

The Alliance

The Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony is dedicated to promoting unity, justice, equal opportunity, ethnic awareness, cross-cultural understanding and appreciation for diversity

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Discrimination--Do You See It or Not? Find Out at ACEH Meeting Nov. 14

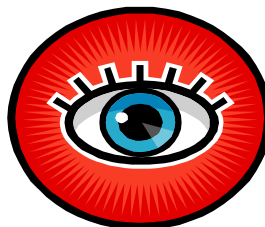
Why some people fail to see discrimination—and what to do about it—is the topic of the Friday, November 14, meeting of the Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony (ACEH).

The public is invited to the meeting, which begins at 7 p.m. at the Center for Women in Transition, 411 Butternut, Holland.

Dr. Mary Inman, professor of psychology at Hope College for 10 years, will talk about her past work and current attempts to widen people's perceptions of discrimination. In her work, she says, she strives to "understand why people are hesitant of different cultures, protective of their turf, and strong in their convictions."

In addition to her professional work, she served on the Lakeshore Fair Housing Board for five years and, with others from the Summit on Racism, wrote a toolbook for businesses to learn the best practices that companies use to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.

She earned her doctorate in social psychology at the University of Iowa, where she had studied perceptions of racism for three years. She taught at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, for seven years before coming to Hope.



WHERE DOES IT STOP?

A COMMUNITY FORUM ON HATE AND HATE CRIMES
Thursday, October 30, from 7 to 9 p.m. at
Crossroad Chapel, Lincoln Ave at 12th St, Holland.

The Forum is the result of the Community Pledge of Not Here. Not Now. Not Ever Again, the Community Unity Potluck, and the Lakeshore Summit on Racism Community Action Team.

Alliance Thanks Renewing Members, Seeks Support for Next Year's Work

Many thanks to these renewing members: John and Mary Buttrey, Phil and Jan Coray, Frances and Robert Hamilton, Mary Kaechele, Bin and Lisa Lim, Luis and Eleanor Lopez, Bill and Judy Parr, Carol Anne Peterson, Maura and Bill Reynolds, Gisela Strand, Gerard Van Heest, Ruth Van Kampen, and Marvin Younger.

Dear Members and Friends:

Since its founding in January 1999, the Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony has worked hard in the greater Holland area to keep the issue of diversity in the public eye, advocate for equality and justice, offer interesting programs, and distribute information on area events. Please consider joining us or renewing your membership.

ACEH has held these programs in 2008: January: Art Ambassadors from Holland and the Dalits (Untouchables) of India; February: Video: "Lunch Date" and Hearts in Harmony; March: Holland Chorale music and Langston Hughes' poetry, at Holland Area Arts Council; April: Peace at All Costs-How to Love Your Enemy: Northern Ireland; June: Video and discussion: "Blue-Eyed"; July: Leaving Home Because of War: Local refugees from Austria and from Iraq.

In October, we launched an exciting new partnership, Hearts in Harmony, to create intentional friendships across cultures.

So far this year, we have published 11 newsletters; sent out more than 30 "In the Community" emails alerting people to area diversity events; maintained a website www.harmonyalliance.org with links to translators and other organizations; and held our 10th annual August Potluck in the Park.

In August ACEH worked with to help support a family whose driveway was defaced with a racial slur; the response organized by LEDA, ACEH, LAUP, churches and other groups included a Pledge—Not Here. Not Now. Not Ever Again—of commitment to anti-racism; to date more nearly 3,000 persons have signed. We were also part of the Community Unity Potluck in September. The Alliance participated with the Lakeshore Summit on Racism in May and with Core City's Juneteenth Celebration and helped publicize LAUP's Fiesta and the 8th annual Tulipanés.

As a volunteer group we rely on dues, contributions, and occasional grants to pay our expenses. The membership year is October 1 to September 30, and the dues are:

Individual: \$20 one year; \$35 two years.

Family: \$30 one year; \$50 two years.

Nonprofit: \$40 one year.

Business: \$75 one year.

In lieu of, or in addition to, paying dues, you may make a pledge of service to ACEH.

There are three ways to join or renew your membership:

(1) On line at www.harmonyalliance.org, using the Pay Pal secure system to pay by credit card; (2) By mail, with a check made out to ACEH and sent to Treasurer Bin Lim at ACEH, Box 3007, Holland, MI 49422-3007; (3) In person at an ACEH meeting or social get-together. ACEH meetings, held on the 2nd Friday of each month, are always open to the public. Check the website for current information.

