

## CRC plays important peace-keeping role during DNC

By: Patricia Albritton and Andy Silver

The Democratic National Convention brought thousands of visitors and protestors to Charlotte during the first week of September. Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Community Relations Committee played an important role in keeping the peace during this crucial moment in our city's history and, thanks to its members' efforts, there were only 25 arrests during the week of the President's nomination.

For almost four years, Charlotte officials planned for the DNC. Of critical importance was the security of the city, visitors, residents, delegates, and the president and vice president of the United States. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Rodney Monroe and Deputy Chief Harold Medlock, worked with the FBI, U.S. Secret Service, and various other law enforcement agencies to ensure everyone's safety. They also considered past

political conventions as examples of how to and how not to secure the Convention.

During the planning for the DNC, CRC offered assistance and stood ready to answer any call to service. A year before the DNC, Mayor Pro-Tem, Patrick Cannon commented to CRC Member Andy Silver that the Occupy Movement and the DNC were on a "collision course" and mediation would be helpful.

Not many calls came until three months before the start of the DNC. Suddenly, not only did the Deputy Police Chief call but he had a partner for the CRC – The United States Department of Justice Community Relations Service (DOJ-CRS). DOJ-CRS needed a local partner to monitor demonstrations, speakers, and marchers. The DOJ-CRS knew the criticality of promoting harmony, facilitating resolution, and celebrating diversity. This was exactly the responsibility

CRC welcomed.

After meeting and training with police and DOJ-CRS and reviewing overall security and street access plans, the CRC was ready. CRC members Patricia Albritton, Bahiyah Walker, Andy Silver, Ruth Stevenson, J. R. Black, Kenneth Rance and CRC Executive Director Willie Ratchford actively participated as monitors and negotiators.



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## Focus on youth: CRC helps start student relations council at Harding University High School

By: Lisa Rudisill

The Community Relations Committee works to support projects which will enhance the betterment of youth in the Charlotte community through a number of projects. Taking a model from the Greensboro Public Schools Youth Initiative Council – designed to create better harmony, understanding and interaction between school students of all races, genders, sexual orienta-

tions and ethnicities – CRC's Education Subcommittee initiated a new program at Harding High School to help students learn to deal with conflict more effectively. The first year has been a success.

In the early 1970s when court-ordered bussing for CMS placed students in unexpected school assignments, there was violence and misunderstandings in many

area schools. To address these problems, student groups were formed with key students from various schools—these proved very helpful in promoting harmony. Similarly, the new Harding University High project was geared toward aiding with the transitions experienced by students who were in a new environment with the closing of Waddell High

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## Student relations (continued from page 1)

School and the movement of students to a new school.

The new Students Relations Project at Harding was blessed by Principal Alicia Johnson and directed by staff, including Ms. Effuah Sams. Beginning last November, monthly meetings brought together students representing diverse backgrounds who discussed important issues for achieving harmony. An "Action Day" was held which focused on putting together students in a peer mentoring situations – this was especially useful in aiding with the increased number of exceptional students at the school (260 additional students added during last academic year). Teen Health Connection, a local agency, paid for the lunch.

Later in the year, students gathered during a "Unity Week" for several student relations projects during lunches such as a "Meet and Lunch" on Tuesday—offering various topic discussions, a challenge project focusing on "Are We So Different?", a "Quad of Arts" outside featuring

expressions by students of unity through fine and performing arts, an annual Black History Month observance, and "Ram Pride Day" featuring the topic "For the Love of Chocolate."

In addition to participating with planning for the week, several CRC Education Sub-Committee members participated in the "Meet and Lunch" event. The entire CRC membership contributed toward a financial gift in support of the Harding Student Relations Project under the direction of member Constance Green-Johnson. The gift was presented by Sub-Committee Chair Rhonda Taylor at a meeting of the CRC held at Harding. During the meeting, students commented on their first year's experience with the new project.

One student, Victoria, explained how the events have helped the students come together better. "The Student Relations activities have helped us especially to discuss what separates us this year and to come together as a family—especially the Meet and Lunch," she commented. Jesse,

another student, said he looks forward to the future when the Student Relations groups can add peer mentoring. Shandra, a senior who began at Winston-Salem State University upon graduation last spring, but was involved in the first Harding Student Relations group, agrees with Jesse on the importance of student modeling. "It is so important that older students help younger ones," she says. "To help us learn to get along better, we can lead the way for the younger group and make good things happen!"



