

## **Diversity Thunder Bay Year at a Glance 2010**

Co-chairs: Rebecca Johnson; Walid Chahal

Secretary: Brenda Reimer ([bjreimer@tbaytel.net](mailto:bjreimer@tbaytel.net))

Treasurer: Evelina Pan

### **Meetings**

Diversity Thunder Bay met in the McNaughton Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month from 12-1:30 pm. Exceptions were March when the the Celebration Breakfast took the place of the regular meeting and July, August and December when we do not meet.

Average attendance at meetings was 13 compared to 15 the previous year.

Minutes were distributed by email to all members.

### **Membership**

29 paid members ( 25 organizations and 4 individuals). These figures include 1 new organizations that became a member in 2010. They were an additional 7 organizations on the contact list but membership fees had not been received by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Projects and Activities**

#### **Website**

[www.diversitythunderbay.ca](http://www.diversitythunderbay.ca)

In October it was decided that the web site needed to be updated. In November TBayIT service ( Mark Walther) was engaged to do this work. The Education/communications committee is working with Mark to provide content. The revamped site should be up in late February 2011.

#### **March 21<sup>st</sup> Breakfast**

-The 4th Annual Breakfast was held on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at the Italian Cultural Centre with 325 tickets sold. The theme was Working Together. The Little Eagle Singers from McKellar Park School opened and closed the event. Keynote speaker was Margaret Parsons, Executive Director, African -Canadian Legal Clinic in Toronto. Personal immigration stories were shared by Ludit Granadillo and Michelle Lander. As at other breakfasts some of the award winning videos from the national Racism. Stop It! Competition were shown. Immediately following the Breakfast the new Immigration Portal for Thunder Bay was launched. Having the two events back to back meant an increased attendance for both events.

- Carol Rusak chaired the Breakfast Planning Committee and Clara Butikofer was contracted as the co-ordinator. Committee member Cliff Friesen was helpful in procuring more participation from the business community.

- Diversity members were unanimous in their support for a 5th Annual Breakfast and a date of March 23rd, 2011 was set.

### **Strategic Planning and Terms of Reference**

- During 2010 some of the committees identified in strategic planning work in 2009 began to meet. Initially an education committee and a youth committee were established in addition to the existing communications committee. During the year it was decided that to avoid overlap the education and communications committee should merge.

In February it was suggested that in addition to having co-chairs who would represent Diversity Thunder Bay as spokes persons and as signing officers we have Meeting Chairs who would volunteer to chair monthly meetings on an alternating basis. The system worked well in 2010 and will be reviewed at the Annual Meeting in 2011.

### **Youth Committee**

The Youth Committee at an initial meeting identified the need to involve youth on the committee. The committee recommended that Diversity Thunder Bay agree to accept \$2000 from Youthscape to be used for a youth led initiative which might help us to establish contacts with youths.. They further recommended that this money be granted to the students involved with the Gay Straight Alliance at Superior Vocational and Collegiate Institute to cover the cost of a workshop and an awareness day. In April Leigh Potvin and three students from the Gay Straight Alliance reported on the workshop involving students from their school and from neighbouring elementary schools and on an awareness day known as Pink Day. Members of Diversity Thunder Bay had many questions for the students and were very appreciative of the discussion. There was enthusiasm for exploring an ongoing relationship between the Gay Straight Alliance and Diversity Thunder Bay. Unfortunately noon hour meetings are very difficult for students and teachers to attend. As a follow-up to this report Diversity Thunder Bay placed a small ad in the Chronicle Journal on May 17<sup>th</sup> , International Day Against Homophobia, congratulating the Gay Straight Alliance groups in all of the city high schools for their work.

The next activity of the Youth Committee was to help develop a proposal for some Safe Schools funding. Diversity Thunder Bay's role was as a supporting organization with the Police Services Board and the two Boards of Education acting as the leads. The proposal was accepted.

Since 2011 is the United Nations Year for Youth it was decided that Youth should be the theme for our 2011 Celebration Breakfast. It is hoped that this will lead to more youth involvement with Diversity Thunder Bay.

## **Education Committee**

The education committee worked on three recommendations from previous strategic planning:

that we broaden our scope to deal with other forms of discrimination and not just racism; that we educate ourselves about some of the issues around discrimination; that we continue to keep our name in front of the public.

At the February meeting three recommendations were approved:

1. That 20 minutes at the beginning of every second meeting be set aside for internal education.
2. That we explore with Colin Bruce the possibility of having op ed pieces in the Chronicle Journal
3. That we partner with the Lakehead University Advanced Institute for Globalization and Culture in advertising and supporting speakers where the topic is of interest to us

During 2010 two speakers made presentations to Diversity members as part of the monthly meetings.

In June Amy Britton-Cox spoke of the work of the Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Centre. It has been set up to assist people having problems with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Currently they are developing a protocol for working with Aboriginal people.

In November, Dr. Gerald Walton from the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University gave a presentation called Live and let live? Really? In which he looked at the ways in which lesbian,

gay, bisexual and transgender people are not able to express the public side of their sexual identity without fear of judgement and even violence.

The first partnership with the Advanced Institute for Globalization and Culture was set up for January 2011 when Dr. Sherene Razack from OISE would be speaking about her study of inquests into the death of aboriginal people in custody.

Other Activities/Concerns

## **City of Thunder Bay Advisory Committee on Racism**

Anne LeSage represents Diversity Thunder Bay on this committee. Her alternate is Rev. Paul Carr. Brenda Reimer submitted an organizational scan for Diversity Thunder Bay at the committee's request. In 2010 there were no other opportunities for Diversity Thunder Bay to work with this new committee as it was just establishing its terms of reference.

## **Drum Experience**

In January Diversity Thunder Bay members had the opportunity to preview a DVD of this group from Nova Scotia which uses drums and dancing to show the diverse cultures who have contributed to Nova Scotia's history. We felt it had great potential but that due to our limited funds and lack of paid staff it was beyond our scope to provide leadership in getting them here.

### **Canadian Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD)**

Rebecca Johnson continues to receive requests from other municipalities asking for more information about what we are doing in Thunder Bay. As she attends meetings and speaking engagements in other communities she keeps us informed as well about what others are doing.

Of particular interest in 2010 were meetings with people in Fort Frances.

### **Mathieu da Costa Exhibit**

Diversity Thunder Bay had the opportunity to work with the City Clerk's office to bring this travelling exhibit to Thunder Bay during December. The exhibit featured award winning art and writing done by young Canadians to celebrate the contributions that Canadians from diverse cultural backgrounds have made to our country.

### **Welcoming Communities Inventory**

Lakehead University is one of several universities collecting information from 17 communities across Ontario. Leisa Desmoulins is the LU researcher and Thunder Bay Multicultural Association has prepared an inventory of services in place. According to this study there are few gaps in services for immigrants and newcomers in Thunder Bay. However, these services are not available to Aboriginal newcomers. As part of the study it was learned that Sudbury and Vancouver have been able to integrate aboriginal newcomers into existing services. Is this something Diversity Thunder Bay should be pursuing?

### **Racial Equity Report Card**

In response to our interest, Margaret Evans, speaker at the Celebration Breakfast, forwarded to Carol a binder of material on various ways of establishing indicators which could be used to develop a racial equity report card. Currently the binder is at the LSPC with the hope that staff there might be able to summarize the material for us.