

# The Alliance

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

## *Inside this Issue:*

New ACEH Board	2
Memberships	2
Tiny Acts of Activism	3
Juneteenth	4

## **Board of Directors**

**Natalie Avila**

**Jack Hyde**

**Jauanna Jackson**

**Bin Lim**

**Norma Luna**

**Victor Orozco**

**Lucia Rios**

**Rev. Angela Taylor Perry**

**Mary Yedinak**

**Marvin Younger**

## **Beyond the Bus: The Rosa Parks Legacy Comes to West Michigan at ACEH Meeting Friday, June 12**

At its Friday, June 12, meeting, the Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony will hear two sisters discuss their experiences with the late civil rights activist Rosa Parks, and the five programs of the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development in Detroit. The Institute plans to establish four branches in West Michigan, including Holland.

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

Founded in 1987 by Mrs. Parks and Elaine Eason Steele to honor Mrs. Parks' late husband, Raymond, the Institute empowers youth to model Mrs. Parks' philosophy of "Quiet Strength." For 20 years the Institute has run Pathways to Freedom, sending young people ages 11-17 by bus to trace the Underground Railroad and perform educational and historical research. Pathways' 2009 focus, "Seeding Green Sprouts for the Next Generation," will be based in West Michigan.

Speakers are Anita Peek of Detroit, executive director and historian of the Institute, and her sister, Mrs. Steele, who knew Mrs. Parks as "a leader, a mentor, and a friend." They will be joined by Mitch Dennison of Grand Haven, new president of the Institute's board, to present the group's plans for a Rosa Parks Library and a camp in West Michigan.

There will be a brief video about the Pathways to Freedom program, and a question and answer period.

Rosa Parks (1913-2005), called "the mother of the modern civil rights movement," refused to give up her seat on a segregated Montgomery, Alabama, bus to a white man. Her action helped spark the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 that lasted 381 days. Led by Martin Luther King Jr., the protest galvanized the civil rights movement in the United States.

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**Friday, June 19, and Saturday, June 20: Save the Dates for activities marking Holland's 9<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of Juneteenth. See Page 4 for more information.**



## ACEH Elects New Board Members

Leading ACEH in the coming year will be (group photo, left to right) Front row: **Victor Orozco**, communications; **Lucia Rios**; and **Bin Lim**, treasurer. Standing: **Jack Hyde**, secretary; **Rev. Angela Taylor-Perry**, membership; **Jauanna Jackson**, events; and **Norma Luna**, Unity. Separate photos (from top): **Marvin Younger**, president and outreach; **Mary Yedinak**, vice-president and funds development; and **Natalie Avila**, youth representative and Unity. Victor, Lucia, and Jauanna are new to the board this year; Natalie will leave in August to attend college.

## *New, Renewing Members Help Support Alliance*

**A warm welcome** to new members **Janice Fike** and **Sylvia Jones**. And **thanks** to renewing members **Jauanna Jackson**, **Victor Orozco**, and **Mary Yedinak**.

Please consider joining with these members and others who work together for social justice and appreciation for diversity, to make West Michigan a place where all are welcomed and respected. The dues structure is:

<b>Individual:</b>	<b>\$20.00 one year; \$35.00 two years</b>
<b>Family:</b>	<b>\$30.00 one year; \$50.00 two years</b>
<b>Nonprofit:</b>	<b>\$40.00 one year</b>
<b>Business:</b>	<b>\$75.00 one year</b>

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 Bin Lim, c/o ACEH, P. O. Box 3007, Holland, MI 49422-3007. To pay by credit card, go to our website [www.harmonyalliance.org](http://www.harmonyalliance.org), click on "Join Us" and use the secure Pay Pal. You may also join at an ACEH meeting. To learn whether your membership is current, please contact database manager Herb Weller at [hpweller@comcast.net](mailto:hpweller@comcast.net).

## Tiny Acts of Activism

Tiffany Pridgen wrote this article in May 2009 for [www.antiracistparent.com](http://www.antiracistparent.com), a website for parents (and others) committed to raising children with an anti-racist outlook. It is reprinted here with her permission. She lives in Durham, North Carolina, with her son and husband.

**Until** recently, I didn't consider myself to be much of an activist. I'm pretty even-keeled when it comes to most things. I'm not political. I'm not radical. I play my cards fairly close to my chest.

Then something happened and changed my mind. I realized that I'm a different *kind* of activist. I'm not the kind that carries signs or makes speeches. I don't demand that people shut up and listen. I don't suggest that I'm an authority.

