



2022 ANNUAL REPORT Activities of the Human Rights Commission in 2022

With the easing of Covid restrictions, the HRC resumed in-person meetings at City Hall with the meeting on March 8, 2022.

In January, we did not participate in the annual Martin Luther King Celebration at Kirkwood high School due to its cancellation because of the Covid pandemic.

A Subcommittee met with Police Chief Murphy in January, April, July and October to review Department demographics, citizen complaints, training, taser deployment, and vehicle stop reports for the last quarter of 2021 and the first three quarters of 2022.

The HRC met on January 29 to review and update the Strategic Plan as well as the Calendar.

The Commission's Annual Essay Contest for High School Juniors received 78 entries. The 2022 prompt was "What is the Most Important Human Rights Issue of Your Generation and Why"

The top four entries were recognized at the May 19 City Council meeting:

- 1st place – Emma Wells
- 2nd Place – Ayla Burba
- 3rd Place – Jane Dubberke
- 4th place – Lucy O'Brien

In order to engage the community, Information tables were staffed by Commissioners at the following events:

- One-Author-One Kirkwood on April 6
- Farmers' Market on May 7 and June 4
- Hot Dog Event at:
 - Walker Park on June 10
 - Montford Park on June 24
 - Fillmore Park on July 29, and
 - Meacham Memorial Park on August 19
- Back-to-School event at Meacham Park on August 20
- Carbs and Guitars Breakfast at Firehouse #1 on June 11
- Backpack Event on August 20
- Greentree Festival September 17 and 18
- Police Open House October 1
- Speaker Event – Bobby Bostic on December 12 at KPAC

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Council Liaison: Maggie Duwe

Commissioners: Geoff Morrison, Chair; Judy Moticka, Vice-Chair; Margie Palazzolo, Secretary; Carolyn Becker; Robert Boyd; Michelle Cole; Nicole Goldkamp; Paul Ward; Eugenia Webdell.

The Commission continued its efforts to promote the Employment Initiative hiring of those with diverse abilities. Visits were made to Fresh Thyme, Schnucks, Kirkwood Audi, Suntrup Ford, Global Foods and the Magic House. Great Harvest Bread Company completed an application for the Employment Initiative and a sticker was delivered. In September, stickers were awarded to the Greek Kitchen and Great Harvest Bread Company.

The HRC Annual Report Presentation was made to the City Council on April 7.

Brandi Martine and Douglas Riggs were presented the 2021 Denis Hart Award at the City Council Meeting on April 21.

The HRC heard a presentation by Karen Coulson of Women's Voices Raised about the Attainable Housing effort of that organization. There is ongoing discussion about how the HRC can support that effort and Commission representation is participating in the Women's Voices Zoom meetings. Commissioner Margie Palazzolo attends the WVR meeting via Zoom and reports back to the Commission monthly. The WVR plans to be part of the Envision Kirkwood 2035 and continues to monitor areas around Kirkwood where attainable housing could potentially be built.

A Utility Bill insert publicizing the activities and efforts of the HRC was prepared and included in the April bill mailing.

In April, the Commission received a complaint that the Blood Drive at the Community Center in May discriminated against gay men. The complainant was advised that the Red Cross was following CDC guidelines and to contact the CDC or his U. S. Representative and U.S. Senators.

In April, the Commission also received an inquiry regarding ADA restroom compliance at the Mercy Building, 1001 S. Kirkwood Road. The building was found to be in compliance and the complainant was so advised.

In May, the HRC terms ended for Commissioners Bob Boyd and Judy Motika whose service was recognized and thanked.

Geoff Morrison was elected as Chair; Carolyn Becker as Vice Chair and Margie Palazzolo as Secretary for the 2022-2023 year at the June 14 meeting. New Commissioner, David Hartung, was welcomed.

Planning began in March for the 2023 One Author – One Kirkwood with participation by the HRC along with Kirkwood Library Staff. In August Morgan Talty, a citizen of the Penobscot Indian Nation, was selected as OAOK presenter for the meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. at KPAC on Tuesday, May 23, 2023. In September, Adria Brown of the Buder Center for American Indian Studies at Washington University was selected to moderate the program. It was learned in November that "Night of the Living Rez" was

selected by Time Magazine as one of the must-read books for 2022 and ALA has shortlisted it for their Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction Award.

