

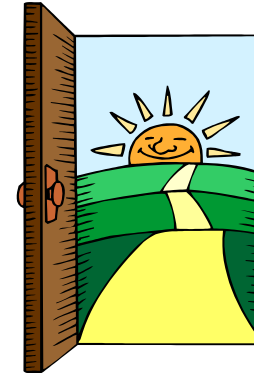
Annual Report 2003



Union County Human Relations Commission

c/o The Office of the Union County Prosecutor ♦ Andrew K. Ruotolo Justice Center
♦ 32 Rahway Avenue ♦ Elizabeth, New Jersey 07202
♦ www.ucnj.org/uchrc ♦ 908-527-4505 ♦ FAX: 908-527-4625

Our Mission



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

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

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

Simply stated, the Commission celebrates the richness of life that cultural diversity brings to our communities and ourselves.

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

The Commission meets every other month on Monday nights at the John H. Stamler Police Academy in Scotch Plains.
UCHRC Sub-Committees meet as needed to address and implement specific projects.

Union County Human Relations Commission

March 25, 2004

The Honorable Theodore J. Romankow, Prosecutor
Union County Prosecutor's Office
Andrew K. Ruotolo Justice Center
32 Rahway Avenue
Elizabeth, New Jersey 07202

Dear Prosecutor Romankow:

With this 2003 Annual Report, we are offering an update on the focus and efforts of the Union County Human Relations Commission over the past two years. The UCHRC has continued to take an active role in fostering harmony and good will among the diverse citizenry of Union County.

We sincerely appreciate your unequivocal support for the Commission and its many endeavors. You are to be commended for recognizing the diversity of citizenship we enjoy in Union County, and for providing a means to address the sometimes difficult issues that arise as a consequence.

The Commissioners are grateful to you and your office, the Union County Superintendent of Schools and his staff, and the local police departments and bias officers for encouraging us, networking with us, and for co-sponsoring important initiatives and activities.

We appreciate your continuing support, without which none of these programs and outreach efforts would be possible.

Sincerely,

THE UNION COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSIONERS

Jack Weinshanker
Co-Chair

James F. Keefe, Esq.
Co-Chair

JW/JFK:kep

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Unity Achievement Awards

What better way to actively encourage, develop, promote and strengthen respect for human rights and cultural diversity among the people of Union County than to publicly honor those who already do it well.



The UCHRC Unity Achievement Awards recognize the programs, services, activities and efforts being put forth by local role models that promote cultural diversity and strong community relations, and address the issues confronting the Commission. These nominated and selected individuals, organizations and businesses are honored at our annual Spring Award Presentation event.

Our third annual Presentation is scheduled for Wednesday, April 28th. We are grateful to the NUI/Elizabethtown Gas Company graciously permitting the Commission to use their Atrium for our reception and ceremonies, and to the Union County Prosecutor's Office for its continued support and funding. Our first two events were extremely well received by our Award recipients, their guests and other honorees.



2004 UCHRC Unity Award Recipients



We are proud to present the 2004 Unity Award Recipients who will be honored on Wednesday, April 28th, 2004:

Achievement by a Corporation.....

✿ **RexPlex of Elizabeth** ✿

Achievement by a Non-Profit Organization.....

✿ **PROCEED** ✿

(Puerto Rican Organization for Community Education & Economic Development)

Achievement by a Community Organization.....

✿ **St. Joseph's Social Service Center** ✿
(Sister Jacinta Fernandes)

Achievement by an Individual.....

✿ **Sally Ann Benjamin of Plainfield** ✿

Achievement by Law Enforcement.....

✿ **Detective Robert Segear, Cranford Police Department** ✿

Achievement in Public Service.....

✿ **The Honorable Senator Thomas H. Kean, Jr.** ✿

Achievement by a Student.....

✿ **Amanda Chokov, Elizabeth High School** ✿

Special Recognition.....

✿ **The Honorable Edward W. Beglin, Jr.** ✿
✿ **The Honorable Rudolph N. Hawkins, Jr.** ✿



UCHRC Unity Award Recipients for 2002 and 2003



honored for promoting respect for
human rights and cultural diversity



Achievement by a Corporation.....

✿ **Wakefern Corporation**

Recognition for providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities through the Supermarket Careers Partnership Program

✿ **Hillside Auto Mall**

Recognition for providing mentoring and employment opportunities in the private sector for at-risk youth

Achievement by a Non-Profit Organization.....

