

Highest Number of Human Rights Complaints Remains in Employment

2002 Annual Report Released

As revealed in the 2002 Manitoba Human Rights Commission's Annual Report, complaints arising in the area of employment constitute the vast majority of complaints filed with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

According to Executive Director Dianna Scarth, about 70% of the complaints are in employment, whereas 23% are in services and less than 5% are in housing.

"The high percentage of complaints filed in the area of employment confirms the importance of our educational seminars," she says. The Commission offers a series of human rights workshops, which address the rights and responsibilities of employers.

The annual report also reveals that complaints filed on the basis of disability were once again the most common ground among complaints in 2002. Almost 33% of the complaints filed were based on disability.

The total number of complaints filed during 2002 was consistent with the volume of complaints in previous years. The Commission however continues to be more efficient in dealing with complaints. When all options utilized to resolve a complaint were combined, and a time calculated, the average time taken by the Commission to process a complaint was 3.8 months.

"One reason for the decrease in time is the mediation process," says Ms Scarth. "Of the 279 complaints closed during the year, a record 57% were resolved through mediation and conciliation."

By way of historical comparison, in 1996, 31% of complaints were resolved through mediation.

The full report is available on the Commission's website at www.gov.mb.ca/hrc



The Rights Connection

By Janet Baldwin - Chairperson

Racial Profiling: Tearing at the Fabric of our Community

The underlying principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of Canada's Charter is the "worth and dignity of each of us". Our Human Rights Code states that implicit in this principle "is the right of all individuals to be treated in all matters solely on the basis of their personal merits, and to be accorded equality of opportunity with all other individuals". Racial profiling strikes at this very foundation.

Racial profiling is an approach to matters involving security or safety, which relies on stereotypes concerning a person's ancestry, national origin or religion. Individuals are not treated based on their personal merits. For example, a recent Nova Scotia case concerned the actions of a police constable in pulling over a car whose driver and passenger were black men. The car's out-of-province registration documents were valid but misinterpreted; tickets were issued and the car towed. The Board of Inquiry found "the tragic lack of communication which caused Constable Sanford to fall into error was the result of the police officer's use of a racial stereotype of black male criminality".

The Ontario Human Rights Commission has recently released an Inquiry Report "Paying the Price: The Human Cost of Racial Profiling". Costs of racial profiling identified include that it "compromises our future through its impact on our children and youth, creates mistrust in our institutions, impacts our communities' sense of belonging and level of civic participation and impacts on human dignity."

Matters involving security or safety may evoke fear, but this fear must not prevent us from treating all individuals on the basis of their personal merit. To do less than this discriminates against the person, as it tears at the fabric of our community - a fabric whose strength may be our best assurance of security and safety.

Youth Conference Goes North

Commission seeks sponsors

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission is proud to announce that it is taking its very successful Youth Awareness Conference to Thompson, Manitoba.

“Many northern schools found the cost of coming to Winnipeg prohibitive,” says Executive Director Dianna Scarth, “so we decided to take the conference closer to them.”

Northern schools are excited about the chance to attend a human rights conference, which will take place on March 23, 2004. Already the Commission has received a huge response. On the agenda for the students is three of the Commission’s most popular workshops; Sticks and Stones, which is about bullying and harassment, Taking Care of Business, about rights and responsibilities in the workplace and “Not So Trivial Pursuit”, the Human Rights Game Show.

The goal of the Conference is to ensure that students are aware of their human rights. They are given the opportunity to talk, ask questions and listen. All the workshops deliver the message that equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination are non-negotiable.

The Commission will also be holding a Video Contest. The winning school receives a \$500 gift certificate to help enhance its audio/video needs.

The City of Thompson was selected because of its successful efforts in past years to hold week long activities revolving around International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which is March 21st.

If your organization is interested in becoming a sponsor/donor to the First Annual Northern Youth Conference, please call Patricia Knipe at 945-5112.



Laura Gomes, Meenakshi Punj, Narissa Umali and Bojan Dulabic (starting front left, clockwise) participate in a CBC national radio broadcast about the issues surrounding racism and the work of the Unity Group.

Congratulations to Maples Collegiate

The YMCA-YWCA has awarded the YMCA Youth Peace Medal for 2003 to the Unity Group of Maples Collegiate in Winnipeg. This is the group’s 9th year of promoting anti-racism and unity. The students meet once a week and plan activities such as food drives, volunteering at homeless shelters, planning and running a full day of Unity Group activities in the school and organizing annual marches to draw attention to and show leadership in, the fight against racism.

This year the Maples Collegiate Unity Group is organizing a dinner event at the Royal Crown, Fort Garry Place, Wednesday, March 3, 2004. The proceeds of this evening will go towards their continuing efforts to promote unity, anti-racism and human rights. The group is hoping that businesses and organizations will help out by way of a donation whether it be goods, services or financial.

You can also sponsor the attendance of a recent immigrant at the dinner, by purchasing one or more tickets on their behalf.

For more information about this event call Chuck Duboff at 632-6641 extension 3229.

Coming Events

**Next Month is Black History Month
Celebration 2004**

“Understanding Our Past, Living Our Present, Creating Our Future”

**Police Multi-Cultural Forum
Friday, February 6 at 7:00 pm
Marlborough Hall, 8th Floor Ramada Hotel
In collaboration with the Winnipeg Police Service**

**Youth Workshop on Education
February 21 at 10:00 am
Jamaican Association Hall, 1098 Winnipeg Avenue
In collaboration with MAME, BEAM and Congress of Black Women**

**For more information on these and other events call:
The Black History Celebration Committee at 477- 0997 or 257- 9665**