

City of Riverside

**Human
Relations
Commission**

**Annual Report
2007**

**3900 Main Street, 7th Floor
Riverside, CA 92522
(951) 826-5897**

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Human Relations Commission Mission Statement:

The City of Riverside's Human Relations Commission advocates for equal opportunity, Justice, and access in the City to services and opportunities. The Commission fosters mutual understanding and respect between people, encourages education and outreach and develops and promotes programs which work to eliminate prejudice and discrimination



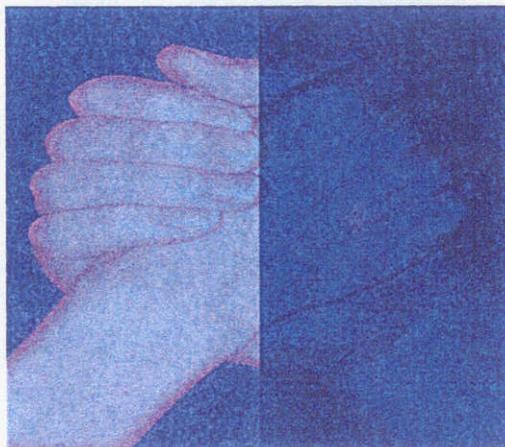
Introduction

This is the fifth edition of the Human Relations Commission's Annual Report. The purpose of this report is to present to the public an insight as to the work of the commission in advocating for equal opportunity, justice, and access to services and opportunities in the City of Riverside.

With an operating budget of \$17,000, the Human Relations Commission is charged with fostering mutual understanding and respect between people; encouraging education and outreach, and developing and promoting programs which work to eliminate prejudice and discrimination.

The report is divided into sections starting with this introduction. We have included the Chairperson's message, a list of accomplishments, followed by a section that introduces our Commissioners, includes event photographs from some of our events and programs during 2007, describes our organizational partnerships, and answers some frequently asked questions, and the current budget.

We hope you find this report useful and enjoyable to read. If you have any questions about this report, feel free to call our office staff at (951) 826-5897. You can also e-mail us at hrc@riversideca.gov or visit our website at www.riversideca.gov/hrc.



Message from the Chairperson

It has been an eventful transitional period in the life of the Human Relations Commission. Our list of accomplishments highlights our focus on the ongoing mission of community involvement, responsiveness to community concerns, and securing opportunities to showcase the commitment to inclusion and diversity in the City of Riverside. In carrying out our mission, the Commission continues to:

- Identify areas of community concern
- Develop responses to meet those concerns.
- Work with public and private entities to ensure fair and just treatment for all who find themselves in our city.

The responses to community concerns have included:

- Upgrading of Commission marketing materials.
- Outreach efforts at community events and coordination with community partners
- Hosting ethnically and culturally diverse community events
- Assessing current economic and business trends in light of a growing acceptance and valuing of matters of inclusion and diversity.

The continued population growth and physical development of the City of Riverside creates new challenges and opportunities. An additional endeavor that the Commission hopes to accomplish is to engage the business community as a partner in making Riverside an all-inclusive City. By accomplishing this task, our City's businesses can expect to yield greater penetration into new markets that perhaps they have never been able to reach. It is within this ever-changing landscape that the Commission continues its work.

Sincerely yours,

Omar Zaki, Chairman

Human Relations Commission List of Accomplishments

2007

- Commissioners hosted information booth at the Mayor's Annual State of the City Address.
- Commissioners participated in quarterly Mayor's Multicultural Forums
- Commissioners attended ceremony of the first graduating class of the Eleanor Jean Grier Leadership Academy
- Commissioners and Staff attended the Riverside Coalition for Police Accountability (RCPA) and the Eastside Think Tank's panel discussion and community dialogue on issues of police accountability.
- Commissioners participated in the Fair Housing Council of Riverside County's Volunteer training.
- The Commission sponsored a week of artistic and culturally diverse Community events for the 2007 Race Equality Week.
- Commissioners held a community engagement session to gather diverse community input for the formulation of RPD's Diversity and Cross Cultural Communication Training.
- Commissioners assisted in the development of Riverside Police Department's Liaison Program

- Commissioners assisted the Jeffrey Owens Community Center to host a Downtown Safety Forum
- Commissioners assisted in the production of a comprehensive Hate Crimes brochure to be used by law enforcement and the Western Inland Empire Coalition Against Hate (WIECAH).
- Commissioners facilitated a meeting between concerned citizens of Riverside's Islamic community and Police Chief Russ Leach, in response to incidents of police profiling that had been occurring in the Los Angeles Islamic community.
- Chairman Zaki was a guest speaker at the Riverside Chamber of Commerce's August 2007 meeting of Good Morning Riverside.
- The Commission requested Mayor and City Council to file an Amicus Brief in Support of Same-Sex Marriage.
- The Commission requested Mayor and City Council to Re-Affirm the City of Riverside's Inclusive Community Statement.
- Commissioners conducted a workshop at the annual Riverside Neighborhoods Conference
- Commissioners taught a session on Cultural Diversity for the Riverside Leadership Academy
- Chairman Zaki was a speaker for the Greater Riverside Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's October 2007 "Que Pasa Riverside" business luncheon.