✿ **Volunteers of the Interfaith Council**

Recognition for a broad-based collaborative effort by volunteers that provides comprehensive programs that improve the quality of life for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness -- especially children; that promote personal development, independence and self-sufficiency; and that bring the community together to create safe and stable neighborhoods

✿ **Occupational Center of Union County for the Homeless**

Recognition for providing a unique combination of vocational, employment, mental health and educational services to individuals with disabilities which advocate removing barriers to employment and fostering community integration

Achievement by a Community Organization.....

✿ **Director Joseph Keenan, Elizabeth Public Library**

Recognition for providing a variety of materials, resources, programs and special events to the community that focus on exploring, understanding and appreciating cultural heritage

✿ **Muslim Community Soup Kitchen**

✿ **Omega Psi Phi**

✿ **First Baptist Church of Elizabeth / Elmora Presbyterian Church**

Recognition for providing volunteer-staffed soup kitchen services to their community's needy, supplemented by a variety of other support services that are frequently required by their clients, and the positive impact and impressions their compassion has had on some of the lives they have touched.

Achievement by an Individual.....

✿ **Donna Albanese-DeMair**

Recognition for taking the initiative to form a grass roots community effort to unify the multi-cultural business owners on South Avenue in Plainfield in a generous spirit of cooperation to beautify the business district and to protect and enhance the area's economic environment

✿ **Patricia McRae**

Recognition for providing day care and after-school programs for Rahway's children.

.....Achievement by the Media.....

📌 **Bob Braun, Star Ledger Columnist**

Recognition for beautifully written human interest stories which have served to enlighten the public about special considerations and needs, and, in some instances, to obtain solutions and support services for those he writes about.

📌 **Robert Misseck, Star Ledger Union County Bureau Chief**

Recognition for beautifully written "Neighbors" profiles series, appearing every Thursday in the Star Ledger's "In Our Towns" section, which feature extraordinary efforts of individuals who stand out as exemplary role models.

.....Achievement by Law Enforcement.....

📌 **Lt. Guy M. Steward, Union County Prosecutor's Office**

Recognition for his enthusiastic response to a project commissioned by the UCHRC and Union County Prosecutor's Office to improve communications and relations between Union County youth and law enforcement, and for asserting his own sensitivity and creativity that continue to make the PATT program a success

📌 **Chief Edward Santiago, Plainfield Police Department**

Recognition for his dedicated commitment of spirit and energy as the Chief of Police and private citizen to improve the human condition and relationships between and among the citizens of Plainfield and the larger Union County community

.....Achievement in Public Service.....

📌 **Lewis Mingo, Jr.**

Recognition for exemplary volunteer service that aims to improve the quality of life for all Union County citizens, especially that of less privileged children

📌 **New Jersey Assemblyman Neil Cohen**

Recognition for legislative, professional and personal efforts to honor and protect the human rights of senior citizens, children, people with disabilities, women and other minority individuals and organizations

.....Special Achievement.....

📌 **Victor Richel**

Recognition for his humanitarianism as an individual, businessman, and board member.

📌 **Robin Parker, former Deputy Attorney General, NJ Office of Bias Crime & Community Relations**

Recognition for his outstanding and far-reaching efforts in the arena of human relations.

📌 **Dr. Thelma Hurd**

Recognition for providing leadership that motivates high standards from students and teachers and emphasizes accountability and accomplishments

📌 **John Griffith**

Recognition for spotlighting his dedicated extracurricular efforts to influence students and at-risk youth to stay in school and to commit themselves to high quality and advanced academic achievement, and for serving as a mentor to countless individuals throughout his career, including co-founding a mentoring organization at PSE&G

.....Special Recognition.....

The Union County Human Relations Commission would like to express its appreciation to these individuals for their invaluable contributions to revitalizing the Commission in 1997, and their continued leadership, dedication to, and support of, the Commission, its programs and activities.

