

Culturally Speaking

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MPTA: Up and Growing

The Multicultural Parents and Teacher Association (MPTA) of Fargo, North Dakota is a PTA organized under the authority of North Dakota Congress of Parents and Teachers (NDPTA), a branch of National Congress of Parents and Teachers (National PTA).

Parental involvement in a child's education can make a definite positive impact on student behavior and attitudes. For "new American" students, this is especially true. Participation in education related activities such as the Multicultural Parents and Teachers Association (MPTA) offers several advantages: It promotes intercultural relationship in regard to cultural sensitivity and managing diversity; it promotes multicultural involvement; it encourages multicultural network-

ing; and, finally, it encourages positive New American student behavior and attitudes.



According to Pierre Atilio, Program Director at Cultural Diversity Resources, the M P T A program, which began as a concept last year, was met with enthusiasm when it was put into effect this fall. The first meeting included new American parents, teachers, students, social workers and Cristie Jacobsen, Cultural Liaison Officer from the Fargo Police Department.

At the meeting, school administrators conveyed to the members of the audience the unique qualities of the American education system. Parents from diverse cultural backgrounds, in turn, explained their cultures and the education system of the countries of origin and how this affects their world view.

The initial meeting received an enthusiastic response. This will be followed by an executive board meeting to determine what programming would be most helpful at future meetings. The MPTA general meetings will be held once a month at each school. Contact your school office if you desire more information.

DIVERSITY CONFERENCE 2008

**August 12, 2008,
150 Businesses,
Educators and
Community Leaders
came together in the
First Annual
Diversity Conference
at the Marriott Hotel
& Convention Center
in Moorhead, MN.**

On August 12, 2008, Cultural Diversity Resources launched the first annual Diversity Conference in an effort to bring understanding and solutions for employers, educators and community leaders regarding the diversity issues facing the region.



Attendees of the conference came from as far away as Pennsylvania, Iowa and South Dakota. All of the participants were seeking solutions to the unique issues that are facing many corporations and businesses, school districts, institutes of higher education and communities across the nation as we progressively move toward a global society.

Pictured Left to Right: Pierre Atilio, Lewis Brown Griggs, Yoke Sim Gunaratne, Young Chung Hall, Christine Chapweske, Doug Burgum and Cate Kinney (back)

National and local diversity professionals addressed topics from the very basic: 'Demographics & Trends', 'Diversity 101'; to the very complex: 'Designing, Developing and Implementing Diversity Initiatives', 'Multicultural Curriculum Transformation'. *Con't on page 3*

Cultural Diversity Resources is dedicated to building communities that value diversity, in partnership with the cities of Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, Dilworth, Cass & Clay Counties since 1994

Pangaea—Cultivate Our Cultures Fifteen Years of Celebration



Maureen Kelly Jonason, HHIC Executive Director, Irene Hogan Pangaea—COC Volunteer and Yoke Sim Gunaratne, CDR Executive Director.

2008 marked the 15th anniversary of Pangaea—Cultivate Our Cultures!

Cultural Diversity Resources began the tradition of Cultivate Our Cultures in 1994 as a small festival that rotated through area schools in 1994.

Yoke Sim Gunaratne, Cultural Diversity Resources Executive Director, initiated the event after city leaders declined to replace Columbus Day with Diversity Day in 1994. Yoke Sim and Irene Hogan, the longest serving volunteer of the event, were presented with the “Spirit of Pangaea” award in recognition of their significant roles in the initiation and implementation of the event. In a speech given by Yoke Sim she told of her dream for Pangaea—Cultivate Our

Cultures to become an event at the level of the “Festival of Nations” in the Twin Cities or “Folk-a-Rama” in Canada.

Through the years, the event has grown to such a success it was moved to a new venue in 2006, the Heritage Hjemkomst Interpretive Center in Moorhead and a partnership naturally fell into place. The event was renamed: Pangaea—Cultivate Our Cultures in 2006. The name is reflective of the supercontinent that once existed on the earth before it split off into the seven continents we have today, forever creating geographic barriers to cultural understanding.

Pangaea—Cultivate Our Cultures was held on November 15, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Hjemkomst Heritage Interpretive Center in Moorhead, MN. Over 1000 people attended this event.

Attractions such as traditional cultural performances, traditional foods and an international bazaar have continued to be the main draw of the event. This year a children’s “Parade of Nations”, children’s activities and a cultural fashion show were added to bring a new flavor to the event.



