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The Alliance

The Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony 616-335-8139

Dedicated to promoting unity, justice, equal opportunity, ethnic awareness, cross-cultural understanding and appreciation for diversity.

Inside this Issue:

Membership	2
ACEH Holiday Celebration	2
Board Candidates	3
Rosa Parks' Example	5
Sharing Circle	6

Board of Directors

Becky Arenas
Liz Barveld
Jill Cooper
Judy Essenburgh
Mike Jones
Utsab Khadka
Bin Lim
Annie Olson
Kim Romero

ACEH Launches 8th Year

Annual Meeting is Friday, January 13, 2006

ACEH is set to begin its eighth year January 13, with election of new board members, annual reports, and brainstorming on future programs.

Mike Jones, who is completing his term as president, urges all ACEH members and friends to attend. "We need the energy and involvement of as many folks as possible to really be effective. Working for justice, equal rights, and appreciation for diversity is not a one-person job, or even a board job. It takes a commitment from all of us in order to make an impact in the community," he says.

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. at the Center for Women in Transition, 411 Butternut, Holland. The children's group, UNITY, for youngsters ages 4 to 14, also will meet.

Candidates for 2006-08 board positions are Liz Barveld, Dan Cornelissen, Bin Lim, Eleanor Lopez, and Victor Orozco (see ballot inside).

Nominations may also be made from the floor at the annual meeting.

Continuing on the board are Becky Arenas, Jill Cooper, Jill Essenburgh, and Kim Romero. Ending their service on the board will be Mike Jones, Utsab Khadka, and Annie Olson.

A copy of "Speak Up! Responding to Everyday Bigotry," published by Teaching Tolerance/The Southern Poverty Law Center, will be given to everyone who attends.

ACEH was founded as a grass-roots volunteer organization in Holland in January 1999, following several informal meetings at the home of David and Kim Douglas to study the recommendations of the President's Commission on Race. It holds 10 meetings a year on topics of race, ethnic diversity, stereotypes and discrimination, and other justice issues; sponsors summer and winter social events; publishes a monthly newsletter and bi-monthly In the Community emails; offers a children's program; and serves as a community resource on diversity. The ACEH website is

www.harmonyalliance.org.



ACEH Welcomes New and Renewing Members

A warm welcome to new member **Debra Quade** and thanks to renewing family and individual members **John and Mary Buttrey, Bob and Fran Hamilton, Ruth Hill, Mary Inman, Dale Van Lente, Bob and Leslie Wessman,** and nonprofit member **Evergreen Commons.**

Please consider joining with these ACEH members as we work together for social justice and appreciation for diversity, and to make West Michigan a place where all are welcomed and respected.

The ACEH dues structure is as follows:

Individual: \$20.00 one year; \$35.00 two years

Family: \$30.00 one year; \$50.00 two years

Nonprofit: \$40.00 one year

Business: \$75.00 one year

The ACEH fiscal year runs October 1 – September 30. In lieu of, or in addition to, paying dues, you may make a pledge of service to ACEH. Checks should be made out to ACEH and sent to Treasurer Bin Lim, ACEH, Box 3007, Holland, MI 49422-3007.

Many thanks to retiring board members Mike Jones, president; Annie Olson; and Utsab Khadka for their service to ACEH and the community over the last two years!!

ACEH Holiday Celebration Attracts Crowd

Some 50 adults and children turned out for the annual ACEH Holiday Potluck and Cultural Sharing Party on December 10 to enjoy good conversation, delicious food, and each other's company.

Special thanks to First United Methodist Church for their fellowship hall; to the Ballet Folklorico Sol Azteca de Humberto Hernandez, for providing entertainment; to Annie Olson, for her polymer clay art activity, Dance of the Penguins; to Holland Chorale Director Gary Bogle, who led the group in singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth (and Let It Begin with Me)"; and to the ACEH volunteers who decorated tables and set up and cleaned up the party.

Canned food donations were given to the food pantry of Core City Christian Community Development Association of Holland.

CANDIDATES FOR ACEH BOARD, Jan. 2006-Jan. 2008

The ACEH board elections are held annually; terms are for two years. Continuing on the board are Becky Arenas, Jill Cooper, Judy Essenburgh, and Kim Romero. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the January 13, 2006, meeting. There are 5 open positions for 2006-2008.

