



watercolour by Alyson Thorpe

Equal Employment Opportunity Program

REFLECTIONS



Newsletter
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Benefits of Diversity

Conference Board of Canada's recent report titled The Value of Diversity provides compelling research about the pivotal role and impact of diversity on organizational and community effectiveness and ultimately on financial performance. The 25-page report summarizes five of the most important benefits of diverse leadership:

- Improved financial and organizational performance;
- Increased capacity to link with new global and domestic markets;
- Expanded access to global and domestic talent pools;
- Enhanced innovation and creativity; and
- Strengthened social cohesion and social capital.

In addition, other research has revealed the following about how diversity enriches our workplace through:

- Filling job vacancies by drawing from a larger pool of qualified applicants;
- Decreasing or eliminating barriers to exemplary service by having a diverse workforce to share expert knowledge of the diversity of the people we serve;
- Developing and maintaining a competitive advantage by having a multi-lingual, interculturally competent workforce is a clear advantage over organizations without these abilities;
- Saving money by capitalizing on the talents of all workers while creating a more inclusive workplace, reducing turnover, and increasing job satisfaction;
- Enhancing productivity and organizational effectiveness with a wider array of fresh perspectives, creative thinking, and a capacity for risk-taking and innovation. Research shows that diverse teams are more effective in solving complex challenges than homogenous teams;
- Creating a healthier and more supportive work environment. As a result, organizations attract more and better employees through its reputation and achievements;
- Fostering and maintaining a positive public image. By providing exemplary service and/or products to meet the needs of diverse communities, organizations gain more positive media attention.

***What is diversity?** Diversity refers to all the ways in which we differ, and may include (but are not limited to) age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, religion, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, and other characteristics. Beyond diversity as a social identity, we need to strive for inclusion by creating welcoming and respectful workplace environments for all. Creating welcoming and respectful workplaces is an on-going challenge and opportunity for us as public servants committed to excellence, fairness, integrity, leadership, responsiveness and learning.*

Measuring Up Goes To Edmonton!

This past September, EEO Director Monica Kay, and Consultant Paul Tubbe, were invited to Edmonton to describe how the *Measuring Up* initiative has been implemented in Vancouver. As many will recall, *Measuring Up* is a strategy for assessing the level of accessibility and inclusiveness we have achieved as a City, specifically with respect to people with disabilities and seniors.

The City of Vancouver undertook *Measuring Up* in a slightly different way than some other communities: Vancouver opted for an “internal” focus, assessing the accessibility of our own organization in providing services and facilities to the community. The “internal” process involved cataloguing all work done in each City department. Then, through a series of interviews, City staff and community members assessed the accessibility of our work.



Monica Kay (EEO Director) [front right] and Paul Tubbe (Consultant) [middle front] with staff of City of Edmonton

Over a three day period, Monica and Paul provided two workshops and an all-day symposium on our *Measuring Up* process. The workshops were attended by staff from City of Edmonton and the Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities. The enthusiasm and energy in the room during all three events was inspiring, and Edmonton staff and community members are considering undertaking the *Measuring Up* initiative.

We extend a great big THANK YOU to all Vancouver City staff and community members who participated in the *Measuring Up* process - your hard work, patience and commitment are much appreciated! For more information about *Measuring Up*, please call EEO.



Two-Day Workshop for Line and Hiring Managers

EEO offered a new two-day workshop for line and hiring managers on November 25th and 26th, 2008.

Engaging Diversity: Recruitment & Retention for the Future focused on recruiting and retaining persons with disabilities the first day, and on recruiting and retaining women in non-traditional employment, immigrants, and Aboriginal peoples the second day.

Our goal in providing the training was to:

- recognize and enhance the existing expertise of our line and hiring managers;
- provide practical support and resources; and
- provide an opportunity for participants to share their best practices and lessons learned.

The workshop was designed and delivered by a “Creative Team” of representatives from City departments, Unions and community agencies with significant and wide-ranging expertise. We would like to extend our appreciation to each of them for their generosity and insightfulness. We also appreciate the very thoughtful feedback from all participants which has been used to revise the workshop for future dates.

For more information about this new workshop, please contact an EEO Advisor.



The Facilitation Team in action

Vancouver Celebrates Diwali: Festival of Lights

The City of Vancouver celebrated Diwali, one of the most important spiritual and cultural festivals in the South Asian community, on October 23rd with an opening ceremony at City Hall and two further days of celebration at the Roundhouse Community Centre.

On Saturday November 1st, Diwali was celebrated at the Roundhouse with a family event showcasing the various classical and folk arts of India and featuring top performing artists from BC.



Performance by local artists

There were displays of handicrafts, m e h n d i , clothing and food vendors, and dance workshops. On Sunday, November 2nd, the Roundhouse

featured a “Chai House” for the younger audience. Filled with a myriad of fusion arts, the Chai House included both dance and voice, inspired by the worlds of hip hop, reggae, pop, funk, classical dance and soul. Cultural workshops were also offered at Renfrew, Champlain Heights, West End and Sunset Community Centres.

