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The Alliance

The Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony 616-392-5086

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

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Board of Directors

- Becky Arenas**
- Natalie Avila**
- Linda Blauwkamp**
- Jack Hyde**
- Bin Lim**
- Norma Luna**
- Rev. Angela Taylor Perry**
- Mary Yedinak**
- Marvin Younger**

8th Annual Tulipanes Festival Hits Holland in mid-September

Holland's very own Tulipanes Latino Art and Film Festival will roll out a full schedule of films, concerts, dancing including Salsa Night, and art on the weekend of September 12-14 at several locations in the city. Instead of holding its own general meeting in September, ACEH encourages members and friends to attend Tulipanes and also to volunteer to help out at the various events.

To volunteer, contact Angie Hanks at angela.hanks@chemicalbankmi.com or call her at (616) 785-2531.

A full schedule of the films and activities is on the Tulipanes website: www.tulipanes.org.

Tulipanes was founded by former Holland resident Deborah De La Torre and continues to celebrate Latino culture through music, dance, art, and film, and to promote a positive image of Latino youth, families, senior citizens, and professionals.

Hate Crimes Conference in Lansing September 12

The Michigan Alliance Against Hate Crimes and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights are hosting a statewide hate crimes conference on Friday, September 12, at the MSU Kellogg Hotel and Convention Center, East Lansing. It is free and open to the public. First-come, first-served registrations should be made ASAP to <http://miaahc.com/conference08.aspx> MIAAHC is a coalition of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, civil rights organizations, community groups, educators, and anti-violence advocates working to ensure a complete and effective response to hate crimes and bias incidents.

See Page 3: RESPONDING TO RACIAL SLURS

The Community's Support for Local Family and a Pledge of Commitment to Anti-Racism: NOT HERE. NOT NOW. NOT EVER AGAIN

Sign-up Deadline is 9 a.m., Tuesday, September 2

Thanks to Alliance Supporters!

A warm welcome to new member **Norma Killilea**, and thank you to renewing member **Debra Quade**.

Please consider joining with Norma, Debra, and other ACEH supporters as we work together for social justice and appreciation for diversity, 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 or service pledges should be made out to ACEH and sent to ACEH Treasurer Bin Lim, c/o ACEH, P. O. Box 3007, Holland, MI 49422-3007. If you want to pay by credit card, please go to the ACEH website www.harmonyalliance.org, click on "Join Us" and use the secure Pay Pal system.

NOTE: If you are a current member and your membership is due to expire this October, you will be notified by email (or regular mail if you aren't on the internet) in mid-September.

News of Members

Congratulations to **Tony Castillo**, who has been named a trustee of Hope College. Tony, who is president of Milagro Six/McDonald's in Holland, is also chair of the Holland Area Chamber of Commerce.

Shannon Garrett was elected as a precinct delegate in the city of Holland in the August 5 primary. She heads the Michigan office of The White House project, which trains and supports women running for public office. The office is located in Grand Rapids.

* * * *

Our sympathy to **Phil** and **Kathy Beal** on the recent death of Phil's brother, the Rev. Maynard Beal, in Rockford, Illinois.

Adults, Kids Party at the Park at 10th Annual ACEH Event

Some 60 adults and children (and canines Bella and Phoebe) from a variety of countries and cultures met at Ransom Park on Sunday, August 10, for ACEH's 10th annual Potluck in the Park. They enjoyed wonderful food, good conversation, and a chance to meet and mingle with newcomers and long-time Alliance members, including **David** and **Kim Douglas**, founders of ACEH in 1999. Many thanks to **Robert Engle**, for providing great music with the street organ; **Kim Romero**, for making amazing animals and hats with balloons; **Dominique Vargas** and **Norma Luna** for beautiful designs painted on young faces, and **Liz Barveld** for the piñata. Special thanks to **Bin Lim** for his set-up work at the park. Couldn't be there that day? You'll find some pictures of Potluck in the Park on the ACEH website, www.harmonyalliance.org (then click on Photos, 2008).

