



# Connections & Communications

A Biyearly eNewsletter for the *Northwest Coalition for Human Rights*

December, 2014

Issue 11

## Northwest Coalition for Human Rights Annual Meeting

The second annual meeting of the NWCHR was held on October 11, in Spokane at the Eastern Washington University Riverpoint Campus. The group was officially welcomed by Spokane Mayor David Condon, Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich, the new president of EWU, Dr. Mary Cullinan, and members of the Spokane Human Rights Commission.

Sheriff Knezovich warned that the departure of organized hate groups does not mean that discrimination has gone away. He mentioned, in particular, discrimination against people with disabilities. Mayor Condon spoke about the importance of celebrating and educating about diversity, and continuing work to eliminate discrimination of all



kinds. He borrowed a metaphor from the Boston Marathon, and talked about “Heart-break Hill”—the place in the run where you can identify the finish line from the skyline ahead, but have to make the most difficult uphill climb before you get there. That is where he sees our work in human rights at this time—as we are now working to counter the more subtle and individual forms of hate—not the big visible targets with compounds, signs, arm-bands and parades.

The keynote speaker for the event was former Spokesman Review reporter and expert on hate groups, militia, sovereign citizens and anti-government conspiracies, Bill Morlin. Just a few years into his

**Please Contact Us!**  
**Northwest Coalition for Human Rights**

<http://nwchr.wordpress.com>  
[jennms@uidaho.edu](mailto:jennms@uidaho.edu)

University of Idaho: Office of Human Rights, Access, and Inclusion  
Administration Bldg Rm 104  
875 Perimeter Drive MS 3160  
Moscow, ID 83844-3160  
Phone: 208-885-4285

retirement, he received a call from the Southern Poverty Law Center, asking him to write for their online Hatewatch and their Intelligence Report. This has enabled him to expand his expertise to a national scale—and to remain an authority on what is going on in our region. Bill’s talk was able to provide background information about regional events in the past as well as a view of current trends. He sees the recent increase in violence against law enforcement as a manifestation of anti-government sentiment that has surged since Barack Obama became president. Law enforcement officers are the most visible symbol of governmental authority. His shared experience reinforced the message that human rights advocates have much more work to do!



The mission of the NWCHR is to facilitate communication and collaboration among groups and individuals addressing human rights to allow them to share resources, information, ideas and become part of a larger support system.

You can become a member, and receive updates and newsletters for no fee. If you google “Northwest Coalition for Human Rights” it will take you to the site that is hosted by the University of Idaho and a link where you can download a membership application. For more information you can also email [nwchr@uidaho.edu](mailto:nwchr@uidaho.edu) or call the Office of Human Rights Advocacy and Inclusion (HRAI) at: 208-885-4285. It’s so important that we stand together!

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## **Bonner County Endowment Fund for Human Rights**

The Bonner County Human Rights Endowment Fund for Human Rights is pleased to announce it was able to award over \$16,000 to support anti-bullying in the schools and encourage the celebration of diversity. This fund is administered by the Idaho Community Foundation and advised by the board of directors of the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force. A brief description of the funds awarded follows.

Lake Pend Oreille School District #84. The school district was awarded \$5,000 to bring renowned author Trudi Ludwig a distinguished author of numerous children’s books including,

“Confessions of a Former Bully”. This program will include multiple elementary schools in our district as well as community/staff training. It is hoped that providing this type of program early in the education process will drastically reduce the often noted silent acceptance of bullying as a part of youth culture before it takes hold.

Pend Oreille Arts Council (POAC). POAC was awarded \$6,500 to assist in bringing performances and workshops presented by the New York based American Place Theater’s Literature to Life Series entitled “The Kite Runner”. The performance is a verbatim stage adaptation of Khaled Hosseine’s powerful book of the same name. Led by a Master Teaching artist, the story shares the heartbreaking journey of friendship and betrayal of a society with severe class division in Afghanistan. It not only gives the audience an insight, but it also provides a unique historical experience they will not forget.