*Students from Harding High School, clockwise: Jesse, Shandra, Ms. Effuah Sams, Victoria*

## September & October police review highlights



CRC Staff person Melissa Baker took over CRC's police review program after Butch Simmons' retirement over the summer. In her new role, she is responsible for assisting citizens in making allegations of officer misconduct, providing them an alternative to registering their complaint directly with the police department's internal affairs division, and sitting on the board at police disciplinary hearings. In the month of October, Ms. Baker sat on two Police Chain of Command Hearings and processed two complaints that alleged police misconduct.

Ms. Baker also supports the fair housing program by doing case intake and helping conciliate complaints.

### CRC Link

**Editor:** Ailen Arreaza

**Editorial Board:** Lisa Rudisill, Michael Tanck, Marc Friedland

CRC Link welcomes letters to the editor, articles, community announcements or other items of interest.

Please direct them to:

CRC Link

[aarreaza@charlottenc.gov](mailto:aarreaza@charlottenc.gov)

## Peacekeepers (continued from page 1)

The police designated an open space for groups to gather and give speeches. All marchers and speakers were required to pre-register and receive a march and/or speaker time assigned through a lottery system. Our own CRC Executive Director, Willie Ratchford, monitored the lottery and assisted in assigning a time to each group or speaker. Over a hundred groups pre-registered to participate including *Occupy Charlotte*, *Abortion Rights*, *DC Statehood*, and my personal favorite *I Can March Anywhere I Like* (organization of one).

Most demonstrators were expected to arrive in Charlotte on Tuesday, September 4. At 8AM Tuesday morning, CRC and DOJ-CRS proceeded to Frasier Park where all marchers were to begin. We waited for four hours and none of the planned groups appeared.

The police, DOJ-CRS, and CRC had heard from local activists that the planned demonstration route was a path to nowhere and the groups would not use the route because it did not take the marchers past the Charlotte Convention Center or the Time Warner Cable Arena. It ap-

peared the activists were keeping their word not to use the planned routes; but where were the demonstrators?

Around noon, DOJ-CRS began to receive reports that groups of protestors were gathering in Marshall Park and marching towards central Uptown. Thus, for the next three days (Tuesday through Thursday), CRC and DOJ-CRS followed protestors and performed active negotiations between the police and the protestors. These activities went on from day into night, going past midnight on all three days.

The CRC learned a lot from DOJ-CRS about how to monitor group leaders, protest signs, changing agendas, and potential clashes between opposing groups. CRC played a critical role in assisting DOJ-CRS with negotiations and moving through Uptown.

The police were very lenient with the protestors. At one point, when protestors blocked the intersection of Stonewall and Caldwell (a designated bus route into Uptown), the police allowed the protestors to stay there for over two hours. When the protestors tired, not the police, the protestors negotiated with CRC, DOJ-CRS, and the police, to

peacefully walk through the streets of Uptown-as long as they stayed on the sidewalks and did not cause any damage or harassment to others. The police expertly used uniformed officers, bicycles, and scooters to control the path of the protestors.

Police Chief Rodney Monroe oversaw combined law enforcement agencies and completed an excellent job of policing the DNC. Charlotte is now known as a city that can accomplish great things.

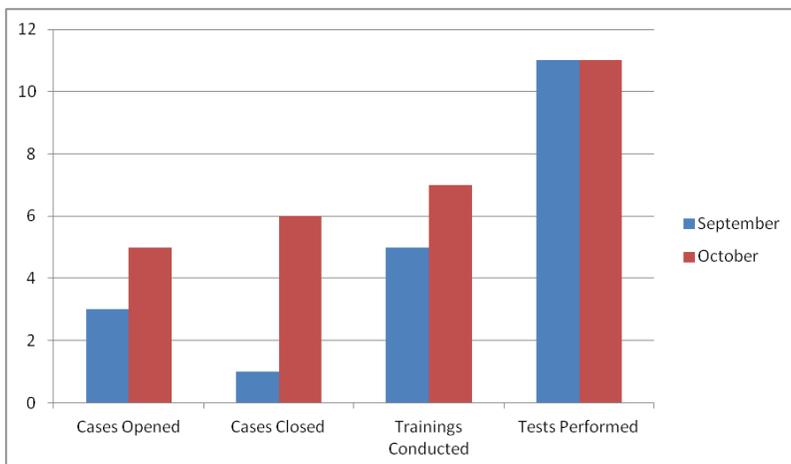
DOJ-CRS were really impressed with how the CRC provided positive impact to the DNC. Thomas Battles, Senior Manager of DOJ-CRS, spoke highly of the wonderful job by the CRC with monitoring and observing the marchers/protestors to assure a safe DNC for all involved. Mr. Battles was very impressed and gave his regards for a job well done.

