

Helping Hands in Honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.



Over 250 city employees participated in the city's fifth annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Helping Hands Day on Friday, Jan. 17., they spent part of their work-day volunteering at local non-profit organizations.

The employees served at 13 sites, including the Crisis Control Ministry, the Second Harvest Food Bank Warehouse, the Diaper Bank of North Carolina, Senior Services', and Dress for Success Winston-Salem. The other organizations are ReadWS, The Shepherds Center, Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County, Happy Hill Cemetery Friends, Moore Magnet Elementary School, Gateway Nature Preserve, Oddfellows Cemetery, and Ronald McDonald House of Winston-Salem. "City volunteers worked at their respective sites from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.," said Wanda Allen-Abraha, the City's Human Relations Director.

"We are very grateful to the City Council for supporting this initiative," Allen-Abraha said. "Since 1985, when Winston-Salem was among the first cities in North Carolina to designate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day a holiday, our elected officials have always promoted city participation in honoring Dr. King's legacy."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Young Dreamers Honored

The City Council and the Human Relations Commission honored two city residents as the 2020 recipients of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Young Dreamers Award at the City Council meeting Jan. 21.

The Young Dreamers Award honors two emerging or proven young adult city residents between the ages of 18 and 40 who have made a tangible difference

in the lives of those who otherwise might have been overlooked, ignored or disadvantaged.

Honored this year was Nicole Little, associate attorney with Grace, Tisdale, Clifton; and Sgt. Dwayne Little (no relation), the sergeant in charge of the Community Outreach Unit for the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office.

Nicole Little was honored for her work helping those who are underprivileged and under-represented, not only in legal matters, but by assisting with voting rights programs and helping residents in public housing obtain college grants and scholarships.

Dwayne Little was honored for efforts to revitalize the sheriff's Community Outreach Unit (formerly Crime Prevention) to include goals of dispelling hate and bias through awareness and education; and for his service as a community volunteer and youth basketball coach.



The Human Relations Commission established the Young Dreamers Award in 2009 to encourage young adults to participate in philanthropic, altruistic community involvement that is in the spirit of how Martin Luther King Jr. lived and encouraged others to live.

Showcase of Song



The Human Relations Commission sponsored the 8th annual "Showcase of Song: An African-American Cultural Celebration," Saturday, Feb. 8, in the Carver High School auditorium. Dr. Krishnauna Hines-Gaither, Assoc. Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclu-



sion, from Guilford College, emceed the program. The event included secular and non-secular musical performances that

illustrated the link between the African culture and modern-day African-American culture. Acts included: Parkland High School Choir, Easton Elementary African Drummers, Kidane Mehret Ethiopian Church, Carver High School Drum Squad, F.O.C.U.S, and more. The Showcase of Song was free and open to the public.

Human Relations Department- New Staff

Human Relations Specialist- Iris McKnight

Iris McKnight is a Human Relations Specialist/ Investigator for the City of Winston-Salem, Human Relations Department. Iris conducts landlord/tenant mediations, and conciliations for tenants, management companies and/ or property owners, as well as conducts fair housing investigations, in accordance with HUD guidelines for the residents of Winston-Salem. She conducts fair housing training and assists with executing outreach programs within the department. Iris holds a bachelor of art (BA) in Human Relations from High Point University.



Iris is a compassionate, altruistic person who demonstrates concern for people and the environment. She interacts with culturally diverse people of all levels, and always remains sensitive to an individual's needs. Her family says, "she gives great advice, and says what will be the right thing to do." She lives by her favorite quote, by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "The time is right to always do what is right." Iris hopes that she's able to do the right thing each and every day she interacts with the people in the community.

Human Relations Graduate Intern- Salwa Majeed

Salwa Majeed is an MPA candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She is currently researching trends in urban and economic development in the Piedmont-Triad, and among individual cities in the Southeast. Salwa has a background in film and news writing, with a B.A. in Media Studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.



Pakistan-born, but raised in the Triad, Salwa is a proud first-generation immigrant who has an uncanny talent for connecting with foreign-born residents in the community. Her own parents have inspired her to find solutions to inherent urban issues of equity, linking marginalized workers and entrepreneurs with the innovative industry, and closing the gap on the digital divide.

Salwa is a literature enthusiast, with library shelves full of fiction and true crime, and the occasional offbeat romance novel. She spends her free time walking the trails at Hanging Rock State Park, listening to gritty rock anthems, and cooking South Asian cuisine.

