



interoffice
MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Allen Joines and Members of the City Council

From: Juan Suarez, Chairperson
Human Relations Commission

Wanda Allen-Abraha, Director
Human Relations Department

Date: October 21, 2008

RE: Summary of 2007-2008 Human Relations Commission Annual Report

Attached, please find the Human Relations Commission's Major Program and Project Highlights for the **2007-2008 fiscal year**.

Also, please note the following undertakings of the staff during the past fiscal year:

1. Approximately 50 outreach and educational programs were conducted;
2. Approximately 5,000 citizens attended outreach and education programs;
3. Approximately 1,000 total inquiries and complaints were processed;
4. Approximately 11 housing discrimination cases were processed; and
5. Approximately 85 unscheduled walk-in clients were served.

The Human Relations Commission, in adopting its Strategic Action Plan, recognizes the need to continue fostering an environment that initiates and supports multi-racial and multi-ethnic inclusion in our community. The Commission also embraces the ordinance amending Article III, Division 8 of Chapter 2 of the City Code, as adopted by the City Council on January 21, 2003, charging the Commission with facilitating partnerships with fair housing and cultural community organizations in furtherance of the Commission's purpose. To achieve the Commission's purpose, we respectfully request your support of the following recommendations:

1. The Human Relations Commission recognizes the importance of building and maintaining effective lines of communication between city government and the community. By improving the dialogue with our diverse community groups, city government can ensure that the City of Winston-Salem fosters an environment that is conducive for an atmosphere in which everyone is treated fairly. In carrying out its strategic goals, the Commission will increase its outreach efforts in all areas of the community and will seek input from the City Council on issues or concerns in their respective wards.

2. The Commission seeks to build a stronger relationship with City officials and City commissions by inviting input and attendance for Human Relations programs and activities.
3. The Department will continue to provide a bilingual staff member who can assist with proactive outreach measures that will facilitate building positive relations between the City government and our rapidly increasing Hispanic population.

The Commission appreciates the continual support it has received from the City Council. Your continued support will only strengthen the Human Relations Commission efforts in working on behalf of all the citizens in Winston-Salem. The Commission welcomes any comments or questions you may have. Additional copies of this annual report summary and the full 2007-2008 annual report are available upon request.

Attachment

cc: Lee D. Garrity

2007-2008 MAJOR PROGRAM /PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

September

- The Human Relations Department sponsored the annual "Fiesta" event that celebrated the culture of the City's Hispanic Community. This event included food, music, and various vendors. It was held in downtown Winston-Salem. There were approximately 5000 attendees.
- The Human Relations Commission, in partnership with the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County NAACP, sponsored its second the Beyond Soul and Salsa: African-American/Hispanic Race Relations Forum to encourage and facilitate a positive race relations dialogue amongst members from these communities regarding housing, economic development, immigration, and the perceived resegregation of schools. Approximately 75 individuals attended.
- The Annual Housing Expo, in partnership with the Winston-Salem Regional Association of Realtor's American DREAM Weekend, which is a one-stop resource for anyone interested in buying a home. Approximately 200 people attended the Expo.
- The Commission sponsored the annual "Race Equality Week," as sponsored nationally by the National League of Cities. This program consisted of various events such as a Student Race Relations Forum at Carver High School.

December

- The Commission hosted its annual holiday "Open House" at City Hall. Commissioners, city officials, community members and others attended the open house. This event also served as an open invitation to the public to meet and greet the new Human Relations staff. Approximately 100 people attended.
- The Commission sponsored the annual Homeless March for Children in downtown Winston-Salem, in partnership with the Winston-Salem Jaycees, to raise awareness of fair housing issues concerning the homeless. Approximately 400 people participated.

January

- The Human Relations Department, in coordination with Mutter Evans and the Winston-Salem Chapter of the NAACP, co-sponsored the Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Noon Day Observance Program at the Benton Convention Center. Approximately 1,250 persons attended the program.

**2007-2008
Human Relations Commission
Major Program/Projects Highlights**

February

- The Human Relations Commission held its 28th Annual “Human Relations Awards Banquet” at the Twin City Quarter. The banquet honored youth who made significant contributions to the community in the area of Human Relations and Human Rights. Approximately 500 persons attended the awards banquet, which is an annual project of the Commission’s Program/Community Relations Committee.

April

- The Human Relations Commission observed “Fair Housing Month” throughout the City. Staff taped the Nexus Television segment with a focus on fair housing by discussing the Winston-Salem Fair Housing Ordinance and the Federal Fair Housing Laws. The month-long Fair Housing Month celebration also included the annual Fair Housing Summit, at which housing industry professionals throughout Forsyth County gathered to discuss housing discrimination and the overall state of housing in the community. Approximately 250 individuals attended this program.

June

- The Human Relations Commission, in partnership with several community organizations, co-sponsored the 4th Annual Triad Juneteenth Festival at Rupert Bell Park. These events educated the community about the history of African-American culture in the community. Approximately 500 residents attended and participated.