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION 2007



Omar Zaki
Chair



Marisa Yeager
Vice Chair



Viet Tran
Parliamentarian



Gilberto Esquivel



Aric Isom



John Krick



Haydee Llanes



Lorraine Saint



Raj Singh

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION 2007



Gladys Walker



Georgia Warnke



AJ Wilson

Left Commission in 2007



Chani Beeman



Susan Carpenter



Sherry Gordon



Suzanna Medina



Jan Moore



Sonya Walker

Staff to Human Relations Commission:

Yvette Pierre
Community Relations Coordinator
Office of the Mayor

Program Highlights

Guest Speakers

Monthly Human Relations Commission Meetings provide the opportunity for Commissioners to hear first-hand from various community partners, and from the public to educate themselves on a variety of civic activities and community issues. Many Community Partners provide the list of guest speakers that keep the Commission current on what's happening in the City.

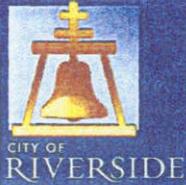
The Human Relations Commission invited updates and presentations from the following groups in 2007:

2007 Guest Speakers

Meeting Date	Speaker's Name	Organization	Topic
June 21, 2007	Mike Kinsman	Western Inland Empire Coalition Against Hate (WIECAH)	WIECAH Plans & programs
October 18, 2007	(1) Carlos Cortés	UCR/Mayor's Multicultural Forum	History of Inclusive Community Statement
October 18, 2007	(2) Don Smith	City of Riverside Homeless Manager	Annual Project Homeless Connect
November 15, 2007	(1) Rose Mayes	Fair Housing Council of Riverside	Effects of the current foreclosure/lending crisis for diverse range of Riverside communities
November 15, 2007	(2) Jim Yerndon	City of Riverside, Development Department, Division of Housing & Neighborhoods	City of Riverside's draft 5 Year Housing Implementation Plan
December 20, 2007	Mary E. Salvador Chief Executive Officer	Volunteer Center of Riverside County	Opportunities to serve/Volunteer, Social Capital

Multicultural Calendar

The Human Relations Commission and Staff develop and maintain the City of Riverside's Multicultural Calendar. The Calendar can be accessed through the City of Riverside website at: <http://www.riversideca.gov/hrc/PDF/calendar.pdf>



2007 Multicultural Calendar

October (Diversity Awareness Month)

Community Meetings

- 3-The Group (7am)
- 4-The Latino Network Meeting (7:30am)
- 17-The Latino Network Meeting (7:30am)
- 18-Human Relations Commission Meeting (6pm)
- 18-The Group (7am)

Community Events

- 6-Family Village Festival
- 11-Riverside County Commission on Women
- 24-Mayor's Night Out (Arlanza)

November (National American Indian Heritage Month)

Community Meetings

- 1-The Group (7am)
- 7-The Latino Network Meeting (7:30am)
- 15-The Group (7am)
- 15-Human Relations Commission Meeting (6pm)
- 21-The Latino Network Meeting (7:30am)

Community Events

- 15-2nd Annual Project Homeless Connect (8-5pm)
- 17-4th Annual Day of Service (10-3pm)
- 23-Festival of Lights
- 28-Mayor's Night Out (Victoria)

December (Human Rights Day Anniversary)

Community Meetings

- 5-The Latino Network Meeting (7:30am)
- 6-The Group (7am)
- 12-The Latino Network Feliz Navidad Breakfast (7:30am)
- 20-Human Relations Commission Meeting / Holiday Potluck(6pm)

Race Equality Week

During the last week of September, the Human Relations Commission celebrated the second annual Race Equality Week. As a continuation of the National League of Cities campaign to raise awareness about racism and spotlight the efforts of communities working to reduce racial tensions and build bridges across racial boundaries, the City of Riverside celebrated the importance of racial equality by proclaiming September 25-27, 2007 Race Equality Week.

The week was filled with performances illustrating the many aspects of race equality and diversity that play into our communities. The week's events included:

Tuesday:

The Human Relations Commission received a Proclamation from the Riverside City Council as they declare September 25-29th as Race Equality Week.

