

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Interim Chair Message	1
Advisory Council Updates	2
Standing Together Against Hate and Bias	3
Fair Housing Training Conf.	3
Outreach Activities	4
Photo Gallery	5 -6
Strategic Plan Update	6



M. Joel Bolstein
PHRC Interim Chair

Message from the Interim Chair

Greetings Everyone,

I want to start by thanking my fellow commissioners, our hard-working and dedicated staff, and all of our partners around the commonwealth for everything you do to fight discrimination. It has been a busy summer for PHRC.

In July, commissioners and executive staff met to begin the strategic planning process. We spent a day going through exercises that helped us define the direction for the future of the commission. Additional time has been set aside during commission meetings as well as staff meetings to gather information in order to refine goals and objectives. This fall, we look forward to having a finalized strategic plan for 2017-2021.

In August, we held the first annual Housing Training Conference for staff and stakeholders. Nearly sixty people attended. Speakers included Sara Pratt, Sheryll Cashin, author of the book "Place, Not Race" and Kristina Musante – all well known in the fair housing field. Please see page 3 for more information on the training conference.

For the past nine months, the PHRC has seen an increase in incidents of hate and bias. The PHRC released a statement on August 8 condemning the racist and hateful actions of neo-Nazi groups, white supremacists and the KKK that were carried out in Charlottesville, VA. <http://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/PA-Human-Relations-Commission-Details.aspx?newsid=65>

On September 11, the PHRC and NAACP along with partners from the PA State Police, Community Responders Network, ACLU, PA Legislative Black Caucus, and the Council on American-Islamic Relations held a news conference to "Stand Together Against Hate and Bias". As partners it is important to be able to support one another to keep an open dialogue on how our diverse nature brings many opportunities and ideas to the table. We thank our partners for joining us in this effort.

Our staff continues to evaluate the comments received on the Proposed LGBTQ Policy Guidance that was posted on our website for public comment. I expect the commission will be able to review the comment/response document during its November commission meeting. We thank everyone who took the time to comment and continue to ask that you remain patient with us in providing a response.

We are meeting with legislators on an ongoing basis to provide clarity on the services and processes of the commission as well as, the impact that recent budget has had on our ability to implement PHRC's mission.

I'm proud of the work we do and how everyone is pulling together to protect the civil rights of the citizens of the commonwealth.

Advisory Council News

Most of the PHRC's 10 Advisory Councils (AC) will be holding meetings this fall. Here are some of the highlights:

- Blair County is recruiting members for the Fall 2017.
- Lancaster/Lebanon/Berks continues to focus on English Language Learners (ELL) programs and school busing issues in their area.
- Lehigh Valley held a meet and greet with the new Allentown school administrator.
- York County planned a fall series of presentations for new members and the community starting with a session on hate and bias.
- Centre County held an end of summer picnic to recruit members and to educate the public about the activities of the advisory council.
- Montgomery County will be holding several town informational meetings.
- Cumberland/Dauphin/Perry is seeking a new chairperson.

This fall, we also hope to establish advisory councils in both Erie and Luzerne Counties. If you or someone you know is interested in joining, please contact Lyle Wood at lwood@pa.gov for Erie and Geoff Biringer gbiringer@pa.gov for Luzerne. Please see below for scheduled dates for upcoming meetings.

The PHRC promotes equal opportunity for all and enforces Pennsylvania's civil rights laws that protect people from unlawful discrimination. It is our vision that all people in Pennsylvania are able to live, work and learn free from unlawful discrimination.