In July the Kirkwood Public Library was contacted by Missouri Prison inmate Bobby Bostic, who requested that he be allowed to participate in the Library's Author Series after he is paroled on November 9 (Bostic is the author of numerous autobiographical works as well as volumes of poetry). KPL agreed to host Bostic in an event where he could read from his works and interact with the audience. KPL asked the HRC to co-host this event because of his involvement with the Justice System and unique sentencing and parole application experience. Bostic appeared at the Performing Arts Center on December 12. HRC Chair Geoff Morrison moderated the program, which was recorded for the making of a documentary about Mr. Bostic. He read from his books and answered questions from a large audience during a 90-minute program. Invitations were sent to various community social justice organizations to have information tables in the KPAC lobby before the program and eight responded. Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice, Community For Understanding and Hope, Kirkwood Social Justice Coalition, Heart to Heart Tutoring, AAUW – Kirkwood-Webster Groves Branch, LifeBridge from Kirkwood (United Methodist Church), in addition to the KHRC staffed tables handing out provided printed materials for Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, and Moms of Meacham.

The HRC supported the Parks and Recreation Trivia Night Fundraiser on June 24 with donations to sponsor one of the eleven rounds of trivia. 150 of 200 tables were filled, seven of the eleven trivia rounds were sponsored and \$8,000 was raised. A trivia night is being planned for 2023.

A Subcommittee met with Library staff to evaluate the annual Fall Art Exhibit for 6th – 10th grade students. Due to low participation, a decision was made to find another method of involvement to engage students. Various activities are being considered. It is hoped the Youth Advisory Commission will serve as a bridge between the high school and the HRC.

Guidelines for the Dennis Hart Award were approved and a press release was issued soliciting nominations for the 2022 Award. No nominations were received resulting in no award being given.

New Commissioner Jennifer Bean was welcomed in August.

A proposal from Commissioner Eugenia Webdell for an Achievement Award for a group or organization that works in Kirkwood to further the spirit and intent of the KHRC was considered. A Subcommittee was created to examine this proposal and plans are ongoing.

During the August meeting, a presentation was made by the Heart-To-Heart Tutoring Program concerning their volunteer organization's efforts to recruit tutors to improve the reading skills of Kirkwood School District elementary students. The focus is on literacy for the critical grades of K-3 with the goal of having each student in the program reading on grade level by the end of the school year. Five local churches and organizations

participate in the program with 27 tutors who are working with 18 students at Lemmie Building and 13 at Robinson School.

Youth Advisory Board members Scarlet Adams and Morigan Carey were introduced and welcomed in September.

Several Commission members attended the City Council reception on September 29 held to formally thank Board and Commission members who have provided service to the community. Judy Moticka and Robert Boyd were formally recognized for their service by the City presentation of plaques.

In September, Commissioner Hartung reported that the KHS Student Council was disbanded in 2020 and was replaced with class leadership groups. It was suggested that the HRC establish collaboration with the KHS Social Justice Club in addition to the new class leadership groups.

In October, the HRC heard a presentation by the KHS Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA). GSA President Cameron McCaslin and Vice-President James Taylor presented information about the afterschool social club whose focus is on justice and supporting the community both within KHS, in St. Louis and throughout the nation. The Club held a Solidari-Tea in November for Solidarity Week and a Day of Silence in April to honor deceased members of the LGBTQ+ community. Mx McCaslin reported the biggest issue the GSA currently faces at KHS is the banning of queer-centric books.

HRC Chair Geoff Morrison met with a North Kirkwood Middle School Leadership Class on September 27 to present information about HRC's mission and activities.

On October 27, Geoff Morrison, Nicole Goldkamp, and Michelle Cole attended a Zoom meeting with Dr. Jeremy Mappe, Kirkwood School District Executive Director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to discuss various issues including: the achievement gap; redrawing building attendance boundaries; staff diversity (hiring and retention of BIPOC teachers); Distinct demographics and enrollment trends; and, the High School's recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School and District.

In November, the HRC heard a presentation by Malley McKeen, Allison Schmidt, and Molly Browne from the KHS Social Justice Club about the organization's activities to promote awareness for social justice. The Club holds fundraisers to support various activities including donating funds to Welcome Neighbor to buy costumes for immigrant children experiencing their first Halloween. The group also raised funds to purchase books to empower white families with small children to have conversations about race from WeStories to donate to Westchester Elementary. The group also collaborates with Focus Youth St. Louis Leadership Program.

On November 21, a subcommittee met with the Clayton Equity Commission to discuss activities each organization engages in and to share ideas for heightening community awareness for human rights.

In December, it was announced that the January 16, 2023, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration will be held via Zoom.

In December, the Essay Prompt for 2023 was selected: "What is the most important human rights issue currently? Why?" Chair Geoff Morrison will contact Kirkwood High School and other local high schools to announce the Essay Contest and invite participation.

12/20/22