Wednesday:

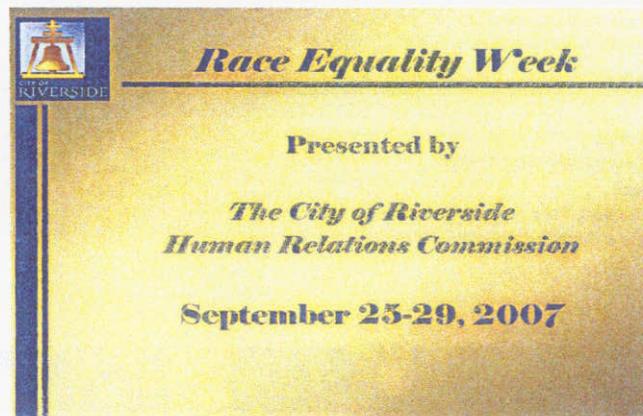
Dr. Carlos Cortes, Professor Emeritus at UCR, performed his renowned one-man play titled "A Conversation with Alana: One Man's Multicultural Rite of Passage" at the Riverside Art Museum. The play was well attended and well received.

Thursday:

Diversity in Education explored the racial equality and diversity through the eyes of the leaders of tomorrow by hosting an evening of presentations and performances by local college students. The evening presentations featured the now World Champion La Sierra University SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) Team at the California Museum of Photography. Performances also included Krystelle Robeniol opening with pose and poetry, and the UCR Katipunan performing a native Pilipino dance.

Saturday:

Commissioners joined the Islamic Center of Riverside for the Annual Ramadan Iftar and dinner which celebrated the breaking of their fast. The event was held at the Riverside Convention Center.



Access Riverside

Human Relations Commissions throughout the country have different ways in which they handle citizen's grievances or complaints. In general, commissions that serve a large city, county, or State have a complaint process that makes use of full time investigators on staff. Many of these also have a mediation option available through the local courts for the parties involved. Other smaller jurisdictions like the Human Relations Council of the Hemet and San Jacinto Region rely on a referral system for handling community complaints. These smaller councils lack the budget and resources necessary to conduct their own investigations. The Human Relations Commission of the City of Riverside is an example of this latter type.

In August 26, 2003, the City of Riverside made amendments to Sections 2.16.020 and 2.16.030 of City Ordinance #6704 entitled, "An Ordinance of the City of Riverside, California." This memo specifically addresses the Standing Rules of the Human Relations Commission of the City of Riverside, Section B, item #7: "To recommend and coordinate effective systems to insure equal justice and access for The City of Riverside." As such, Access Riverside was developed to address this mandate. The Commission will strive to promote and market Access Riverside as a community resource.

Access Riverside discrimination complaint forms are available on-line at www.riversideca.gov/hrc, or at our offices at 3900 Main Street, 7th floor, Riverside, CA. 92522. You may also request a form by mail by calling (951) 826-5897.



Community Events

Black History Month Parade

Commissioners supported the Annual Riverside Black History Month Committee's Parade and Expo. As in years past, Commissioners enjoyed taking part in the parade by riding on the fire trucks.



HRC Meets with RPD Chief

Commissioners set up a meeting with members of the Riverside Islamic Center and Riverside Police Department (RPD) Chief of Police, Russ Leach to discuss community concerns regarding incidents of racial profiling that had been taking place in the Islamic community in Los Angeles. Chief Leach was quickly able to allay the concerns of Riverside Islamic community members and with the assistance of Commissioners, effectively maintain good community relations.



Multicultural Youth Festival How Big is Your World?

The Commission staffed a booth on racial bias and provided financial support for the 2007 Youth Festival held in Downtown Riverside.



Greater Riverside Hispanic Chamber

Chairman Zaki spoke on "Embracing Diversity within Our City" at the Greater Riverside Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's "Que Pasa Riverside" Business Luncheon in October, 2007.



Downtown Safety Forum

In November 2007, the Human Relations Commission helped coordinate and participated in a public forum sponsored by the Jeffrey Owens Community Center and the Riverside Police Department that addressed downtown safety issues, in particular safety issues reported by Riverside's LGBT community.