_____ **Liz Barveld** has been board secretary and is running for reelection. For 25 years, she owned a retail store selling furniture, antiques, and household items, serving many diverse people. She has 3 sons and 5 grandchildren. Liz says, *"Diversity and people are a passion to me; I want to see people live in harmony. I also want to see ACEH grow and involve more people working for the group and its vision."*

_____ **Dan Cornelissen** is a member of the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish band of Pottawatomi Indians, also known as the Gun Lake Band. Last fall, he was chair for the Anishnabek Nodin Gathering on the Hope College campus, the first gathering of Natives in Holland in about 200 years, and he recently became a member of the Nokimos Learning Center. Dan, who is 34 years old and single, says he would like to be an ACEH board member because *"I have a willingness to help others, I like to see a mix of cultures working together, and I would like to help the world become more diverse."*

_____ **Bin Lim**, who is running for reelection, has been an ACEH member from its founding and has served as treasurer. He is an engineer, retired from Herman Miller, and active in the Lakeshore Interfaith Institute. Bin and his wife, Lisa, have 4 children and 1 grandchild. He says, *"I think ACEH is a unique organization attracting progressive, open-minded, and compassionate people who are trying to dismantle the (sometimes ever so subtle) social injustices in our community by getting involved in discussion in a very personal way. We have to educate ourselves and the community, to get rid of our prejudices and unconscious false understanding of others. I have no choice but to be active and hope to attract others to do the same."*

_____ **Eleanor Lopez** has lived in the Holland area for many years, and is an active volunteer in many community programs, including ACEH. She has been on the staff of Holland Hospital for 27 years. She says: *"I believe ACEH is an excellent organization that can make an impact in our community. I would like to continue helping people from different cultures and backgrounds together to share their diverse experiences and points of view. Education that is truly diverse can have a lasting impact on our community."*

_____ **Victor Orozco** was born in Guanajuato, Mexico, and raised in Chicago. He has been a city councilman in Holland for 11 years and works as a millroom operator. He's volunteered with Latin Americans United for Progress (LAUP), serving as president for a short time, and Habitat for Humanity and has been a member of the Holland Chorale board. Victor and his wife, Rosa Maria, have 4 children (another is deceased) and a dozen grandchildren. *"I'm a strong advocate for racial and ethnic diversity, and think I can help ACEH as it works for this also,"* Victor says.

_____ Open to nomination from the floor on January 13, 2006

We Know What Rosa Parks Did, But What Can WE Do?

We honor what the late Rosa Parks did for civil rights and to advance the cause of justice. But do we leave it there? What can we do, in our own time and in our own ways? On December 1, 2005, *Detroit Free Press* writer Desiree Cooper asked that question in an article headlined "Change Can Start with You," which is excerpted below:

"The 50th anniversary of the Montgomery bus boycott is no time for us to rest, either. Forget the rousing speeches, the monuments and marches. Because peace and understanding must be earned every day, action is the only path to real progress. If you want to honor Mrs. Parks' legacy, do exactly what she did: Put yourself in the way of destiny.

"But how?

"Start right where you are, with yourself, your inner circle and your community. Here are some simple things ordinary people have done to bring an end to racial strife, one relationship at a time," Ms. Cooper wrote.

Metro Detroiters of different races and ethnic backgrounds came up with these ideas, reprinted in Ms. Cooper's article. What are yours?

"You have to first realize that everyone has stereotypical notions about others, and you have to figure out where they came from: the media, your family, etc. Then, you have to put yourself in a situation to get to know the people you have those notions about. Challenge yourself." (Female African American student)

"If you're near someone not of your race, just be polite and say 'Hello.' Politeness can go a long way. It's a little thing, but it can be a big thing in the long run. And do less talking and more listening. If you show the other person that you're interested in what they say, they'll return that favor." (Male African American high school student)

"Everyone has their own story to tell...it really opens your eyes so that you can never judge anyone. Now when I see kids isolating themselves in school, I think about what they may be going through. It inspires me to be a little nicer to someone.... (Polish-American female high school student)

"I learned to speak up every time I saw people operating from stereotypes. I began to notice that because I wouldn't tolerate it, it happened less often in front of me...It definitely impacted the culture at work." (Male African American retired sheriff's deputy)

"Go to the movie 'Crash' and watch it alone. It's about race relations and how to get past stereotypes. Seeing the movie was a non-threatening way to experience difference. It's on my Christmas list." (58-year-old Caucasian woman, director of a rotating emergency shelter team)

"There's a difference between tolerating people who are different from you and actually becoming friends. You can't be color-blind; you have to embrace their race. A lot of people say, 'I look beyond race,' but how can you ignore someone's racial identity. You can't talk about diversity if you aren't able to recognize it." (Female Caucasian high school student)

"Read. Do your own research. Ask yourself what you know about history that you can share with others. It's an opening for dialogue, and it will help you discover if your assumptions are based on facts." (52-year-old Puerto Rican male, director of multicultural affairs at a Detroit-area university)

And now...ACEH asks: What would be your ideas and suggestions, if the reporter talked to you? What will you commit to doing to advance justice in the coming year?

The Alliance

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HARMONY

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WEB ADDRESS
www.harmonyalliance.org

*Bringing People
Together from Worlds
Apart*

ACEH's Holiday Celebration: Around the circle, adults and children share their thoughts about people, activities, and things for which they are thankful. For more pictures, please go to www.harmonyalliance.org, and click on Photos.



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