

Albany Human Relations Commission (HRC)
Annual Report (January 2010 – December 2011)
Date: May 9, 2012

The Human Relations Commission was established in 2007 “to promote harmonious relations among citizens of Albany” through recommendations of “programs, activities, ordinances, expenditures and other appropriate governmental activities which will serve the goal of maintaining respectful interactions within our community.” (Ord. 5671 § 1, 2007; Ord. 5665 § 1, 2007).

A brief chronological review of Commission activities during 2010 and 2011 is set forth below. A history of Commission membership and attendance is attached to this report.

Activities During 2010

January 2010: To honor the birthday of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the Commission, Oregon State University, and Linn-Benton Community College presented a **workshop on “Creating a Just Community”** at the Albany Library. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Larry Roper from OSU and Toni Klohk from LBCC and attended by approximately a dozen diverse student leaders invited from middle and high schools and LBCC and more than 20 community members. The workshop included both a student panel and age cohort breakouts that reported back to the whole group on three common questions. Participants learned from each other and the broad range of perspectives.

May 2010: Partnered with Linn County Mental Health on a poster sponsor for Mental Health Month. Juried a student art display on a related theme at the Albany School District offices.

June 2010: A representative from the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence spoke to the Commission about teen sex trafficking in Oregon and ways in which increased community awareness can help to keep our young people safe.

August 2010: The Commission hosted a community picnic as part of National Night Out. Food and supplies were donated by Oh Boy! Oberto, Costco, PepsiCo, Mega Foods, Safeway, Albertson’s, Samaritan Health Services, and LBCC Civic Engagement Committee. Parks & Recreation staff hosted games. Attendees included Mayor Konopa, Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith, Canine Officer Nate Ard and K-9 Joeri, Commission members, and neighborhood residents.

October 2010: Commission members attended a showing of *A Beautiful Mind* at the Venetian Theater, sponsored by the Mental Health Advisory Committee as part of observing Mental Illness Awareness Week.

Activities During 2011

April 2011: Met with Employment Specialist Debbie Little and youth workers from the Community Services Consortium to share information about the Human Relations Commission and hear about their experiences in Albany and suggestions for making Albany a more welcoming place for youth.

May 2011: Cosponsored Mental Health month poster.

Staffed a table at the HEART to Heart Resource Fair. Distributed 50 bags of personal hygiene and other supplies. Gathered attendee feedback on a brief survey. Seventy-one people completed the survey: 56% lived in Southeast Albany and 21% lived in Southwest Albany. Ages ranged from 18 to 74 years old. Ninety percent identified as white, 8% as Native American and white (both), and 1% as Latino. Eight-three percent said they would recommend Albany as a welcoming place to live; 66% said they had attended another Albany community event in the past year; and 70% said it was either easy or very easy to get around town. Thirty percent said it was either somewhat or very difficult.

June 2011: Cochair Greenman represented HRC at the Linn-Benton Community College Diversity Achievement Center Juneteenth Celebration.

July 2011: Met with the Hispanic Advisory Council to share information and ideas. Developed practical suggestions for welcoming and including the Latino community into City events and civic life.

Staffed a table at River Rhythms concerts to share information about the Human Relations Commission and to hear concert-goers' experiences in Albany, using the survey mentioned above.

August 2011: Continued participation at River Rhythms (August 4 & 11). In total, 62 people completed surveys: 87% said they would recommend Albany as a welcoming place to live; 79% had attended a community event in the past year (most had attended prior River Rhythms concerts); and 85% said that it was either an easy (65%) or very easy (20%) to get around Albany.

September 2011: Met with Anna Benson from Linn Benton Housing Authority, to hear about the programs and opportunities offered. The Commission proposed a meeting with program participants. This is still pending, and the HRC hopes the conversation will take place in 2012.

Participated in Festival Latino. HRC members served as Festival greeters, welcoming people as they arrived and urging them to participate in the Festival raffle.

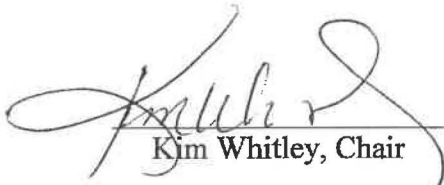
October 2011: Distributed and publicized information and nomination forms for the first Human Relations Award.

November 2011: Approved the first Albany Human Relations Award to Sharon Gisler (presented in January 2012).

Conclusion for 2010-2011

Looking back, the Commission is grateful for the opportunities available to further its purpose. It is especially grateful for the support and assistance of City of Albany staff, including City Manager Wes Hare, City Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith, and Administrative Assistants Diana Eilers and Gina Burrese; and of its collaborative partners, including Linn-Benton Community College, Greater Albany Public Schools, Linn County Mental Health, Linn Benton Hispanic Advisory Council, and Oregon State University. It is also grateful to City and County staff members who attended meetings to share information and answer questions, including Frank Moore and Kathrn Henderson from the County Health Department, Lynn Hinrichs from Albany Police Department, and David Shaw, Human Resources Director; and to Executive Assistant Laura Hyde for her work on preparing the Commission history that is attached to this report. We look forward to continuing these and other positive activities in the future.

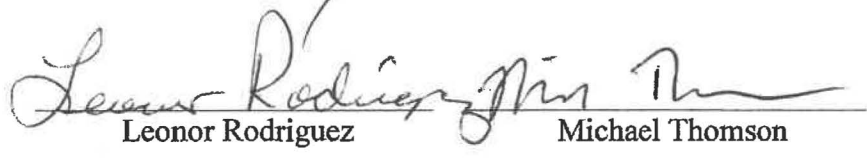
Respectfully submitted,


Kim Whitley, Chair


Nancy Greenman,
Vice Chair


Linda Hart


Julie Jones


Leonor Rodriguez


Michael Thomson


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