



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF BLACK MALES

To: Mayor Mark Kruzan and Common Council of the City of Bloomington

From: David Hummons, Chair, Commission on the Status of Black Males

Re: Report from the Commission on the Status of Black Males

Date: April 13, 2011

The Commission on the Status of Black Males was created to address the challenges faced by African-American males in the areas of health, employment, criminal justice, and education. The group promotes public and private remedies to some of the challenges confronting Black males in the community, organizes and convenes community meetings to discuss the status of Black males, and networks with other groups in the community and the state. Commission members during 2010 included Commission Chair David Hummons (appointed by the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration Commission), Vice Chair Marty Deckard (Mayor), Secretary Cedric Harris (Mayor), Chuck Rogers (Human Rights Commission), Adrian Land (Mayor), Bev Smith (Common Council), and Greg Tourner (Common Council). Staff support is provided by Special Projects Coordinator Craig Brenner.

In January of 2010, Mayor Kruzan called for nominations for the Outstanding Black Male Leader of Tomorrow Award. The Commission selected Rashawn Ray and presented him the award at the Black History Month Gala on February 26, 2010.

Also in February, the Commission hosted a Black History Month “Conversation” for youth on the importance of selecting good role models. The conversation, which included pizza and soft drinks, took place on February 20, 2010 at a local Black barber shop, involved 35 men and youth. This successful event illustrated the positive influence the Commission has on the community.

The Commission continued its efforts to attract more African-American Males to the services provided by Volunteers in Medicine during 2010. Commission member Greg Tourner spearheaded this effort by volunteering on the VIM Marketing Committee.

In the area of education, Monroe County Community School Corporation Superintendent Dr. J. T. Coopman attended the March Commission meeting. Dr. Coopman expressed his openness to ideas for recruiting more staff of color into MCCSC and also hosting diversity roundtables to provide suggestions and support, although his main priority was addressing budget concerns. Commissioner Bev Smith is a part of the administration at MCCSC, facilitating communication between the Commission and the school corporation.

City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Black Males

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On September 9, 2010, the Commission held a planning retreat facilitated by Jean Joque of Human Resources. With her assistance the Commission determined that its two primary areas of interest during 2011 will be Education (mentoring in reading, math and science) and Employment (providing assistance with business plans, books/accounting, scheduling, time management, and possibly hands-on workshops in basic business skills).

James Garrett, Director of the Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males, attended the December meeting and reported on statewide initiatives as well as activities of other local commissions. The Commission also adopted by-laws at the December meeting.

Upcoming issues for 2011 include working with a growing local collaboration of groups that is advocating naming a street after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. For detailed information on the activities of the Commission, please refer to www.bloomington.in.gov/csbn

The photos below are from the “Saturday at the Barbershop” Conversation which took place on Saturday, February 20, 2010 at College Town Cutters.

