Citizen Equity Committee

2011 Annual Report



Winnipeg

About Us

The Citizen Equity Committee (CEC) was established in 2001, based on a recommendation in a report prepared by the Mayor's Task Force on Diversity. The Report was adopted on March 21 2001, and the first CEC meeting took place in October that same year.

Since then, the CEC has worked diligently towards the goal of making Winnipeg the leading Multicultural City in Canada.

Our Vision

Winnipeg, envisioned as the leading Canadian City of cultural pluralism, in which all ethnic groups live in absolute harmony with each other, in an environment of mutual recognition and respect, social justice and inclusivity, and the City deriving strength and dignity from cultural diversity.

Contact Us

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CEC Chair's Statement



In 2011, just like in the previous years, Winnipeg maintained its status as a culturally diverse City, where annual celebrations of cultural events by the Aboriginal and the various ethno-cultural communities took place. As the chair of the Citizen Equity Committee, it has always been a delight for me to see people from different cultural communities interacting among themselves and building and improving upon existing relationships. For this reason, the CEC's priority objective to promote equity and diversity among the City's different cultural communities, remains on course and valid.

During the past year, members of the CEC enthusiastically responded to invitations from the City's communities to support them in celebrating their cultural events. This practice has enabled the committee to build excellent relations with and among the various cultural communities in Winnipeg. And it is the kind of relationship that has come to be commonly referred to as the friendly multicultural environment prevailing in Winnipeg. I am therefore proud of what we are collectively doing both at the CEC level and the efforts by community organizations and stakeholder institutions towards building and sustaining better inter community cultural relations.

Some of the public events undertaken by the CEC to enhance the promotion of cultural diversity in the City include the Annual Youth Role Model Awards, the Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) meetings and the Annual Community Wine and Cheese gathering that took place at the Mayor's Foyer. These events are becoming exciting, judging from the increasing level of participation by community members, stakeholder institutions and organizations.

In the past year, the CEC also monitored and advised on equity and diversity program activities being implemented by the city administration and the departments. It is of interest to note that the Diversity and Wellness Branch of the Corporate Services Division submitted monthly reports to the CEC. Some of the objectives of the diversity programs include enhanced access to City jobs and internship opportunities for Aboriginal and visible minority youth. Other aspects of the City diversity program activities focused on Respectful Workplace staff training and others.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere thanks to members of the CEC and the coordinator, as well as the City Administration staff and colleague councilors, who in diverse ways supported the committee in implementing its 2011 program activities.

Mike Pagtakhan
City Councillor, Point Douglas Ward
Chair, Citizen Equity committee

Coordinator's Statement



Immigration data and information released by the Manitoba Provincial Government in 2011 indicate that Winnipeg continues to be a major destination for newcomers to Canada. The report confirmed that immigration to the province has increased five-fold over the last decade. Winnipeg for instance constitutes a cultural amalgam of 137 nationalities from different parts of the world, and at any given time, more than 120 different languages are spoken in the City the report concluded.

Revealing as this information may be, credit goes to the roles being played by different organizations, including the Citizen Equity Committee, in ensuring that each cultural community in Winnipeg feels welcomed and respected.

As Inter-community relations in Winnipeg continues to improve, the respective supportive roles being played by various levels of government, including the City of Winnipeg, as well as non-profit agencies, cannot be over emphasized. As human, financial and material resources are committed to maintain the momentum of progress, there is optimism for the future of Winnipeg as a harmonious multicultural city.

In 2011, the Citizen Equity Committee (CEC) continued to monitor and provide advice to the City's equity and diversity programs, including the City Departments. The CEC also provided support to communities in celebrating cultural events. The committee held monthly meetings and received reports from its sub-committees (the Youth Role Model Awards committee and the CMARD Working Group) and the Wellness and Diversity Branch of the City of Winnipeg. In addition to these activities, the CEC invited The City's Aboriginal Youth Strategy representatives and the Province's Fairness Commissioner to attend its meeting to share information on the services they provide to the community in Winnipeg.

The content of this report itemizes the various initiatives the CEC successfully undertook in 2011 with financial and material support from the City of Winnipeg. There is every indication that the committee's work in promoting equity and diversity in Winnipeg will continue to be meaningful and strategic, to strengthen the City's renowned reputation as a friendly, culturally diverse and welcoming municipality.

