require advocacy, as appropriate, to work though issues potentially harmful to the work of welcoming community. The Commission many times works on issues that are not known to many, but we continue to get the call from community members who seek our help.

The Commission through its strong leadership, effective City Council support and its strong support from City Hall leadership, the organization will be poised to address issues of discrimination and proliferate the concepts of Welcoming Community through new leadership, innovation with the help of a new generation of civil rights workers!

I wish the Commission well in its future endeavors as it strives to enhance the quality of life for all who live, play and work in Columbus.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that "*somewhere we must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be coworkers with God. And without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. So we must help time and realize that the time is always ripe to do right*." And so it is with Columbus – and your Human Rights Commission!

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

ADA Transition Plan Recommendations

As reported in the 2012 report, The Human Rights Department offered to assist the City in the update of the City's Transition Plan in 2013. The final assessment made by former Deputy Director Frances Jordan was submitted to the Human Resources Office along with recommendations to solve issues found in the assessment.

Councils

Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility

In 2012, the Commission assisted in the research and development of bylaws and resolution of the Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility (MACDA). In addition, the Commission staff conducted the application process with approval of the Mayor. After Mayor Brown's selection of candidates, MACDA had its first meeting in November of 2012. In an advisory capacity, at the behest of the Mayor, the Commission served as the convener of this group. The group which meets bi-monthly, set about determining its committee structure and its goals and objectives for each during 2013. By July 2013, the group developed and approved its focus through the creation of four sub-committees. Although advisory only, the group sought to carry out MACDA's mission through four committees:

- Community Awareness – Chaired by Robin Winters
- Corporate/Business Awareness – Chaired by Grace Kestler

- Sidewalk Accessibility – Chaired by Bill Pumphrey
- Integrated Community Social Events – Chaired by Deborah Seeley

The Community Awareness Committee worked with Chief Maddix in incorporating disability awareness into their annual training. The trainings were slated to begin January 2014 for four (4) consecutive sessions. The Commission and MACDA appreciates the tremendous support from the police department in order to continue to expand community knowledge and awareness about the issues facing people with disabilities.

The Community Awareness Committee also is working on rollout of Disability Awareness Month.

Welcoming Community Stakeholders Council

Born out of the Mayor's Strategic Plan Committee, of which Director Smith was a member appointed by Mayor Brown, Tracy Souza and Director Smith created a framework for a Welcoming Community Stakeholders Council in the latter half of 2012. Building on the work of Heritage Fund's Welcoming Community studies and its spin-off organizations, the Mayor appointed a Welcoming Community Stakeholder Commission (WCSC) to ensure the sustainability of this community value and strategic priority. The WCSC will meet at least twice a year and review progress against the welcoming community metrics. The WCSC will listen to the public and attempt to identify gaps and barriers in reaching our community vision and propose initiatives to close those gaps. The Council meets twice a year and held its first meeting on April 8, 2013 and is scheduled to reconvene in 2014. Aimed at bringing together diverse populations such as the LGBT, African American, Latino, disability populations, the Council included representatives from Pride Alliance, MACDA, NAACP, CAMEO, SuCasa. The group began development of a scorecard in which the group would evaluate the Community's progress on welcoming community in areas such as reduction of discrimination, educational programming, general diversity programming and community leadership.

Grants

Welcoming Community II Grant

- Adventures in DiverCity

Adventures in DiverCity was an organized and fun way to involve Bartholomew County residents in events, programs and activities that focus on diversity in and around Bartholomew County - the goal of which was to increase cross-cultural learning and awareness and thereby create a more inclusive community.

The program acquired 70+ participants who signed up to be a part of the Adventures in DiverCity. The program had about 25 different people actively participate in the "Adventure."

Katelyn Diehl was the grand prize winner of the program who won an iPad! Ms. Diehl attended all of the required diversity programming in order to take home the grand prize. A successful outgrowth of the initiative was the Commission's creation of a DiverCity Calendar. The Commission received very positive feedback about the Calendar. Many community members commented that they didn't

realize that Columbus had so much diverse activity and programming. Police Chief Maddix was an mid-way participant winner by attending the mid-way requisite programs.

- Threads of our Diversity- Oral History Project II

The Commission partnered with IUPUC, Pride Alliance and Inclusive Community of Columbus (ICC) and received one of thirteen (13) Welcoming Community grants funded by Heritage Fund. As Pride Alliance and ICC document stories of the LGBT experience in Columbus, the Commission's project will continue documenting the stories of African Americans in Columbus as a continuation of the first project from 2000. The grant allowed the three organizations to purchase and share video equipment to record their oral histories. Director Smith interviewed a variety of African Americans to share their experiences in Columbus through lenses such as family, business, entrepreneurship, educational, the ability to overcome racial barriers and other perspectives. The teams underwent an intensive training required by IUPUC's Institutional Review Board to ensure that interviewers were taking appropriate care of the human subjects throughout the interview process. Fifteen (15) hours of raw footage have been compiled thus far.

Community Education and Awareness

2013 Human Rights Commission Annual Dinner

The Commission broke its attendance record in 2013 with close to 400 guests! The Commission's guest speaker received outstanding marks for his keynote remarks. The Commission invited Mr. Miller to be the keynote speaker. As it was his Welcoming Community model that led the way for this community to create various Welcoming Community initiatives such as the CYP, CAMEO and downtown initiatives. Will Miller traced this community's Welcoming Community journey while placing into perspective its impact upon Columbus' economic vitality.

- *Benjamin M. King Essay & J. Irwin Miller Art Contest*

The Essay and Art Contest continues to receive active participation from local elementary, middle and high school students. The Commission deems the contest as a means to educate and engage students on issues of diversity and human rights. Contest winners receive awards during the Annual Dinner. 2013 contest winners were: Adam Saad, Agustina Fainguersch, Kiana Snyder, Reilly Jones, and Kevin Luo.

2013
Annual Dinner

- *William R. Laws Human Rights Award*

OWEN HUNGERFORD

© 2013 Sharon Shipley Photography & Graphic Art Design

The 2013 William R. Laws Human Rights Award was presented to Owen Hungerford at its Annual Dinner Meeting on April 10, 2013. Before a capacity-filled crowd, Mr. Hungerford accepted the award. Mr. Hungerford is one of the early leaders in the community who brought to the fore the discrimination issues facing community members. Through his collaboration and activism with other concerned leaders, the Commission was created.

Board Governance Train-the-Trainer

Director Smith and Chairperson Palmer participated in a training provided by Heritage Fund to become part of a corps of trainers for Not-for-Profits on "Board Governance."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Director Smith provided keynote remarks for the Dr. Martin Luther King Day Breakfast at East High School cafeteria which was filled to capacity. For the event, the Commission developed a Civil Rights Timeline for distribution to the MLK Breakfast attendees. Deputy Director Jordan participated in a panel discussion at IUPUC. Commission staff, Director Smith and Deputy Director Jordan represented the Commission at the evening panel discussion held at Second Baptist Church. Prior to MLK Day, Director Smith provided a short presentation and read a book on diversity for preschoolers at the Busy Bees/Johnson Academy in honor of the upcoming Dr. Martin Luther King Day. Civil Rights/Sensitivity Training – Love Chapel

Deputy Director Jordan provided Civil Rights/Sensitivity Training for Love Chapel. Evaluations completed by the attendees were no less than a '4' rating (5 being the highest).

Landlord Association Meeting

Director Smith attended the Landlord Association meeting with other department heads. Director Smith answered a number of questions regarding Fair Housing Law and requirements. Questions ranged from 55 and older housing requirements to sleeping rooms.

Little People of America Regional Conference

At the request of local community member Ethan Crough, a Little People of America national officer, Mayor Brown and Director Smith provided remarks at the Little People of America Regional Conference held in Columbus on October 9, 2013. The conference is the first held in Columbus.

Kiwanis Meeting Presentation

Director Smith provided a presentation to Kiwanis and answered questions regarding the work of the Commission.

Black History Month Presentation

Director Smith provided a Black History Month presentation for attendees at CAMEO's February Meeting.

Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization (CAMEO) Retreat

Director Smith assisted in facilitating CAMEO's Strategic Planning Retreat. Heritage Fund's Outreach Committee developed and created the group in 2011. The group continues to be one of the pertinent welcoming community organizations.

Indiana Governor's Conference on People with Disabilities

Director Smith, Deputy Director Ramirez and MACDA member Grace Kestler attended the Indiana Governor's Conference on People with Disabilities on December 3 and 4.

Arts District Committee on ADA and Access Planning

Deputy Director Ramirez provided technical assistance to the Arts District Committee on ADA and Access planning.

Audit and Review Committee

Chairperson Gil Palmer, Deputy Director Jordan and Director Smith attended the quarterly Audit and Review Committee meetings. The Audit and Review Committee is a police citizen's review panel.

