

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

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Cynthia A. Brown, *Commission Liaison*



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St. Mary's County Human Relations Commission
November 5, 2008
Minutes

Attendees: Joseph Bush, Jim Hanley, Theo Cramer, Joyce Dyson, Rose Everett
Excused: Pam McKay

Staff Liaison: Cynthia Brown, Community Services Division Mgr, Dept of Human Services

Guest: Mac McClintock, community member; Kathleen Reif, Director, St. Mary's County Library; Janis Cooker, Youth Coordinator

Chairperson Joseph Bush convened the meeting at 5:45 and introduced the guests from the St. Mary's County Library.

Presentation: Ms. Reif and Ms Cooker discussed a collaborative effort between the Library, Head Start and the Judy Center to apply for a grant to support outreach services to the Hispanic community in St. Mary's County. The purpose of the grant is to make libraries more welcoming to people of different backgrounds, to address language and cultural barriers, to enhance efforts to prepare Spanish speaking children in early childhood for preparedness to begin school and heighten awareness of staff on how to interact with various segments of our population. The grant was awarded in August, 2009 and runs through August 31, 2009. Activities supported by the grant so far include a cultural and linguistic diversity and competence workshop that was held on 10/17/08 at the library, purchasing educational materials featuring Spanish and other languages (15K) and story time activities at the centers and libraries in Spanish. Also, two bilingual computers with games and educational software have been purchased and are housed at the Lexington Park branch. In the Spring of 2009, there will be a Health Fair with multi-cultural performers.

The library has a fluent Spanish speaking employee and the Lexington Park branch and increased efforts to attract Spanish speaking parents and children to the library for tours. Most recently, the library has been invited to partner with the Public School System on the English Language Learners Dinner event.

Ms Reif and Ms. Cooker asked the Human Relations Commission for support by helping to promote these efforts and increase community awareness. HRC members brainstormed about other groups who need to hear this message and suggested the faith community as a way of reaching families.

Motion: The October minutes were accepted as presented.

Staff Liaison: Cynthia Brown reported the budget remained unchanged from last month and still has a balance of \$2,100

Theo Cramer reported on two new projects recently initiated by St. Mary's County Public Schools. The first is Fairlead Academy located on Great Mills Road. One in four 9th graders in St. Mary's County repeat the 9th grade. Currently, about 400 ninth grade students are potential drop outs. Fairlead Academy is specifically for 9th graders to give them that extra support needed to continue and complete high school. Students are bused there from their home school for a year and are taught in smaller groups with methods that provide the extra reinforcement they need. The second project is FLOW (Future Leaders of the World). This program is for enriching after school programs for elementary and middle school children. Both FLOW and Fairlead Academy are very much in need of mentors. Anyone interested should contact Mr. Cramer at 301-475-5511.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cynthia Brown