📌 **(former) Prosecutor Thomas V. Manahan**

📌 **(former) First Assistant Prosecutor James F. Keefe, UCHRC Co-Chair 1997 to present**

📌 **Faheemah El-Amin, UCHRC Co-Chair 2000-2002**

📌 **James Glassen, Esq., UCHRC Co-Chair 1998-2000**

Anti-Bullying & Harassment Initiative



One of the UCHRC's key initiatives was developed during a regular meeting while discussing the April 20, 1999 Columbine High School shootings and its tragic implications for the community. After a discussion of whether bullying was a key motivation in the shootings and the perceived acceptance of bullying as a "rite of passage," the UCHRC Commissioners began to delve more deeply into the areas of bullying, intimidation and harassment. Our research indicated that bullying is really a "wrong of passage," and carries with it serious short- and long-term consequences for the victims of bullying, witnesses to acts of bullying and the bullies themselves.

📌 **Educational Workshop for Union County Educators and Law Enforcement Professionals -- April 2003**

This focus resulted in a well-received April 2003 educational workshop for Union County educators and law enforcement professionals, co-sponsored by the **Union County Prosecutor's Office** and **Union County Superintendent of Schools**. The program featured an interactive, Power Point-based theatrical presentation which was developed by the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office, entitled, **"Anti-Bullying and Harassment for Parents and Children of All Ages."** This live presentation defined bullying, examined its repercussions on the three players, explained why it is important to intervene, and offered real suggestions on what must be done by the entire school community to stop it. The workshop, held at the Orange Avenue School in Cranford in April 2003, was **attended by over 150 educators and a small representation of law enforcement officers**. The UCHRC provided a **256-page workbook** containing additional information and educational materials that could be used in schools and classrooms, as well as handouts for students and parents. **Sunrise Communications**, which provides educational materials and video programs on a variety of issues concerning student safety, graciously allowed us to preview one of their videos on bullying, and generously donated a gift certificate for a free video package, which was used as a door prize.

📌 **Anti-Bullying Coalition (ABC) Task Force Created**

An "anti-bullying law" (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13 et seq.) passed by the New Jersey Legislature, signed by Governor James McGreevey, mandated schools to adopt a policy on bullying, harassment and intimidation by September 1, 2003. The law required that the policy contain a statement prohibiting harassment, a definition of the offense, a description of the behavior expected from each student, the consequences for a person who harasses, intimidates or bullies, a procedure for reporting and prompt investigation of complaints, and a range of school responses once such incidents were identified.

The informational need following passage of this law intensified, and the UCHRC's focus was to continue to meet the educational and informational needs of various levels of the community.

Because some of the long-term consequences for bullies involve violent and criminal behavior, Union County Prosecutor Romankow wholeheartedly supported the intentions and efforts of the UCHRC. (In a phrase, little bullies become big bullies. In addition to the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual harassment, 60% of students identified as bullies in 6th through 9th grades go on to have a criminal record by the age of 24; 40% of these students have three or more convictions for serious crimes.)

The Union County Prosecutor's Office and UCHRC joined with Union County Superintendent of Schools Glenn Tillou, who serves as a UCHRC Commissioner, to create the **Anti-Bullying Coalition (ABC) Task Force**, to clarify the vision and guide the creation of additional initial programs. Representatives included UCHRC Commissioners, UCPO Assistant Prosecutors and investigators, local police department's school resource officers, Superintendent of Schools Glenn Tillou and key staff members from his office, teachers from various grade levels, guidance counselors, substance abuse counselors, and students.

📌 Train The Trainers Workshops for Union County Educators -- October 2003 and November 2003

A **Train The Trainers Workshop** was held to help spread the word and increase awareness about bullying throughout Union County. **Over 130 Union County educators** were trained to present the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office's presentation, and were asked to make presentations to all educators, students and parents in their community. The training was held on Tuesday, **October 28, 2003**, at the John H. Stamler Police Academy. **All 21 Union County municipalities were represented.**

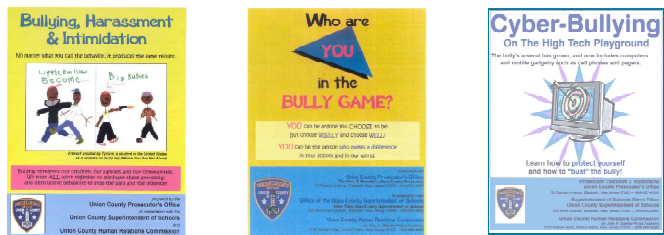
Because the presentation can be given in two variations -- one for students, and a more detailed one for parents, a **follow-up workshop** was offered. In a morning or after-school session on **Monday, November 17th, 2003**, the attendees were able to view the student presentation, role play, and were provided with outline scripting for the student and adult presentations.

