

Diversity Thunder Bay
Year at a Glance
2009

Co-chairs: Anne LeSage; Walid Chahal
Secretary/Treasurer: Brenda Reimer (bjreimer@tbaytel.net)

Meetings

- Diversity Thunder Bay met at Shelter House on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 12-1:30 pm 7 times in 2009. No meetings were held in July, August and December. In March the 3rd Annual Celebration Breakfast took the place of the regular meeting and in October an extended planning session was held at the 55 Plus Centre.
- Average attendance at meetings was 15
- Minutes were distributed by email to all members

Membership

- 32 paid members (27 organizations and 5 individuals). These figures include 2 new organizations that became members in 2009. They do not include another 4 organizations in arrears for 2009 but still participating in activities.

Projects and Activities

Website

www.diversitythunderbay.ca

The communications committee is responsible for the web site with assistance from the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association. Donn Hickerson is the web master.

Diversity in Policing Project

- March 31st, 2009 marked the official end of this project although some remaining work such as delivering the training to officers and other staff continued into the spring. Members of the Project Advisory Committee continue to receive invitations to speak about the project in other communities.
- In September this project was removed as a standing item on our agenda. This marked the completion of more than four years of work from initiating the idea to finding the funding to project implementation. Diversity members expressed a sincere hope that the implementation work would continue within Thunder Bay Police Services.

Overcoming Systemic Racism and Discrimination A Community Plan

- Although the development of this plan was undertaken by a broader group known as TBCARD

Diversity Thunder Bay members were well represented on TBCARD and were also involved throughout the process.

- In January Diversity Thunder Bay members served as the first focus group for

community input into the community plan.

- In March some 40 replies were received to the question posed to those attending the Celebration Breakfast.
- In April Diversity Thunder Bay members were asked to review the draft recommendations under each of the 10 Common Commitments of the Coalition of Municipalities Against Racial Discrimination.
- In May the completed report was taken to Thunder Bay City Council where it was approved.
- In October Diversity Thunder Bay named Anne LeSage to represent them on the Racism Advisory Committee recommended by the report.
- In November Rebecca Johnson tabled an extensive list of her contacts with many other communities across Canada regarding our anti racism work in Thunder Bay.
- Diversity Thunder Bay will now undertake a supportive role as the new Advisory Committee appointed by City Council begins to meet and establish its terms of reference.

Broader Antiracism Proposal

- From January through June Leisa Desmoulin worked with the Trillium Foundation; provincial networking groups and other northern Ontario cities to develop a broad antiracism proposal to submit to the Trillium Foundation for funding. In June we were disappointed to hear that the Trillium Foundation would not be funding the broader proposal but would like to see a smaller proposal to assist some of the communities to do more work to prepare them for being part of the broader proposal. We were disappointed to learn in September that this smaller proposal was not funded after all. Leisa spent a lot of time developing contacts and networks. It is to be hoped that at some time in the future her work will come to fruition.

March 21st Breakfast

- The 3rd Annual Breakfast was held on March 25th with 251 tickets sold. The theme was Community Action Working Together. Speakers included Frances Wesley speaking about the UrbanAboriginal Strategy; Leisa Desmoulin speaking about TBAYCARD and the community plan being developed. Two young people from Thunder Bay Multicultural Association read their entries in a book written by teen-agers for teen-agers coming to Thunder Bay from other countries. Those attending were inspired by the resiliency and humour with which these young people dealt with the difficulties of experiencing a totally new culture and their willingness to share their experiences with others. Some of the winning anti-racism videos from a competition for Canadian youth were shown and enjoyed.
- Lisa Beckwick chaired the Breakfast Planning Committee and Clara Butikofer was contracted as the co-ordinator. Both were thanked for an excellent job.
- Diversity members were unanimous in their support for a 4th Annual Breakfast and a date of March 24th, 2010 was set. In December Lisa announced that she would be unable to chair the committee for 2010. Carol Rusak assisted by Tina Tucker has taken on this responsibility.

Proposed Retail Sector Project

- 2009 marked the 3rd year of trying to get funding for this project. Despite contact with several potential funders and a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce who have expressed interest in the project it has still not moved ahead.

Strategic Planning and Terms of Reference

- With the completion of two major projects in 2009 the need for strategic planning for the future was identified.
- A planning session held in October was attended by 20 members.
- It was agreed that one previous goal of becoming a recognized voice in the community has been met. Some of our other previous goals may now be carried out by the Advisory Committee on Racism. We need to be ready to work with them as needed.
- It was unanimously agreed by those present that our focus should broaden to include other forms of discrimination. In particular, the discrimination experienced by gay, lesbian and trans-sexual people was identified as an area of concern. Our terms of reference accommodate this broadening of scope without any changes being required. Our first step should be to educate ourselves as to what people are experiencing, what organizations exist etc.
- Through the planning process six areas were identified as priorities for Diversity Thunder Bay for 2010. To carry out work in each of these areas small working groups will be required. As a follow up to the planning session members indicated their interest in the different working groups at the December meeting.
- The six identified priorities are:
 - Education
 - Youth
 - Communication
 - 4th Annual Celebration Breakfast
 - Reference group for representative to City of Thunder Bay Advisory Committee on Racism
 - Funding and membership

Other Activities/Concerns

The need for a policy on how Diversity Thunder Bay can speak out on issues of concern given its diverse membership base was identified in 2008. The first attempt to develop such a policy in 2009 was not successful. The need for a policy came up again in the 2009 planning session. This will be part of the work of the Communications committee.

A colourful brochure outlining the work of Diversity Thunder Bay was developed for the Celebration Breakfast in March. Thanks to the Thunder Bay Multicultural Centre for allowing their graphic arts student to work on this for us.

Honours Received in 2009

Diversity Thunder Bay and the Regional Food Distribution Centre were co-recipients in June of the Lakehead Social Planning Council's Social Planning Award for

organizations. Anne LeSage accepted the award at the LSPC Annual meeting in June 2009.

In December, after hearing Rebecca Johnson speak in Winnipeg about the anti-racism work being done here in Thunder Bay, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation invited Diversity Thunder Bay to submit a nomination for a CRRF Award. The nomination was duly submitted before the January 15th deadline. Whether or not we receive an award being asked to submit a nomination is an honour in itself.