Richfield Human Rights Commission
2018 Annual Report

The purpose of the Commission is to secure for all citizens equal opportunity in employment, housing, public accommodations, public services and education, and full participation in the affairs of the community and to take appropriate action consistent with the Minnesota Human Rights Act. The Commission shall also advise the City Council on long range programs to improve human relations in the City. Richfield City Code Section 305.01, Sub.3

2018 Officers
Chair – Mark Westergaard
Vice Chair – Debbie Eng
Secretary – Carrie Chillman

2018 Liaisons
City Council – Mike Howard
City Staff – Deputy Chief Mike Koob
School Board – Tim Pollis

2017/2018 Activities

RESOLUTIONS PASSED:

DACA Resolution. The HRC passed a resolution in support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA). This program provides protection from deportation to children of undocumented immigrants after undergoing an extensive application and review process as well as regular renewals.

Planned Parenthood Resolution. The HRC passed a resolution in support of Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota. Specifically cited were their efforts that provide cancer-screenings, birth control, STD tests and treatment and exams to 4,300 patients each year in Richfield.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & OUTREACH EVENTS:

4th of July Parade. The HRC participated in the community parade on the 4th of July. We created and distributed a bi-lingual card version of our all-commission recruitment flier. We also distributed candy and MDHR swag.

Open Streets at PennFest. In September of 2017, the HRC partnered with other City commissions to host a booth at the Penn Fest community event. We distributed our new informational/recruitment flier.

Human Trafficking Event. The HRC sponsored, planned, and implemented an educational presentation on the topic of human trafficking for the third year in a row. Our partner for this event is the Advocates for Human Rights. This year, the event was held at the House of Prayer Lutheran Church and over 35 people were in attendance. The Richfield Police Department also participated.

Naturalization Event. The HRC partnered with the U.S. District Court to plan and implement a naturalization ceremony which was held at Richfield Municipal Center. This is the third year in a row the HRC has hosted a naturalization ceremony. This year, approximately 35 new citizens were represented. The event was covered by the Sun Current.
Islam 101 Event. For the third year in a row, the HRC planned and implemented the Islam 101 event in coordination with the Islamic Resource Group, and in partnership with the House of Prayer Lutheran Church who hosted the event this year. Over 60 people were in attendance at the event.

PRIDE Event. On June 9th we co-sponsored our first ever event in celebration of PRIDE Month. We partnered with Hennepin County Libraries and screened the movie Moonlight at Augsburg Library and helped facilitate a Q & A discussion afterwards.

GENERAL COMMISSION BUSINESS:


Demographic Survey of Boards & Commissions. The HRC re-wrote our commissioner demographic survey to include all areas covered by the MN Human Rights Act. In 2018 we distributed the survey and collected results. We compiled the data, and presented data and trends to the City Council at a work session. Survey results show the changing diverse composition of the City’s Boards and Commissions since our initial poll in 2014 and subsequent poll in 2016. There are many demographic data points we track such as race, faith, age, gender, familial status, income, and native language.

Recruitment to Boards & Commissions. In close connection with the demographic survey are our ongoing efforts to recruit new applicants to Richfield’s Boards & Commissions. Our hands-on community outreach and increased social media campaign have increased the pool of applicants to all-time high levels.

Increased Presence on Social Media. The HRC is working hard to expand our presence in social media spaces. We have added a permanent, voluntary role of social media coordinator. Thanks to Will Ruckel for taking this on in 2017 and 2018!

Gene & Mary Jacobsen Outstanding Citizen Award. The HRC selected Joyce Marrie as the 2018 winner of the Gene and Mary Jacobsen Outstanding Citizen Award. Ms. Marrie was honored with a plaque, reception, and presentation to the Council in June of 2018.