

in WWII and just about 300 each to Korea and to Viet Nam. Today, almost 1,000 veterans live in Concord. Memorial Day is Concord's opportunity to honor the men and women who served our community and our nation in these wars.

FLAG RETIREMENT

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 2012 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, Co-Chair
Sarah Napier, Co-Chair
Libby Kurten, Treasurer
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 January 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 joining us for the first time, the Fenn School Chorus. The groups sang separately and together, their powerful voices joining with the audience to celebrate King's life and legacy.

In April, the Council again coordinated the Annual Holocaust Memorial on behalf of the Concord Board of Selectmen. The program featured Leon Rubinstein,

a Holocaust survivor, and his son, Concord resident Wade Rubinstein, reading from Leon's memoir "As I am Presently Known." Cantor Rosalie Gerut began the memorial observance with song.

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 educate Concord citizens about our work.

Our annual Human Rights Day Breakfast was held on Monday, December 3 at the Trinitarian Congregational Church.

This is the year that we give our Biannual Climate for Freedom Award to a group or organization in our community, one that fosters a climate for freedom in its work and mission. A committee of five worked to gather updated information on the main organizations being considered for this year's award. The finalists were forwarded to a panel of panel of judges, whose deliberations resulted in a recommendation to the HRC Board. The recipient this year was Communities for Restorative Justice for their work to build a community-police partnership that offers restorative justice to those affected by crime. Their mission states that their process "recognizes that crime is a violation of people and relationships, not just a violation of the law." This award is a richly deserved recognition of the importance of their mission. Executive Director Jennifer Larson-Sawin, received the award and was the keynote speaker.

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. The fund exceeded its goal in 2012 and they plan to apply for a matching grant in 2013. See more at www.theabbyfund.org

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.

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, Sue Kurker, Seamus Vahey, Kevin Wholihan, and Ed Wholihan

Advisers: Sam Alexander, Al Armenti (former chair and co-founder), Debbie Barr, Erin Lynch, Kati Miller, Lal Minton, and Bryan Wholihan

The Concord-San Marcos Sister Cities Committee encourages peace and mutual understanding and socioeconomic 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 and reaffirmed the value of the Committee's work by a second vote in 1987. 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.



Sue Kurker and son Kevin Wholihan with San Marcos school children

Projects in 2012

Committee chair Steven Bloomfield, treasurer Nancy Kerr, Steering Committee member Sue Kurker, and community member Fran Powell led an eight-day trip to San Marcos in late July and early August for ten Concord-Carlisle High School seniors to experience life in San Marcos and elsewhere in Nicaragua. Activities included family home-stays, athletic competitions, and community-service in San Marcos, and an excursion to the city of Estelí and a nearby village, El Limón, where the students learned about rural life through the teaching and experience of Steven Bloomfield's friend, Eric Meyerowitz, a medical student at the University of Pennsylvania.

While in San Marcos, Bloomfield and Nancy Kerr attended a meeting of the board of FUNDISMAR, established after many years of urging on the part of the Concord Sister Cities Committee on March, 30, 2012, by vote of the Nicaraguan National Assembly. Concordians had long believed in the efficacy of the founding of an independent entity with legal status in Nicaragua to receive funds, raise funds, and take on projects of significant scale. FUNDISMAR – the Foundation for the Development of San Marcos – is now a private, not-for-profit partner of the Concord Sister Cities Committee (and other potential partners outside of San Marcos) and the governing institution over the micro-bank established in San Marcos by the Sister Cities Committee, FECONDESAM, founded in 1996. During the board meeting, Bloomfield and Kerr were disappointed to find that FUNDISMAR had yet