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THUNDER BAY

ANTI-RACISM & RESPECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

5th ANNUAL SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS - MARCH 22, 2016

The City's Anti-Racism & Respect Advisory Committee develops and recommends a four-year Action Plan to challenge individual and systemic acts of racial discrimination and foster respect. A new Plan (available at thunderbay.ca/antiracism) was developed in 2015 and presented to City Council in November.

The Committee's vision—Diversity is valued and racism is not accepted—is reflected in each objective.

As well, Terms of Reference were approved for a new two-tiered structure. A smaller 11-member Advisory Committee includes five community representatives to better support committee ownership in implementing the Work Plan. A larger Roundtable Against Racism will bring together community-based organizations that are united in action against racism and work to promote equity, diversity, and respect in the community. The Roundtable will meet for the first time in fall 2016.

Finally, to recognize the City's proactive efforts to raise awareness of the importance of respect as a human right, Respect was added to the Advisory Committee's name.

Other 2015 Highlights Include:

RESEARCH ON INCIDENT REPORTING

The Committee collaborated with members of Diversity Thunder Bay to research a plan for a telephone incident reporting system for people who have experienced acts of racism and discrimination in the community. Following development of an online anti-racism tool kit to provide information resources and support effective referral, the incident reporting system will be developed and promoted.

ONE CITY, MANY VOICES COLUMN

The Chronicle-Journal, in partnership with the Committee, provides a public forum to address many aspects of racism and discrimination through *One City, Many Voices*. Columns have ranged from first-person stories of experience with prejudice and racism to the importance of respecting treaties; the rewards of embracing diversity; how stereotypes and bullying contribute to racism; the importance of being an ally; examining your own biases and the power of privilege, to name a few. Writers have included Committee members and interested members of the community.

“SHIFTING THE LENS” COMMUNITY FORUM

The Committee brought in guest speaker Becky Sasakamoose-Kuffner, Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Coordinator for the City of Saskatoon, to facilitate a community engagement session. The Shifting the Lens Forum took place on April 21, 2015, at the Italian Cultural Centre and was well attended with over 150 participants. The Forum looked at the historical and cultural roots of racism in Canada. Breakout sessions resulted in several grassroots recommendations for further dialogue and strategies to continue to fight racism in the community.

PARTNERSHIP WITH LEADERSHIP THUNDER BAY/YOUTH FORUM

As a result of the Shifting the Lens Forum, there was a strong interest expressed for a youth specific engagement session. Leadership Thunder Bay accepted the youth forum as a community project. Ms. Sasakamoose-Kuffner will be returning to Thunder Bay to facilitate that forum on April 4, 2016, at the Lakehead University Faculty Lounge. Students between the ages of 12 to 18, from various schools, will be attending to participate in an open dialogue on racism, and will recommend further strategies to eliminate racism in the community.

RESPECT

The Committee, along with the Crime Prevention Council, proudly embraces the **respect.** Initiative. On March 19, 2015, the Committee presented the third annual **respect.** Award to the Regional Multicultural Youth Council, which has provided a voice for youth in Thunder Bay and isolated communities across Northwestern Ontario. In addition, funding from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation was secured for a one-year **respect.** Intern to start in February 2016.

*Photo front: The Respect Working Group launched the Customer Service Pilot Project at City Hall. The project includes training, a new **respect.** wall mural, signage and t-shirts for staff to wear at the first floor customer service desk where feedback from the public and staff is tracked.*

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Anti-Racism & Respect
Advisory Committee

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