Kwabena Osei-Bonsu
Coordinator
Citizen Equity Committee

WINNIPEG CMARD

Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination

Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) Winnipeg Working Group

In 2011, the CMARD Winnipeg Working Group held monthly meetings to develop a draft Action Plan to present to the CEC. The Action Plan titled "Inclusion and Respect for All Winnipeg" was submitted to the CEC and approved by the committee in November 2011.

The CMARD Winnipeg Action Plan focuses on two main activities, namely:

- Building capacity for communities in Winnipeg, including City Service Departments to embrace the principles enshrined in the Safe Harbour's "Respect for All" Program;
- Implementing a public education campaign to increase awareness for all citizens of Winnipeg to stop acts of racism, discrimination and hate crime in the City of Winnipeg.

During the year, the CMARD Winnipeg Working Group also prepared the Terms of Reference (TOR) for its operation.

The CMARD Winnipeg Working Group initiated action to develop a new brand for its public campaign and Website content. The brand package was funded from a grant given by the Multiculturalism Secretariat's Welcoming Community Program. A review paper on the status of racism and discrimination in Winnipeg was also completed.

To assist in the execution of the above-mentioned projects, two interns were recruited. The website development intern assisted for a period of three months, compiling data and information, as well as identifying prospective partner organizations and institutions for the working group. The second intern was responsible for developing a review paper that explored the current status of racism in Winnipeg.

The CMARD Working Group is working to implement the remainder of the Action Plan in 2012.

Youth Role Model Awards (YRMA)



The Annual CEC Youth Role Model Awards ceremony was held on Saturday, 7th May 2011, at the Caboto Centre, 1055 Wilkes Avenue. Ten out of the twenty recommended young men and women received cash awards, plaques and certificates of recognition for their achievements. Awards were given in junior and senior levels in the following seven categories: Sports, Academic Performance, Spirituality, Community Volunteering, Advocacy, Performing Arts and the Natividad Cantiveros Award for Courage.

Award winners were accompanied by family and community members, as well as colleagues and staff from their schools. The Irish Youth Group and a musician from the African community provided cultural performances to enliven the awards event.

On October 15th 2011, a special meeting was organized for past recipients of the CEC YRMA at the City of Winnipeg's Millennium Library. These young men and women are considered honorary CEC Community Youth Ambassadors. The objective for convening the meeting was to reconnect with previous years' award recipients, share ideas and learn about their life experiences, as well as encourage them to continue exhibiting the exemplary life qualities that qualified them for the awards. The youth were also invited to participate in organizing future YRMA events.







Community Wine and Cheese Event



The CEC Community Wine and Cheese event was held at the Mayor's Foyer on Thursday, 15th December 2011. The committee was privileged to have had Deepak Joshi, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the City of Winnipeg as the main speaker for the event. The gathering was well-attended, bringing together community leaders, representatives from civic society, newcomer service organizations, school boards and City Councillors.

The CEC community wine and cheese event is a yearly meeting, where invited community guests are able to socialize and renew community commitments and by so doing, strengthen inter-community relationships. The event also provides the invited guest speaker the opportunity to share his/her life story with the larger community. The overall goal for the CEC in hosting this annual event is to provide a forum to promote excellent inter community relations and understanding that will make Winnipeg a better place for all cultural communities to live and work in harmony.





Working with the Community



In 2011, the CEC continued to maintain strong connections with various communities in Winnipeg. The Citizen Equity Outreach Office received close to seventy invitations from various community associations, public and civic institutions and other organizations promoting diversity in Winnipeg. The Chair and members of the committee accepted the invitations and attended the events, bringing greetings on behalf of the CEC and the City of Winnipeg.

Some of the special events the CEC members attended in 2011 included the Annual Walk for Values organized by the Sri Satya Baba Centre, celebrations of Canada Multiculturalism Day and events for the International Day against Racism and Discrimination.

As part of its community connections outreach program, the CEC visited the Hindu Temple at 999 St. Anne's Road in July. The committee members met with representatives of the Indo-Canadian community in Winnipeg and talked about issues of concern. Settlement and integration challenges, housing, jobs, and the lack of recognition for foreign earned degrees and certificates emerged as community issues confronting newcomers from the Indo-Canadian community. The CEC delegation referred the leaders of the Indo-Canadian community to the immigration and settlement services organizations responsible for providing solutions to the discussed challenges and issues.



Regarding the issue of non-recognition of foreign degrees and certificates, the CEC chair promised to facilitate contact between the Indo-Canadian community representatives and the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner's Office, which is the provincial government agency responsible for those matters.