Music Conservatory of Sandpoint. This is the second consecutive year in which a collaborative effort between MCS and students of CEART of Mexicali, Mexico, provide an educational summer youth orchestra camp for Bonner county and Mexican students. At the end of the camp a performance will be presented for the community at the Panida. This is an opportunity for our students and guests to not only become more proficient performers, but also to share cultural similarities and diversity. The Mexican students are hosted at local homes and participate in the summer activities of our students.

Team Autism 24/7. Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability in the U.S. Team Autism 24/7 focuses on increasing awareness and providing education and resources. The trainings are free but the BCHRTF grant will help with presenter fees. They expect to serve between 180-200 participants in these trainings.

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## **An A+ Essay by a “social entrepreneur” at ISU, Pocatello**

### **Learning to Grow**

By: Victoria Gregory

It was April in south east Africa. The sun beamed orange and sticky across the horizon, sweet and warm like morning tea. My hands clasped around my cup and I felt the heat radiate through my palms and up my arms. These beautiful mornings in the city of

Lusaka were always happy and peaceful; quiet, yet my heart was thumping with passion and adventure. I faced one month of mystery, connection, culture and growth, I just didn't know yet.

The day after my arrival, I awoke with the sweetness of the morning sun, put on my running shoes and searched for service opportunities in the area. Eventually I came face to face with an orphanage in Chilenje. The doors were cold and painted blue. Although I had no idea what was awaiting me behind those doors, I knew I was in the right place. After I knocked, the door flew open and I was instantly bombarded with a plethora of happy girls, jumping on me and dancing around. They kept laughing and laughing continuously, and even though I felt very surprised and even a bit uncomfortable, I've never felt so warm. After the girls grabbed my hands and pulled me inside I met Mother Ingwe, the caregiver of all the orphans. We planned a time for me to return to volunteer.

The next day I walked to the orphanage, feeling better and better with every step I took. After meeting the girls and learning their names, I encountered one happy girl who didn't respond to my questions. The other's explained to me that she was dumb and deaf. I didn't understand that term at all, mainly because the little girl certainly didn't seem to have a cognitive disability. Feeling slightly awkward I tenderly stroked her shoulder, looked in her eyes and smiled back. That was when I first felt our connection.

Mother Ingwe explained to me that the little girl, Sarah, was completely deaf, mute and illiterate; abandoned to the streets at the tender age of nine years old. Eager to help, I did research to learn about Zambian Sign Language. I soon learned that Zambia uses American Sign Language, a language that I'm fluent in. So, the next day I decided to try something new, something I thought I would never do, and that was to teach sign language to someone unable to read, write, speak or hear.

I brought a big children's picture book with me to the orphanage and sat Sarah down at a picnic table. From there, I pointed to a picture of a tree and showed her the sign. She seemed confused, yet her excitement and motivation to learn something new was astonishing. Within hours, Sarah was able to interpret the entire book in American Sign Language. Her abilities bloomed right before my eyes; it was truly indescribable. Sarah was squealing with laughter and excitement with every sign she learned. It was one of the most humbling experiences I've ever had. When our lesson for the day came to a close and I started heading for the door, Sarah wrapped her arms around me and didn't let go for the longest time. In that moment, as tears came to both of our eyes, complete and utter joy filled my heart and I had the absolute certainty that I was where God wanted me to be.

