



## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT Activities of the Human Rights Commission in 2021

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to be a disruptive force in 2021: the annual Martin Luther King Day Celebration was cancelled and the Commission continued to meet virtually in January. Retired Kirkwood School District Teacher Roberta McWoods was awarded the Commission's Denis Hart Award for Excellence for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion. McWoods started the "Kirkwood Teachers of Color" mentoring group and organized the June march following the death of George Floyd. A Commission Subcommittee met in early January with Police Chief Murphy to review Department demographics, citizen complaints, training and taser deployments during the last quarter of 2020. The Chief was also queried regarding the impact of the pandemic on crime as well as police-community relations due to diminished contacts with the citizenry caused by Covid.

The Commission's Annual Essay Contest for High School Juniors received 74 entrees in response to the prompt:

*"Young people have emerged as a force in political and social activism in recent times. Considering all that has happened in 2020, in what ways do you see your generation having an impact on human rights and/or equality for the future of this country and world?"*

At our April meeting we recognized 4 of the entrants:

Audrey Blaine – 1<sup>st</sup> place  
Megan Missey – 2<sup>nd</sup> place  
Maggie Klein – 3<sup>rd</sup> place  
Megan Glasgow – 4<sup>th</sup> place

In April we also met with Kirkwood School District Supt. Dr. Ulrich regarding the Achievement Gap, the impact of the pandemic on learning, waiting-list issues and tuition costs of the Early Childhood Center, and the status of the Adventure Club program (before and after school childcare).

A Commission Subcommittee met with Chief Murphy in early April to review the year's first quarter's regularly carried in patrol cars will be converted to firing "less than lethal" beanbag rounds to provide another alternative (besides tasers, pepper spray, and batons) to firearms.

Amanda Sher departed in May having completed her second term on the Commission. In June, Nicole Goldkamp joined the Commission and Geoff Morrison was elected as Chair, Judy Moticka as Vice Chair, and Margie Palazzolo as Secretary. The Commission staffed an information table at the Farmers' Market on Saturdays June 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> as well as at the June 11<sup>th</sup> Hot Dog event at Walker Park sponsored by the Police and Parks & Recreation Departments.

In July and August, The Employment Initiative—a way to recognize businesses that hire, train, and welcome people with diverse abilities—finally got off the ground! The first three businesses recognized were the Kirkwood Schnucks, Sammi’s Soaps, and The Pioneer Bakery. All three received letters commending them as well as window stickers they can display prominently and proudly. Commissioners reached out to other businesses (Global Foods, Manor Grove to a name a few) and we are hoping to hear back from them. The Special Business District publicized this as well, and there were articles in the Webster-Kirkwood Times and Ladue News about this.

Geoff Morrison was named to the Vision Zero Action Team as the KHRC representative.

In July we met with Dr. David Ulrich, KSD Superintendent. The issues covered in the meeting were around the Achievement Gap, the Encompass Report, Equity Issues and Adventure Club.

The KHRC continued to meet regularly with KPD Chief Murphy regarding the 2020 Vehicle Stop Report as well as Department demographics, citizen complaints, taser deployments and training vehicle stop reports and police training issues.

As part of our continuous efforts to engage with the public, the KHRC had an information table/booth at Police Department/Parks Department Hot Dog events at Fillmore Park in July and at Meacham Memorial Park in August; at the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association “Back to School” event on August 14<sup>th</sup>; at the Greentree Festival in September; and, at the Police Department Open House in October.

In November, we hosted our Fall Speaker’s Forum at KPAC, where Dr. Alisa Warren from the Missouri Commission on Human Rights spoke about all the important work they do. Brandi Martine and Doug Riggs were nominated for the 2021 Kirkwood Human Rights Commission Denis Hart Award for Excellence and the Commission voted unanimously to present it to them. They will be recognized at a future City Council meeting.

Finally, we selected the following prompt for the 2022 Essay Contest:

*“What is the most important human rights issue of your generation and why?”*

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