Finally, political protests are here to stay. Police and protest movements need to have a common aim: safety, messages delivered, and head-to-head politics. There is a definite roll for mediation between protestors and law enforcement.

*“Police Chief Rodney Monroe oversaw combined law enforcement agencies and completed an excellent job of policing the DNC. Charlotte is now known as a city that can accomplish great things”*



## September & October fair housing highlights



### Two noteworthy accomplishments

- Complainant received \$9,727 in settlement for disability discrimination
- CRC held a fair housing public hearing and the hearing panel voted in favor of staff's findings of discrimination.



# CRC strengthens services to disabled community

By: Ailen Arreaza

As Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s primary civil and human rights organization, the Community Relations Committee (CRC) is devoted to ensuring equality of opportunity and fairness to all of our city’s residents. This, of course, includes individuals of all racial, ethnic, and faith backgrounds, but it also extends to persons with disabilities. Over the last several months, CRC has developed two new initiatives that focus on removing barriers that prevent disabled individuals from fully enjoying all that our city has to offer and in ensuring that those same individuals understand their rights under the law.

## ADA Coordinator

In March, CRC staff person Terry Bradley was promoted to ADA Coordinator for the City of Charlotte. In this new role, he is responsible for ensuring that all City programs, practices, policies and facilities are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Although Bradley had already been working on disability issues with the City on a part-time basis, his new position is much broader in scope. He now partners with ADA liaisons in each City department to ensure that all their services – from the airport to public transit – are accessible. Additionally, he works tirelessly to resolve complaints from disabled Charlot-

teans and to make sure that all in our community – private citizens and city staff alike – understand the rights of disabled individuals.



“I’m proud to be serving as ADA Coordinator because I think that the issues affecting the disabled are often not addressed. The truth of the matter is that we are an aging society – all of us will have a disability at some point,” says Bradley. “I want to make sure that the City of Charlotte addresses these important issues now, before it’s too late. I want Charlotte to be a place where people can retire without worrying about accessibility.”

## Fair Housing

Earlier this year, CRC’s fair housing staff applied for and received a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct fair housing testing and develop

an education and outreach campaign that specifically targets the disabled community. According to the 2010 Annual Report on Fair Housing, disability is the most common basis of complaints filed with HUD and Fair Housing Assistant Programs across the country. In Charlotte, however, disability has consistently ranked third, behind individuals alleging discrimination on the basis of race and national origin. The aim of this project is to examine the prevalence of housing discrimination against persons with disabilities in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and guarantee that all members of our city’s disabled community understand how the Fair Housing Act protects them.



In order to complete this endeavor, CRC hired new staff person Stephanie Randolph and partnered with local nonprofit Disability Rights and Resources (DR&R), an organization that has been guarding the rights of people with disabilities in the region

for the past 30 years. As part of this partnership, Randolph actually has an office at DR&R where she can stay in constant contact with the community she’s serving.

“It is a pleasure to be a part of the HUD partnership grant program,” states Randolph. “Over the past two months I have conducted design and construction tests as well as reasonable accommodation tests. I feel that the project is running smoothly thus far. In the next couple months, I will be conducting fair housing training to disability agencies throughout Mecklenburg County.”

**Charlotteans interested in learning more about the City’s ADA services may contact Mr. Bradley at 704-336-5271.**

**Those interested in supporting our fair housing efforts or who feel like they’ve been discriminated against in housing, can call CRC’s fair housing line at 704-336-5160.**

## Welcome new members!

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members:

- Jeanette Ayeni
- Clair Craig-Lane
- Brenda Hayden
- Melvin Lowery
- Edward Mattison
- Damon Miller
- Kathleen Odom
- Jacqlin Robinson
- Jill Santuccio
- Valarie Reed
- Mary Hemphill

We are excited about your commitment to promoting harmony, facilitating resolution, and celebrating diversity and look forward to working with you in the future.