50th Anniversary March on Washington Trip

The Commission assisted with the distribution of information about the trip and in providing information to Channel 8 for its newscast about the local trip. Commissioner Lewis attended with several of his students.

CAMEO Annual Meeting

Deputy Director Jordan, Chairperson Palmer, and Commissioners all attended the CAMEO Annual Meeting, where Director Smith was awarded the "Benjamin 'Mickey' King Award. As Director Smith was on medical leave, her son accepted on her behalf.

National Conference in Equal Employment Law

Deputy Director Jordan attended the National Conference on Equal Employment Law sponsored by the American Bar Association.

CSA Central Presentation

Commissioner Lewis, Secretary Betsy Schuette attended a presentation by Deputy Director Jordan at CSA Central.

HFBC Outreach Committee

The Commission participated in the Voice of the Customer meeting for an HFBC Outreach Committee Welcoming Community Initiative in October.

Diversity Circles

Commissioner Barnes represented the Commission by participating in the IUPUC Diversity Circles in the Fall of 2013.

Great Decisions on Myanmar and Southeast Asia

Deputy Director Jordan served as facilitator for IUPUCs/Mill Race Center's "Great Decisions on Myanmar and Southeast Asia" in February.

Women's International Day

Commissioners attended the Women's International Day to hear Loung Ung, Cambodian Activist.

Employment Discrimination Seminar

Deputy Director Ramirez attended an Employment Discrimination Seminar in December.

Indiana Consortium of Human Rights Agencies

Deputy Director Jordan and/or Director Smith attended the quarterly meetings of the Indiana Consortium of Human Rights Agencies.

Very Special Arts Fair

Deputy Director Jordan participated in the Very Special Arts Fair which focused on mentally and physically challenged children.

Threads Video Showing

Commissioners Barnes, Gold and Director Smith attended the "Threads" Video showing in October in City Hall.

Networking with the Community

Staff and/or Commissioners continued to serve as a resource/liaison to the commission in a number of roles including organizations such as:

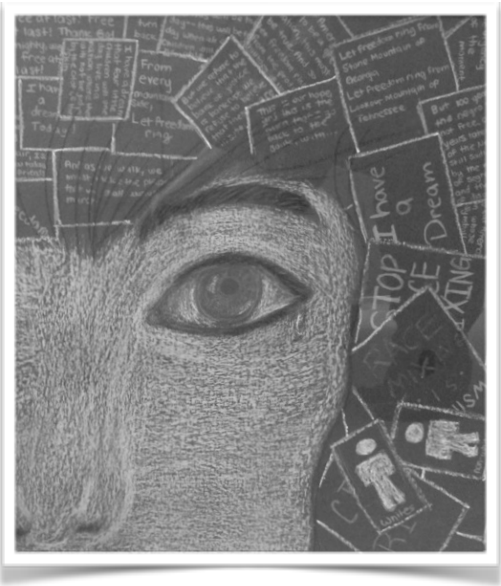
- Pride Alliance
- Inclusive Community Coalition (ICC)

- Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization (CAMEO)
- BCSC Anti-bullying Task Force
- BCSC Foundation meetings
- BCSC Diversity Cabinet
- Teen Pregnancy Council
- Columbus Young Professionals (CYP)
- CYP Strategic Planning Meetings
- IUPUC Diversity Cabinet
- IUPUC Department of Education Advisory Board
- Columbus Safe Community Six Sigma Project
- SuCasa Board of Directors Meetings
- Heritage Fund Scholarship Committee Meetings

NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet

The Commission was represented by Director Lorraine Smith, Chairperson Palmer, Vice-Chair Kohen and Commissioner Ipek-Baker at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet held by the local chapter of the NAACP. Dr. Kevin Jones was the guest speaker who provided a presentation on the benefits of Columbus's global connection and its Welcoming Community initiatives of which the Commission has been instrumental in creating.

Artwork Donated by Cummins to the Commission Office



As a tribute to the work that the Commission does, Cummins donated a picture depicting Civil Rights work, which was presented by Cummins Vice-President of Corporate Responsibility Mark Levett to Director Smith at the April 16, 2013 Board of Works Meeting.

Heritage Fund Outreach Committee

Director Smith continued her role on Heritage Fund Board and as Chair of the Outreach Committee through December 2013. Director Smith served as the Outreach Co-Chair, then as Chair for 8 years. The Outreach Committee developed the Welcoming Community II Follow-Up Survey and subsequently the Welcoming Community II Grants program, which awarded thirteen (13) grants to community organizations. These grants enabled these organizations to develop programs and activities which will educate and raise awareness on welcoming community issues. Under Director Smith's Chair position, the group began work on the Six Sigma project on the

Multicultural Center, the Community Portal and the continuation of the Welcoming Community II Grants Program. Tom Harmon co-chaired the committee for part of 2013, and is in line to succeed Director Smith at the end of her term. Director Smith will remain as a community advisor on the committee.

Threads of Our Diversity Preview

The commissioners hosted a preview of the collaborative project, "Threads of our Diversity" which chronicled the LGBT movement in Columbus. The Commission was instrumental in collaborating with Pride Alliance and the Inclusive community coalition in producing the video through the Welcoming Community Grant.

Police Recruiting Technical Assistance

Director Smith provided assistance and feedback to the Police Department in regard to minority recruitment efforts and ideas.

Human Rights & Civil Liberties Student Projects – New Tech High School

Director Smith served as a Community Evaluator for the Human Rights-Civil Rights Projects at New Tech High School. Some of the projects included civil rights, suffrage movement and other human rights topics.

Heritage Fund Board

Director Smith ended her role as member of the Heritage Fund Board in 2013. As a board member, Director Smith served for eight years, serving on the Outreach Committees and on the Grants Committee.

Staff Development

Deputy Director Jordan attended a comprehensive ABA Civil Rights Law Training in Georgia.

Deputy Director Ramirez attended trainings in Employment Law.

Secretary Betsy Schuette attended the Womens Conference and trainings on the creation of accessible PDF documents and on Excel.

FRANCES L. JORDAN

Commission Office Transitions

The Commission went through significant transitions during 2013. For several months, the Commission was short-staffed, first due to FMLA leave of Director Smith and at mid-year the resignation of Deputy Director Jordan.

In July 2013, Deputy Director Jordan announced her resignation from the Commission to relocate to Austin, Texas. She accepted a position with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Civil Rights Office as a Civil Rights Specialist. The Commission thanks Frances for her tremendous contributions to the Commission and the Columbus community!

With the loss of Deputy Director Jordan, the Commission had to refocus on bringing its staffing back up to an effective level. The office needed to realign its priority during these gaps and reset. After a thorough job search, the position of Deputy Director was filled with Aida J. Ramírez. Deputy Director Ramirez received her Juris Doctorate from the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law in Indianapolis and obtained her undergraduate and graduate degrees at Purdue University in West Lafayette. Prior to joining the Commission, Aida worked as a Judicial Law Clerk to the Honorable Louis F. Rosenberg, Judge of Marion County Circuit Court, via funding by an Indiana Supreme Court Grant. The Commission is grateful to have someone with her skills and knowledge on staff!

AIDA J. RAMÍREZ

Columbus Human Rights Volunteer Commissioners

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Human Rights Commission is comprised of Columbus residents appointed by City Council and sworn into office by the Mayor of Columbus. The Commissioners are volunteers whose skills and knowledge encompass business management, government, law, education, entrepreneurship, engineering, and clergy. The Commission has been able to effectively carry out its work because of the caliber of talent of the Commissioners appointed by City Council. In 2013, the City Council appointed three (3) new commissioners— Annette Barnes, Richard Gold and Kelly Benjamin— all of whom bring a wide array of backgrounds that help meet the ordinance's selection criteria of selecting community members who represent the diversity of the community. More importantly, they represent talents which serve the community and commission well – from law to community activism, business and the faith community. Ian Kohen, Commission Vice-Chair was reappointed to the Commission.

Commissioner Gilbert A. Palmer was first appointed to the Commission in 1993, and he has garnered such respect from his fellow Commissioners that he was been unanimously re-elected Chairperson for the past twenty one (21) years. The Chairperson is responsible for reviewing all findings of fact, requests for subpoenas and restraining orders. Additionally, the Chairperson must prepare and hold any necessary hearings. Gill, a 1995 graduate of Leadership Bartholomew County, is a State Farm Insurance agent who works long hours at his office, and maintains longstanding service to the community as a member of the Columbus Rotary, Centerstone of Indiana, Centerstone Research Institute boards, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, IUPUC Board of Advisors, IUPUC Diversity Cabinet, BCSC Diversity Leadership Committee, Bartholomew County Board of Zoning Appeals, Mill Race Center board, and the African American Fund Board. Gill was the recipient of IUPUC's 2011 Excellence in Diversity Award.