📌 Educational Program for School Administrators -- November 2003

Because of the need for top level commitment and direction, a **half-day educational program** was developed for school administrators. The program was delivered on **Thursday, November 13, 2003**, at the John H. Stamler Police Academy, and, again, had **representation from each of Union County's 21 municipalities**, many of the attendees being district superintendents or principals. Heather Mills-Pevonis, MSSW, a resident of Elizabeth, discussed what was needed to "Create A Healthy School Environment." Virginia East (Curriculum Development Specialist in the Office of the Union County Superintendent of Schools) and Karen Positan (Assistant Public Information Officer in the Union County Prosecutor's Office and UCHRC Commissioner) previewed the "Anti-Bullying and Harassment for Parents and Children Of All Ages" program.

📌 Informational Brochures for Adults and Students Created

To answer information needs, **three brochures** were developed, graciously printed by the Union County Prosecutor's Office and distributed by the Office of Union County Superintendent of Schools:



- 📌 **"Bullying, Harassment & Intimidation: Little Bullies Become Big Bullies"** provides almost everything an adult needs to know about bullying in a compact 8-page brochure, replete with heart-rendering artwork drawn by students worldwide who have been bullied.
- 📌 **"Who Are You In The Bully Game?"** has been written for students through 9th grade. By answering simple questions and examining their own actions, students can identify if they are bullying someone else, being bullied, or just standing by and letting it happen.
- 📌 **"CyberBullying On The High Tech Playground"** has been written to discuss bullying via computers and mobile gadgetry such as cell phones and pagers. It takes a look at how you can protect yourself, and what to do if it happens to you.

Online versions were also distributed, and translations to Spanish are underway. . **All three brochures can also be viewed online at the UCHRC website: www.ucnj.org/uchrc**

📌 In-Service Training Course for Law Enforcement

An **in-service training course for law enforcement** has been developed to explore their role vis-a-vis the legislation. The course, offered at the John H. Stamler Police Academy in **December 2003 and February 2004**, has been extremely well attended and well received. Due to the demand, and based upon student feedback, an additional class has been scheduled for **October 2004**.

📌 Representation At Other Anti-Bullying Organizations and Events

The UCHRC also has been **represented at various "anti-bully" educational and training programs** throughout the state. These include:

- 📌 Attendance at the State's **"New Jersey Cares About Bullying"** campaign kick-off conference in July 2003.
- 📌 **Training workshop** to learn to present the state's "New Jersey Cares About Bullying" presentation in October 2003
- 📌 Attendance at the **New Jersey State Bar Foundation's** all-day conference for educators and administrators featuring **Dr. Dan Olweus of Norway**, internationally renowned as the "father of anti-bullying, and bully research," and other key experts from the United States
- 📌 Active participation in the **"New Jersey Anti-Bullying Coalition"**
- 📌 Attendance at the **Passaic County Prosecutor's Office** educational workshop in September 2004
- 📌 Attendance at a **Camden County Prosecutor's Office** meeting in September 2004, following the incidents at Oakland High School.

📌 Next Steps

The ABC Task Force is slated to meet again on April 1, 2004 to review progress to-date and determine what next steps, if any, are needed. The UCHRC, in the meantime, is continuing to monitor community needs, and will strive to present relevant programs as needed. This topic will also be addressed under the "Interfaith Clergy Network," which appears in a later section.

Conflict Intervention / Mediation

Several Commissioners have completed initial training in Conflict Mediation, giving the Commission the ability to mediate when called upon. The UCHRC is indebted to the New Jersey Secretary of State's Office of Dispute Settlement, and especially Caroline Petrilla, Esq., for providing us with vital training in Conflict Intervention and Mediation over the course of the past two years. Ms. Petrilla is a dedicated and top-notch trainer, and has done an incredible job of working closely with us over the long haul to sharpen our negotiation and mediation knowledge and skills.