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Meetings for Advisory Councils

Cambia County Greater Johnstown High School 1091 Broad St., Johnstown Third Monday of month Next meeting: 10/16/17 @ noon	Monroe County – Will be resuming meetings some time during the fall
Blair County Kings Restaurant 201 Sierra Dr., Altoona Last Tuesday of each month Next meeting: 10/24/17 @ noon	Montgomery County Montgomery County Community College 340 DeKalb Pike, Blue Bell Third Thursday of each month Next meeting: 10/19/17 @ 5:00 PM
Centre County State College Borough Bldg. S. Allen St., State College Second Wednesday each month Next meeting: 10/11/17 @ 7:30 PM	SouthWestPA (Allegheny, Westmoreland and Washington Co) For information contact Jelani Cooper at 717-783-8499 Next meeting: 10/18/17 – held by conference call @ 7:00 PM
Cumberland/Dauphin/Perry Co. 333 Market St., Harrisburg Second Tuesday of each month Next meeting: 10/17/17* @ 3:30 PM (*due to schedule conflicts)	York County Crispus Attucks Center 605 S. Duke St., York Third Wednesday of the month Next meeting: 10/18/17 @ 5:00 PM
Lebanon/Lancaster/Berks HACC Lebanon Campus 735 Cumberland St., Lebanon Meet every other month Next meeting: 11/17 @ 2:00 PM	Lehigh Valley Northampton Community College Meet monthly Next meeting: 10/24/17 @ 4:00 PM

Standing Together Against Hate and Bias

The PA Human Relations Commission (PHRC) and the Greater Harrisburg Chapter of the NAACP, along with other partners, gathered on September 11, 2017 at a press conference at the Capitol to “Stand Together Against Hate and Bias.”

Due to the increase of hate and bias incidents the over the past year, including in Charlottesville, VA, the PHRC, NAACP and partners were responding to the injustices and targeting of individuals and groups. Moving forward, it is the group’s plan to build partnerships and coalitions that help create and enhance peaceful dialogues in communities throughout the commonwealth.

The PHRC and NAACP were joined by:

- Hon. Jordan Harris, Chairman of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus
- Sgt. Robert Bailey, Pennsylvania State Police – Office of Policy & Legislative Affairs
- Sgt. William Slaton, Pennsylvania State Police – Office of Equality & Inclusion
- Elizabeth Randol, American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania (ACLU-PA) – Legislative Director
- Aaysha Noor, Advisory Board Member, Council on American-Islamic Relations – PA (CAIR)
- Judith Samkoff, Community Responders Network

The PHRC looks forward to working with our partners in helping individuals and communities combat hate and bias. Check out our website for more information: <http://www.phrc.pa.gov/biasandhate/Pages/Bias-Hate-Crimes-Information.aspx>

PHRC First Annual Housing Training Conference

The PHRC held its First Annual Housing Training Conference for staff and partners on Wednesday, August 9, 2017 at the PA Turnpike Commission building in Middletown, PA. Funding for the training conference came from the US. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The agenda was packed with great speakers and good topics on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing; Hoarding, Reasonable Accommodations; Support/Service Animals; Criminal Re-entry and Housing; Valuable Lessons Learned in Fair Housing and Place not Race. Some national speakers included: Kristina Musante, JD, National Community Reinvestment Coalition; Sara Pratt, JD, of Relman, Dane and Colfax and former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Enforcement and Programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity; and Sheryll Cashin, JD, author of “Place Not Race,” and Professor of Law at Georgetown University; Christopher Dubble, MSW, Director of Temple University’s Institute on Protective Services for Older Adults and Jinada Rochelle, PHRC Asst. Director of Enforcement .

The conference was quite a success and the PHRC plans to hold a second housing training conference next April 2018 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act. We will provide more information in the near future regarding this conference.

For information on housing, visit our website: www.phrc.pa.gov

UPDATED PHRC PUBLICATIONS

PHRC Complaint Process
Discrimination Facts
www.phrc.pa.gov

NEW! PENNSYLVANIA FAIR HOUSING COLORING BOOK

Great for events and school presentations www.phrc.pa.gov

PHRC Outreach Activities

The PHRC staff have been busy reaching out to communities with training and education. Here are some highlights:

In July:

- Tameka Hatcher provided Bullying Prevention Workshop at St. Barnabas Day Camp at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Harrisburg.
- Tameka Hatcher read "Fair Housing Five and the Haunted House" book to 40 students at St. Barnabas Day Camp at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Harrisburg.
- Heather Roth and Tameka Hatcher provided training to Diversity and Inclusion Professionals of Central PA in Camp Hill.
- Heather Roth and Jinada Rochelle provided training on Service Animals and Public Accommodations for the Grange Fair Association.