Commissioner Rhea Baker-Ipek has a Juris Doctorate (J.D.) from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in Bloomington, Indiana and is an Associate at Thomasson, Thomasson, Long & Guthrie, P.C. Originally from Memphis, Tennessee, she earned a Bachelor's of Arts Degree (B.A.) in Foreign Languages (French fluency); and a Masters of Business Administration (M.B.A.) in International Business, both from the University of Memphis, Memphis, TN. In addition to her coursework in the states, Rhea has studied in France both as a graduate and undergraduate. While obtaining her B.A., she studied at the Université Catholique de Lille in Lille, France. Additionally, while obtaining her M.B.A., she studied at the Université de Robert Schumann in Strasbourg, France. While in Strasbourg, she assisted Turkish lawyers at the European Court of Human Rights. Rhea is an active member of the community and lives in Columbus with her husband and son. She loves Columbus and is self-described as a native Memphian turned Hoosier.

Commissioner Trena Carter, a twenty two (22) year resident of Columbus**,** was appointed in late 2006. Trena works at Administrative Resources association (ARA), a non-profit governmental organization that works with local governments in Southern Indiana to assist in project planning and development to enhance quality of life by applying for and managing governmental grants to implement those projects. She and her husband, Mike, are the parents of two daughters, and have raised their family in Columbus. She has been a committed volunteer in the local schools, in Girl Scouts, as well as Leadership Bartholomew County and also serves on the Human Resource Team and the Church Council at Sandy Hook United Methodist Church. Trena served on the Ad Hoc Committee which planned the 2007 Annual Dinner Meeting in April, a special 45th anniversary celebration of the Commission.

Commissioner Ian Kohen was appointed to the Commission in 2004. He has been a member of the Columbus community for over twenty one (21) years. Ian currently works at Cummins Inc. and has roles in Engineering, Purchasing, Six Sigma, Service, and is leading a Sales / Support organization for North America. His outside interests include spending time with his wife Mary, playing racquetball, being a Big Brother, working with teens as the adult leader of the Turning Point Dance Marathon, and being part of the Columbus Rotary Club. Ian has two sons, Max and Henry. In 2006, Ian chaired the Ad Hoc Committee that studied the issue of discrimination based upon sexual orientation, gender identity and age, as it related to enforcement mechanisms available to the Commission. This resulted in changes to our Rules and Regulations to better represent these groups. Ian has served as liaison to both the local Interfaith Forum and the Pride Alliance Coalition.

Commissioner Greg Lewis has served as Commissioner since 2005, and is the current Commission Liaison to CAMEO (Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization). He is the Chair of the Social Studies Department at Columbus East High School, where he has taught since 1994. Previously, he taught at Central Middle School from 1992 to 1994. He is well known for his costume portrayal of historic figures, including a different president each year since 1997 on Presidents' Day. He has lived in Columbus since 1984, with his wife Nancy and two children, Lauren and Austin. He was raised in Louisville, Kentucky, and earned degrees from Miami University of Ohio, Indiana University, and Indiana Wesleyan University. He has demonstrated his commitment to public service through his volunteer work with the Columbus East Food Pantry, the American Red Cross - Bartholomew/Brown County Chapter, Dance Marathon for Turning Point, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Youth As Resources, Columbus Soccer Club, and many other community service groups, as well as being involved with many student groups at East High School. At Columbus East, Greg currently

teaches Advance College Project U.S. History, a dual credit course through Indiana University, and he makes issues of social justice a major focus of his teaching. In his spare time, Greg enjoys spending time with his family, playing soccer, hiking, traveling, and biking.

Commissioner Tony McClendon has lived in Columbus for sixteen (16) years and he and his wife, Pat, have two daughters. Currently, he is the Director of Diversity for Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation. Tony is the associate pastor at Faith Ministries, served as the head football coach at Central Middle School and the assistant track coach at East High School. He has volunteered as a mentor at Northside Middle School in a program called TALKS, which focused on at-risk middle school boys. He is a native of Atlanta, Georgia, a graduate of Dartmouth College, works in sales management and serves as an adjunct instructor in the English Department of Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana-Columbus/Franklin. He has special skills as a public speaker that he brings to the Commission as well as a special interest in working with local youth. Tony served as Vice Chair of the Commission in 2009 and in the past, he has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education Class (PIE) on Diversity Issues. He has also facilitated youth discussions in local schools, at the Commission's request. He has served also on the Commission's nominating Committee.

Commissioner John Roberts joined the Columbus community thirteen (13) years ago. Currently, he is an Associate Professor of English, Behavioral and Social Sciences at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana-Columbus/Franklin. He was Dean of the School of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Ivy Tech from 2008-2013. John is involved with the music ministry at Faith Ministries of Columbus. He has worked most of his life as an educator, teaching in the Louisville, Jefferson County, and Lexington Public Schools, the Archdiocese of Louisville, and St. Francis School, Goshen, Kentucky. When he first came to Columbus, he worked as Christian Education Coordinator at First Presbyterian Church. He earned degrees at Morehead State University, University of Louisville, National University, and Northcentral University. He has a particular interest in low income and minority students, and while working in Louisville, he served on a team that developed a successful enrichment program for at-risk students in the Jefferson County Public Schools. He has also worked with the disability community, and has an interest in issues facing senior citizens. John is a father and a grandfather of four (4). John has served on the Ad Hoc Committee of the Commission which studied and then recommended changes to the Rules and Regulations which provided a mediation process for complaints of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, and chaired the Ad Hoc Committee which planned the Commission's 45th anniversary celebration. John recently received a Doctorate in Education from Northcentral University and specializes in Curriculum and Teaching. John has provided numerous presentations on diversity for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and he has served as facilitator for panel discussion "All Muslims Don't Look Alike."

Commissioner John Stroh has lived in Columbus for twenty five (25) years with his wife and children, and is engaged in the practice of law. Earlier in his career he worked as a public school teacher in Washington Township Public Schools where he met his wife, Beth, and developed an innovative team-teaching, multi-grade program. He has a long record of commitment to social justice, working as a church youth leader, school volunteer, professional actor, juvenile probation officer, U.S. Postal Employee, volunteer project peace presenter and volunteer lawyer for Legal Aid. John has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education Class (PIE) on Diversity Issues and he served on the 2006 Ad Hoc Committee that first studied and then

recommended changes to the Commission's Rules and Regulations to provide a mediation process for complaints of gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination. An experienced mediator, the Commission is fortunate to have John's service on the Board. He serves as a liaison to the Inclusive Community Coalition (ICC).

Commissioner Kelly Benjamin was appointed in 2013**.** She has lived in Columbus since 2007 with her husband, Scott, and their 3 children. Kelly is currently the Commissioner of the IV-D Child Support Court and the Attorney for the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation. She has practiced law for over twenty three (23) years, devoting fifteen (15) of years to prosecuting crimes with a specialty in domestic violence (DV), child abuse and/or sexual assault (SA) cases. Kelly is a certified trainer through the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance and Department of Justice-Law Enforcement Standards Board, regarding DV and SA, including victim issues. In Wisconsin, she implemented DV protocols for the Portage County prosecutor's office and investigative protocols for the Portage County Child Abuse/Neglect Multi-Disciplinary Team, which she coordinated. She was a member of the DV and SA Community Response Teams and was nominated for Wisconsin Prosecutor of the year in 1999. In 2001, she received the "Ted Long" CAPartners Award for her work in DV issues within the community. In Bartholomew County, Kelly has been the Chairperson of the Domestic Violence Action Team for the past 5 years and is a current Board Member for the Heritage Fund. She was awarded "Outstanding Prosecutor of the Year" in 2011 from the IN Coalition Against DV for her community work in raising awareness around teen dating and DV. Kelly was also one of several to be awarded "The Community Safety" Award from Turning Point DV Services in both 2009 and 2010, as well as receiving the "Service Pillar, Healthy Communities Volunteer of the Year" Award from Columbus Regional Health in 2011. Kelly has provided DV training in Indian Country for the Menominee Nation in Wisconsin and the National Indian Youth Police Academy. In addition, she has been an instructor for the Tribal Probation Academy sponsored by Fox Valley Technical College. Kelly has trained nationally on issues of DV and shaken baby syndrome, and she also enjoys participating as a presenter in Columbus, IN for Safe Dates – a teen dating violence curriculum for middle school students.

