

is Concord's opportunity to honor the men and women who served our community and our nation in these wars.

FLAG RETIREMENT



Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, joined Concord, Massachusetts Town officials, State representatives and residents in the annual Veterans Day Flag Retirement Ceremony.

The Flag Retirement Ceremony is traditionally held each year on Veterans Day and gives Concordians the opportunity to retire their American Flags in a respectful and appropriate manner.

The Public Ceremonies and Celebrations Committee is grateful to the many who helped make the celebrations of 2014 so successful—Town officials, the staff of various Town Departments, CCHS Music, the VFW, the American Legion, the Concord Minutemen, the Concord Independent Battery, Middlesex County 4H Fife & Drum Corps and all participants. Once again, many thanks to the supportive people of Concord, Massachusetts.

CONCORD-CARLISLE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Ronni Olitsky & Rob Morrison, Co-Chairs
Libby Kurten, Treasurer
Liz Clayton, Newsletter Editor
Lorell Gifford, Webmaster

Formally established in 1979 as a 501(c)(3), 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 the year was the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration held at the Fenn School. The performers were the Fenn School Treble Chorus, the Willard Fifth Grade Chorus, Boston Children's Choir, Imani Noble and Greenough Chorus, and Vernon "VCR" Robinson and

Lisa Lee, Spoken Word Poets. The groups sang separately and together, their powerful voices joining with the audience to celebrate King's life and legacy. Our spoken word poets stimulated thought of young and old alike.

In April, the Council coordinated the Annual Holocaust Memorial on behalf of the Concord Board of Selectman. The program featured Karen Kirsten. Raised in Australia, she recently discovered her mother's family had survived the Holocaust in Poland. She is researching and writing a book on these findings.

Our annual Human Rights Day Breakfast was held on Monday, December 1, at Trinitarian Congregational Church. We presented our biannual Climate for Freedom award to Gaining Ground. Chairman of the board, Joe Rigali, spoke on behalf of the organization. This organization grows organic produce and distributes to individuals, organizations and shelters in need. Local and Boston folks benefit from Gaining Ground. All of their fruits and vegetables are given away. Money is never exchanged.

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 or through the Police Department, or the Town House.