# From the Executive Director's desk: Fundamental Principles for CRC's Future Success

By: Willie Ratchford



In every organization there exist certain understandings that govern how people interact with one another around important things. Sometimes these things are written down in procedures and guidelines. By way of this article, I have chosen to articulate some of the fundamental principles and approaches to leading CRC that I feel will improve our management practices and secure our future in this community. These, although not exhaustive, are representative of major issues facing CRC staff, members, and those who work with us. If we apply them to our practice we will see positive results. If we apply them consistently, our organization will become an even better place to work and better at helping our community, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, achieve positive outcomes on everyday issues that need our attention.

**CRC exists to serve people in the community who need us:** We provide services mandated by law and regulations and others that the community, our staff and our membership has deemed important. Apart from our vision, mission and man-

dates, we as an organization have no reason to exist. Staff and members must incorporate this humbling reality into their practice. Organizations and individuals that do not understand this connection become obsolete. This fundamental principle is the foundation for a strong emphasis on excellent customer service and an efficient, courteous response to the community.

**We are stewards of a public trust of resources and responsibility:** The resources provided to us are purposeful – to help people achieve better outcomes in their lives. In an environment where there are always greater needs than resources, the inefficient use of resources through poor planning, lackadaisical management or waste is not acceptable. We are responsible for ensuring that resources are used well.

**And speaking of resources, our employees and members are our most important and valued resources at CRC:** Staff and members must stay in touch with each others needs and concerns through effective management, while at the same time assuring that the work gets done. While a diversity of individual styles exists among us, we all are expected to manage our most important and valuable resource in a way that promotes high morale, high motivation, high achievement and effective teamwork.

**We all, without exception, are leaders:** CRC staff and members are all in key leadership positions in our organization. Effective leaders are characterized by initiative and the practice of 100% responsibility. Leadership capacity is a prerequisite to our

effectiveness and future success.

**Problem solving is a collaborative process:** We should collaborate and focus on outcomes that boost community harmony, reduce the incidence of discrimination and promote conflict resolution. We are an organization where partners in collaboration get praise when we are successful and share responsibility when we collectively fall short.

**Management is about getting good results:** While process is important to most of us, it is irrelevant if we don't get positive results for our community. Staff's strategic operating plan, related to the City's Corporate Scorecard, provides a focus and structure to guide CRC's efforts towards positive outcomes. CRC members' recent organizational and structural changes provide a focus and structure to guide their efforts towards positive outcomes, partnership and collaboration with staff.

**Mistakes are rarely fatal – they are opportunities for improvement:** Mistakes happen in all organizations and because of the consequences, failure cannot be trivialized. However, mistakes are rarely so serious that they cannot be corrected. The bottom line is we learn from mistakes and continually try to improve.

**Don't do stupid things on purpose:** Most of our programs flow downhill from City, County, State and Federal governments in very separate and distinct streams. As a result, they often conflict. While we are obligated to carry out City, County, State and Federal laws, statutes, ordinances and policies we also must apply sound judgment to the decisions we make. Our goal is to maintain

compliance while doing the best we can for the community we serve. When the application of a policy or regulation creates a hassle or harm, we need to go the extra mile to make it work for our clients and our community.

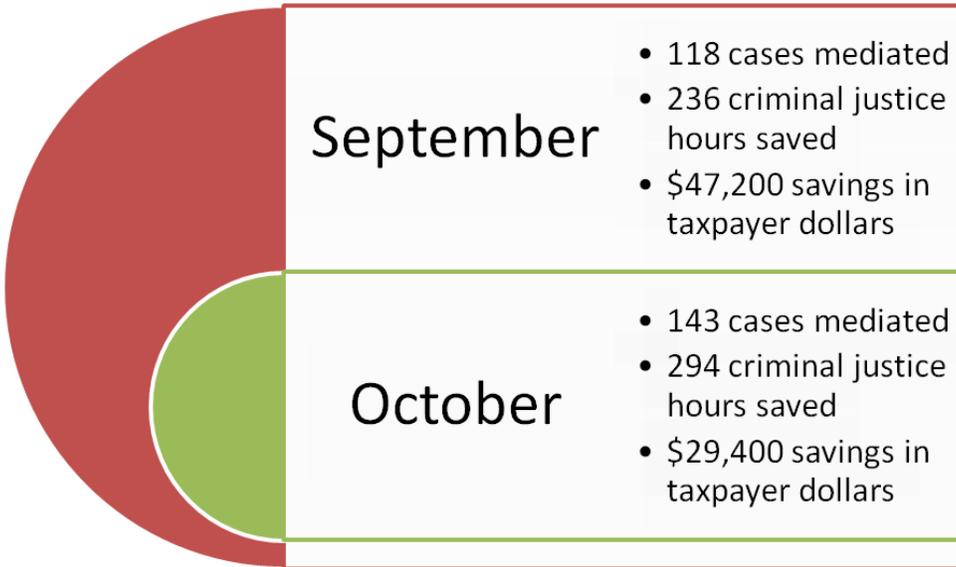
**CRC staff and members are ambassadors:** Every person in our organization is an ambassador. Often we have program expertise and we can help the community understand our programs through outreach and presentations. Each opportunity to represent the Community Relations Committee is a chance to promote a positive image for our organization and to articulate our vision and mission. Even those who are not experts have the capacity to facilitate good community education for our organization.