Commissioner Richard Gold was appointed in 2013. He and his sisters were raised in the Washington DC metro area in the 1960's - a time of acute civil rights awareness and progress. These sensitivities were heightened through international assignments, diversity training at Cummins and during his time living and working in Memphis, TN in the 1980s. He has lived in Columbus for most of the last 33 years with stints out of town for work assignments. He and his wife Alice have raised three children here. He has been extensively involved in the issue of domestic violence since 1997, serving on the Board of Turning Point, as Chairperson of the Domestic Violence Action Team, and more recently as mentor to high school students for the annual Dance Marathon to benefit Turning Point. He has also served on the Board of United Way of Bartholomew County and is currently Chairman. Like Commissioner Kohen, he is also a facilitator of 7 Habits training. He received his Bachelors and M.B.A. from the University of Michigan. He came to Columbus as a Cummins recruit in 1980 and served the company for 24 years, eventually as an officer of the company overseeing aftermarket and distribution. He left Cummins to become President of Brinks, Inc. He is currently owner of Brainstorm Print, an Indianapolis-based design, print and marketing company which serves customers in Indianapolis, Columbus, and beyond the Midwest.

Commissioner Annette Barnes was appointed in 2013. Annette, a 1986 graduate of Leadership Bartholomew County, is the mother of five (5) children and eleven (11) grandchildren. Annette comes to the Commission with significant volunteer experience in the Columbus community. She is a Board member of Turning Point, a volunteer for the Mill Race Center, the Columbus Visitor's Center, and the Columbus Regional Hospital. She served as the Executive Director of the Youth Advocacy Commission and was also a Guardian ad Litem. Annette represents the religious community on the Commission by bringing with her many years of experiences in the church community. She is a graduate of the Christian Theological Seminary and has a Master of Divinity. A member of St. Bartholomew Catholic Church, she volunteers as a member of the Choir, serves as a Eucharistic Minister and Lector, and has also served on the Parish Council. Annette is also a retired Board Certified Chaplain.

Commissioner Rosalind Pegram (term expired 2013) was first appointed to the Commission in 2007. Originally from Puerto Rico, Rosalind is a twenty one (21) year resident of Columbus as well as a former educator, having worked in both Monroe and Bartholomew counties. Rosalind has a M.S. in Education from Indiana University - Bloomington and is bilingual in Spanish and English. Commissioner Pegram swerves as the Commission's liaison to the Immigration Issues Group of Columbus. She represented the Commission on the Immigration forum with Senator Greg Walker and Representative Milo Smith. She volunteered for Proyecto Salud- Volunteers in Medicine, and she is a founding board member for the new Columbus Latin American Association. Commissioner Pegram is very involved in her new business start-up, Tax Avanza, which assists immigrants with tax and other financial issues.

Commissioner Shiva Rallapalli (term expired in 2013) was reappointed to the Commission in 2010. Born in Hyderabad, India, Commissioner Rallapalli came to the United States in 2000 to pursue his Bachelor's degree in Computer Science at Michigan Technological University. He moved to Columbus in 2005 and he currently works for Humana Inc. as a Manager of Information Technology Applications Development. He lives with his wife Sheetal Hosmani, who also got her Bachelor's in Computer Engineering from Michigan Technological University. She works for Cummins, Inc. as a Technical Manager for Chrysler Onboard Diagnostics. Shiva enjoys running, working out, playing racket ball, watching movies and listening to music. He is proud to be a member of the Columbus Human Rights Commission, does speaking and training on behalf of the Commission, and is chair of the Hate Crimes Taskforce for the Commission.

Compliance, Mediation, and Enforcement Activities

Monitoring Compliance

The Commission is a party to written conciliation agreements, which resolve complaints of alleged discrimination filed with the agency. A Commission staff person is assigned to monitor the terms and conditions of these agreements as well as Commission orders.

The Complaint Process

The Columbus ordinance provides that any person who claims to be aggrieved by an unlawful practice in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and education and can articulate a prima facie case pursuant to a recognized legal theory of discrimination (based on race, religion, color, gender, disability, ancestry, national origin, pregnancy, familial status in housing, sexual orientation, gender identity and age (voluntary mediation only) and retaliation) may file a complaint with the Commission. The Commission shall review and, if necessary, investigate the complaint. Complaints must be filed within ninety (90) days of the last discriminatory act alleged, except in housing, where some complaints may be filed one hundred and eighty (180) days from the last discriminatory act alleged.

An individual may write, e-mail, telephone, or come into the Commission office to begin the filing process. If the complaint falls within the Commission's jurisdiction, a formal complaint may be submitted. The staff is available to assist in drafting a complaint based on information provided by the complainant. An employment, housing, or public accommodation complaint must be signed, verified, and notarized before it can be officially filed with the Commission. Some inquires that are outside of the Commission's jurisdiction or beyond the timely filing limit are referred to the Equal Opportunity Commission or another agency. The Commission offers a voluntary mediation program in all complaints prior to investigation, at the option of the parties. Mediation services offer a possible alternative to complete investigation.

When mediation services are not selected by one of the parties, or when mediation services fail, a complaint may be sent for full investigation. The Commission is responsible for investigating all complaints filed. It is also responsible for conciliation of cases where the investigating commissioner has indicated there is probable cause to credit allegations of the complaints. During a full investigation the Commission staff person will interview the complainant, review relevant documents, conduct interviews with witnesses, and summarize the case for the investigating commissioner. The investigator's role is that of a neutral fact finder. The Commission staff does not determine the outcome of the case, but rather gathers and presents the facts with a recommendation, based on the application of relevant civil rights law, to a Chairperson of the Commission for a determination. All information discovered throughout the course of the investigation is gathered in an objective and impartial manner. Depending upon the information obtained during the investigative process, the Chair makes a determination of either "Probable Cause" or "No Probable Cause." An attempt will be made to reach a written settlement between complainant and respondent if the Commission finds "Probable Cause." If conciliation efforts fail, the case may be scheduled for public hearing.

Mediation Program

The Commission offers a voluntary procedure in which the parties to discrimination complaints filed with the Commission may attempt to mediate and resolve their controversy short of having the Commission investigate and process the complaint. Unlike conciliation, the mediation process can begin prior to an investigation, thereby saving both parties time and money. The mediation procedure has been an effective means of resolving complaints, as in some years, more than 75% of all Commission cases were referred to mediation. The Commission is fortunate to have dedicated

and hardworking Commissioners who serve as volunteer mediators, and mediation is offered at no cost to either party. If mediation is not chosen by both parties or if mediation fails, then an investigation is completed by the Commission staff. If the Commission staff recommends a Finding of Discrimination and that is accepted and issued by the Commission Chair, then parties are required to go to conciliation. Conciliation is similar to mediation, except that the Commission is a party to any settlement and monitors compliance, and may have certain stipulations of its own for there to be settlement. If conciliation fails, which is extremely rare, the complaint will go to public hearing.

Mediation is entirely voluntary. Some mediations result in cash settlements, and other mediations may result in re-training or modifications in policy.

The Commission continues to emphasize equitable remedies to discrimination, including training, reinstatement as a tenant or employee, education, and restructured business processes in order to prevent future discrimination.

2013 Columbus Human Rights Commission Cases

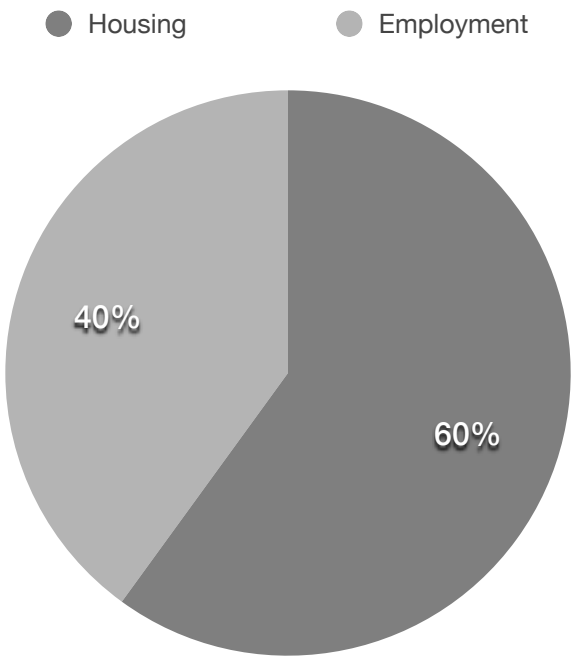


chart 1. General classification areas of cases filed under Columbus ordinance in 2013

