

January, 2007
Volume 9, Issue 1

The Alliance

The Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony 616-786-0829

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

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ACEH Jan 05-Jan 07

Board of Directors

Becky Arenas
Liz Barveld
Jill Cooper
Dan Cornelissen
Judy Essenburgh
Bin Lim
Eleanor Lopez
Kim Romero

ACEH Begins 9th Year on January 12 with “Clown” Video; Board Elections

In the summer of 1998, David and Kim Douglas led a small group of people in meetings at their home to talk about recommendations of the President’s Commission on Race. From those discussions came the first meeting of the then-unnamed Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony, in January 1999.

On Friday, January 12, the Alliance starts its ninth year as a grass-roots volunteer organization offering programs, information, and advocacy to promote justice, equal opportunity, cross-cultural understanding, and appreciation for diversity in the greater Holland area. **The meeting, which is open to the public, begins at 7 p.m. at the Center for Women in Transition, 411 Butternut, Holland.**

ACEH will present the video-based training program “Clown,” a “unique, thought-provoking, and entertaining look at diversity” that combines drama and comedy to explore the negative effects of bias, racism, and prejudice and gives viewers a way to take a fresh look at their personal assumptions and interactions in a diverse society.

New board members for 2007-9 will be elected at the January 12 meeting (see Page 3 of this newsletter), a proposed revision of ACEH bylaws will be voted on, and there will be brainstorming of programs for the year ahead. The bylaws are posted on the ACEH website, www.harmonyalliance.org. UNITY, the ACEH children’s group, will meet at the same time and place as the general meeting. For information, contact President Jill Cooper at 786-0829 or the ACEH website.

*The well-being, peace and security of mankind are unattainable unless and until its **unity** is firmly established.*

-Baha’u’llah



Alliance Welcomes New, Renewing Members

Welcome to new members **Diane Canales** and **Faith Van Popering**.

And a big thank-you to renewing members **Judy Essenburgh** and **Bob and Fran Hamilton**.

Please consider joining with Diane, Faith, Judy, Bob and Fran and other members of ACEH as we work for social justice and appreciation for diversity, to make West Michigan a place where all are welcomed and respected.

We are a volunteer group with a modest budget, relying on dues, donations, and occasional grants to support our work. Funds go toward educational programs, postage, paper, printing, the children's UNITY group activities, contributions to local events, maintaining the website, and so on.

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 or service pledges should be made out to ACEH and sent to Treasurer Liz Barveld, P. O. Box 3007, Holland, MI 49422-3007. To pay by credit card, go to our website www.harmonyalliance.org, click on "Join Us" and use the secure Pay Pal system.

Jill Cooper to Lead UNITY in 2007

Many thanks to **Jill Cooper**, who served as ACEH president in 2006. In 2007, Jill has volunteered to be the new leader of UNITY, the ACEH children's group for ages 4 to 14 and has some exciting plans for the group. She is a former president of Pine Creek Elementary School PTO and the mother of two children.

Thanks also to **Ken Cooper**, ACEH webmaster; **Herb Weller**, database manager; **Ann Weller**, newsletter and In the Community email editor; and **David Douglas**, newsletter layout and graphics editor. They will continue in these jobs.

ACEH BOARD CANDIDATES, January 2007 – January 2009

_____ **Becky Arenas** was elected to the ACEH board in 2005 and is seeking reelection. A parent educator and social worker with Life Services Systems in Holland, she has been active for years in Latin Americans United for Progress (LAUP) and other Hispanic organizations and in voter registration efforts. She has seven adult children, a number of grandchildren, and a great-grandchild; she is a graduate of Hope College. Becky says: ***"I want to be on the ACEH board again to keep working toward having others believe that everyone in Holland is their neighbor regardless of what race they are! 'Love your neighbor' needs to be redefined."***

_____ **Linda Blaukamp** has lived in Holland for 26 years; she is a graduate of Hope College and Western Seminary and has raised six children, mostly as a single parent. She says, "I have been the proprietess (and surrogate mother) of the Leaf and Bean, a cafe where everyone is valued as a person first, second, and last. My most formative education came from my friendship with Joy Forgwé, a single mother of four African-Dutch children, which opened my eyes to many things I would never have learned in my Dutch Christian Reformed community." Linda would like to be part of the ACEH board ***"to be involved in opening the eyes of others."***

_____ **Janie Briones** was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, and moved to Holland 25 years ago. She is employed with the City of Holland as Neighborhood Liaison and has been involved in the community for many years. Janie is single, with two married sons and three grandsons. Janie says: ***"I really believe in the proverb, 'it takes a village to raise a child,' and it takes all of us together to work for justice, fairness, equality, and diversity for the people that we serve. My role is to be a mentor and empower others so we can build a strong community."***

_____ **Judy Essenburgh**, a peace and social justice activist, was elected to the ACEH board in 2005 and is running again. She has been a volunteer for many community groups and in the last few years has participated in an Institute for the Healing of Racism, Holland First, Holland Police Academy, neighborhood watch training, and crisis training for the Center for Women in Transition. Judy looks forward to continuing on the board because ***"my life is about learning, caring, and, above all, acceptance of people from all walks of life."***

_____ **Kim Romero**, who lives in Zeeland, is an information referral specialist for Disability Network/Lakeshore, an education and advocacy agency. She spent several years in Mexico and Central America learning to speak Spanish and working as a missionary. She has two children, Nicole, 11, and Luis, 7. Kim was first elected to the ACEH board in 2005, and is running again. She says: ***"I can contribute my own perspective, as a person with a disability, as well as the perspective of the people in the community that I work with every day."***

_____ **Marvin Younger** taught elementary students in Holland Public Schools for more than 30 years, receiving many state and local awards; for 20 summers he trained teachers in Micronesia. He volunteers on the Holland Area Arts Council board, Holland Human Relations Commission, Lakeshore Area Youth Leadership board, International Relations Commission, and Upward Bound. Marvin says: ***"As a board member, I hope to foster a respect for and acceptance of the diversity that is so much a part of Holland, working to build bridges of communication between ethnic groups and the city, and examining ways to involve all stakeholders in the life of this community."***

(Nomination from the floor)

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Continuing on the board in 2007 are **Liz Barveld, Dan Cornelissen, Bin Lim, and Eleanor Lopez.**

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*Bringing People
Together from Worlds
Apart*

Latin Americans United for Progress Selects New Executive Director

Roberto “Bert” Jara has been named the new executive director of Latin Americans United for Progress (LAUP). He began working for the organization on January 3.

Mr. Jara’s background includes organizational development, management, fund development, and team building. He has a bachelor’s degree from Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA, where he graduated magna cum laude, and a master’s in divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA.

Speaking for LAUP’s board of directors, Tino Reyes, who has been the volunteer executive director for many years, said Bert Jara has the expertise to take LAUP to its next stage of development. A public open house will be announced at a later date to give area residents and community leaders the opportunity to meet Mr. Jara.

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