

TO: Colorado Springs City Council

FROM: Colorado Springs Human Relations Commission

RE: Year in Review- April 1, 2014- March 30, 2015

**Commissioners:** The HRC has positions for 9 commissioners and 3 alternates. This list is a result of the annual elections in March 2014:

Anja Wynne, Chair

Tom Strand, Co-Chair

Laura Wedemeyer, Treasurer

Teressa Hill, Secretary

Bill Chancy

James Chaney

Christine Davidson, alternate

Brenda Dukart

Di Graski

Karla Heard-Price

Brooke Kallstrom, moved to Pueblo and resigned in August 2014

#### **Community Outreach:**

1. The HRC took a strategic initiative and partnered with the Department of Justice to plan a state-wide conference with fellow Colorado HRCs. The two-day seminar focused on best practice, conflict resolution and community building initiatives; eighteen commissioners from Front Range communities attended the seminar.
2. Community Mental Health Dialogues & Action Forum- In collaboration with NAMI, Food for Thought and the Diversity Forum, the HRC assisted with community dialogues at Colorado College, UCCS, and the Mining Exchange, on the topic of mental illness in the community. Commissioners facilitated dialogues, coordinated logistic support and served on the Steering Committee. Each event involved approximately 150 participants.
3. Housing 101 Forum- In collaboration with the local NAACP Chapter, the HRC hosted a community forum at the Sand Creek Library on topics related to leasing/renting property in Colorado Springs. The panel consisted of
  - a. Willie Breazell, independent owner and leasing
  - b. Robert Carr, Weidner Properties, owner-operator
  - c. Magistrate Evelyn Hernandez-Sullivan
  - d. Richard Sullivan, Section 8, Federal/State housing
  - e. Officer Robert Wilson, CSPD

Thirty community members attended and participants donated approximately 60 lbs of food to Care & Share. Issues of concern:

- a. Not enough Section 8 Public housing in the community.
- b. Individuals with disabilities were concerned about equity in leases.

- c. There is a need for translated leases, i.e. Spanish.
4. El Pomar Emerging Leaders Development Program- The HRC provided a presentation to each of the emerging leader groups in the month of March in support of the community involvement theme. All nine Commissioners participated in at least one of the four presentations and used this opportunity to network and recruit potential applicants to fill the current vacancies.
5. YourCOS forum- The HRC provided information to community participants about the role of commissions, community involvement and the general role of the HRC.
6. Everybody Welcome Festival- commissioners provided an information booth at the community event which drew approximately 6,000 citizens on a very stormy Sunday in August.

**Guest Speakers:** Commissioners invite community leaders and agencies to attend monthly meetings in order to promote education and collaboration.

1. Amy Licanto, 2-1-1
2. Officer Wilson and LT Santos, CSPD Community Relations
3. Lamar Richardson, State DOC Community Re-Entry Specialist
4. Susan Payne, Safe-to-Tell
5. Amy Long, Colorado Springs Visitor Bureau
6. Amy Dinofrio, United Way
7. Deb Walker, Citizen's Project

**Cases:** Commissioners receive call via a phone line monitored by the City Attorney's Office. Calls are forwarded to the HRC officers and distributed to commissioners on a rotational roster. This is a sample of the types of cases received this year.

1. Landlord tenant case- multiple mold complaints; one specifically concerned medical issues for a pregnant female tenant
2. Apartment complex restricting a tenant from using the community bulletin board to advertise LGBT events in Colorado Springs.
3. Renter's reaction to chemical treatment of bed bug
4. Possible workplace discrimination in promotions
5. Racial discrimination in senior housing

**2015-2016 Plans:**

1. Appoint four new commissioners
2. Meet with Judge Tim Schutz, 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District's minority over representation committee
3. Partner with CSPD on Community outreach to youth