Monthly Meeting Attendance

In its efforts to continually improve its understanding of various groups within the city, members of the Human Relations Commission attend numerous monthly discussion venues and participate in regular monthly meetings. In the past year the Commission attended the following community group meetings:

- ❖ The Latino Network
- ❖ The Group
- ❖ WIECAH
- ❖ Asian American Community Assoc (RAACA)
- ❖ The Riverside Black History Committee
- ❖ Greater Riverside Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Riverside Chamber – Good Morning Riverside

Additional Community Events

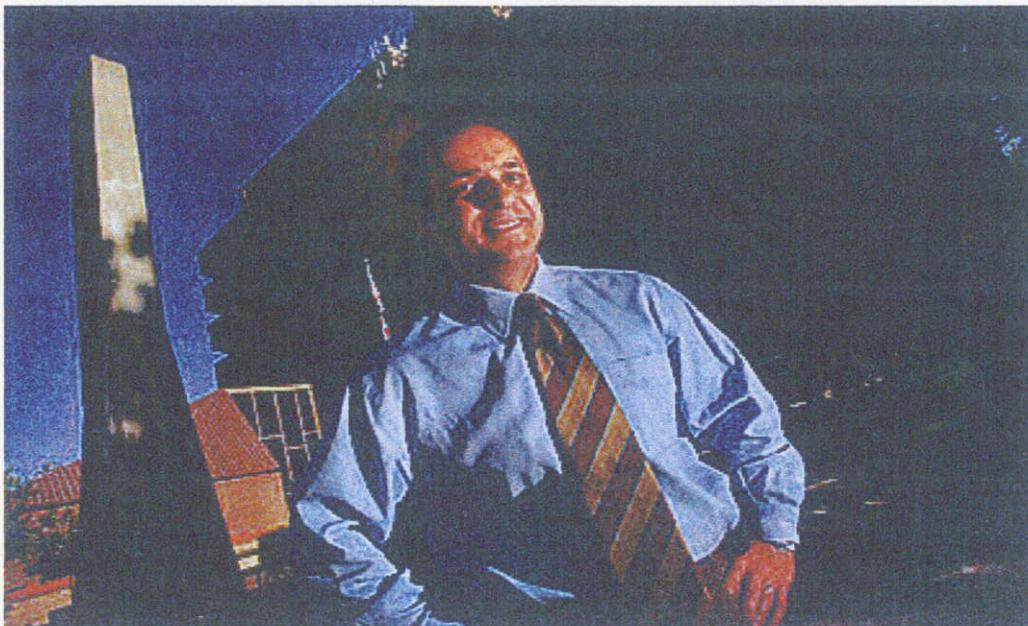
Commissioners also attended the following additional Community events:

- Annual NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet
- Fair Housing of Riverside's Champions for Justice Banquet
- Western Inland Empire Coalition Against Hate (WIECAH) Awards Banquet
- Neighborhood Conference "Cultural Diversity & Creating Inclusive Neighborhoods"
- Annual Sherman Indian High School Inter-Tribal PowWow

Business Focus – Diversity

Under the leadership of Chairperson Omar Zaki, a new focus has emerged for the Human Relations Commission to address issues of diversity in the City as they relate to business.

Human relations official tells business leaders to embrace diversity



Kurt Miller / The Press-Enterprise

Omar Zaki is the first Muslim to hold the chairman position on Riverside's Human Relations Commission. He says he wants to forge deeper relations between the commission and business owners.

11:44 PM PDT on Monday, September 3, 2007

By DOUG HABERMAN

The Press-Enterprise

RIVERSIDE - Halfway through his yearlong term as chairman of Riverside's Human Relations Commission, Omar Zaki made a pitch to business leaders.

Embrace diversity -- it can be good for your bottom line, he told the audience at August's Good Morning Riverside, a monthly gathering organized by the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce and held at the Mission Inn.

A company with a diverse workforce can tap into markets with which it may not have had experience, Zaki said.

"Social capital equates to economic growth," he told the audience.

As a Muslim in post-Sept. 11, 2001, America, Zaki knows better than many Riverside residents the value of an inclusive society.

It's been his goal for years.

Zaki, whose family is from Egypt, has long invited non-Muslims to participate in Muslim celebrations, such as Ramadan, to understand better what Islam is about.

He was so worried about the way the terrorist attacks affected how Muslim Americans were perceived that he spent two years between 2003 and 2005 as director of governmental affairs for the Southern California chapter of the Council of American-Islamic Relations, a nonprofit civil-rights group.

"There was such a gap" in understanding between the non-Muslim community in the United States and the Muslim community, Zaki said.

Islam has more than 1 billion adherents worldwide but it's the extremists who have spoken for them in recent years, he said.

The Sept. 11 attackers are not representative of the majority of Muslims, Zaki said.

"Most Muslims, including myself, look at what they did as sinful," he said.

Now as Human Relations Commission chairman, he is working to increase understanding among all racial, ethnic and religious groups in the city.



