

**Human Right Commission
October 23, 2007 Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Randy Cole, Noel English, Marie Glaze, Oona Paredes, Mark Thomas, Valeta Snell

Members Excused: Glenn Glasgow

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Steve Hollis, Shawna Victor

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:13 p.m.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Thomas made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Paredes and passed unanimously.
- III. **Dinner Meeting to Discuss Human Rights Enhancement Program Proposals:** The commission discussed the issues and concerns they each had with the proposals and the possibility of changing items
- IV. **Organization Hearings-Human Rights Enhancement Program:** The commission held hearings with the following organizations.

Organization	Program	Funding Requested
Parkade Elementary School	"Celebrate the Dream"	\$600.00
Amnesty International Hickman High School	The Human Rights Crisis in Tibet: Venerable Champe Lhumpo	\$350.00
Hickman High School Global Issues Club	Crossing Borders, Connecting People: Latin American Peace Conference	\$1,200.00
Services for Independent Living	Empowering Women	\$1,000.00
Centro Latino	Teenagers' Civic Awareness: The DREAM Act	\$600.00
The Shelter	Stop traffic Now: 2008 Anti-Human Trafficking Conference	\$700.00
The Mid-Missouri LGTB Coalition	PrideFest 2008	\$1,000.00
The Columbia Friends of China	Volunteers in the Chinese Culture and Language Program	\$491.25
Stephens College	Black History Month	\$1,000.00

- A. *Parkade Elementary School:* Sky Jimenez was present for this presentation. Jimenez said next year will be the 14th year of this program. This program matches fifth grade students with African-American mentors, many of whom are business owners and community leaders and teaches the students about different career opportunities, manners, and interview skills. After the students spend their time with their mentor, there is a luncheon at Columbia College. She has seen a change in many of the students over the years.

There was discussion about an error in the budget. Transportation costs were not included.

Thomas asked how the mentors are recruited. Jimenez said many have been involved in the program since the beginning, others have been recommended by mentors and others she has just met in the community and recruited.

- B.** *Amnesty International Hickman High School:* George Frissell and Juan Perez were present for this presentation. Frissell said Champe Lhumpo has been coming to Columbia for the past eight years to speak with sophomore block classes, Classical Studies classes and the Amnesty International Chapter at Hickman High School. Perez noted he heard Champe speak during his sophomore year and it opened his view of the world. Frissell said during Champa's discussions, he does discuss the human rights issue in Tibet.

English said the group does fundraising but does not use any of those funds for this event. Frissell said the money that is raised goes to other organizations that help with crises such as Darfur, the recent situation in Myanmar, and tsunami relief in 2004.

English asked what the group would do if the commission was not able to provide funding. Frissell said they would do additional fundraising.

Thomas asked how word is spread about Amnesty International. Perez said there are daily announcements at Hickman, they post flyers, and there is a lot of information spread just by word of mouth. Frissell added they also do a newsletter and other teachers at the school are good about making announcements.

Glaze suggested the application be redone for next year. She noticed many of the same statements are in last year's application.

- C.** *Hickman High School Global:* Jami Thornsberry and Juan Perez were present on behalf of this organization. Perez introduced other members of the group and noted the group is trying to get more people involved.

Perez said the conference is growing each year. This year there will be a broad focus on Latin America but they will have more focused discussion groups. Thornsberry said they try to have different speakers, such as writers and professors. They have also established a relationship with the True/False Film Festival coordinators to help with showing documentaries.

Thomas suggested incorporating human rights issues into the conference.

Glaze said the commission needs to have final reports in a timely manner.

- D.** *Services for Independent Living:* Becky Stewart was present on behalf of this organization. Stewart said women with disabilities are at the highest risk of being a domestic violence victim. She has given presentations in the past on domestic violence. They have the resources available to put on a workshop.

There was discussion about errors in the budget and items that were not included with the proposal.

- E.** *Centro Latino:* Eduardo Crespi and Courtney Wright were present on behalf of this organization. Crespi said the Dream Act would help students access educational opportunities currently not available to them. He stated that the funding requested would allow the organization to publish a collection of the students' reflections about the DREAM Act. This booklet would then be distributed to educators and policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels.

English said she is confused because the legislation has not been passed and is not sure what the booklet would be used for. Crespi said this would be used to inform the kids and the parents of the legislation and give them information about pursuing a higher education. This legislation has been around since 2001.

English asked if the purpose is not to contact federal legislators and ask them for their support? Crespi said that is correct. The purpose is to give information to the public about the reality that their students are living in pursuing the dream of a higher education.

Glaze said the application states the booklet will be sent to politicians. Crespi said the booklet will be printed after the vote is done.

Hollis said the City cannot provide financial support for programming which seeks to promote or oppose legislation. He suggested the application could have been better written as a proposal to teach students about immigrant and civil rights afforded under existing law.

Paredes asked how many undocumented children there are in Columbia Public Schools. Crespi said there is no specific number of undocumented but there are 840 Hispanic children in the school system. Hollis stated he has seen figures which estimate that 40% of Latino immigrants in the United States are undocumented.

Thomas said he views this is a human rights issue and asked if Crespi could possibly submit a different proposal. Crespi said they could work on this because this will be beneficial for the students.

Cole asked if the Dream Act would provide funds to those wanting to pursue a higher education. Crespi said it would allow students to enroll and allow those students to pay in state tuition. There would also be other regulations that would have to be followed for the student to attend school.

English asked how this will benefit Columbia and if this is a civics lesson or about a right to an education. Crespi said it is both. The students will learn about how a bill is passed and that they also have the right to an education.

Paredes asked if the \$600 is for the production of the booklet. Crespi responded affirmatively and said the booklet will be very similar to one they produced for another HREP program. There will be a picture of the student with a paragraph they have written about what they have learned about the Dream Act.