ACEH Responds to Racial Slur

The following letter was written by ACEH president Marvin Younger and sent to the Holland Sentinel, Grand Rapids Press, and Holland Observer on August 18, 2008:

The Board of Directors of The Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony (ACEH) calls upon the Holland community to deplore the August 17 defacement of the driveway at the north side home of a family of color, with a caricatured face and the word "Nigger." It's a shame and unfortunate that this community has to continue to deal with this type of destructive behavior from a few ignorant individuals, after many people work so hard to avoid stereotypes and to forge a much more diverse city.

The Alliance is dedicated to promoting unity, justice, fairness, equal treatment, good-will, peace, hope, harmony, love, helping, caring, sharing, community and truth. Since 1999, we have provided workshops and activities that bring together people from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds. We believe that all human beings – no matter how different in background – share certain core values and needs and these commonalities serve as a foundation for good business and personal relationships.

"Let us not be blind to our differences, but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which those differences can be resolved."

John F. Kennedy

Please take a moment and put yourself in this family's situation. The emotional scars will last a lifetime – how would you explain this to your three children? The family is from Jamaica, and they have only seen this type of behavior in the movies. When I spoke with the mother this morning, the family was still in shock. The family's little girl asked her, "Does this mean we will be killed?" How would you respond to your child?

We believe that this is a community with a conscience, and we ask that you make it abundantly clear that this type of racist behavior will not be tolerated.

Community Response

On Tuesday, August 19, some 25 people from ACEH, the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance/LEDA, Latin Americans United for Progress, churches, and other groups met at the LEDA offices to strategize a response to the incident. After discussion facilitated by LEDA director Gail Harrison, three were chosen: (1) Prepare a pledge of support to the family and an anti-racist commitment, encourage individuals to sign it, and publish it in the Holland Sentinel (which will be on September 7); the group adopted a pledge written by ACEH member Ann Weller. As of Friday, August 22, more than 1,500 signatures had been sent in. (2) Hold a community party in Winstrom Park, Park Township; date to be determined. (3) Advocate for training in local schools about hate crimes, presented by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

The Pledge

Here is the pledge: If you have NOT already signed it, you may send your name to be included in the ad to hpweller@comcast.net or mail your name to LEDA, c/o PO Box 2945, Holland, MI 49422. Please do this right away; the deadline for accepting signatures is 9 a.m., Tuesday, September 2.

NOT HERE. NOT NOW. NOT EVER AGAIN.

"As concerned residents of West Michigan, we extend our support to the Park Township family whose driveway was recently defaced with an offensive racial slur and picture. We want the family to know that anyone who did this does not reflect us or what we want our community to be, and we support efforts to bring the person or persons to justice. We will work to see that no other family living here now or in the future experiences the same shock and pain. A diverse and welcoming community creates economic and wonderful cultural benefits. But inclusion *depends* on all of us. We, the undersigned, pledge to promote justice, celebrate our diversity, and act as anti-racists in our personal and community lives."

The Alliance

THE ALLIANCE FOR
CULTURAL AND ETHNIC
HARMONY

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E-MAIL:
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*Bringing People
Together from Worlds
Apart*

October 10 Meeting Introduces Hearts in Harmony Partnership

The Friday, October 10, meeting of the Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony will be the kick-off of the ACEH partnership with Hearts in Harmony, which was developed by Rev. Angela Taylor-Perry. Rev. Taylor-Perry is reconciling minister of Faith Christian Reformed Church, Holland, and an ACEH board member.

Hearts in Harmony pairs two people of different ethnic backgrounds who commit to meet monthly for a year to talk openly and honestly about issues of prejudice and race and their own experiences.

The meeting, which starts at 7 p.m., will be held at the Center for Women in Transition, 411 Butternut. The public is warmly invited to attend to find out more about this new program.

LAUP Offers New Round of ESL and GED Classes

Starting the week of September 8, Latin Americans United for Progress (LAUP) will offer new classes for people learning English as a Second Language (ESL) and for people who want to obtain their GED. ESL classes will be held at the Martha Miller Center, Hope College, Columbia Ave and 10th St, Holland, on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. GED classes are Thursday and Friday nights from 6 to 9 pm at Fourth Reformed Church, 238 West 15th St, Holland.

Those interested in either ESL or GED may sign up at the LAUP office, 100 North Fairbanks, between 9 am and 5 pm weekdays, or by calling (616) 392-5058.

The Alliance for Cultural
and Ethnic Harmony

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