Sincerely,

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

October, 2008

TO: ACEH Members and Friends
FROM: Marvin Younger, ACEH President

Over the last several weeks the Alliance leadership has been very busy with the August racial intimidation graffiti incident, the community pledge and the Community Unity Celebration at Kollen Park. I truly thank everyone for your support and assistance during this turbulent period.

Recently, I attended a conference in East Lansing called MI Response To Hate, a conference presented by The Michigan Alliance Against Hate Crimes and The Michigan Department Of Civil Rights. Often when incidents of bigotry and/or hate occur, it is left to the victims and members of the particular group that has been attacked to speak out. Yet, it is united that we stand, divided we fall. The Alliance believes that if one group is attacked, it is as though all groups have been attacked. We all have a duty to respond. This conference helped me to understand the legal, emotional, and effective ways to respond to this type of problem for the future, as well as a reaffirmation that we responded correctly to our current situation.

I was pleased that Capt. Jack Dykstra of the Holland Police also attended this important conference. This was another indicator to me that the Holland Police Department is concerned and developing strategies to deal with hate crimes in the future. We both returned with many resources that will be invaluable in our fight to eradicate racism in Holland.

You can do your part by knowing and sharing your pride in your heritage with others. Take the Community Pledge: Not Here, Not Now, Not Ever Again, in your heart. Invite friends from backgrounds different from your own to experience the joy of your traditions and customs. Please see our new program called Hearts and Harmony for a wonderful way to achieve this goal. Be mindful of your language; avoid stereotypical remarks and challenge those made by others. Speak out against jokes and slurs that target people or groups. Silence sends a message that you are in agreement. See other ideas on Page 5.

This is just a small sampling of what I learned, and I hope that together we will all be better human beings. Here's hoping that you get involved!

Celebrate Community and Diversity at ACEH Holiday Potluck December 5

Everyone is invited to ACEH's annual Holiday Potluck on Friday, December 5, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at First United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 57 West 10th Street, Holland.

Please bring a dish to share, one from your own cultural background if possible. ACEH will provide beverages and table service and activities for children. Music will be provided by Luis Ruiz and by the Beltran cousins. And there will be a surprise performer that kids will especially enjoy.

Last year 100 people attended, sharing fellowship with old friends and people they had just met, celebrating the diversity of our greater Holland community. Please invite your family and friends, your neighbors and co-workers, newcomers to Holland and people who have lived here for years. Let's make everyone feel welcome!



Contribution to Film Honors the late Gary Pepe

The Southern Poverty Law Center/Teaching Tolerance has produced a new documentary film that will be distributed to classrooms throughout the country. "Viva La Causa!" is about "one of the seminal events in the march for human rights"--the grape strike and boycott led by César Chávez and Dolores Huerta in the late 1960s. Previous SPLC award-winning documentaries have included one on Rosa Parks and another on "The Children's March."

Inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Chávez, Huerta, and others created a mass movement to improve the lives of farmworkers who labored for meager wages under appalling conditions in the fields of California. The film, in Spanish and English, features interviews with Chávez's children, Huerta, and members of the Robert Kennedy family as well as farmworkers, students, and supporters of the movement. The Center hopes to distribute 50,000 copies of "Viva La Causa!" within two years, saying the film is timely because of "burgeoning anti-Latino sentiment" and continued exploitation of migrant laborers and immigrants of color.

The ACEH/Gary Pepe Memorial Fund has made a financial contribution toward production of the film, and Gary's fund will be listed as a sponsor. Gary died suddenly in May 2005 at the age of 55. He was president of the Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony in 2003 and had been a member since 1999. He was a social worker with Allegan County Mental Health, and before that with Child and Family Services; he was a community mediator, a member of the Migrant Resource Council, a mentor for teens at Ottawa Family Court, a political activist and humanitarian, and a frequent writer of letters to local papers. Gary had lived in the Dominican Republic, traveled in Mexico, and spoke Spanish. And ... Gary loved movies, especially films about the world's cultures.

ACEH president Marvin Younger says: "Our board believes it is especially appropriate to honor Gary's life and the values that he supported by contributing to this new production of the Southern Poverty Law Center and Teaching Tolerance."