As Commissioners, we are becoming more and more aware of individual needs for mediation. Armed with this training, we hope to be able to intervene when requested to resolve disputes and keep these matters out of the court system. Some of the members who have participated in the State's mandatory 18-hour training have furthered their training with the State; others are hoping to work with the local court systems; and all of us will actively use our newfound skills to achieve the goals of the Commission and the citizens we serve. We continue to conduct our own "role playing" training sessions to increase our experience and hone our skills. This, too, will provide material for to-be-discussed programs to be developed and delivered via the Interfaith Community Network.



Police & Teens Together: Communications 2000

Improving Relations Between Youth & Law Enforcement

The widely-successful "Police & Teens Together" (PATT) program was created to bring youth and law enforcement officers together in a one-on-one setting to build communication, understanding and mutual trust. In all instances, the program unequivocally has been applauded by the media, student participants, educators, and local police departments. The program was co-developed by the Union County Prosecutor's Office. Lt. Guy Steward, who received a UCHRC Unity Award in 2002 for his invaluable contributions to the program, continues to work with the UCHRC PATT Sub-Committee and to deliver the program the first time it is presented at a particular school.

Originally prototyped at ♡ Elizabeth High School in Spring 2000, and again delivered in Fall 2002, the program has to-date been presented at the high schools in nine of Union County's 21 municipalities:

- ♡ Roselle's Abraham Clark High School (Spring 2001)
- ♡ Hillside High School (Spring 2001)
- ♡ Roselle Park High School (Spring 2002)
- ♡ Rahway High School (Spring 2002)
- ♡ Kenilworth's David Brearley High School (Fall 2002)
- ♡ Linden High School (Fall 2002 and Fall 2003),

♡ Berkeley Heights / Mountainside's Governor Livingston High School (Spring 2003.)

The program is slated for presentation in Spring 2004 to ♡ Union High School, ♡ New Providence High School, and ♡ Arthur L. Johnson High School in Clark.

The program is delivered in four classroom sessions over a two-week time period.

♡ The first session is intended to discover and discuss "Youth's Perspectives About Law Enforcement." It provides students with an opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts, insights and viewpoints about law enforcement in our society.

♡ The second session focuses on "Law Enforcement Officers As People And As Professionals." Each officer introduces him/herself "as a person." Following a graphic video of actual footage from a squad car in which an officer is murdered, each officer then explains his or her professional attitude and demeanor, and why this and certain tactical approaches and responses are vital to the safety of the officer, his/her partner, and others who might be in the area.

♡ By this time, some rapport has been created between the students and officers, and we go outdoors for the "Trading Places" role plays. This third session is the highlight of the program. The students are "suited up" in police attire, replete with fake guns, and take their places in the squad car, while the officers (some of them armed, some with fake contraband) take their places in a passenger car, ready for a motor vehicle stop. Two or three of the motor vehicle stops are conducted, followed by one or two "crowd dispersement" exercises.



Student "officer" handles a "driver and passenger" (officers) during a motor vehicle stop role play.

♡ The role plays are videotaped, and an edited version is shown in the beginning of session four, "Building Bridges: Creating Mutual Respect," where all participants ask additional questions and discuss what they have learned.

♡ Every participant receives a Certificate of Appreciation signed by the Prosecutor, local Chief of Police, and high school principal; a PATT T-shirt; a copy of a group photo; and a copy of the video, which affords them the opportunity to talk with their parents, families, and peers about their experience, their insights, and key points about staying safe.



Following each role play, everyone gets together as a group as the officers explain certain concerns and tactics, ask the students' thoughts, and answer questions. Above, Lt. Guy M. Steward (UCPO) speaks with students following one of the role plays.

We would like to acknowledge the support of the local news media in covering the program presentation. One of our highlights was a visit by the television reporter and camera crew from News 12, who visited us at Governor Livingston High School for the "Trading Places" role play session.

Excerpts from an interview with Lt. Guy M. Steward
by Star Ledger Reporter Gabe Gluck,
who asked what the students will learn from this experience*

♡ Lt. Steward was one of the key creators of the P.A.T.T. program, and received the 2002 UCHRC Unity Achievement Award for Law Enforcement. ♡

"My experience in being an officer in numerous car stops is that perhaps with this type of program both students and officers would have a better understanding of what is expected from each of us. The kids will learn from it because they will understand better why it is we approach a vehicle a certain way.