*Hello NWCHR! I hope you enjoyed my essay. No kidding! I did get an "A"! It is the first essay of my current English class that wasn't marked up with red ink! The story is 100% true. I had many humbling and personally rewarding experiences as a service volunteer in Zambia last summer. None, however, compare to working with the orphans of Chilenje! Thanks to help from CHEER Sarah is now enrolled in a deaf school in Lusaka. Hooray! Education in Zambia is not free, especially for special needs children like Sarah, so I opened an account with Chase Bank and also a GoFundMe page for friends and family to donate money to support Sarah in getting the help she really needs. Through a generous grant we got her enrolled, and now we need funds to keep her in school. 100% of funds sent to Chase Bank are made available for Sarah. Please help! Here are the links and bank information:*

**Chase Bank**

**1790 W. Pullman Rd.**

**Moscow, ID 83843**

**Account number: 431095640**

or; you can deposit to the account number at any Chase Bank

Fundraising Site: <http://www.gofundme.com/sendsarahtoschool>

Here's a link to my Zambia adventures blog:

<http://www.victoriasadventuresinzambia.blogspot.com/>

Thank you!

Victoria Gregory

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## **Message from the BCHRTF President**

The BCHRTF was incorporated in November of 1992—that would make this year's annual meeting the 21<sup>st</sup>! Our By-laws state that each year the President shall present a report to the membership, reviewing the year past and "making such forecasts for the upcoming year as seem appropriate."

Many of the accomplishments will be detailed in separate articles, so I'll just list them here:

- This was the first year that the TF was able to disburse funds through grants to the community from the endowment of Dorothy Adler.
- The Human Rights Club at the High School is fully functioning, having been re-established through the efforts of Erik Bruhjell in 2012.

- Another Arts for Human Rights exhibit featured work of local students.
- The SHS Human Rights Club did an art project with the children who live at Blue Haven transitional housing.
- The HS club also held a fundraiser with the proceeds going to Angels Over Sandpoint.
- The TF has joined the Northwest Coalition for Human Rights, with two of our Board members serving also on the NWCHR Board.
- Partnering with Lost Horse Press, we helped to sponsor the “100 Thousand Poets for Change” event—and joined with the voices of others all around the world to read poetry advocating positive change.
- We awarded the Darby and Amber Campbell annual scholarship and in addition the Board offered a second scholarship plus a special “Stone of Hope: award to Erik Bruhjell.
- The TF helped to sponsor the “Vagina Monologues” and donated the proceeds to Transitions in Progress, known also as the BC Homeless Task Force.

Looking ahead to this next year, I have a number of thoughts. I heard someone remark recently that the name “Task Force” signified a *temporary* organization—and I thought it would be more than wonderful if, indeed, the work of the BCHRTF could be declared to be finished!

I was reminded of how much work is still to be done when an African American woman, with whom I attended a local Child Welfare conference, confided that she had been very afraid and reluctant to come to this area. Fortunately, she reported that “Except for a few looks” she had been treated well, and found people here to be helpful and friendly. So the stain of racism exists still on the map of Idaho – despite the fact that many more racist groups exist on other parts of the country.

At the same conference I attended a workshop on “Cultural Humility” – a concept much different than that of “cultural competence” that was mentioned often when I went to grad school. We were reminded how important it is to respond with generosity, instead of judgment, to ideas that differ from our own. And this reminded me—again—of our obligation to honor the rights of everyone to speak their mind, not only those who express the views that we endorse.

One thing that the Board needs to do is to take a hard look at our mission statement to be sure it corresponds to the needs of the community at this time. We amended our By-laws last year and added “disability, gender identity and social and economic status” as protected categories. We need to consider further how this change might affect our mission, and our goals.

So we will go forward—keeping marriage equality and bullying in mind as important issues—but also continuing to look for ways to encourage in our community an environment of respect that is safe and mindful of the rights of all.

Brenda Hammond, BCHRTF President

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## Join the Team!

The NWCHR will present FINDING THE CENTER 2015 in the fall of next year and needs your help! FTC 2015 will be the sixth FTC Conference. Here is YOUR opportunity to be part of the Planning Team for FTC 2015!

FTC brings together social entrepreneurs, educators, civic and governmental leaders, law enforcement personnel, students, and those committed to principles of equality and inclusiveness for hands-on, skill creating workshops presented by distinguished leaders and practitioners in the fields of Human Rights.