The Gary Pepe Memorial Fund was established at The Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area and continues to accept contributions. Gifts are placed in a pass-through fund of the foundation and qualify for a federal tax deduction. Checks should be written to The Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area, with a memo noting "ACEH/Gary Pepe Memorial Fund." They can be mailed to ACEH at Box 3007, Holland, MI 49422-3007 or sent to the foundation at 70 West 8th St., Suite 100, Holland, MI 49423.

In 2006, ACEH purchased a memorial bench in Gary's name; it is located near the Kollen Park fountain that was a gift from Holland's sister city, Querétaro, Mexico.



We've Signed the Pledge...What Else Can We Do?

The following article by ACEH editor Ann Weller was published in the Holland Sentinel Sept 9, 2008.

"On September 7 the Sentinel printed an advertisement with the signatures of more than 2,600 people who protested the racial slur painted on a north side family's driveway, and who committed to be anti-racist in their personal and community lives. What are some ways we could do this?"

We could:

- 1.** Keep our eyes and ears open, for instances when prejudice rears its ugly head around us and for instances when someone speaks out against racism. Be the one to stop racist jokes, not the one to laugh at them, tell them, or forward them in email.
- 2.** Listen when people describe an incident of discrimination, without telling them "You're too sensitive," or "just get past it; we all have problems," or "I'm sure they meant no harm." Until you are the person who has the experience, you don't know its effect.
- 3.** Learn more about other cultures. Watch a movie, read a book, go to a locally celebrated event like Tulipanes, Juneteenth, Fiesta, Native American Pow Wow, or Vietnamese or Cambodian New Year, or visit the Dutch gallery at the Holland Museum; have a meal in an ethnic restaurant; study another language. The Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony meets monthly in Holland to hear speakers from many backgrounds and to create friendships across cultures. Holland First, a free program of the Holland Area Chamber of Commerce, looks at our community through the eyes of diversity.
- 4.** Take a look at your child's school curriculum, or the study plan for Sunday School or religious school. Who's pictured in the books and videos? Do they reflect people of many backgrounds?
- 5.** Meet someone new to you in your neighborhood or at work. Invite her for coffee or to a local event. Talk with him about his life here and what he has experienced.
- 6.** Don't wait for the children. Many times I hear, "We have to start with the children; they'll do better than we do as adults." But...who parents those children, who teaches them, who are their grandparents or other role models? We as adults have to educate ourselves about history and about racism and its effects on people; we can't expect the kids to somehow do it on their own.
- 7.** Sign up for an Institute for Healing Racism sponsored by the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance and the Holland Area Chamber of Commerce. Videos, discussions, and first-hand stories by people from different ethnic backgrounds have a powerful impact.
- 8.** Racism is more than just personal; it infects our institutions and systems, too. Who's hired, who gets a mortgage, who rents the apartment, who pays higher interest rates because of his or her race, who's stopped by police and why? Ask questions; do some research.
- 9.** It's great to invite people of different backgrounds to your church or an event your group sponsors, but take the time to go somewhere else yourself. Your doors may be open, but try walking out of them into someone else's world for a change.
- 10.** Celebrate and enjoy our diversity; it creates a far more interesting and appealing community than one where everyone is the same.

The theme of the pledge, referring to the racial slur, was: Not Here. Not Now. Not Ever Again. We all have to take action to make that come true. What are your ideas?"

Attend the Community Forum on Hate and Hate Crimes October 30 (See Page 1).

The Alliance

THE ALLIANCE FOR
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HARMONY

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*Bringing People
Together from Worlds
Apart*

City Seeks Nominees for Justice Awards

The city of Holland's Human Relations Commission seeks nominations for its 10th annual Social Justice Awards in Housing, Education, Employment, Government/Community Relations, and Youth (ages 13 to 19). To nominate a person, program, agency, business, or employer, a letter should indicate the category and describe (1) services provided to a diverse population that make a difference in the lives of the people served; (2) the needs met that make our community a better place to live; and (3) how diversity is valued and demonstrated. The letter should also list the programs and activities involved to promote equal opportunity and social justice for all.

The deadline is Friday, December 5, 2008; mail nominations to Human Relations Commission, City Hall, 270 South River, Holland, MI 49423, or email to administrative assistant Erin Nyholt at e.nyholt@cityofholland.com.

ACEH received a Social Justice Award in Education in 2006.

**ON TUESDAY, NOV. 4, YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE!
;EI MARTES, 4 NOVIEMBRE, TU VOTO ES TU VOZ!**

The Alliance for Cultural
and Ethnic Harmony

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