"The students will not be necessarily aware, because they do not do our jobs, that when we receive certain information, there is a certain way we have to conduct ourselves, and a certain way we have to approach people and deal with people based upon the information we receive. I think this will give them a better understanding why we are so aggressive when we stop a motor vehicle for a particular reason. Even if it is a minor motor vehicle stop, we do not know what that individual has just done, so safety is always a key issue.

"The students will get a better understanding once they go through the practical exercise. The classroom portion is basically explaining us as people and as a police officer. When they have the opportunity to walk in our shoes and see how stressful it can be, they appreciate it more, and they appreciate us more."

InterFaith Community Network

In the aftermath of the Columbine High School tragedy, the Commission actively set about to create a structure and system to be used to quickly put together crisis-response public forums when necessary. The result was Union County's Interfaith Community Network, comprising multi-denominational houses of worship geographically spread throughout Union County that have volunteered to act as "safe haven" host-sites. The purpose of establishing this network of facilities is to ensure that we can quickly arrange meetings as necessary wherein the community can dialogue and express concerns about issues and events affecting their communities.

To introduce this concept -- and our availability -- to the Union County community, the Sub-Committee is currently planning several educational programs and presentations that can be offered at each of the host sites. These programs ultimately focus on Prejudice Reduction and Multi-Cultural Diversity. Several of the other UCHRC initiatives provide material for potential programs, including the anti-bullying initiative, Conflict Mediation training, and *Police & Teens Together* program. Programs looking more deeply into various religious philosophies, such as the definition of "good" vs. "evil," are also being considered.

Our first program, currently in its planning stages, will be presented at the First Baptist Church in Cranford in Spring 2004. We intend to invite all host site representatives, to showcase some of the UCHRC's capabilities and ideas for potential program offerings at their facilities.

Staying In Touch With Local Bias Crime Officers

Because the UCHRC is concerned with the realm of human relations and cultural diversity, an important aspect that requires keeping a pulse on is local bias crime. Sgt. Tracy Diaz, who heads up the Bias Crime Unit for the Union County Prosecutor's Office, is a Commissioner, and keeps the Board members apprised of areas of activity and concern throughout the county in a regular report she makes at every meeting. She also serves on the New Jersey State Bias Crime Officers Association, and serves as a liaison for them as well.

In May 2002, the UCHRC invited the Bias Crime Officers from every Union County police department to attend a special meeting dedicated to introducing ourselves to them, meeting them and listening to what they have been involved in, and identifying any areas that the UCHRC might be able to assist or support their efforts. One area identified is assisting with identifying language resources that they can call upon for assistance as part of their routine duties and/or investigations.

Another area we continue to explore to enhance communication and relations is in increasing awareness and understanding of a particular people's culture, customs and orientations -- for instance, those of the Muslim people.

Language Resource Network

Our conversation with the local Bias Officers identified part of the need for a Language Resource Network in Union County. Rather than reinventing the wheel, the UCHRC has been attempting to identify various existing resources that are available and might be called on to assist law enforcement and other individuals and organizations with interpretation and translation services.

Although local law enforcement has made major strides in building multi-lingual resources, a key need identified by the UCHRC that has yet to be addressed is in the municipal court system. The UCHRC will continue to explore possibilities and options in this area. Input from interested parties in the community are more than welcome.



Community Education Forums

The UCHRC is proud to be a sponsor of the annual *Standing Together Against Hate* Forums, which are presented by the Union County Commission Against Hate, under the able leadership of Terri Warmbrand. This year's tenth Forum is focused on youth attraction to gangs, and will be held on Thursday, April 29th at the First United Methodist Church in Westfield, at 7:00 p.m. Last year's Forum featured the renowned one-man theatrical presentation by Dr. Micki Fowlin, entitled, "You Don't Know Me Until You Know Me," held at the Temple Emanu-El in Westfield.

In response to a need that has been identified among legal and illegal immigrants living in Union County, a Sub-Committee has been formed to look further into problems concerning the various forms of abuse suffered by this group of people. These include, for example, abuse of women, abuse of workers, and those being taken advantage of by individuals offering quasi legal services. The Sub-Committee is currently formulating a proposal for an educational seminar to be presented to this audience. One seminar will focus on how to properly identify legitimate legal resources that can assist these individuals with their various needs. The Sub-Committee is looking to present their proposal and a preview forum at an upcoming UCHRC meeting. Input from interested parties in the community are more than welcome.