NEXUS Challenge

Which of the following are protected classes under the Fair Housing Act?

- A) Gender
- B) Religion
- C) National Origin
- D) All of the Above

The Answer is D) All of the Above. Federal fair housing law bans discrimination based on seven characteristics— or “protected classes”: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, and familial status.

In honor of Fair Housing month we would like to give more detail on what these terms mean:

Race and color: These are two separate, but closely related characteristics. Race refers to a person’s physical appearance, and color refers to a characteristic of a person’s race.

National origin: This is based on whether applicants—or their families— come from another country. Discrimination based on national origin means treating people differently because of their ancestry, ethnicity, birthplace, culture, or language.

Religion: This refers to members of a particular faith or belief system, and may also apply to anyone based on their spiritual beliefs, even if they are not affiliated with a particular religious group.

Sex: This refers to treating women—or men—differently because of their gender; this bans sexual harassment against both women and men.

Disability: This refers to a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. However, individuals who currently use illegal drugs or pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others are not considered disabled under the FHA.

Familial status: This refers to households with one or more children who are under 18 years of age, whether they are living with a parent, legal guardian, or anyone else with written permission. It also applies to pregnant women and anyone in the process of securing legal custody of a minor child, such as a foster or adoptive parent.

Commissioner’s Corner

The mission of the Winston-Salem Human Relations Commission (“WSHRC/HRD”) is to educate, create, facilitate, promote, anticipate, study, and recommend programs, projects, feedback, and actions for the elimination of discrimination in any and all fields of human relationships. This is made possible by the hard work of the HRC Committees listed below.

Community Relations Committee— Providing programs that promote an understanding of and respect for cultural diversities; educational programs regarding human relations, human rights and civil rights; and promoting ways to build bridges of understanding throughout the communi-

ty. Some of these programs include: Black History Month Showcase of Song, Trust Talks, Dr. Martin Luther King Young Dreamers Award, sponsor the annual citywide Juneteenth cultural program, and interfaith programming.

Multi-Cultural Relations Committee— Providing workshops and programs to ensure that the international community will receive fair treatment in all real estate transactions and to co-sponsor events which support, encourage, and promote cultural understanding and tolerance of the growing international community in Winston-Salem. Programs and events include: International Village Food and Music Festival, Winston-Salem Building Integrated Communities, Statewide Newcomers Symposium, Fiesta cultural festival annual sponsor, etc.

New Horizons Fair Housing Committee— Eliminating housing discrimination by working with representatives of the community in government, business, the clergy, education, civic affairs, minority organizations and others, in developing, implementing and analyzing activities that promote equal availability of housing for all citizens of the Winston-Salem. Programs and events include: providing monthly Fair Housing Training; Annual State of Fair and Affordable Housing Summit; Fair Housing Month activities each April, Gentrification Symposium, and March for Homeless Children.

Student Human Relations Committee— Providing human relations and leadership experience for high school and college students through the facilitation of diversity and conflict resolution training. The SHRC conducts forums to educate students on human relations issues and assists in nurturing a positive human relations climate throughout the school system. Events include: High School Race Relations Forums, Collegiate Trust Talks, Teen Trust Talks, and the Annual Student Human Relations Awards Banquet.

If you are interested in supporting any of the committees of the Human Relations Commission, please contact CityLink311 and ask for The Human Relations Department.

City Council

Mayor: Allen Joines; Vivian H. Burke, Mayor Pro Tempore, Northeast Ward; Denise D. Adams, North Ward; Dan Besse, Southwest Ward; Robert C. Clark, West Ward; John Larson, South Ward; Jeff MacIntosh, Northwest Ward; Annette Scippio, East Ward; James Taylor, Jr., Southeast Ward; City Manager: Lee D. Garrity

Human Relations Commission

Chair: Robert Leak III; Vice-Chair: Jeffrey Bloomfield, Sylvia DuRant, Sonny Haynes, Joshua Price, Ruth Sartin, Sita Somara, Fred Taylor, Kerry Wiggins

Human Relations Department Staff

Wanda Allen-Abraha, JD, Human Relations Department Director; Adolfo Briceño, Specialist/Hispanic Outreach; Iris McKnight, Specialist; Jayme Waldeck, Specialist/Outreach; Karlyn Duncan, Admin, Asst./Intake

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