Omar Zaki talks with Yvette Pierre, community relations coordinator at Riverside City Hall.

One of his main goals, Zaki said, is to forge deeper relations between the commission and business owners.

He has spent most of his adult life in the business world, working for a defense contractor and then a supplier of industrial gases. He recently opened an insurance agency in Riverside.

The commission can promote businesses that endorse the city's 2001 "Inclusive Community Statement," Zaki said, by putting their name out among nonprofit and ethnic organizations. This could help the businesses expand their market base, he said.

The statement calls for all Riverside residents to see themselves as respected, contributing members of the community and to follow a set of principles, including fair treatment of all, recognition of rights, commitment to equality, and dedication to expanding opportunities for all.

"I want to make it real," Zaki said.

Bill Chamberlain, marketing director for Fritts Ford, heard Zaki's message about embracing diversity and said businesses should take it to heart.

"You have to do it or you're going to die, is my feeling," he said.

Fritts Ford, for example, has a salesman of Vietnamese origin who draws buyers of Vietnamese extraction from as far away as Orange County, Chamberlain said.

The commission vice chairwoman, Marisa Valdez-Yeager, said Zaki is encouraging the commission to reach out beyond the nonprofit groups and ethnic organizations with whom the commission normally works.

"He really brought a good new energy and perspective to the commission," Valdez-Yeager said.

Mayor Ron Loveridge said Zaki has long impressed him and he encouraged Zaki to apply for the commission.

Over the last 10 years, Zaki has often moderated or emceed events in the Muslim community, and Loveridge said he was always struck by how measured and thoughtful Zaki's comments were and how well he spoke.

"He's bright and resourceful," Loveridge said. "He's very impressive."

Though Zaki's aims on the commission are larger than creating greater understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims in Riverside, the Muslim community is hopeful that will be one result of his time on the commission, said Mustafa Kuko, director of the Islamic Center of Riverside.

Zaki can teach others about the virtues emphasized in Islam, including kindness, compassion, mercy and peace, he said.

If Zaki's work for the mosque over the years is any indication, the Muslim community can have faith in Zaki, Kuko said.

"Every assignment he's been given, he's taken it seriously," he said.

Reach Doug Haberman at 951-368-9644 or dhaberman@PE.com

TOWNSFOLK

Omar Zaki

He is the first Muslim chairman of Riverside's Human Relations Commission.

AGE: 41

RESIDENCE: Riverside

Attended Riverside Community College and received a bachelor's degree in marketing and management from the University of Redlands.

Veteran of the U.S. Army.

In July, opened an insurance firm in Riverside.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Human Relations Commission?

The Human Relations Commission (formally known as the Community Relations Commission), established in 1966 through the passage of Ordinance #3389, was created to ensure that all community members of the City of Riverside receive or participate in:

1. Equal justice before the law;
2. Equal socio-economic and political opportunities;
3. Protection of dignity and integrity of every individual;
4. Responsible citizenship;
5. Responsive redress of grievances;
6. Equitable opportunities in health, housing, education, and employment;
7. Respect and support of the law;
8. Education related to basic human rights and responsibilities;
9. Reduction and eventual elimination of prejudice among people based on race, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

What does the Commission do?

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) creates access for Riverside community members to a complaint and referral system which can seek justice in cases where they perceive discrimination in employment, use of public facilities, availability of housing, delivery of public services, and disparate treatment in the criminal justice system.

Finally, the HRC enhances inter-group education, outreach, and interaction to build bridges between the diverse groups within our City, using tools such as facilitating dialogue between groups and City Hall, attending and supporting numerous community events that facilitate the occasions for positive interaction.

Who can serve on the Commission?

Commissioners are registered voters who reside in the City of Riverside. They are appointed to the Commission by the City Council and serve staggered terms on a volunteer basis. The individuals may hold no paid office or employment with the City of Riverside. Those chosen come from diverse backgrounds which include education, medicine, health and welfare, law, real estate, business, finance, law enforcement, and labor. In addition, they also represent various ethnic and racial groups.

How do you apply for the Commission?

Individuals interested in serving on the commission should file an application with the City Clerk's Office year round. Each February Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and the City Council to fill vacancies.

When and where does the Commission Meet?

The Commission meets at City Hall and in past years has met at various parts of the City, the third Thursday of each month.

How can the Commission serve those in Riverside?

If you are in need of assistance, please contact the Human Relations Commission Staff at (951) 826-5897. The address for correspondence with the Commission or Commissioners is: 3900 Main St. 7th Floor, City Hall, Riverside, CA, 92522.



Human Relations Commission Organizational Partnerships