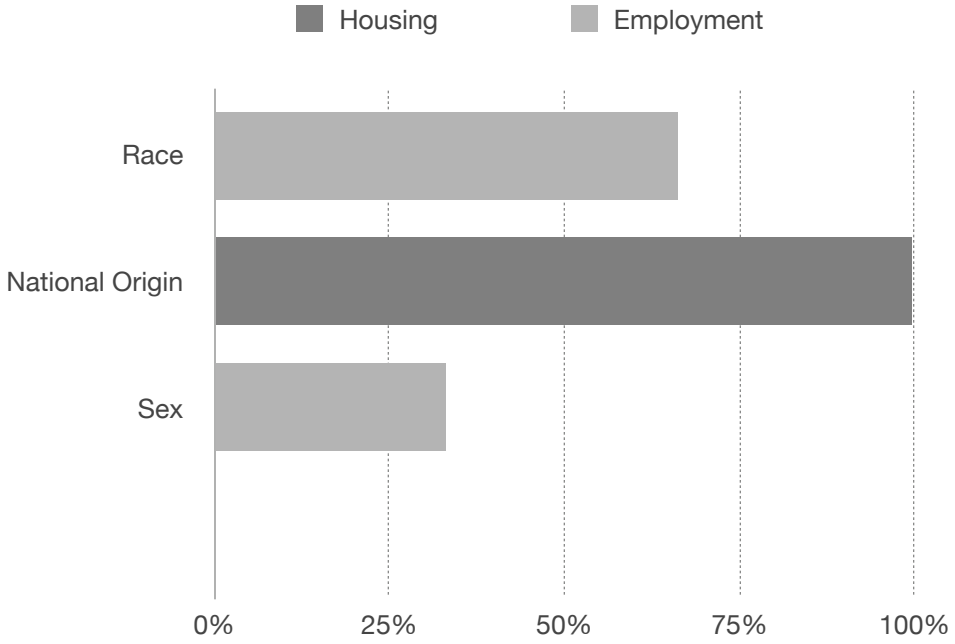


chart 2. Subclass of discrimination cases filed under Columbus ordinance in 2013

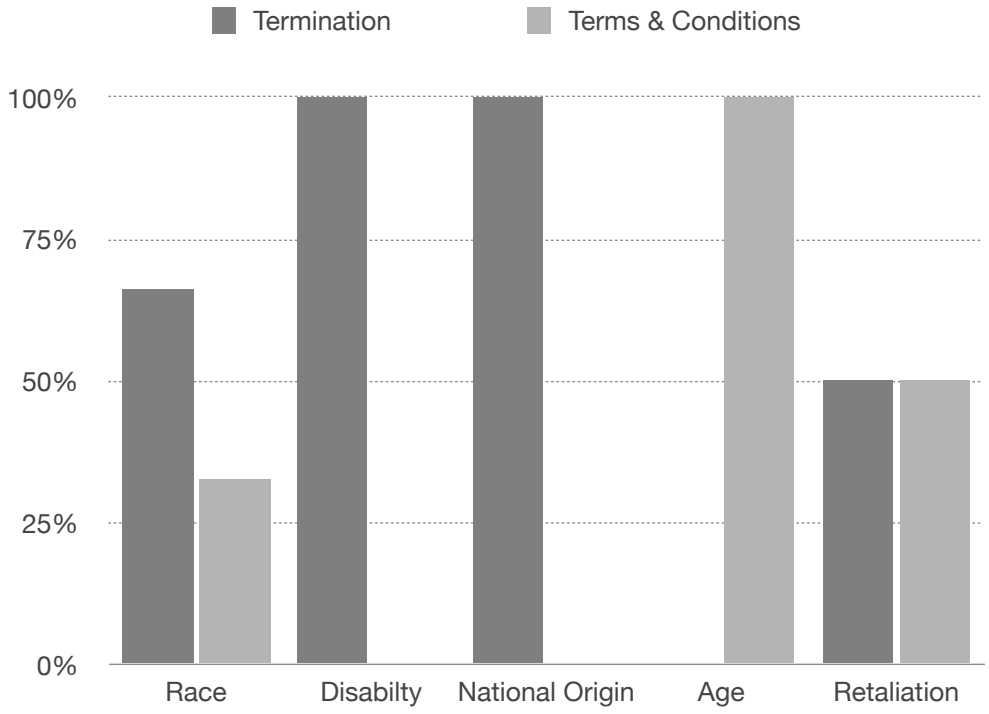


chart 3. Cases filed with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2013

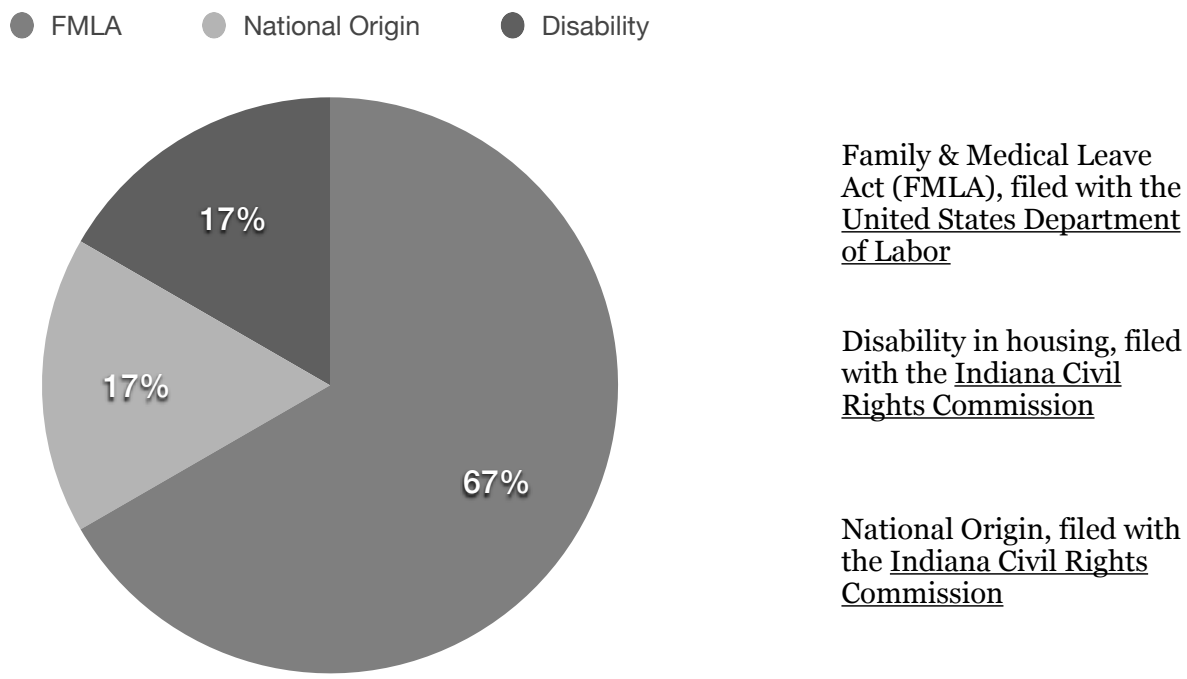


chart 4. Cases filed with other agencies in 2013

2014 Goals

Goal I – Enforcing the Ordinance – Effective case processing as a key staff priority

Goal II – Educating the Public – Implementation of current strategies and implementation of creative and innovative strategies that promote a Welcoming Community, education on anti-discrimination law, education on the work of the Commission and human rights history and diversity

Goal III – Networking with the Community – Maintain key stakeholder relationships with various welcoming community and diversity-related groups by becoming an organization knowledgeable on potential discrimination issues in the community

Goal IV – Challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality – Become a leader and or partner in the development of innovative strategies and initiatives that break down systemic discrimination by providing solutions on discrimination issues proactively through the development of community networks; by creating awareness on Welcoming Community issues and by assisting Welcoming Community and diversity-oriented groups in their work including:

- Convening and facilitating Mayor's Council on Disability and Accessibility
- As applicable, serve as co-convener of proposed Welcoming Community Stakeholder Council

- Increasing Community Disability Issues Awareness
- Providing assistance on the City of Columbus ADA Transition Plan as requested and appropriate
- Support Heritage Fund Welcoming Community Catalyst Work
- Support Mayor's City-wide strategic plan regarding Welcoming Community

— Synopsis of Goals Passed by Columbus Human Rights Commission Board October 2013

Columbus Human Rights Commission History and Purpose

History

The Columbus Human Rights Commission had its beginnings in 1962 when Mayor E. A. Welmer created the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations. The Commission began as a small group of concerned and respected local citizens with no power of legal enforcement. Complaints were filed in the Mayor's office or with individual Commissioners appointed by the Mayor. The Commissioners' only tool was their personal commitment to the formidable work of the Commission and their powers of verbal persuasion—they called it "friendly persuasion." The Commission, at this time, functioned under challenging conditions, without enforcement powers or city funding.

In 1972, because the City Council recognized the need for the Commission to have stronger tools with which to combat discrimination, the City Council passed an Ordinance that gave the Commission legal enforcement powers. At this time, the name was changed from the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations to the Columbus Human Rights Commission. In 1975, a part-time Administrative Assistant for the Commission was hired and funded by the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA). In 1977, the City Council reaffirmed its commitment by funding the Commission, in essence saying that this community does not tolerate discrimination. In the 1980's and most recently in 1992, the jurisdiction and scope of the Human Rights Ordinance was expanded by City Council, transforming the Columbus Human Rights Commission into the comprehensive civil rights enforcement agency it is today.

