

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

On Friday, Feb. 13, ACEH Will Show the Movie, "Pride," the Inspiring Story of a Teacher and an African American Swim Team

The Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony (ACEH) will show the movie "Pride" at its Friday, February 13, meeting. It starts at **6 p.m. (note earlier time than usual)** at the Center for Women in Transition, 411 Butternut, Holland. Everyone is welcome.

Based on true events, the movie is the story of Jim Ellis, an inspiring teacher who changed lives forever when he founded an African American swim team in a rough neighborhood of Philadelphia. One reviewer said, "It shows how an ordinary man can do something extraordinary."

ACEH president Marvin Younger said, "This is a terrific film that merges the realities of living in the ghetto with and without hope for the future. It's a gripping story of survival, in a world where all the cards are stacked against you."

"Pride" is an hour and fifty minutes long and rated PG. ACEH will provide pizza for the evening.

The Alliance is a grass-roots group founded in Holland in 1999 to work for cross-cultural understanding, appreciation for diversity, equal opportunity, and justice in West Michigan. It welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds. For information about ACEH, go to the website www.harmonyalliance.org or call 392-5086.

***"Black history is not a separate history
that we honor only in February,
it's American history."***

Thanks to Alliance Supporters!

A warm welcome to new members **Trudy Berkel** and **Bob Camden**.

Please consider joining with Trudy and Bob 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.

You're Invited to Come on Board!

The Alliance is looking for several people to join its board of directors, helping plan programs and events, overseeing finances, and promoting ACEH in the community. The election will take place in April. Terms are for two years, and the board meets once a month.

Since its founding in January 1999—10 years ago!—the Alliance has relied on volunteers to run its board, and many people have been part of that commitment.

In this special anniversary year, will you give some time toward our goals of advocating for diversity and cross-cultural understanding and working for equal opportunity and justice in West Michigan. Interested? Want more information about what would be involved? Call Marvin Younger at 392-5086.

Dance, dance, dance! Zumbathon event is Saturday, February 21

A Zumbathon afternoon to benefit the All For One Dance program will take place Saturday, February 21, from 1 to 5 p.m. at Christ Memorial Church, 595 Graafschap Road, Holland. Tickets are \$8 per person, sold at the door only.

Maria Schaefer will be the lead instructor for Zumba, a dance exercise that incorporates footwork and body movements from flamenco, salsa, and other dances set to Latin music. There will also be guest entertainment throughout the afternoon.

All For One promotes exercise by dancing as well as bridging cultures through dance. For more information, contact Norma Luna at moonchild1993@yahoo.com

The following "My Take" opinion piece was printed in the Holland Sentinel February 3, 2009. The issue involves opposition by some residents and Saugatuck High alumni to dropping the "Indians" name from Saugatuck athletic teams so that the school can apply to the Michigan Department of Education for Blue Ribbon Exemplary School Award status; the department will not recognize a school that uses American Indian mascots, nicknames, logos, fight songs, insignias, etc.; the Saugatuck High/Middle School gym also has a wall mural of an American Indian wearing a feathered head dress (Holland Sentinel, January 22, 2009). Ms. Dickie is a resident of Saugatuck Township.

Learning Gives New Perspective on Indians

by Jane Dickie

"How do we move from being defensive about changing the name of our community's athletic teams, the Indians, toward a graceful acceptance of the past and enlightened movement forward? As a mother of two Saugatuck High athletes, let me tell you a story:

The year is 1990. As the proud mother I watch my youngest daughter in the role of "mascot Indian." She wears a long feather headdress and a short white outfit. She cheers for the football team and dances in front of the stands. She and we know very little about Native Americans, really almost nothing, and we see nothing wrong with the scene.

Fast forward 10 years: My oldest daughter and her husband have accepted a position working for the health of Native Americans in one of the country's largest reservations, the Navajo nation in Arizona. It is clear to me that Native Americans have been seriously damaged by broken treaties and broken promises, stolen land and decimation of their culture in forced separations between children and their parents to "civilize the natives." The legacy of abuse is heart-rending. But the people we meet are also resilient. We commit ourselves to shifting from some abstract vision of "the Indian" to an understanding of the diversity of peoples encompassed by that category. With our family's education, we begin to look very differently on the appropriation of the name Indian for our own purposes and the consequent promotion of stereotypes that cannot help but become demeaning and trivializing. With learning comes change.

I speak for our whole family, including Jennifer (class of 1987) and Sara (class of '93) when I say we do not feel proud of the ways we participated in trivializing and demeaning real Indians. However, we also understand our own behavior and the defensiveness that some people feel when changing the name Indian is suggested. We've been there.

To move forward and change the name does not lose our heritage, our history with Saugatuck, Saugatuck schools and the excellent experiences we had there. Instead, it recognizes that we cannot appropriate another's experience and eradicate their real heritage.

We strongly urge really honoring the Indian heritage with a comprehensive curriculum that teaches about the Pottawattami and other indigenous peoples both historically and how they live today on and off reservations and with an immediate name change for our athletic teams."

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CULTURAL AND ETHNIC
HARMONY

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*Bringing People
Together from Worlds
Apart*

Stir Fry Trains Culturally Competent Leaders

ACEH treasurer Bin Lim attended the Stir-Fry Seminar, "Cultural Competency for Leaders," at Hope College January 22, and called it "the best seminar I ever attended!" In "stir fry," no one ingredient dominates; all contribute in harmony. Leader Lee Mun Wah said, "Community is about creating a connection with each other, so that when one of us falls, we all fall, and when we each are supported and valued, we are enriched."

When you are talking or working with someone, listen for the BLUES:
Begin where they are, not where you want them to be.
Learn what they have gone through to get to this room.
Understand how their past affects who they are today.
Emotionally relate to how they are feeling. Nourish your relationship.
Stay with how they are feeling. Be present with them as they revisit the pain and memory of their life story.

In discussion, use mindful inquiry like:
"Tell me more about what you meant by...."
"What angered you about what happened?"
"What hurt you about what happened?"
"How did that affect you? How does it affect you now?"
"What do you need/want?"

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