For more information on Pangaea—Cultivate Our Cultures visit the CDR website :

Culturaldiversityresources.org

“It is my dream to see Pangaea—Cultivate Our Cultures become an event like the Festival of Nations or Folk-a-Rama...”

CDR PARTNERS

- Cities of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo & Dilworth
- Cass and Clay Counties
- Fargo-Moorhead Public Schools
- MN Workforce
- Experience Works
- AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer
- Tri-College

What Do You Do?

Often times the staff at Cultural Diversity Resources is asked this question: “What do you do”?

In 1993, Fargo-Moorhead area leaders held several community forums to identify community issues needing urgent attention. It was determined that the community needed to embrace its increasing ethnic diversity and assist diverse populations in overcoming barriers to community participation. Leaders wanted to ameliorate intolerance of all kinds, increase understanding of the value of diversity, and develop a permanent system wide framework aimed at celebrating the ever

-increasing cultures of the community. With this in mind, action to develop a proactive regional diversity project, to cover four cities (Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead and Dilworth) in two counties (Cass County, ND and Clay County, MN) began.

A project development team was formed to develop the mission and long-term goals; to coordinate involvement from key stakeholders in the community; and to seek funding for the project. **Cultural Diversity Resources (CDR)** was established in 1994 as the Cultural Diversity Project and incorporated with its new name, Cultural Diversity Re-

sources, in 1998 as a 501 (C) 3 tax exempt non-profit organization. CDR was established to address the challenges and opportunities of growing cultural and ethnic diversity.

Cultural Diversity Resources, Inc. is a proactive diversity initiative to address the challenges and opportunities of increased cultural and ethnic diversity in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area.

According to Census 2000, Fargo-Moorhead’s ethnic community doubles every ten years. New challenges and opportunities to bond as a strong community patterned in cultural and ethnic diversity abound.

Diversity Conference 2008 Continued



Doug Burgum closes the conference with an inspiring speech to encourage the participants to embrace diversity and welcome it as a positive rather than a negative.



“Lewis Brown-Griggs spoke passionately about seeking a deeper connection between people that goes beyond outward appearances, beliefs and stereotypes.”

Cornelius Eason, President and owner of Priority Staffing USA, Nevada, opened the conference with a speech that challenged participants to realistically look at the demographics, not only in the room, but their places of business and the community as a whole. He engaged the audience in active conversations regarding their personal experiences, ideas and successes.

The morning continued with small break out sessions designed in three tracks: employers, educators and community.

Young Chung-Hall (CDP) and Cate Kinney of Other-Wise Solutions of Washington, DC facilitated a two-part workshop on Designing, Developing and Implementing Diversity Initiatives in the workplace. This workshop covered the initial basics of diversity initiatives regarding the roles of demographics and trends in the analysis, planning and corrections that make up diversity initiatives and programs.

In the adjacent rooms, other participants were taking on issues of their own such as the workshop on multicultural curriculum transformation presented by Haseena Hamzawala, a St. Paul teacher and multicultural curriculum expert. The session outlined the fundamental values and the steps towards multicultural curriculum that encourages an inclusive learning environment for everyone. Haseena also provided two additional workshops throughout the day on the shortcomings of traditional curricular framework that make multicultural curriculum transformation critical; and strategies and techniques to develop a multicultural curriculum.

Diversity beginners participated in a workshop facilitated by Yoke Sim Gunaratne, Executive Director of Cultural Diversity Resources, on exploring frequently asked ques-

tions about diversity, what diversity means, the benefits of diversity and how to succeed working across differences. It provided an in-depth analysis of what diversity means beyond race and gender issues.

During the noon lunch, Lewis Brown-Griggs, of Griggs Productions, San Francisco, CA, spoke passionately about seeking a deeper connection between people that goes beyond outward appearances, beliefs and stereotypes. Griggs Productions develops diversity training materials.



Healthcare providers participated in a workshop facilitated by Pierre Atilio, Cultural Diversity Resources Program Coordinator, Cultural Competency in the HealthCare System. Mr. Atilio is currently working on his PhD in Healthcare Administration. The workshop provided discussion on the impact of culture on healthcare, preventative strategies, and the relevance and benefits of cultural competence for healthcare providers.

In the afternoon, Young Chung-Hall (CDP) facilitated another workshop on assessments and cultural audits of an organizations diversity needs. It provided a step-by-step process for initiating diversity initiatives in any organization or company. As well as, a workshop on designing and launching diversity initiatives.

Cultural Diversity Resources was honored to have local busi-

nessman, entrepreneur and visionary, Doug Burgum, provide the closing speech of the conference.