Purpose of Local Commissions

Most historians place the beginning of the civil rights movement in the era 1950 through 1968. Beginning in 1967 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1967, the federal government passed the most significant civil rights legislation that this country would ever see and for the first time, the full force of the federal government was exercised against discrimination in this country. This passage sent a strong message that this country stood firmly behind the concepts of equal opportunity and non-segregation. The passage of the legislation signaled that discrimination is not bound by state,

region or locality and that local governments must support the effort of anti-discrimination. Just as the federal government serves as the conscience of the nation regarding discrimination, localities serve as the conscience of cities and towns. To address the broad nature of discrimination, which can occur in various facets of community life, many states and localities within those states created human rights commissions to fill in the gaps between federal, state and local efforts to help combat discrimination. The continuing attack on the problem of discrimination must be equally broad. It must be both private and public – it must be conducted at national, state, and local levels – and it must include action from the legislative, judicial and executive branches. Discrimination knows no sectional or state boundaries. As a result, the Columbus Human Rights Commission currently operates in a legal system of parallel jurisdiction – the local ordinance enforced by the Commission contains language very similar to state statute, enforced by the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, and federal statutes, enforced by various federal government agencies.

Even with progress over the past four decades, discrimination persists and limits opportunity – all of which negates the economic health and quality of life of a community. As a result, local commissions exist to make sure that everyone in the community has an equal opportunity in employment, housing, education, credit and public accommodations. Local commissions don't exist to make money or produce a profit; it doesn't produce a tangible product. But a fundamental question for many is: how do local Commissions, such as the Columbus Human Rights Commission, contribute to the overall success and welcoming nature of a community?

The Columbus Human Rights Commission contributes to Columbus' vitality and excellent quality of life by playing an integral role in a broad circle of remedies in five main areas: (1) Strategic partnering in Economic Development, (2) Comprehensive Enforcement of Civil Rights Laws, (3) Proactive Enforcement by providing free technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach to organizations, (4) the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics, and (5) in providing local solutions to local problems.

- The Commission is a strategic partner in economic development.

Clearly, discrimination hampers the economic growth of a community by preventing the maximum development and utilization of our manpower. The federal and state governments have decided that local civil rights enforcement is a priority they wish to encourage because federal and state civil rights agencies continue to be over-burdened with cases, under-staffed and stretched resources and they cannot always provide the most comprehensive enforcement of civil rights law. As a result, some federal and state grants require a community to have local civil rights enforcement to even be considered for the grant money, and most federal and state grants favor applicants who have local enforcement of civil rights. Although the city's budget is made up of local tax dollars, a portion of the city's budget each year is made up of federal and state funds, not just local tax dollars. And because the federal and state governments have control over these taxpayer-supported funds, they can choose which communities will receive federal and state funds. The local Commission helps the city receive over 2 million dollars a year in state and federal grants for economic development that make possible senior housing, affordable housing, city buses and bus transportation, better roads and bridges, better technology for crime-fighting and many other improvements.

- The Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement of civil rights laws.

The city's decision to have local civil rights enforcement is like the city's decision to have a local police force—the county's sheriff's department is still there and the state police are still there, and the FBI is still there, but citizens of Columbus benefit by getting a police response to their 911 call in roughly five minutes, rather than possibly waiting longer if another law enforcement agency had to respond. By having local enforcement of civil rights, the city receives more comprehensive enforcement. The strong institutional presence of the local commission helps maximize equal opportunity services.

Local Commissions ensure that individuals have meaningful access to EEO technical expertise and the investigatory process. By responding effectively to a wide array of discrimination cases that have varying levels of complexity, claimants are ensured that they have access to enforcement processes to vindicate citizens' rights.

The Commission has jurisdiction to look into complaints filed against employers with six or more employees, which is smaller than the EEOC's jurisdiction. The Columbus Human Rights Commission is the only agency required to investigate all officially filed complaints of discrimination in the City of Columbus. What does that mean in real terms? It means the little guy can get help. It means a server in a restaurant who is sexually harassed can get help, even if she does not work for a national chain of restaurants. The Columbus Human Rights Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement and a quicker response.

- The Commission provides cost effective technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach programs, in order to prevent local problems before they occur.

While Columbus is home to a Fortune 500 company who has attorneys and human resource professionals working in-house, Columbus is also home to many small businesses that do not have the resources to have an attorney on retainer or have a large personnel department. Yet smaller businesses must comply with civil rights laws, too, and those same businesses support the work of the Commission through their payment of local tax dollars, as they do all local government services. The Commission provides local businesses with technical assistance without charge that is not available from state and federal agencies.

The staff of the Commission answer business people's questions on the phone, provide model policies and other resources, and provide training without charge to local employers and their employees, to local property management companies and their employees, to local public and private schools, and to local places of public accommodation. Area businesses receive an extremely high level of service from the Commission, which they support through their payment of local taxes. A local commission facilitates cost effective, efficient delivery of services in the prevention of discrimination and remedy of discrimination.

The intangible value of these trainings and resources offered by the Commission come in the form of having a direct impact upon changed behavior in our schools, workplaces and public accommodations, with a good deal of the work done behind the scenes. For instance, so much work done behind the scenes is nevertheless very valuable to the community, and those individualized resources and support are not available on a federal and state level. The local commission provides cost-effective, efficient delivery of human rights services.

- The Commission provides Columbus with the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics.

The Columbus community is changing demographically, which creates a need to respond in a way that facilitates community growth and stability and allows all community members to prosper. Changing demographics and shifting population trends only heighten the critical need for outreach into local communities. People must have confidence in a community's ability to respond effectively when they seek assistance in vindicating their rights. But the presence of the Columbus Human Rights Commission makes Columbus well positioned to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse community it serves. As a critical piece to creating a welcoming community and a healthy quality of life, the Columbus Human Rights Commission partners with community groups to educate community members about their legal rights and to educate employers about their legal obligations – while also bridging understanding on cultural differences.

- The Commission provides Columbus with local solutions to local problems.

The Commission, a local, all-volunteer eleven-member Board, ensures that here is a local alternative – local solutions to local problems, rather than civil rights law enforcement agencies from the federal government and the state government being the only alternative—and therefore coming to Columbus to investigate and enforce all civil rights violations.

The Commission was originally founded when there was no financial incentive to provide local enforcement of civil rights. Local citizens saw that there were problems of discrimination in Columbus that were not being adequately addressed by state and federal agencies, and decided to address them locally. According to testimony from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, it is generally held that a complaint handled at the local level affords an opportunity for a more expedient response and a greater potential for a satisfactory resolution. Many Columbus citizens believed, and still believe that the best solutions to challenges facing this community will come from within this community. All staff persons are required to live in or adjacent to Bartholomew County, and all of the volunteers who serve as Commissioners live in Bartholomew County. The Commission is controlled by an eleven-member Board of volunteers, appointed by City Council and sworn into office by the Mayor. The community originally founded the Commission because it was the right thing to do, and the reason the Commission continues to serve the community is not only because it makes sense financially, but simply because it is the right thing to do.

The Commission's fifty-year history stands for the principle that Columbus values all members of the community. Columbus is open to persons of all races, religions, abilities and ethnic backgrounds to join the community, contribute, and be fully included. Beginning in 1962, with wisdom and foresight, elected officials and other community leaders created the Commission in order to enforce the principles of fair treatment, respect, and inclusion, and with that same wisdom and foresight, today's elected officials and community leaders continue to sustain a strong Human Rights Commission. The continued support of City Council members and Mayors from both political parties has given Columbus a progressive human rights ordinance that identifies our community as committed to equal treatment and willing to strive toward full inclusion in all aspects of community life.