Cultural Harmony Awards 2008

The City of Vancouver established the Cultural Harmony Awards in 1996 to recognize individuals and organizations that display a significant and sustained commitment to the promotion of cultural harmony in Vancouver. The downtown Eastside-based arts company, Vancouver Moving Theatre, and anti-discrimination advocate, Romi Chandra, were the recipients of this year’s Cultural Harmony Awards.

Romi is well known for his long commitment and involvement as a young person in addressing issues of anti-discrimination. His capacity to lead and motivate his peers and other youth to respond to issues of racism and homophobia is impressive.

Vancouver Moving Theatre is an award-winning professional arts company that develops accessible interdisciplinary theatre, events and community art influenced by Vancouver’s Pacific Rim culture.



Terry Hunter, Savannah Wallins (representatives of Vancouver Moving Theatre - Organization Winner), Korina Houghton (Park Board Chair) & Romi Chandra (Individual Winner) [from left] at the Tree Planting Ceremony

The Cultural Harmony Award recipients were honoured by City Council at a special ceremony and had trees planted in their names in the Cultural Harmony Grove.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities: A Celebration at the Roundhouse!

December 3rd, 2008 marked the second annual celebration of “International Day of Persons with Disabilities”. The event was funded jointly through the City of Vancouver, Departmental Happenings Program of the Office of Olympics and Paralympics, Legacies 2010, and The Hastings Institute. It was attended during the early afternoon by children from nearby Elsie Roy school, and by all ages throughout both the day and evening.

The day’s theme was “Sports, Art and Culture,” and featured presentations and demonstrations by Paralympic athletes Ross MacDonald, Vince Preap, Shawn Marsolais and Paul Gauthier, as well as Bruce Gilmour, torchbearer for the Beijing Games. The 2010 Olympic Mascots joined us during a Sledge Hockey demonstration. There were performances by Cody Tressiera, a gifted mouth artist, Vancouver Adaptive Snow Sports, BC Blind Sports, musician and technology expert Michael Wittman, and Mime artist “Max-i-Mime.”

Evening performances included Stewart Brinton’s gifted Saxophone solo, the “Wheeling Eights” wheelchair squaredancers, a dramatic performance by Sistershow, and an excerpt from Theatre Terrific’s new performance “The House of Seikilos”. Jazz lyricist, composer and performer Moreen Meriden rounded out the evening reception.

Our heartfelt thanks to all the performers and presenters; to the many volunteers; to the Steering Committee; to the Roundhouse staff and management, and to Event Coordinator Nicole Kiyooka.



Cody Tresierra (mouth artist) answering questions from students of Elsie Roy School

The Rotunda Event

The Rotunda Event, held on December 11, 2008, celebrated the winter solstice and the holidays. It was well attended by staff, who enjoyed good food, beverages and lively conversation. This year City staff raised \$2,040 for the Evelyn Saller Centre, Carnegie Centre and the Gathering Place. The event was organized by volunteers from Corporate Services, Engineering, Communications, Protocol, EEO & Social Policy.

Lunar New Year Celebration

The Lunar New Year, which occurred on January 26, 2009, is regarded as the most important annual festival by the Asian communities. The City invited the Vancouver Police Department to perform the Lion Dance, and Mr. James Tan, the Chinese brush painting master, to calligraph good luck messages. Staff members enjoyed the Chinese New Year's goodies. Kung Hei Fat Choi!



The Vancouver Police Department's Lion Dance performance at City Hall on January 26, 2009

The Hastings Institute

2009 will mark the 20th anniversary of The Hastings Institute and we have much to celebrate!

Wholly owned by the City and operating out of the Office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Program, The Hastings Institute continues to grow its client base with our training and consulting services. We work with a wide variety of organizations from both the private and public sector who are dedicated to creating respectful workplaces that welcome and value diversity. Our consultants include Stephen Hammond, Rhonda Margolis, Lorna McCreath, Richard Singer and Eric Wong, and they are truly the best in their field.

We extend a warm welcome to our new Board members - Mayor Gregor Robertson and Councillors Suzanne Anton, George Chow, Kerry Jang and Ellen Woodsworth. We look forward to meeting with them at our yearly Board meeting.

The Hastings Institute

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EVENTS

- February: Black History Month
vancouver.ca/multiculturalism/blackhistory.htm
- March 8: International Women's Day
- March 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

WORKSHOPS

- March 3: Service Across Cultures
(half-day morning)
- April 28: Workplace Harassment Prevention
(half-day morning)
- April 28: Workplace Harassment Intervention Skills
(half-day afternoon)
- May 28: Diversity in Our Workplace
(half-day morning)

To enrol, please send an e-mail to eeo@vancouver.ca or phone 604.873.7786 as soon as possible, as space is limited and fills quickly!