Please email your interest in becoming part of the Planning Team to Toney Driver, driver@moscow.com by December 15th. The Team will be approved by the NWCHR Executive Committee by the end of the year and planning begins in January!

## Poets for Change

On September 27, 2014, The BCHRTF and Lost Horse Press co-sponsored the second annual "100,000 Poets for Change" event in Sandpoint, ID. This event is held on the same date and time in over 1,000 international cities.

Held at Evans Brothers Coffee in Sandpoint, the event featured local artists, musicians, and poets. The participants read, sang or played music to celebrate the concept of a positive change.

Jackie Henrion and Andrew Sorg, event MCs, welcomed performers and readers of varied backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, and gender. All brought the unifying concept of expressing the change they would like to see in the world.



Various interpretations included poems composed in a teen's bedroom, jazz flute and acoustic guitar music, reading of a script from a Charlie Chaplin movie scene, a presentation of a scientific article on global warming translated into Haiku form - complete with water colored graphs and charts, and many recitals of favorite

poetry that touched each individual in their own private way.



The Task Force is honored to be associated with this event that serves as a catalyst for raising awareness, provoking discussion and hopefully spurring action. We look forward to a future filled with many more.

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## WSU Stands Against Poverty during Poverty Awareness Week 2014

PULLMAN, Wash. – Each year, the Washington State University Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) invites students, staff, faculty, and community members to help raise awareness on issues of poverty during the week before Thanksgiving break, November 16-22, 2014. Throughout this week, the CCE partners with several WSU departments and student groups to hold events and activities throughout the week.

All week long, the CCE will hold daily service projects open to WSU students, along with food and supply drives that will take place on and off campus in support of local community organizations. Other events scheduled for Poverty Awareness week include a coffee hour and potluck on November 14, bowling tournament at Zeppoz on November 15, letter writing campaign for St. Jude on November 16, documentary screening on November 16, public discussion on November 18, bake sale for United Way on November 19, cardboard city on November 19, as well as a variety of other events.

For more information and a full list regarding poverty, local resources, events, and sponsors for the event, please visit [cce.wsu.edu](http://cce.wsu.edu). Search for #cougsagainstpovetry on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for updates. Join the CCE to show the world that Cougs stand against poverty during Poverty Awareness Week this year.

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## UnityWorks Foundation

**Our Mission:** UnityWorks is a newly-established 501(c)3 non-profit organization on a mission to promote understanding of the oneness of humanity, the value of diversity and the need for unity.

**School Program:** The goal of our School Program is to educate staff and students about living in a diverse society, to promote culturally-responsive teaching, to reduce prejudice, to improve race relations, to close achievement and opportunity gaps, and to encourage positive multi-cultural change.

UnityWorks provides training, materials and support to empower each school to develop learning environments where students from all backgrounds can be successful.

Our efforts began this October with a pilot program in Yakima, WA, with four local schools: Davis High, Garfield Elementary, Lewis and Clark and Wilson Middle Schools. The school site teams have just been established and we are currently in the process of visiting each team to orient them to the Program. The UnityWorks intensive Teacher Training Institute will begin next month.

**Program Organization:** The UnityWorks program is organized on three levels:

1. UnityWorks Foundation: Sets guidelines and provides materials, training and ongoing support.
2. Local Action Board: Spearheads the local program, supporting the site team at each school.
3. Site Team: Designs and implements an action plan for its own school.

**Program Elements:** The UnityWorks program includes:

- Approx. 40 hours of staff training for teachers and administrators
- The development of a diversity action plan by the site team at each school
- Assistance with school climate and institutional transformation
- Implementation of culturally-responsive curriculum and instruction
- Annual conference for site teams to network and share best practices

**Award-Winning Model:** The Yakima initiative is modeled on the former EMPIRE Program—which our founder, Dr. Randie Gottlieb, served as Executive Director for over a decade. EMPIRE (Exemplary Multicultural Practices in Rural Education) was quite successful—eventually enrolling 17 schools, attracting a number of local business sponsors, and winning several state and national awards. It was highlighted as a model program by President Clinton's National Initiative on Race. It received the Year 2000 Best Program Award from the National Association for Multicultural Education; and was honored with the Washington State Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Education.