I'm the kind of activist who makes gentle statements in everyday conversation.

Sometimes I hear or read some parent expressing concern about something that happened to them that put a blip on their racism radar. They're not sure if it was *really* racism, or if it was just hypersensitivity on their part. Inevitably, someone (who has never been in the situation of the person initiating the conversation) chimes in and tells them they're overreacting and that they're reading too much between the lines.

Generally I stand back and let things resolve on their own: I give people a chance to put themselves in someone else's shoes and imagine how they would feel in a situation. Sometimes they never get there. They think inside the box too much and allow their own limited experiences on a subject to cloud their judgment of what happened to another person (much like how people downplay your medical concerns telling you that "You'll be all right" when in reality you have a ticking time bomb inside). Then I interject.

I don't get confrontational. I try to explain, the best I can, and as *generically* as I can, that asking people to ignore history is impossible. If a situation occurs to make a person uncomfortable, it is because they have knowledge that is aligned with their survival instincts that they tap into when they feel threatened. My instincts tell me that if a stranger reaches a hand out to touch my son without my permission I should draw him back for his safety. But, there are also instincts that tell us to protect ourselves from hurtful words and intentions. Those are a bit more difficult to draw back from.

Sometimes, only the person who commits an act or makes a statement can verify if it was intended to be racist (if they're even conscious of it themselves). However, attempting to extinguish conversation about whether or not an event qualifies as racism is a disservice to us all. Killing the talk prevents people from becoming enlightened that subtle acts of racism (e.g., back-handed compliments about appearance, language, behavior, etc.) are just as insidious as the ones that are out in the open, and if left unfettered can erode our trust in each other.

We're all responsible for educating each other about what we find to be insensitive and doing our best to explain *why*. The extra education is important for people who would say that worries are groundless and that we needn't fear because "That's not what racism looks like."

Those who choose to listen will not be so quick to dismiss the conversation when they find themselves in a discussion that begins with "Is this racist?" They may even become activists themselves.

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*Editor's note:* In response to online comments, Mrs. Pridgen said: "...I think people 'in the know' sometimes forget that not everyone has the same level of knowledge. ... Cultural issues many people my age are most insensitive about are ones that aren't taught in history at school. While having to explain...can be tiresome, I ask myself, 'Where would they learn if I don't tell them?' A lot of my own understanding of other groups has come from moms like me who took time to explain their customs (e.g, Muslim moms regarding head covering, dress, diet, etc.). They've broadened my respect for their traditions and given me good knowledge about how not to unintentionally disrespect them."

*The Alliance*

THE ALLIANCE FOR  
CULTURAL AND ETHNIC  
HARMONY

Box 3007  
Holland, MI 49422-3007

PHONE:  
616-392-5086

E-MAIL:  
aceh@harmonyalliance.org.

WEB ADDRESS  
www.harmonyalliance.org

*Bringing People  
Together from Worlds  
Apart*

The Alliance for Cultural  
and Ethnic Harmony

Box 3007  
Holland, MI 49422-3007

**9<sup>th</sup> Celebration of Juneteenth  
Features Basketball, Dinner,  
Ms. Juneteenth Pageant, Activities  
in the Park, and an After-Party**

Holland will host its 9<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of Juneteenth on Friday, June 19, and Saturday, June 20. The theme, "We Are the Change We Seek," encourages youth, children, and adults to learn about their shared legacy and the importance of community involvement. Everyone is welcome! Events are:

- **Friday, 8 am-5 pm:** 3-on-3 basketball tournament. At Holland Civic Center, Pine Ave. at 8<sup>th</sup> St.
- **Friday, 6 pm:** Black-tie dinner, Hope College associate professor John Yelding as speaker. Ms. Juneteenth Pageant. At Midtown Center (15<sup>th</sup> St and Pine Ave.);
- **Saturday, 1-7 pm:** Free, family-oriented activities, entertainment, and fun; food for purchase. (**ACEH will have an information table** and Kim Romero will make balloon animals for kids.) At Kollen Park, Van Raalte Ave and 10<sup>th</sup> St, at Lake Macatawa, Holland.
- **Saturday, 9 pm:** An After-Party at the Park Theater, 248 River Ave, Holland.

Dinner tickets are \$25 per person; basketball team registration is \$40; call (616) 836-8559. Tickets for the After Party are \$5 and will be sold at Kollen Park and at the Park Theater. The Juneteenth chair is Ruth Coleman.

Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States; its roots trace back to 1865 when, two and half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, Union troops arrived in Texas to announce and enforce the proclamation's provisions.