**Organizations are dynamic – change occurs:** Successful organizations learn to adapt to change. Successful staff and members are adept at adjusting to change and helping our community do likewise. Change, while sometimes difficult, can lead to better results for members, staff and our community. All of us must be agents of positive change to be effective and to prepare the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee for the future.





# September & October dispute settlement highlights



### CRC Staff

#### **Executive Director**

Willie Ratchford

#### **Community Relations Managers**

Ledger Morrisette

Mary Williams

Terry Bradley

#### **Community Relations Specialists**

Ailen Arreaza

Melissa Baker

Luis Matta

Donna Murrell

Stephanie Randolph

Terry Stokes

#### **Administrative Assistants**

Renee Thompson

Sue Green

### CRC Members

#### **Chair**

Patricia Albritton

#### **Vice-Chair**

Rev. Dwayne Walker

#### **Members**

Jaye Alexander

Jeanette Ayeni

Madelyn Baer

JR Black

Toria Boldware

Clair Craig-Lane

Tonya Curry

Larry Edwards

Maya Engle

Marc Friedland

Constance Green-Johnson

Tyyawdi Hands

Brenda Hayden

Mabel Hemphill

Gwendolyn High

Jibril Hough

Sharon Ingram

Janet Lama

Melvin Lowery

Edward Mattison

Lawana Mayfield

Sharon Merritt

Damon Miller

Dave Nichols

Kathleen Odum

Aaron Orr

Marty Puckett

Kenneth Rance

Jacqilin Robinson

Lisa Rudisill

Jill Santuccio

Omar Saxton

Bill Schreiner

Andy Silver

David Smith

Ruth Stevenson

Pat Taft

Michael Tanck

Rhonda Taylor

Glenn Thomas

Thomas Vinson

Bahiyah Walker

Doug Wilson

## Upcoming events and announcements

CRC invites you to the following events in remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

#### **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial and Wreath Laying Ceremony**

Tuesday, January 15 at 12:00 pm in Marshall Park

#### **City of Charlotte MLK Holiday Parade**

Saturday, January 19 at 11:00 am beginning at N. Tryon and 9<sup>th</sup> and continuing to Stonewall.

#### **19th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast and City of Charlotte National Observance**

Monday, January 21 at 7:30 a.m. in the Crown Ballroom of NASCAR Hall of Fame Building.

*CRC is requesting nominees for the annual MLK Medallion Award. If you know someone who is reflective of Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy and embodies the values he fought for, please nominate them by filling out [this form](#).*

#### **SAVE THE DATE! CRC's Annual Police Community Relations Awards will be Thursday, May 16 2013**

If you'd like to nominate a police officer who goes above and beyond the call of duty for a Police Community Relations Award, you may do so by filling out [this form](#) or contacting Donna Murrell directly at [dmurrell@charlottenc.gov](mailto:dmurrell@charlottenc.gov).

CRC recommends the following exhibits to community members interested in issues of race and equality:

#### **America I Am: The African American Imprint @ The Gantt Center through January 1, 2013.**

*Covering more than 10,000 square feet, the exhibition presents a historical continuum of pivotal moments in courage, conviction and creativity that helps to solidify the undeniable imprint of African Americans across the nation and around the world.*

#### **Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America @ The Levine Museum of the New South through December 31, 2013.**

*A graphic exhibit that examines one of the most horrific chapters of American history, and one that continues to influence society today.*