

**NEW JERSEY HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**March 20, 2013**

The regular meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council was held on March, 2013, at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex Fourth Floor Conference Center in Trenton. Chairperson Jim Peeler called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. Those serving on the Council and Advisory Board and in attendance included: Jim Peeler, Tawfiq Barqawi, Richard Biolsi, Philip E. Freeman, Sr., Edward Haas, Wendy Galloway, Rudene Vaught, Michael Mastronardy, Renee Herron McKithen, Leila Lawrence, Lawrence James, James C. Ford, Steve Landfield, Joan Rivitz, Reisa Sweet, Gabrielle Gallagher, Rebecca White- Johnson, Paul Crupi, and Paul Winkler. Others attending the meeting included Reverend Keith Davis of the Camden Dream Center, Joseph Fanaroff, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, Carol Berger of the CEC/Re-Entry Task Forces, Darren Ivey, Claude Taylor of Monmouth University; and Ms. Linda Spagnuolo, Administrative Support for the NJHRC from the NJ Division on Civil Rights.

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

All assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Open Public Meeting Act Statement**

Chairperson Peeler read the statement that pursuant to the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et. seq., notice of the meeting was filed with the Secretary of State, the *Asbury Park Press*, *The Times*, *The Courier Post*, *The Star-Ledger* and posted in the Office of the Attorney General.

**Reading of Mission Statement**

Chairperson Peeler read the Mission Statement: "The purpose of the New Jersey Human Relations Council shall be to promote prejudice reduction, education and address the problems of bias and violent acts based on the victim's race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation gender or disability." Further, Chairperson Peeler stated that "this is our purpose and we will adhere to our purpose".

**Introductions**

Council, Advisory Board members and guests introduced themselves and briefly told of their affiliations.

**Minutes**

The minutes of January 16, 2013 meeting were read and approved as presented.

**Meeting Presentation**

Carol Berger, of Community Education Centers, which works to decrease the recidivism rate of criminal offenders in NJ, spoke about many issues facing incarcerated individuals and their families.

**Chairperson's Report**

Chairperson Peeler said that he wishes the NJHRC to be more proactive in following its mission. He spoke in detail about the Annual Conference and the 2013 theme "Children of Incarcerated Parents" (CIP). The HRC is trying to eliminate bullying and discrimination experienced by CIP. The HRC is calling on various State Departments, Agencies and associations to develop best practices within the State for working with CIP. The HRC has been working on ideas and practices for this theme with Wanda Moore and Joe Fanaroff from the Office of the Attorney General. Carol Berger has been instrumental in trying to achieve our goals, not only this year but in years past. She has been very effective with working on incarceration issues. According to Ms. Berger's presentation CIP have a higher likelihood of being discriminated against in housing and education. In addition, CIP have a higher likelihood of becoming incarcerated themselves.

Carol Berger introduced Darren Ivey, Sr. who was an incarcerated parent and spoke of his experiences. Mr. Ivey talked of his experiences and how he became involved in working with CIP. He noted that he took parenting classes, participated in his church ministry.

His 22 year old son, Darren Ivey, Jr. will be speaking at the upcoming HRC conference in May.

Another guest speaker, Pastor Keith Davis of the Camden Dream Center, spoke of the likelihood of CIP getting involved in criminal activity. According to Pastor Davis we can reduce the risk CIP engaging in criminal activity if we reach out to them in time. It requires a team effort, especially in terms of education. The Camden Dream Center has many programs to address the issues faced by the families of incarcerated persons, see website at: [www.camdendreamcenter.org](http://www.camdendreamcenter.org).

Gabrielle Gallagher of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), mentioned that while DCA does not have programs specifically designed for the families of incarcerated persons, they do offer many community based programs available to all NJ citizens; including a Housing Resource Division which offers homeless programs, Section 8 voucher program, State parental assistance programs, State rental assistance program that bridges the gap for those waiting for Section 8, and a shelter housing exit program for victims of domestic violence.

Leila Lawrence of the Department of Corrections discussed some of the services available to the families of incarcerated persons through the Department's Office of Transitional Services.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Steve Landfield, Chair of the HRC housing committee, discussed the HRC Twitter page and its lack of use and the need for support by council and board members.

### **Advisory Board**

Dr. Joan Rivitz concurred that we need to focus on the youth of incarcerated persons. Dr. Rivitz also discussed her passion of eliminating human trafficking. She noted that the Holocaust Commission is working to address this issue and she also mentioned that there is an increase in human trafficking in cities which host the Super Bowl and NJ needs to be aware of this as it is hosting the 2014 Super Bowl.

### **Annual Conference Information**

Chairperson Peeler discussed the details of the conference including the time and location. Also discussed were the HRC award nominations and presenters. He noted that the HRC executive committee will be making final determinations as to award recipients and presenters and invitations and nominations letters will be going out shortly.

### **HRC Reports**

Chair Peeler asked that HRC reports, announcements, etc be emailed to Ms. Spagnuolo to be included on the NJHRC's website.

### **Announcements**

**Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, September 18, 2013**