2014 Benjamin M. King Essay & J. Irwin Miller Art Contest

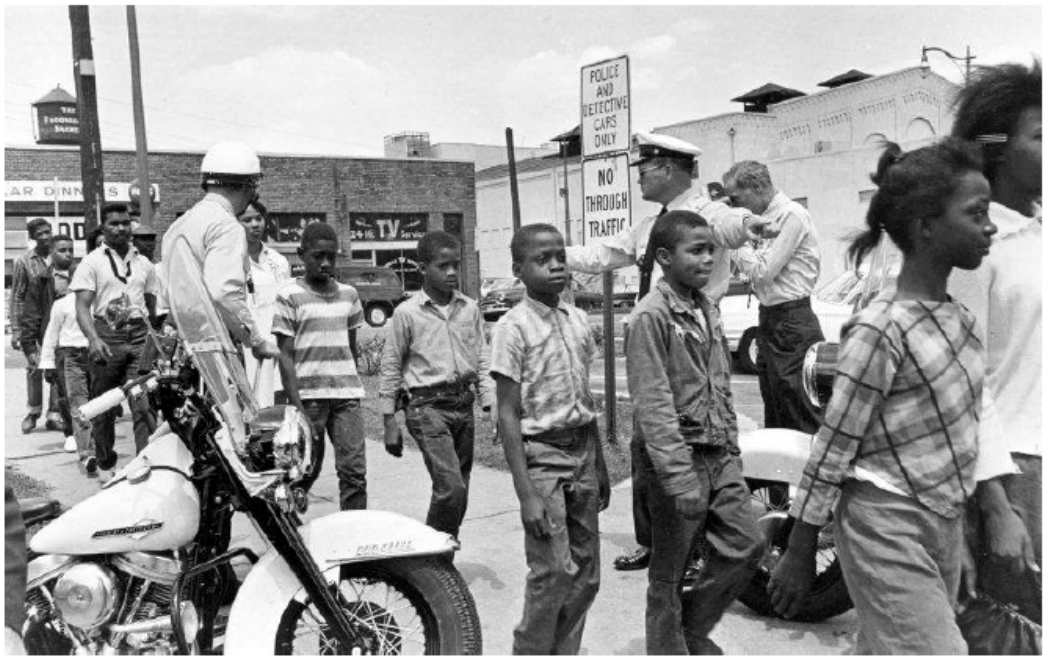
This year's theme was "21st Century Crusade". Students were first given a brief primer which included, in part, the following:

> "To most Americans, the term "civil rights" often refers to the rights guaranteed to us in the U.S. Constitution such as the freedom to choose one's religion, freedom of speech, the ability to freely travel among the states and the right to vote. Historically speaking, civil rights were not afforded to every individual, regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity."
>
> "These events [describing the American Civil Rights movement], and others like them, are important reminders of the sacrifice that many individuals made in order to change the laws and practices that acted as instruments of oppression. During the 1960's Civil Rights Movement, some of the most courageous freedom fighters were children your age! These children participated in the "Children's Crusade" and marched in the streets of Birmingham, Alabama, for freedom and against segregation. Although they risked arrest and jail time, these children epitomized perseverance in the face of adversity."

The objective was to create an original essay or work of art that responded to this call:

> "If you could start one, what would a '21st Century Children's Crusade' look like?"

Pictures, such as the one shown below, were shown to students to get them motivated into action!



Policemen lead a group of black school children into jail on May 4, 1963. Photograph by Bill Hudson/Associated Press.

Coordinating a county-wide essay and art contest is a major undertaking and would not be possible without the hard work, dedication, and volunteerism of the Columbus community. These volunteers gave up their time for several weeks in order to read the essays, review artwork and select the winners. Area teachers, many of whom made the contest part of their school assignments, supported the contests, thereby ensuring its success. The Columbus Human Rights Commission thanks these participating judges and teachers for a job well done!

Emilie Pinkston	**Angie Boyer**	**Ian Kohen**
Sarah Warfield	**Matt Barbiea**	**Mary Kohen**
Stephanee Squires-Roberts	**Wayne Hanrattie**	**Mary Clare Speckner**
Sarah Cannon	**Austin Newberry**	**Sharon Hanrattie**
Michael Siegel	**JD Morris**	**Lisa Siefker Bailey**
Susi Gentry	**Warwan Mugasa**	**Therese Copeland**
Sharmila Vivekanandan	**Denise Cull**	**Sherrie Grable**

The above community judges anonymously selected a winner in each of the categories listed below. Winners of the Benjamin M. King Essay and J. Irwin Miller Art contests are honored at the Commission's annual dinner where they are presented with a check for $75 and a relevant book. The Commission congratulates these winners:

2014 Benjamin M. King Essay Contest Winners		
Elementary School Division:	Sveni Thalor	Southside Elementary School
Middle School Division:	Kennedy Cook	Northside Middle School
High School Division:	Sarah Pankratz	North High School

2014 J. Irwin Miller Art Contest Winners		
Elementary School Division:	Erica Song	Parkside Elementary School
Middle School Division:	Adhil Akbar	Central Middle School
High School Division:	Akina Minamikawa	North High School

(Verbatim Entry)

21st Century Children's Crusade

Human Rights Essay

By: Sveni Thalor

Teacher: Becky Williams

Imagine. You are a child living on the streets of a poor country in Africa. You always go to sleep hungry. You can never ignore the painful growling in your belly, and you look almost anorexic. You are forced to beg and roam the streets, looking for food in trash cans. People shun you and never give you money when you beg. You freeze in winter because you do not have adequate clothing. This is what victims of world hunger are forced to suffer through every day.

World hunger is not as negligible as it may seem. Many people, especially children, go through the day without adequate food or even any at all! Poor countries all over the world have problems with world hunger. Even when the government of a country decides to take action, too many people are hungry and there is not much that can be done. There are many victims of world hunger that die each year. Few die directly from starvation. Hunger weakens those who do not have adequate food, and illnesses are able to kill them easily. About 9 million children under the age of five will die needlessly this year. More than half will die of causes related to hunger. Three out of four of those who are hungry live in rural areas. This is because of the unpredictable weather that causes famines.

I would lead a 21st century children's crusade for world hunger. This is because world hunger is a terrible problem that encroaches upon many people's health. In fact, in Asia, 533 million people suffered from world hunger in 2013! In Africa, the number was 227 million, and in Latin America and the Caribbean, 47 million people had to go to sleep hungry. Even developed countries had some world hunger; about 16 million people sugared. I would lead a children's crusade to cause the governments of these countries to try much harder, despite their current high efforts. There *is* enough food in the world to go round, even though so many people starve each year. The only problem is access to the food.

If I organized a 21st century children's crusade, it would cause governments of countries all around the world to provide better access to food for those living in poor countries. The number of hungry people may be reduced. Children, adults, and seniors alike will go to sleep with full stomachs.

World hunger is a wonderful cause to contribute to. Anyone can make a difference by donating even a small account. Online websites, like freerice.com, donate food if you fill out a survey, take a small test, or even answer questions and improve your knowledge! As John F. Kennedy once said, "The war against hunger is truly mankind's war of liberation."

(Verbatim Entry)

Children's Crusade

By: Kennedy Cook

Teacher: Julie O'Dell

I spent some time reflecting on Birmingham's story. It was bold, brave and gutsy. Most of all inspiring. I am tired of being a bystander, although I am young, I fell I can make an impact on my society for the greater good.

"The word equality shows up too much in our founding documents for anyone to pretend it's not the American way." — Martha Plimton

Our world, out country, America is about freedom, equality and justice. Everyone wants it but does everyone have it? No. In the Declaration of Independence it states "all men are created equal." Then why is Indiana trying to ban LGBT marriage? One of our human rights, as Americans, is the right to marry whomever we may choose. Maybe some of you do not morally agree with it but, does that mean we deny our citizens this basic right?

Many LGBT teenagers walk around knowing they may never be accepted by peers, teachers, even their own parents and, now, have their rights over looked by the government. They will never be happy. The declaration states "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Happiness, isn't that all everyone wants? Statistically, about 20% of LGBT teenagers attempt suicide and they are more prone to bullying just for being them?

Being accepted is not only issue we, as Americans, deal with. Banning gay marriage and rights does not only affect our well-being it affects the economy. Cummins, Marya Rose, chief administrative officer stated "If we have a climate in our state that makes people feel unwelcome in any way, we think that's bad for Cummins, and we think that's bad for business." Talent comes in from everywhere. Different shapes, sizes, colors, and yes sexuality. On a smaller scale, In my opinion my generation will choose not to stay here, in Columbus, if we are told who to love and how to act in our own homes. Meaning business here is lost.

For gay and lesbian rights to not be recognized is outrageous. This country is built on freedom and that's why people come here. The government should take the first step and show the world that America is the place to be, that we have rights and are truly free. America will not stand for less and neither will I.

The story of these young people fighting for equality was just purely moving. I have been so inspired I have choose to send this essay to Indiana's senator, who will be voting on HJR3 sometime this week. I hope my voice will be heard. Hopefully it will make an impact on this generation and future generations.

(Verbatim Entry)

My LGBTQ Rights Crusade

By: Sarah Pankratz

Teacher: Mimi Hageman-Bingham

I've always felt very strongly about LGBTQ rights, or the lack thereof. The rights of LGBTQs are the most prominent issue of society.

According to recent gay bullying statistics, gay and lesbian teens are two to three times as more likely to commit teen suicide than straight teens. About 30% of all suicides have been related to sexual identity crisis. About 28% of bullied LGBTQ youth are forced to drop out of school altogether. Nine out of ten gay and lesbian students are regularly bullied because of their sexual orientation. These statistics are astonishing and something must be done about them. We were not raised by our ancestors to be hateful to those who are different.