Mr. Burgum spoke about the diverse history of the region, his personal experiences as a VP for Microsoft Corporation, global travels and the urgency of the embracement of diversity in this region if North Dakota and Minnesota, specifically, are going to compete in the eminent global market. We no longer have a choice in the matter, according to Mr. Burgum, the world is becoming a much smaller place and will eventually creep across our borders via the internet, global travel and global commerce.

The conference proved to be an overall success and Cultural Diversity Resources is already preparing for the second annual Diversity Conference with a tentative date of August 18, 2009. Look for updates and announcements on the Cultural Diversity Resources website:

www.culturaldiversityresources.org

Or call us at:

701-526-3000

Speakers included:

- Cornelius Eason
- Lewis Brown Griggs
- Doug Burgum
- Haseena Hamzawala
- Young Chung Hall
- Catherine Kinney
- Yoke-Sim Gunaratne
- Pierre Atilio

September thru
October

CULTURAL DIVERSITY RESOURCES



Falling into Good Financial Habits

Succeeding in today's world of economic uncertainty requires being knowledgeable about how the world of finance works. However, recent research reveals startling facts about the way American families manage their finances. According to the American Institute of Public Accountants:

- The United States has the lowest national savings rate in the industrialized world. Dropping from 10.8% in 1984 to 0% currently.
- Approximately 25% of all Hispanic households do not have a bank account; in line with 25% of all households earning \$20,000 a year or less.
- 53% of all women are not covered under a pension plan vs. 22% of men.

Cultural Diversity Resources (CDR) feels it is imperative that all families have the opportunity to learn how to manage money effectively. This is

why CDR implemented Personal Financial Literacy as part of the Education and Development Center curriculum in 2007.

On September 4, 2008, CDR began its first 12 hour personal financial literacy course in partnership with area local businesses (see below). The two hour

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six consecutive weeks covering such topics as: credit and debt management, budgeting for the long-term, understanding insurance policies, long-term investments and retirement planning as well as income tax filing.

Jill Henning, a State Farm Insurance agent, was concerned she wouldn't have enough material to cover two full hours, but, the class went on well past 9:00 p.m. due to the sheer number of

questions by the participants.

Judy Steinhouse, of the Internal Revenue Service, helped the class to understand the differences in tax forms and how to legally qualify for the Earned Income Tax credit.

Kevin Mjelstad and Josh of Northwestern Mutual Financial Network covered a lot of ground in their 2 hours including employment benefits, IRAs, mutual funds and other long-term planning tools.

Dwight from The Village Family Services facilitated conversations about credit and debt management. Something many young people do not understand; at least those who were not in Dwight's class.

Donna Wood, CDR, presented on Budgeting for Long-Term Success that taught the class participants how to identify their income and control their spending as well as how to create monthly and annual budgets.

A special Thank You to the following local businesses who volunteered their employees' time for presentations:

The Village Family Services: Financial Resource Center—
You, Your Credit Report and Your Future

Northwestern Mutual Financial Network—
Long-term Investing and Retirement Planning

State Farm Insurance
Understanding Insurance Policies

Internal Revenue Service—
Income Tax and Me; Earned Income Credit

CDR's 2008 Accomplishments

DIVERSITY TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- Diversity training presentations were given to teachers from Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo School Districts.
- Conducted diversity training on interracial dialogue and working across differences for 25 staff and clients of the YWCA .
- Conducted diversity training for 40 participants in FM Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program.
- Attended planning meeting for racial justice training with 20 Racial Justice Committee members from the YWCA, followed by level-one diversity training for 30 individuals, including students from NDSU, MSUM, Concordia and Wahpeton Technical College.
- Much work was done in planning for CDR'S first diversity conference which was held on August 12th .
- Provided consultation to the planning committee for Blandin Foundation Leadership program on "Working across Differences".

