



Annual Report 2000

Human Relations Commission

Office of the Union County Prosecutor
Andrew K. Ruotolo Justice Center
32 Rahway Avenue ♦ Elizabeth, New Jersey 07202
527-4506 ♦ FAX: 908-527-4625 ♦



Union County Human Relations Commission

March 1, 2002

The Honorable Thomas V. Manahan, Prosecutor
Union County Prosecutor's Office
Andrew K. Ruotolo Justice Center
32 Rahway Avenue
Elizabeth, New Jersey 07202

Dear Prosecutor Manahan:

Thanks to your efforts, the Union County Human Relations Commission continues to take an active role in fostering harmony among the diverse citizenry of Union County since its reorganization in 1998.

Again, you are to be commended for recognizing the citizenship we enjoy in Union County, and for providing leadership to address the sometimes difficult issues that arise as a result.

In recognition of the support you have given the Commission, we are forwarding to you this Annual Report outlining our accomplishments since March 2000.

We are grateful for your continued support, and hope these projects, educational programs or outreach efforts are possible.

Sincerely,
UNION COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Faheemah El-Amin
Co-Chair

First Assistant
Co-Chair

art contest for youth, held in 2000, cosponsored by Secretary of State
ed by the NCCJ. The poster artwork, entitled "Bridges," submitted by
re at Cranford High School, won the Union County level competition,
wide contest.

resentation

t annual presentation of Human Relations Awards to local individuals
te cultural diversity and strong community relations, and who address
mmission.

ed by a Commission Sub-Committee, will each receive an engraved
s a poster composition created for the Commission, that incorporates
ned above. Both the poster and awards are being donated by private

unity Programs

upport and attend community programs that address our mission. We
together Against Hate VIII forum, held in May 2001 by the Union County
d the *Interfaith Kristallnacht* program, held in November 2001, by the
sey.

ining

ue to broaden their understanding of the issues and devise effective
ion County Commission members regularly attend conferences and
Attorney General's Office and offered by the state's Human Relations
developing skills in addressing the issues of bias and racism.

of the State's Office of Dispute Settlements to train our members in
ement and resolution. To date, we held two three-hour workshops
members. In addition to improving our understanding and skills, this
t as part of the state's current mandatory 18-hour training requirement
ing as a New Jersey Conflict Mediator.

roving The Commission

tation of being a Commission that is interested and involved. Being a
ers, we are constrained by the resources and time available among
verage despite our sparse resources, to gain the broadest exposure

entify opportunities for current Commissioners, and continue to try to

Our Commissioners continue to seek active and interested member
reflects the diverse population of Union County. A Background Informa
to aid in this process. Two youth have become Commissioners -- givi
and college-aged citizens.

The following is our Membership Roster effective February 2002, refle

Co-Chairs:

Faheemah El-Amin
Plainfield

First Assistant Prosecutor
James F. Keefe
Union County Prosecutor's
Office

Recording Secretary:

Karen E. Positan
Springfield

Members At Large:

Chaunte' Abdellah
Plainfield

Joe Britt
Fanwood

Alfred E. Brown
Plainfield/Cranford

Chief Robert J. Carboy
Fanwood

Sergeant Tracy Diaz
Union County Prosecutor's
Office Bias Unit

James W. Glassen
Cranford

Flor Gonzales
Plainfield

Linda-Lee Kelly
Elizabeth

Peter McTiernan
Cranford

Charles Newman
Elizabeth

Joe Novick
Scotch Plains

of racial issues and awareness in today's society, we greatly enjoyed the luncheon meeting held for Union County Police Chiefs and Deputy Attorney General Robin Parker and State Investigator General's Office on Bias Crime and Community Relations addressed discussed bias crime reporting, hate on the Internet, and related issues in the community.

Between Youth & Law Enforcement: Bringing Us Together: Communication 2000"

"Bringing Us Together" program, originally prototyped at Elizabeth High School, where law enforcement officers together in a one-on-one setting to build trust and mutual trust, has been rolled out in other Union County High Schools, in Spring 2001; and Hillside High School, in Fall 2001. The program has been applauded by the media, student participants, and local law enforcement.