Monitoring Equity and Diversity Programs in the City Administration and Departments

During 2011, the CEC received monthly reports on corporate and departmental activities related to creating and maintaining a more diverse and respectful workplace. The CEC monitors and provides recommendations related to diversity training and education provided to City of Winnipeg employees, as well as other projects such as internships, scholarship programs and outreach efforts. Below are some highlights from those reports.

The City of Winnipeg is committed to creating a dynamic and diverse workforce of highly skilled employees delivering excellent service to the citizens of Winnipeg. To help achieve this goal a number of workshops are offered to City employees every year. In 2011, over 1100 employees attended 60 diversity related- workshops such as: Respectful Workplace Awareness, Generations at Work, Aboriginal Awareness, Diversity – The role of the Supervisor, Bias Free Selection and Disability Awareness.

The City has a very active outreach program and partners with educational institutions and agencies to provide internships and work experience opportunities to Aboriginal youth, newcomers with international education and persons with disabilities. A total of 13 paid internships and 6 unpaid work experience opportunities were provided by the City in 2011. Oshki Anishinabe Nigaaniwak, the City of Winnipeg's Aboriginal Youth Strategy program also offered internship opportunities for Aboriginal Youth between the ages of 16-30 years old.

Departments were busy this past year planning for the City's second Career Symposium which will take place October 16, 2012 from 12-7 p.m. at the Winnipeg Convention Centre, 3rd floor, 375 York Avenue. Everyone is welcome to attend the event for free. The objective of the Career Symposium is to create awareness about different careers available at the City of Winnipeg. There will be interactive displays and employees on-site will answer questions about different careers. Information on how, where and when to apply for employment opportunities offered by the City of Winnipeg is available at: http://winnipeg.ca/hr/careersymp.stm

During the year, several human resource capacity building initiatives were undertaken, focusing on the youth in Winnipeg. For the second year running, The Aboriginal Youth Strategy program funded ten tuition scholarships of one thousand dollars each for young people from the Aboriginal community, who are pursuing post-secondary education.

Monitoring Equity and Diversity Programs in the City Administration and Departments (continued)



Besides that a total of 36 Aboriginal youth attended three different career camps in 2011. For the first time, an Aboriginal youth career camp was organized by the Winnipeg Police Service in 2011. The second Aboriginal youth career camp was organized by the Fire Paramedic Service. And the third career camp, involving several city departments took place in the course of the year.

The main objective for organizing the Aboriginal youth career camps is to reinforce the 'stay in school' message, as well as disseminate information about careers available at the City and departments during the week-long camping.

On March 1st, 2011, the City of Winnipeg sponsored the Women as Career Mentors Dinner, which was attended by several city employees. The main speaker was Police Sargent Monica Stothers, who at the time of her recruitment, was only the second Black Police Constable in the whole of Canada.





Outgoing CEC Members

Robert M'vondo, the Federal Government representative on the CEC, retired after a long service since 2002. Councillor Mike Pagtakhan, in a farewell statement, paid tribute to Mr. M'vondo for the long service. He was rewarded with a Plaque of Distinction of Service.

Councillor John Orlikow replaced Councillor Russ Wyatt on the CEC in the course of 2011.

Membership

His Worship Mayor Sam Katz, (Ex Officio)
Councillor Mike Pagtakhan, Chair
Councillor Russ Wyatt/Councillor John Orlikow
Phil Sheegl, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
Jackie Halliburton (CAO Designate)

Community members

Ramesh Gupta, Florence Okwudili, Steve Hennessey, Randy Viray, Solange Sookram, Heather Flynn, Sylvia Todaschuk

Federal Government Representative

Nancy Rainboth

Administrative Support

Kwabena Osei-Bonsu, Committee Coordinator
Krista Kunz/Jennifer Ridge, Committee Clerk – City Clerk's Department
Carole Frechette, Outreach Coordinator – Wellness and Diversity Branch, Corporate Support Services.

2011 Financial Statement

Total Budget ($)	Total Expenditure ($)	Unused Funds
69,000	68,417.91	582.09

Statement of Appreciation

On behalf of the Citizen Equity Committee, I wish to express our gratitude to the City of Winnipeg for the yearly financial support that enables the committee to fulfill its mandate of promoting equity and diversity in Winnipeg. The Mayor, City Councillors, as well as the entire City staff have been supportive of the CEC. And last but not least, the CEC is thankful to both the Federal and the Provincial Governments for direct and indirect support.



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