MULTI-ETHNIC LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Participated in Chamber of Commerce training on change management and mentorship opportunity for 35 participants in the Leadership Program..
- Met with ethnic groups from African countries at Saint Ann and Joachim Catholic Church for participants to brainstorm about projects to help elders, youth and single mothers.
- Partnered with People Escaping Poverty Project and Main Street Project on a civic engagement project to educate, inform and engage more minority individuals and refugees on community issues.
- Recruited several ethnic community leaders to meet with administrators at Carl Ben Eielson Middle School. Ethnic leaders act as mediators to resolve the conflicts among students from Sudan, Somali and Liberia.
- Played a major role in establishing the first ever Multicultural Parents-Teachers Association (MPTA) for the Fargo Public Schools.
- Met with 12 White Earth Reservation Veterans Association (WERVA) members to go through 503 (c) incorporation and grant proposal issues. WERVA has asked CDR to be the fiscal agent.
- Collaborated with Village Family Service Center's Explorer project on mental health issues among new American students at Kennedy School. Helped to recruit and train multi-cultural mentors to participate in the project.
- Helped in the planning of "Out of Africa" celebration at Saint Ann and Joachim Catholic Church where 200 refugees from Africa attended.
- Met with several youth leaders to discuss and identify issues affecting new American youth in Fargo-Moorhead area. The goal is to create a youth group interested in developing ideas and ways to assist youth-at-risk.
- Participated in United Way "Share a Story" event at Rheault Farm. CDR gave away 50 cultural books about children around the world.
- Attended a civic engagement training organized by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of MN in St. Paul. The university-community partnership focused on connecting with students, parents and the community on a one-to-one basis to share and to have a dialogue on a variety of issues/ Also learned about the basic principles of civic engagement and what other nonprofit community groups are doing about civic engagement.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

- Staff attended various community meetings: Yoke Sim attended monthly meetings as one of the nine Fargo Human Relations Commissioners, She also attended a Commissioners retreat on strategic planning; attended meetings with Fargo Public Schools Community Concerns Committee, Fargo Human Resources Association. She presented information about CDR programs to 40 employees from Cass County; attended ND Extension Service meeting about reaching out to the ethnically diverse communities; served on the community selection committee for Moorhead superintendent; was a panelist at MSUM Unity Conference; as a member of Moorhead 'Equitable Communities' team, Yoke Sim was facilitator for the session on Business Economic Development' as part of the Civic University courses organized by Moorhead Community Education.
- Pierre attended the Interagency Meeting regarding programs and services for new Americans; attended various community meetings as a board member of Moorhead Healthy Initiative; Refugee Advisory Committee and YWCA Racial Justice Committee; As well as planning and strategic committees for the MPTA project.
- Donna provided information about CDR programs to 25 employees from Fargo Housing. She attended several 'Cultivate our Cultures' meetings and served as coordinator for the cultural performances; attended SMART Fargo downtown coalition meeting; Multi-ethnic Picnic planning meetings.



Reasons to Support Cultural Diversity Resources

1. CDR is a regional diversity initiative serving four cities and two counties in two states.
2. CDR partners and collaborates with existing organizations to maximize our service programs.
3. CDR provides services to all low-income individuals and families including New Americans / Immigrants, Native Americans, Hispanics and the greater population.
4. CDR serves as an intercultural bridge between the ethnic and majority populations.
5. CDR serves as a diversity resource to employers, educators and community leaders in resolving issues of diversity.

To Donate to Cultural Diversity Resources:

Mail or bring your check or money order to:

Cultural Diversity Resources
303 Roberts St. N
Fargo, ND 58103

Or;

You can donate on-line through the IMPACT Foundation

Cultural Diversity Resources is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit

Cultural Diversity Resources depends on the donations and contributions of individuals and businesses.

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Moorhead Public School District

State Bank & Trust - Fargo

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CDR Cul tural Li brary



Resources for clients

- Pamphlets, Brochures and Organizational Materials about Small Businesses, banks, community resources, etc.
- Fargo Forum

Resources for businesses, nonprofits, service-organizations, teachers and college students

- Books about cultures, religions, leadership, women’s issues, biographies, etc.
- DVDs/VHS
- Encyclopedias
- Periodicals
- Information about colleges
- Children’s books
- Photos from local cultural events

Stop into our office to take a look at these great resources!
If you are interested in making a donation to CDR’s Cultural Library, call (701) 526-3000.

www.culturaldiversityresources.org

Phone: 701-526-3000
 Fax: 701-526-3001
 E-mail: office@culturaldiversityresource.org

Programs of Cultural Diversity Resources

| Diversity Education and Multicultural Programs | Multi –Ethnic Leadership and Capacity Building Programs | Education and Development Center | Interagency Services and Referrals | Cultural Events |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Diversity Training Cultural Presentations Diversity Clearing House Annual Conference | Technical Assistance Intercultural Civic Engagement New American Youth-at-Risk Program Professional Ethnic Mentorship Program | Computer Literacy Employment Education & Assistance Personal Financial Literacy Training | Assistance and Referrals for low-moderate income individuals to local food pantries, transportation services, clothing, housing etc. | Pangaea – Cultivate Our Cultures : A community wide event which showcases the cultural heritages of the Red River Valley. Annual Summer Picnic for New Americans. |