Union County Prosecutor's Office, plans are now being finalized for the program to be implemented in Plainfield and Roselle Park in Spring 2002. A condensed version of the program has been developed for special needs of programs for the Probation Officers, the Clergy Network and possibly the Youth Academy. The program is being rolled out in efforts to offer the program county-wide. The video produced has been broadcast by many local cable providers, and has been edited into a format suitable for the HRC and UCPO to generate interest in additional municipalities.

Programs For Youth

The focus on the development of *After School Programs for Youth*. The initial efforts on Plainfield, which can greatly benefit by cross-city meetings were held to determine issues and needs.

A pilot group of a program involving theatre arts is currently being developed to organize and present a showcase performance of various talents in music, dance and entertainment. Drawing on work these groups have done to develop a central theme and bring them all together for a showcase.

The program can provide a comfortable and exciting environment wherein participants can participate and see the commonality of coming together and working together. It is perceived that the force of bringing these disparate groups together can be compelling for the community, and would serve as a model for other groups participating in a powerful joint effort.

The Union County Human Relations Commission serves to promote and encourage a more peaceful and ecumenical society by providing support to bias crime victims who are targeted for a crime because of their race, creed, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or physical or mental challenges, and by intervening to eradicate the conditions that ultimately cause the crime.

The Union County Human Relations Commission addresses the issues of racism and their impact on our local communities, workplaces and neighborhoods.

Our mission, and the focus of our efforts is to actively encourage, develop and strengthen respect for human rights among the people of Union County.

Simply, the Commission celebrates the fact that cultural diversity brings to our community.

The Commission consists of a group of Union County residents from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, professional and personal backgrounds.

The Commission meets every other month and through sub-committees for particular issues.

7 Network

gh School tragedy, the Commission actively set about to create to quickly put together crisis-response public forums when

faith Community Network, comprising multi-denominational spread throughout Union County that have volunteered to act ities ensure that we can quickly arrange meetings as necessary e and express concerns about issues and events affecting their

September 11th, 2001 Terrorist Attacks

our support, sponsored an informational program and public 2001 terrorist attacks, facilitated by Deputy Attorney General al Justice's Office of Bias Crimes and Community Relations.

enter -- An Evening of Understanding, Healing & Hope, the church in Westfield. The program was primarily designed to foster harmony with Muslim American citizens and featured unity who explained the tenets of their faith and tried to dispel

ed the process of the investigation and the nature and scope of response to ensure public safety.

about the healing process, and a victim/witness advocate ims and their families.

ed good press coverage, and was well received by attendees.

e UCHRC's aim to respond to the community's needs. The identify potential educational programs focused on fostering ng bias and hate, that also can be offered to the various ese educational programs will serve to solidify the shape and awareness and credibility within the community.

e UCHRC issued a press release, which appears on the next

Our mission is to actively encourage, develop, promote and strengthen respect for human rights and cultural diversity among the people of Union County.

Co-Chairs:
First Assistant
Prosecutor
James F. Keefe
and
Faheemah El-Amin

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Please send all
correspondence to
the UCHRC c/o The
Office of the Union
County Prosecutor;
Andrew K. Ruotolo
Justice Center;
32 Rahway Avenue;
Elizabeth,
New Jersey 07202

PRESS RELEASE

FOR

The Union County Human Relations Commission work together "in a spirit of good will and harmony maintain human dignity in the wake of last week's

Members from the commission, which aims to ce work within Union County to promote peace an statement urging residents to avoid taking any actio judgements or labeling.

First Assistant Prosecutor James F. Keefe, w Faheemah El-Amin of Plainfield, said acting with k is the best response to the horrific bombings. "Now the smoke, dust and ashes to establish a course o the rubble, it is most important that Americans kee a renewed sense of unity and brotherhood."

El-Amin, who is of the Islamic faith, stressed that th that Mohammed and his religion did not stand for equally important not to condemn persons of any p entire nation for the crimes committed by a few ind far from the basic teachings of the holy book Koran

Keefe said the commission would also work to ass and Victim Assistance in the months of recovery Office Victim Witness Assistance Program and lo comfort to victims as well as make referrals to so response teams, mental health services and victim Elaine O'Neal, the county's victim witness coordin