NJ Human Relations Council

The UCHRC remains apprised of the focus and efforts of the New Jersey Human Relations Council. In 2003, Jack Weinshanker, UCHRC co-chair, was named to serve on the Council. Following the state meetings, he reports back to the UCHRC any news, developments, concerns, and/or information of interest.

Other Education & Training

UCHRC Commissioners continue to broaden their understanding of the issues and devise effective offerings and responses. Union County Commission members regularly attend conferences and workshops that are aimed at developing skills in addressing the issues of bias and racism, and broadening human relations. Many of these workshops are sponsored by the New Jersey Attorney General's Office, Division of Criminal Justice's Office of Bias Crime & Community Relations, the New Jersey State Bar Foundation, or are offered by the state's Human Relations Institute.

The UCHRC continues to seek additional resources to deliver educational, informational and skill development training to our Commissioners. In addition to furthering our Conflict Mediation skills, we are also looking to the U.S. Department of Labor, Beyond Diversity, and other governmental and private organizations that are willing to deliver their programs, gratis, in our evening time slot.

Web Site Introduced

To assist with making a multitude of information available to citizens, as well as to keep them apprised of our meetings, overall focus, specific activities, and upcoming events, the UCHRC gained permission from the County of Union (NJ) to post information on their web site. Our web address is:

www.ucnj.org/uchrc

The site is currently being renovated, in keeping with the County's new look, but still offers valuable information for citizens requiring help in reporting bias incidents or hate crimes, learning about our programs, or obtaining information about such issues as anti-bullying and harassment.



Continuously Improving The Commission



The Union County Human Relations Commission was created by the Union County Prosecutor's Office in 1991. Following the death of then-Prosecutor Andrew K. Ruotolo, the Commission ceased activities for several years. It was reorganized and reenergized in 1997.

Since that time, the Union County Human Relations Commission has continued to earn our statewide reputation of being a Commission that is progressive, interested and involved.

Being a group of like-minded volunteers, we are constrained by the resources and time available among us. Despite our sparse resources, we continue to use our leverage to gain the broadest exposure and impact.

We will continue to work to identify opportunities for current and future Commissioners, and continue to work to meet and exceed the standards asked of all New Jersey Human Relations Commissions.

Board Members

Our Commissioners continue to seek active and interested members to ensure the Commission reflects the diverse population of Union County. A Background Information Nomination form that has been developed aids in this process. Two youth Commissioners give a voice to high school- and college-aged citizens.

The following is our Membership Roster effective March 2004, reflecting 28 members:

.....Co-Chairs.....

☞ Jack Weinshanker
Clark

☞ James F. Keefe, Esq.
Scotch Plains

.....Recording Secretary.....

☞ Karen E. Positan
Union County Prosecutor's Office

.....Members At Large.....

☞ Chaunte' Abdellah
Linden

☞ Peter McTiernan
Cranford

☞ Joyce Antila-Phipps, Esq.
Plainfield

☞ Chief Marshall Nelson
Scotch Plains Police Department

☞ Harsh Bhargava
Fanwood

☞ Charles Newman
Elizabeth

☞ Joe Britt
Fanwood

☞ Raul Pinto
Union/Cranford

☞ Alfred E. Brown
Plainfield/Cranford

☞ Virginia San Pedro
Linden

☞ First Assistant Prosecutor Albert Cernadas
Union County Prosecutor's Office

☞ Helene Scheuer
Elizabeth

☞ Sergeant Tracy Diaz
Union County Prosecutor's Office Bias Unit

☞ Deborah Smith
Scotch Plains

☞ Faheemah El-Amin (former co-chair)
Plainfield

☞ Gregory B. Smith
Kenilworth

☞ Executive Assistant Prosecutor Anne K. Frawley
Union County Prosecutor's Office

☞ Glenn Tillou
Union County Superintendent of Schools

☞ Flor Gonzales
Plainfield

☞ Kate Vaupel
Cranford

☞ Lenny Guarino
Elizabeth Police Department

☞ Emma Villegas
Elizabeth

☞ Linda-Lee Kelly
Elizabeth

☞ Linda Weissbrod
Scotch Plains

☞ Nicole Young
Clark

.....New Jersey Human Relations Council (NJHRC) Liaison.....

☞ State Investigator Tom Culp, New Jersey Office of Bias Crimes & Community Relations