

**Bismarck Human Relations  
Committee Annual Report**



**January 2021-December 2021**

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## **MISSION OF COMMITTEE**

The mission of the Bismarck Human Relations Committee is to create an atmosphere of inclusion, equality and accessibility through education and outreach to recognize the value of a diverse community.

## **GOALS OF COMMITTEE**

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee has the following goals and objectives as defined in its strategic plan:

1. To exhibit leadership in the areas of civil and human rights:
  - a. The committee will be comprised of individuals that represent and are knowledgeable of diverse populations.
  - b. The committee members will practice and model actions that exemplify nondiscrimination, acceptance and respect of diversity.
2. To educate the public about civil and human rights:
  - a. The committee will implement a public education plan to identify and address issues.
  - b. The committee will actively plan, sponsor and participate in events that promote and celebrate diversity.
3. To identify issues of principle concern in the area of civil and human rights:
  - a. The committee will provide access for public input.
  - b. The committee will prioritize issues based on input received.
4. To recommend priorities and objectives about issues of community concern to the City Commission:
  - a. The committee will serve as a liaison in issues of civil and human rights between the community and the City Commissioners.
5. To advocate for compliance with federal and state laws regarding civil and human rights, including North Dakota Century Code Chapters 14-02.4 (Human Rights) and 14-02.5 (Housing):
  - a. The committee will provide information about current laws through multiple formats.
  - b. The committee will maintain data regarding civil and human rights issues.

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE**

Bismarck Ordinance 5208 created the Bismarck Human Relations Committee and received final passage on October 8th, 2002. The committee's purpose is to promote acceptance and respect for diversity through educational programs and activities and to discourage all forms of discrimination including protected class discrimination, ADA violations or other statutory or constitutional violations (Chapter 2-11).

## **APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEE**

The committee consists of nine members who serve without pay. Member appointment is by the President of the Board of City Commissioners and is subject to confirmation by the Board of City Commissioners. Appointees serve three-year terms.

## **COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES AND LOCATION**

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee meets on the third Monday of each month (except on holidays) at 5:15 p.m. in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Mayor's Conference Room of the City/County Office Building, 221 North 5th Street in downtown Bismarck. Meetings are open to the public and accept public comment.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CURRENT TERMS**

- Chair – Darcy Andahl (term expires Jan. 2024)
- Vice Chair – Trevor Vannett (term expires Jan. 2023)
- Krista Rauch (term expires Jan. 2022)
- Annette Martel (term expires Jan. 2023)
- Brandi Hardy (term expires Jan. 2022)
- Kollie Flomo (term expires Jan. 2022)
- Manisha Sawhney (term expires Jan. 2024)
- Jason Grueneich (term expires Jan. 2023)
- Sargianna Wutzke (term expires Jan. 2024)

## **PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION**

A copy of the Human Relations Committee Ordinance, Strategic Plan, Annual Report, complaint filing forms and other information may be accessed online at [www.bismarcknd.gov](http://www.bismarcknd.gov) or by mailing:

Bismarck Human Relations Committee

City of Bismarck

PO Box 5503

221 N 5th Street

Bismarck, ND 58506-5503

[www.bismarcknd.gov](http://www.bismarcknd.gov)



# Humanitarian of the Year Awards

## Rachel Howard

Rachel is the Founder and Executive Director of Closet 127. The vision of Closet 127 is to encourage individuals to gain their independence and “build” a new home while living a healthy and joyful life, being their best self. They provide furniture and household items to those leaving unhealthy situations. According to the person nominating her, “Rachel has been a light, a beacon of hope when so many have been walking through dark times. Her generosity knows no limits.”



## Dakota Outright

Dakota Outright is an LGBTQ focused organization. Their mission is to serve the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual community of North Dakota by increasing visibility, providing resources and information, advocating for equality, and creating safe spaces for connection, support, and celebration. They sponsor a variety of events that speak to the diverse interests of the LGBTQIA people.