Rather than asking the schools to implement a series of standardized multicultural directives from above, EMPIRE offered pro-active leadership with a grassroots approach that empowered site teams at each school to design and implement their own agendas for change.

**Educational Resources:** UnityWorks also offers an assortment of high-quality, easy-to-use teacher's guides, PowerPoint lessons for children, Conversation Starters on Race, and other multicultural resources designed to teach people about the oneness of humanity, the value of diversity and the need for unity. Visit our online bookstore for details: [www.unityworks.org/bookstore.html](http://www.unityworks.org/bookstore.html).

**Yakima Board Members:**

- Lorenzo Alvarado, Assistant Principal, Davis High School
- Verlynn Best, President/CEO Yakima Chamber
- Dr. Joy Howard, Affiliate Faculty, Heritage University
- Mary Looney, Teacher, Yakama Tribal School
- Alan Matsumoto, Principal, Garfield Elementary
- Dr. Nancy McHenry, YSD Director of Student Services
- Steve Mitchell, CEO of OIC of Washington
- Larry Peterson, Attorney, retired

**Why Unity?** The human race faces a multitude of seemingly unsolvable problems including widespread poverty, malnutrition, war, disease, climate change, economic instability, gender inequality and deep-rooted prejudice.

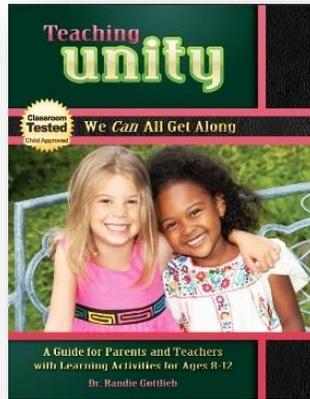
Particularly damaging is racial prejudice. Although great strides have been made, racism still pervades the institutions of our society and holds a strong grip on individual hearts and minds. Many children already hold negative stereotypes of other racial and ethnic groups by the time they enter first grade.

While we might make some progress addressing each of these issues separately, UnityWorks believes that they are only pieces of a larger puzzle—symptoms of the primary disease afflicting society: the disunity of the human race. We believe that a fragmented approach is itself part of the problem, and that unity is a prerequisite for achieving the well-being, peace and security of all the earth's inhabitants.



As a united humanity, we will have the capacity to develop positive

and sustainable solutions to the challenges facing us, and provide a firm foundation on which to build a prosperous and peaceful world.



**We Need Your Help!** As a nonprofit startup organization, we need your help in spreading the word about our programs and resources, and we welcome your financial support. You can make a tax-deductible donation on our website: [www.UnityWorks.org](http://www.UnityWorks.org). Your donation will allow us to develop new resources and to offer training and materials to schools with limited means. Every dollar makes a difference. Join us in our efforts to promote

understanding of the oneness of humanity, the value of diversity and the need for unity. With your support, together we can create positive and lasting social change.

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## Latah County Human Rights Task Force

The Latah County Human Rights Task Force has recently completed a number of projects including the Great Moscow Food Drive and Human Rights Day at the Farmers Market. The task force is now working on educational outreach programs and is also sponsoring Living Voices presentations of “La Causa” for Troy High School and “Within the Silence” for Potlatch High School.

Members are also circulating the prompts for the Martin Luther King Art and Essay contest. The theme this year is Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, the 24th Amendment, and the Voting Rights Act”. The contest is open to grades 1 through 12 in all Latah County Schools. Awards will be presented at the Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Community Breakfast on Saturday, January 17, by Moscow Mayor Bill Lambert.