Paredes said this is not to educate the children but to educate others. Crespi said the students will be educated then the students will write a paragraph. The public will then learn about what the students think of the DREAM Act.

- F.** *The Shelter:* Paige Hendrix and Melissa Chapman were present on behalf of this organization. Hendrix said each year, 20,000 people are trafficked for labor or sex.

Many people think this is an international issue but it does affect people here in Missouri. Chapman said on March 21 and 23, there will be a conference with 75 spaces. There will be speakers and panelists to discuss this issue.

Hendrix said people are beginning to recognize this is a problem in Missouri. They are working with faith organizations and other agencies to raise awareness.

Paredes asked if the problem is trafficking U.S. citizens or internationals. Hendrix said it is both. There are agencies working on getting more firm numbers. She noted one of the panelists that will be at the conference is an actual trafficking survivor.

English asked how advertising will be done for the event. Chapman said they will do fliers and speak with businesses. Hendrix noted they are also working on public service announcements for the event.

- G.** *The Mid-Missouri LGBT Coalition:* Linda Hayes and Clayton Hayes were present on behalf of this presentation. Linda Hayes said the commission has previously given funding for the PrideFest, which is an event held each June to celebrate the diversity within the LGBT community. There are a variety of vendors and activities. They do advertise with radio stations and newspapers.

Cole asked if the event had human rights educational components. Linda Hayes said there will be two workshops. In the past, the workshops have focused on items such as workplace discrimination and parenting. Clayton Hayes added that the event also provides resources. He also stated that there is high rate of suicide in the LGBT community. PFLAG and Open Door Ministries have booths.

- H.** *The Columbia Friends of China:* Mary Jo Herde was present on behalf of this organization. Herde said Friends of China is a relatively new organization in Columbia. This proposal is for the purchase of supplies for a Chinese language program in the schools. This would be the start of a three step process in eventually creating a Chinese language program in the high schools. There is a large Asian population in Columbia and it is also becoming a national trend to have Chinese language programs in schools.

Paredes asked if there are any Asian language programs in Columbia right now. Herde said Japanese is the only Asian language at this time.

English asked if there will be a human rights component to the program. Herde said there is a subtle human rights component in that some from the Asian community feel disrespected because they believe the focus is on other languages and populations.

Hollis asked why the program is proposed only for the EEE program. Herde said the EEE teacher volunteered and has been supportive of the proposal.

- I.** *Stephens College:* Chari Severns was present on behalf of this presentation. Severns said Stephens College would like to bring in Katrina Brown, a film maker, or Joe Rogers to speak during Black History Month. The goal of Black History Month is to increase awareness.

English asked what the demographics are of the student body. Severns said the student body is 80% Caucasian and related there is not a large minority population at Stephens.

English asked if there has been a Black History Month celebration before at Stephens. Severns said yes but on a smaller scale. They have also done film series in the past.

Thomas asked how they would get other community members involved. Severns said there would do off-campus promotions and they will also advertise on their radio station.

The commission recessed at 8:20 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:30 p.m.

V. Commission Work Session-Preliminary Funding Recommendations: Glaze asked if there are any proposals the commission does not want to fund. Paredes said she was not comfortable funding the Centro Latino proposal as there was a question of what would be funded. Thomas said this is a human rights issue. Glaze said the commission needs to be cautious about how they are spending public funds.

Cole made a motion to not recommend funding for Centro Latino's proposal. The motion was seconded by English and passed on a vote of 5-1.

- Columbia Friends of China: Glaze said she is inclined to give some funding as this is a one time request. Snell said she has an issue with not knowing how long it will be before this program is in the high schools. Thomas said there are honorable aspects to this program. Paredes suggested giving some funding but noted the human rights component was poor. The commission agreed to recommend \$200.
- Amnesty International: English said this is not the best proposal and the organization should be raising money for this event. Glaze said this program does reach different students every year. The commission agreed to give \$350 with the stipulation that they submitted a new application next year instead of copying the same application year after year.
- Global Issues: Snell said the commission should be watching for participation from Rock Bridge. Glaze said she was amazed when she read the final report from the event last year. Cole suggested increasing funding as this event is growing each year. The commission agreed to recommend \$1,000.
- Parkade Elementary School: The commission agreed to recommend \$600.
- The Shelter: The commission discussed giving funding for the keynote speaker or for a scholarship for someone to attend the event. The commission agreed to recommend \$500 to be used for the speaker.
- Services for Independent Living: The commission agreed this is a good program and should receive funding but since it is the first year they would only recommend partial funding. The commission agreed to recommend \$500.
- LGBT: The commission discussed the funding going toward a workshop. This would allow the commission to better see outcomes. The commission agreed to recommend \$750 to be used toward speakers for the workshops.

- Stephens College: Snell said it would be nice to see this event collaborate with other events in the community. English asked if this group asks for donations from other campus departments. The commission agreed to recommend \$600.
- The Shelter: The commission came back to this proposal and agreed to recommend \$100 additional for a total of \$600.

The commission discussed possibly having Centro Latino resubmit their application to be more focused on civic education than specific legislation. Many thought this would not be the best idea as it would be equivalent to having the organization resubmit a new proposal. If the commission was going to allow for this then several commissioners questioned the reason for a deadline for the proposals.

Paredes moved to approve the following funding recommendations:

Organization	Preliminary Funding Recommendation
Parkade Elementary School	\$600
Centro Latino	\$0
Stephens College	\$600
Amnesty International	\$350
Global Issues Club	\$1,000
The Shelter	\$600
Columbia Friends of China	\$200
Services for Independent Living	\$500
Mid-Missouri LGBT Coalition	\$750

The motion was seconded by Cole and passed unanimously.

VI. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Hollis, Manager
Office of Community Services