

CONCORD-CARLISLE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Polly Attwood, Chair (until June 2011)
Ronni Olitsky & Sarah Napier Co-Chairs (as of June 2011)
Mary Sheppard, Treasurer (until November 2011)
Liz Clayton, Newsletter Editor
Lorell Gifford, Webmaster
Website: cchumanrights.org

Formally established in 1979 as a 501c3, the Council has a membership of approximately 675 households in the Concord-Carlisle community, with an Executive Board that meets monthly.

The first event of our year was the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration held at the Willard School. The performers were the Holy Tabernacle Women's Ministry Choir, the Willard Fifth Grade Chorus, Boston Children's Choir and the First Parish Gospel Choir. The groups sang separately and together, their powerful voices joining with the audience to celebrate King's life and legacy.

In April, the Council coordinated the 31st Annual Holocaust Memorial on behalf of the Concord Board of Selectman. The program featured Faye Speert, a Holocaust survivor from Norway, as the speaker. Carmen Reiss welcomed everyone on behalf of the Selectmen and Austin Fleming delivered the ending meditation. Approximately 100 people attended the program at the Town House.

This summer we ran a table and a game at the Picnic in the Park as we do every summer. Events like this are a good way to reach out to potential new members and to educate Concord citizens about our work.

Our annual Human Rights Day Breakfast was held on December 5 at 7:30AM at the Trinitarian Congregational Church on Walden Street. Our former Chair and long-time Concord Carlisle Human Rights Council Member, Polly Attwood, and Dr. Charles Willie, were our featured speakers this year. Polly shared her unique perspective after 30 years of working on the Human Rights Council and as a leader in our community. Dr. Willie, who is the Charles William Eliot Professor of Education, Emeritus, at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, and a Concord resident, spoke to the regional and national context surrounding human rights work in Concord. He also spoke of his early support of

the METCO Program in Concord and his role starting the Family Friends Council, which matches Concord and Boston residents to support students and families participating in the METCO Program.



Polly Attwood and Dr. Charles Willie at the Annual Human Rights Day Breakfast in December.

Apart from these annual events, sub-committees of the Council have been busy. Danae Laura, Charisse Gilmer, and Cherisa Hernandez have led efforts to establish a METCO Scholarship Fund in memory of Abdirauf Abdullahi, a METCO CCHS graduate who was shot to death in a random shooting just weeks before heading off to college. The aim is to raise \$20,000 for an endowment to be put into the CCHS Scholarship Fund, and used for METCO students who gain entry to college. In 2011, they reached their \$10,000 mark and they plan to apply for a matching grant in 2012. See more at www.theabbyfund.org



The family of Abdirauf Abdullahi at the Abby Fund Drum and Dance workshop.

We are also beginning to plan what we hope will be a series of workshops in conjunction with the Concord Police Department and local business leaders with a focus on “cultural proficiency.” The goal of the workshops will be to critically examine how we -- people of varied cultural backgrounds who live and work in, or visit, Concord -- interact with each other in a variety of settings. We are in the early planning stages of this project, but are excited about its potential.

In addition to the above activities, the Council has been involved in working with local residents about rights violations, hate crimes and issues of discrimination. We are not professional mediators, but act as a resource for the community in finding mediators, sensitivity training, legal advice, etc. We are in close touch with the Police Department, the schools, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination and do not hesitate to call in experts when we receive complaints from the public. We take no action without thoughtful consideration and discussion with those victimized, as well as the advice of police or other concerned groups.

We can be reached by email through our website cchumanrights.org, the Police Dept, or the Town House.

CONCORD-SAN MARCOS -- SISTER CITY COMMITTEE

Steven B. Bloomfield, Chair
Shirley Andrews, Secretary
Fiona Nauseda, Secretary
Nancy Kerr, Treasurer

Steering Committee: Andrew Della Volpe, Lisa Gutwillig, Seamus Vahey, Kevin Wholihan, Ed Wholihan.

Advisers: Sam Alexander, Al Armenti (former chair and co-founder), Debbie Barr, Cynthia Laflamme, Erin Lynch, Lal Minton, Karin Segal, Bryan Wholihan

Mission

The Concord-San Marcos Sister Cities Committee encourages peace and mutual understanding and socio-economic development in Nicaragua, through programs of cultural exchange and economic assistance carried out in a spirit of cooperation by the people of Concord and the city of San Marcos, Nicaragua. Concord Town Meeting established the Sister Cities Committee in 1986. Town Meeting reaffirmed the value of the Committee’s work by a second vote in 1987. The Commit-

tee works under the auspices of the Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council. Voluntary membership of Concord citizens and voluntary support by means of financial donations and the contributions of goods and services from citizens in and around Concord sustain the Committee’s work.

Projects in 2011

Committee Chair Steven Bloomfield traveled to San Marcos to, among other matters, assess the functioning of the well whose construction the Committee had supported over the past two years in El Uval, a village of 400 inhabitants within the municipality of San Marcos. Meeting with cooperating citizens of San Marcos and some of the benefiting residents of El Uval, Bloomfield deemed the project an impressive success that was bringing potable water and its accompanying health benefits to all of the households of a community never before blessed with such an essential amenity.



Freddy Mercado, an essential partner to the Concord San Marcos Sister Cities relationship, enjoying fresh El Uval water.

While in San Marcos, Bloomfield also donated a used computer, offered by the Concord Public Schools, to the computer laboratory of the Colegio Juan XXIII, San Marcos’ secondary school, to enable the initiation of Skype transmissions between the high school classrooms of Concord and San Marcos. During the rest of 2011, communications went back and forth between teachers, with the expectation of establishing formal curricular opportunities and informal student-to-student