In August:

- Geoff Biringler attended the YWCA's Community Responder Network Education and Prevention Meeting.
- Heather Roth provided anti-discrimination training for managers in York.
- Geoff Biringler attended the Centre County Advisory Council Picnic and Membership recruitment meeting in State College.
- Geoff Biringler took part in the Refugee Conference held at the Catholic Diocese in Harrisburg.
- Heather Roth trained the Pocono Mountain Assoc. of Realtors on diversity and fair housing topics in Stroudsburg.
- Geoff Biringler trained managers and supervisors on employment discrimination at Hiossen, Inc.
- Geoff Biringler provided employment discrimination training for the Lebanon Career and Technology Institute.
- Carl Summerson participated in a community forum held by the Governor's Advisory Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs in Scranton. Carl spoke about the PHRC services and discussed hate and bias issues.
- Lyle Wood participated in a weekend series of events in Pittsburgh following the Charlottesville, VA, riot which included a Prayer for Pittsburgh event and a day of activities for the community and families in Homewood.
- Jelani Cooper participated in SWPA Advisory Council meeting.

In September:

- JoAnn Edwards and Christina Reese attended a news conference in the Main Capitol kicking off Hispanic Heritage Month.
 - PHRC and NAACP and partners held a news conference to stand together against hate and bias.
 - Geoff Biringler and Tammy McElfresh attended a Disability Network meeting in Harrisburg.
 - Geoff Biringler attended a "Meet and Greet" with the new Allentown School District Superintendent, sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Advisory Council.
 - Deven Price attended a meeting with students at Chambersburg High School (HS). Chambersburg HS had to close school and cancel a football game on Friday, September 15 due to fighting and discord among students. PHRC will be working with partners to help the school address issues relating to diversity and inclusion.
 - Geoff Biringler attended a unity day event in Hummelstown
 - Christina Reese attended a training session on hate and bias offered by the York County Advisory Council for the public. Mark Rhoades from Key Learning, Inc. provided an overview on how to identify your own biases. The advisory council will also sponsored a session on ways to respond to hate and bias issues with the Community Responders Network.
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Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month is September 15 to October 15. During this time, PHRC recognizes the contributions made and the important presence of Hispanic and Latino Americans in Pennsylvania and the United States. We celebrate their heritage and culture.

On September 15, JoAnn Edwards and Christina Reese attended the news conference held by the Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs to kick off Hispanic Heritage Month.

At the event, the commission was presented with a proclamation from Governor Wolf declaring September 15 through October 15, 2017 as Hispanic Heritage Month in Pennsylvania.

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month: L to R – Norman Bristol Colon, Director of Special Project, Dept. of State; Commissioner Isamac Torres-Figueroa; State Rep. Angel Cruz; Luz Colon, Exec. Director (GACLA); Commissioner George Fernandez; Sec. of State Pedro Cortes; Sec. of Education Pedro Rivera and Executive Deputy of Dept. of State Robert Torres.



Photo Gallery



Standing Together Against Hate and Bias News Conference – 9/11/17

JoAnn Edwards speaking; left to right: Brandon Flood, NAACP; Rep. Jordan Harris, PA Legislative Black Caucus Chair; Sargents Robert Bailey and William Slayton; Elizabeth Randol, ACLU; Aaysha Noor, CAIR; Judith Samkoff, CRN



First Annual Fair Housing Conference – Left top clockwise: Attendees registering for the conference
Presenters: Christopher Dubble, Kristina Musante, Jinada Rochelle, Sara Pratt and Sheryll Cashin

Strategic Plan Update

As part of the strategic planning process PHRC staff and commissioners were asked to participate in the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis survey.

Survey participation results were:

- Commissioners and Leadership Staff – 68 percent participated
- PHRC Staff – 88 percent participate

This level of participation is phenomenal! Thank you PHRC Commissioners and staff for your commitment to the PHRC!

DON'T FORGET!

PHRC can provide free training for your organization. Training options include:

- Hate and Bias
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Sex discrimination
- Service/Support Animals
- Fair Housing

More information available at phrc@pa.gov