No one should feel unsafe in the United States of America. Our country was founded on the belief that all men shall be happy. When gay and lesbian people wake up, they have a much more difficult time feeling comfortable, even in their own home. More than 64% of LGBT students say they feel unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation. People are dying because of close-minded people's haste and discrimination.

People who bash on the LGBTQ community are scared of what's different. In the 1960's civil rights movement, Martin Luther King Jr. said "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." My life began several years ago when I became part of the LGBTQ alliance. But more needs to be done. Protests, boycotts, and social media stands are already being taken, but more needs to happen in this crusade, just like the civil rights movement.

What more can the crusade do? LGBTQ bullying and discrimination will never stop if action is not taken. The most important thing to remember is the golden rule. "Treat others the way you want to be treated." No one should have to undergo name calling, assault, verbal/mental harassment, and more, all because of something that they can't control.

One thing that needs to be changed is same-sex marriage. Today only 17 states have legalized gay marriage. Gay marriage is protected by the Constitution's commitments to liberty and equality. It is a human right that should be given to ALL humans, not just heterosexuals. Denying same-sex couples the right to marry stigmatizes gay and lesbian families as inferior and sends the message that it is acceptable to discriminate against them, which causes hatred and suicide rates to skyrocket. The concept of "traditional marriage" being defined as one man and one woman is historically inaccurate.

In fact, when ancient Indians roamed North America, same sex marriages were considered more sacred and more holy than "traditional" marriages. Also, gay divorce rates are an estimated 87% lower than heterosexual marriage. The LGBTQ community is doing everything in their power to help people open their minds, but they need help. There once was a time when inter-racial marriage was illegal too, but love was able to overcome.

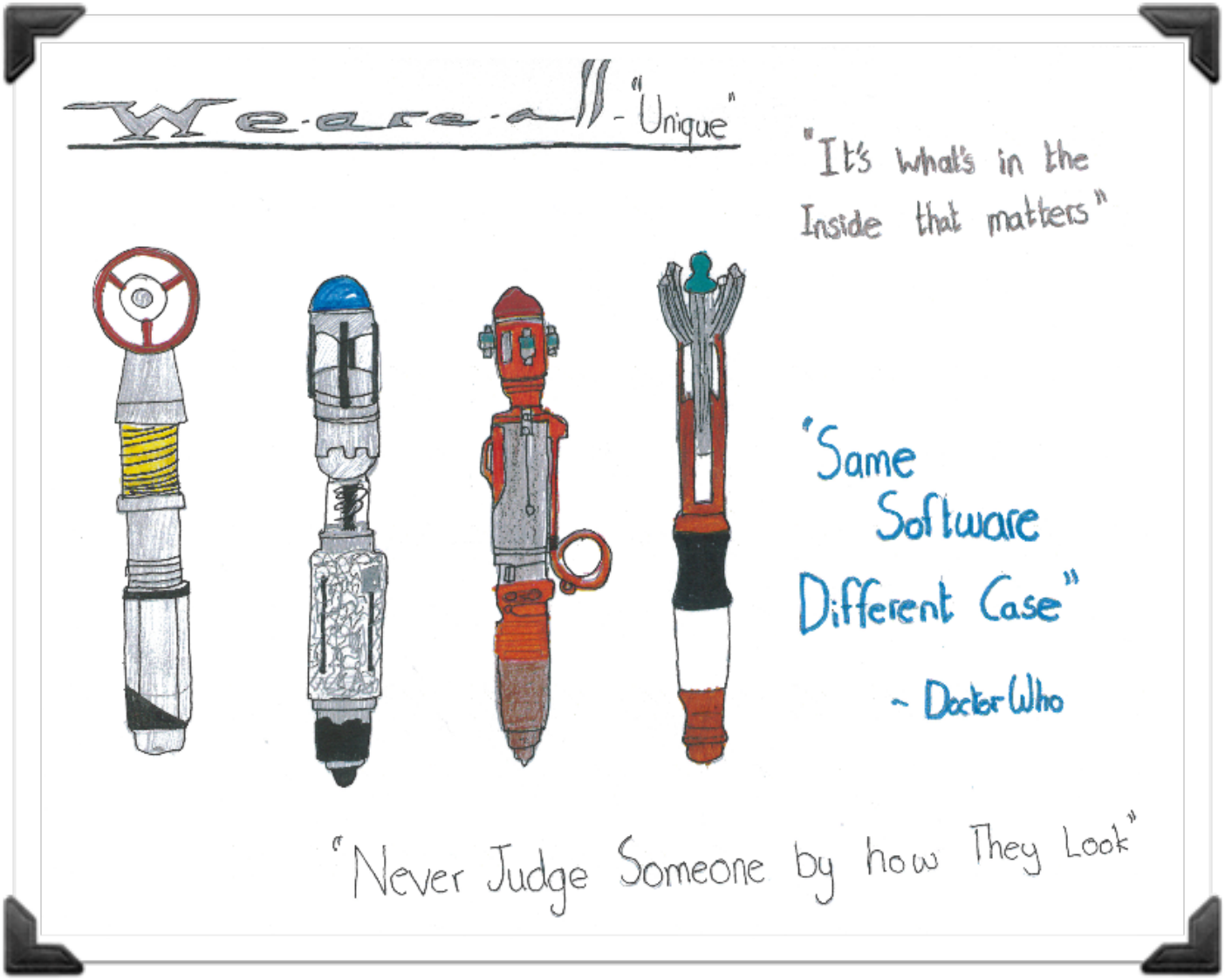
I personally have had to deal with the discrimination and hatred of people who are afraid of change. I am not gay, nor will I ever be gay, but I love my homosexual brother more than anything else on this earth. No one should discriminate against me, or anyone else, just for loving someone.

Love is a beautiful thing. After all is said and done, love is the natural course of live. If love is beautiful and natural, then how can the love between two people of the same sex be anything but that? Generations to come should be able to love each other, no matter what. I want my children and their children to feel safe and happy, if one happens to be a homosexual. I want to be able to walk down the hallways, and not be judged because of my family. All we ask for is equality.

The LGBTQ's scenario is not so different than the scenario of the 1960's civil rights movement. It will take an open mind and an open heart to right the wrongs of the world. The overall theme is that "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." — Martin Luther King Jr.

Artwork by: Erica Song

Teacher: Elizabeth Stroh



Artwork by: Adhil Akbar

Teacher: Melinda Summers

2014 William R. Laws Human Rights Award Winner

PRESENTED TO THOMAS D. HARMON

THOMAS D. HARMON

At the February 2014 Commission meeting, the full board unanimously selected Tom Harmon for his work in improving relations among the people of Bartholomew County. Harmon was selected for his leadership of CAMEO, the Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization, while working closely with the Columbus Young Professionals (CYP) and Leadership Bartholomew County (LBC).

Using his business acumen, he developed a realistic and achievable business plan which led to the production of the Welcoming Guide which highlights ethnic and broad community connections. Harmon's leadership was instrumental in the formation of the CAMEO/CYP/LBC partnership, as a founding member of CAMEO and a leader within that organization.

Nominations stated that Harmon has worked tirelessly to bring together diverse members of the Columbus community and he led efforts to increase the visibility of diverse groups in the community by finding new opportunities and partnerships to share their cultures. This past year, Harmon's efforts brought together several families to form the African American Fund of Bartholomew County which will provide grants which will educate, inspire and equip African Americans in Bartholomew County in the areas of Education, Leadership Development, Economic and Career Development, Health Awareness and Arts and Culture.

Harmon is CEO of Taylor Brothers Construction Co., Inc., Vice President of Harmon Construction, Inc., and President of Harmon Steel, Inc. He serves as President of the Columbus Regional Health Foundation, Chair of Heritage Fund's Outreach Committee and he serves on the Columbus Area Sports Advisory Committee.

Past recipients of the award include Owen Hungerford, Bob Pitman, Tracy Souza, J. Irwin Miller, Madelynn Smith, Rev. Duff Green, Rev. Charles Sims, Larry Whaley, Rev. John Bean, Ted Marston, Richard Stoner, Bill Barton, Larry Snyder, Barbara Wrighthouse, Gwen Wiggins, Charles Imel, Joseph High, Mayor Robert Stewart, Barbara Stewart, Lee Hamilton, Jim Henderson, Benjamin "Mickey" King (posthumously), Juana Watson, Mayor Fred Armstrong, Sondra Bolte, Tim Solso, Joe Loughrey and Heritage Fund-- the Community Foundation of Bartholomew County.

In Memoriam

Chrystal M. Pushor

Former Columbus Human Rights Commissioner

1932-2013

Rev. John R. Bean

Served on Mayor's Commission on Human Rights

1989 William R. Laws Human Rights Award Winner

1928-2013

Acknowledgements

THE COMMISSION THANKS:

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Tom Harmon

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