## CAPITAL PRIDE EVENT

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee participated in the Capital Pride Event. This event is an annual, family-oriented summer event that celebrates the LGBTQIA2S+ community. During the Capital Pride event, the Bismarck Human Relations Committee had a booth and shared information on the mission and purpose of the committee which includes the importance of inclusion and diversity. Committee members had a great time talking with the people attending the event and sharing our mission along with handing out SWAG items and brochures detailing our mission.





## LOGO DESIGN COLLABORATION

The BHRC collaborated with Bismarck Public Schools Career Academy & Technical Center and student Taylor Cook for a new logo for the committee. The logo that the committee was using did not print well on items and committee members felt that there was a need for a logo showing more diversity.

Taylor created an updated logo for the committee's use as one of her community projects through Empower [Ed], a personalized path to graduation based on who students are and how they learn best. Taylor provided a series of conceptual drawings to the committee for their initial review and revised the concepts to reflect the wishes of committee members.

A final design and color palette were provided to the BHRC during their December meeting and the new logo design was unanimously accepted. BHRC member, Jason Grueneich stated "Our partnership with the Career Academy and Taylor Cook couldn't have been a better fit. She put her creative skills to use on an authentic project that resulted in a logo that strengthened our brand." The logo will be used for marketing for the committee for many years to come and we are ecstatic that we were able to give a high school student a chance to complete this project for us.



## **MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX** **RATING**

The Bismarck HRC worked tirelessly over the last 12 months, along with city administration, to coordinate efforts on spotlighting areas of improvement within the city departments to improve inclusion, equality, and accessibility for our LGBTQ+ citizens.

As the HRC is looking forward towards a more sustainable future for our great city, we continue to focus on increasing our city's index rating scorecard. This scorecard focuses on best practices to support LGBTQ+ community members, employees, and businesses. This is taking another step towards the values in the City Strategy Plan and creating community pride.

After meeting with department heads and coordinating strategic planning, we will be taking the next step in this process to meet with the National Municipal Equality Index coordinators to refigure our scorecard. We currently sit at 63/100 and we believe, with our current efforts, that we can raise our score at a minimum of ten points.

HRC believes accountability is necessary from all stakeholders; including city employees, elected officials, and community partners, to improve the index scorecard rating and overall well-being of Bismarck. HRC looks forward to the next 12 months of welcoming diversity, exhibiting community pride, acting with integrity, and looking towards the future with this project!

## EXCITING THINGS COMING IN 2022

### Martin Luther King JR Day Celebration

This event celebrated the dream and legacy of Martin Luther King JR during a celebration held at Trinity Lutheran Church. The committee was one of the sponsors of the event and assisted with the event by promoting it, assisting with set up of the event and having a booth at the event where we visited with attendees about the committee.

### Families Around the World

This event which takes place at the Bismarck Public Library celebrates diversity found in Bismarck. The event will include storytelling, cultural activities, food, and crafts. Our committee will have a booth and offer the activity of rock painting. We will be talking about our mission of inclusion and diversity in our community and what we are doing to support this mission to those who visit our booth.

### Humanitarian of the Year

The committee will name an individual and a business/non-profit Humanitarian of the Year. This award will be given to an individual and a group that exhibited leadership in the area of human rights. The award focuses on recognizing persons in the community that educate, identify, protect, and promote acceptance and respect for diversity, and discourage discrimination.

### Essay and Poetry Contest

The committee is hosting a Human Rights Essay and Poetry contest for students in grades 4 – 5, calling upon them to write an essay or a poem that fosters respect for Human Rights; and for students in grades 6 – 8, to write an essay or a poem about their concept of leadership for Human Rights. One outstanding essay and poem from each age grouping will be selected and recognized by Mayor Steve Bakken and displayed on the City of Bismarck website.

### Quarterly Community Events

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee plans on participating in events quarterly in our community. Our goal is for the committee to participate in at least one event per quarter as well as plan at least two events a year as a committee. We are very excited to discuss our mission of inclusion, equality and accessibility through education and outreach to recognize the value of a diverse community.

