

Diversity Thunder Bay Year at a Glance 2011

Co-chairs: Rebecca Johnson; Walid Chahal

Secretary: Brenda Reimer (bjreimer@tbaytel.net)

Treasurer: Evelina Pan

Meetings

Diversity Thunder Bay met monthly in 2011 with the exception of March (Celebration Breakfast) and July, August and December. Meetings were chaired by members on a rotating basis. Minutes were distributed by email to all members.

Average attendance at the eight meetings held was 13 - unchanged from 2010.

Membership

37 members (28 organizations and 9 individuals). This represented an increase of 8 members. New organizations welcomed were: Centre of Change; John Howard Society; Local 00296: SAGE (Sexuality and Gender Equality) and Wasaya Airways LP. New individual members were: Leisa Desmoulins; Kezia Picard and Paul Berger (Gerald Walton now represents LU Faculty of Education and Paul sits as an individual members).

The increase in membership can be attributed to the Celebration Breakfast; the widening of our focus to include all forms of discrimination and to our website.

Finances

Diversity Thunder Bay annual membership fee is \$20.00. In addition to memberships we have accumulated some monies each year from our International Day for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination Breakfasts. Total assets as of December 31st, 2011 were \$7962.56.

Projects and Committee Activities

Website

<http://www.diversitythunderbay.ca>

Thanks to Mark Walther the refurbished web site has been up since late February 2011. The Communications sub-committee continues to work with Mark to keep the site current and to slowly add more material. Paul Berger is also able to input data.

International Day for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination Breakfast

- The 5th Annual Breakfast was held on March 23rd, 2011 at the Best Western Nor'Wester Resort Hotel with 300 tickets sold. The theme was The Role of YOUTH in Creating Change. Keynote speaker was Jessica Yee, an Aboriginal youth activist from Toronto. In

keeping with the youth theme, The Regional Multicultural Youth Council and the Gay Straight Alliance from Sir Winston Churchill Collegiate also made presentations. Thomas Russell from Confederation College Students Union chaired the event. Diversity Thunder Bay arranged for Jessica to meet with two groups of students during the day in addition to her keynote speech.

- Carol Rusak chaired the Breakfast Planning Committee and Clara Butikofer was contracted as the co-ordinator. There were 26 sponsors with 13 at the gold and silver levels. The strong sponsorship support ensured that the event was a financial success with some money left to support other Diversity Thunder Bay work during the year.
- Diversity members were unanimous in their support for a 6th Annual Breakfast and a date of Friday, March 23rd, 2012 was set. Carol Rusak agreed to chair the committee and Pat Forrest was engaged as co-ordinator since Clara Butikofer was unable to fit it into her schedule.

Strategic Planning and Terms of Reference

- During 2011 the committees identified in strategic planning work in 2009 continued to meet. In May Margaret Wanlin facilitated a strategic planning session to update the plan. Two key themes identified were Public Education and Awareness and Networking.
- In November some changes were made to the Terms of Reference (to be approved at the 2011 Annual Meeting)

Executive Committee

During 2011 the Executive began to meet every few months to ensure that our growing organization stayed on track. The Executive also dealt with extraordinary issues. e.g. developed a successful process for finding a member organization who could use the Porter Airline Ticket which was donated but not required for the Breakfast. We were pleased that Thunder Bay Multicultural Association was able to use the ticket to bring in a facilitator for a workshop with young women dealing with issues of identity and self worth in a new culture.

A continuing task for the Executive Committee is to develop a policy as to how we deal with requests for letters of support and/or financial contributions.

Youth Committee

Although Youth was the theme of the 2011 Breakfast, the Youth Committee as such has not been active in 2011. However, we have maintained contact with the Thunder Bay Youth Strategy and, in particular, with the Anti-discrimination and Racism Pillar of the strategy. This is a relationship which we need to clarify.

Education and Communication Committee

- Partnered with the Advanced Institute for Globalization and Culture to present a lecture by Dr. Sherene Razack from Ontario Institute for Studies in Education on her study of inquests into the death of aboriginal people in custody.
- Arranged for three educational presentations to Diversity members as part of the monthly meetings.

February - Shelley Knott and Ryan Gustafson made a presentation on their work in elementary schools with the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

June - Leisa Demoulins informed the group about the Welcoming Communities Initiative undertaken by several agencies and universities across Ontario. An inventory of services for immigrants and visible minorities in Thunder Bay recognized gaps in services for youth.

October - Aaron Park spoke about the current poverty reduction strategy work being undertaken by Lakehead Social Planning Council and Poverty Free Thunder Bay.

- Began the process of creating a new brochure and a banner. Goal is to have both completed by March 2012.
- Supported the opportunity to partner with City of Thunder Bay Advisory Committee on Racism to produce articles to be published in the Chronicle Journal.
- Continued to hold as a future goal a city wide antiracism publicity campaign.

Incidence Committee

- This committee was created at the Strategic Planning session in May and had its first meeting in December. The purpose of the committee is to liaise with other groups such as the Friendship Centre and Regional Multicultural Youth Centre to determine if there is a practical and useful way in which incidents involving racism can be reported and tracked.
- This committee, like the Education and Communication Committee is concerned about the negative stereotypes and the misinformation about Aboriginal people found in the media.

Mathieu da Costa Exhibit

Diversity Thunder Bay agreed to host the 2011 Mathieu da Costa Exhibit early in 2012.

Monitor, Network and Support

As part of strategic planning it was identified that Diversity Thunder Bay needs to keep informed about current issues and advocate and provide support and encouragement where possible. In 2011 this included:

City of Thunder Bay Advisory Committee on Racism

Rev. Paul Carr has replaced Anne LeSage as the representative of Diversity Thunder Bay on this committee. Raymond Moonias is our alternate.

In December we were invited to join with the Advisory Committee for a meeting with Ian Pattison of the Editorial Department of the Chronicle Journal. The opportunity gave both groups an opportunity to express concerns about the negative portrayal of Aboriginal people in the newspaper and has led to the opportunity to write our own articles once a month. This initiative will be organized by the Advisory Committee.

Canadian Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD)

Rebecca Johnson continues to represent us at meetings of CMARD.

Thunder Pride

Diversity Thunder Bay supported the first Thunder Pride Event by purchasing advertising space in the Pride Guide.

International Day Against Homophobia

Diversity Thunder Bay supported the newspaper announcement of this day by purchasing a Business Card ad.

Poverty Free Thunder Bay/Lakehead Social Planning Council

Diversity Thunder Bay provided a letter of support for the LSPC's application to the City of Thunder Bay for funds to develop a Poverty Elimination Strategy.

Leadership Thunder Bay

Diversity Thunder Bay provided a donation of \$100 towards the cost of the learning day on issues around racism and discrimination.

Memberships and Affiliations

Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition