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WESTERN REGION DIVERSITY

Director's Corner

*Welcome to the Summer Edition
of our Diversity Newsletter!*

The age old saying, "united we stand and divided we fall" is important to remember in the rough budget waters we find ourselves in these days. That phrase is also an example of why our diversity program is so important. We can sometimes become complacent about things like honoring diversity. When the going gets tough though, I think we all appreciate just how important it is for everyone in the NWS, no matter who they are and what position they hold, to pull together and work as a team to fulfill our mission.

There are two more diversity awareness months that I urge you to learn more about as we head into summer. May was Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month and a great web page is available from the Library of Congress to learn more about the rich culture of Asian-Pacific Americans and their endless contributions to the society we live in today. As time allows, I encourage you to explore and learn from this web site. I hope you were able to check out any Asian-Pacific American displays or activities that were being held in your city. Even in smaller towns, many public libraries and schools offer awareness month displays or activities that you and your family will enjoy.

In June, we turned our attention to Gay Pride Month, taking some time to learn more about the history of our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered citizens, their contributions to society and their fight for equal treatment. If your city offers one, try attending a gay pride festival one day. At most pride festivals you'll learn about many non-profit groups providing services to the homeless, those with addictions, LGBT veterans and more.



Acting NWS Western Region Director David "Rusty" Billingsley

[Take a look at the links offered from our LGBT Sharepoint page.](#)

Summer is the season for enjoying long, warm days, cookouts with family and friends and perhaps taking a few days to get away on vacation. During the next few months, try taking a little time to learn more about all the different types of people that comprise modern American society. It's a journey that I think you will find rewarding and enriching.

Rusty

At its core "diversity" is about facilitating inclusion.

The WR DAC believes that facilitating inclusion can be supported by engaging in constructive discussions that provide learning opportunities to think critically and discuss alternative perspectives.

Please let your DAC members know what YOU think.



From: Teri Schwein: CRH Deputy Director

Letter previously sent out at the end of 2012 from Tom Schwein



To my co-workers within NWS,

I am writing this to let you know about a major change that I have decided to take in my life. I have a condition known as Gender Identity Dysphoria (GID). Persons with GID suffer with an internal conflict between their birth gender and the way they feel inside. This conflict often becomes extreme; this was the case in my situation, particularly over the last several years, leading me to seek professional assistance over a year ago.

How does this happen? The existence of GID is well documented around the world and occurs in men and women. The exact number of persons with GID worldwide is not exactly known; one good estimate places the frequency around 1 in 6000 people. The clinical causes for GID are also not fully understood. Many researchers believe that GID is a pre-natal condition that develops in the womb where the gender identity portion of the brain develops in an opposite direction from the physical body. A hormone imbalance during fetal development may be involved as well. Regardless of the cause, I have known about and struggled with GID since my earliest childhood memories. A very common report among persons with GID is that they knew they were different at a very early age. I have struggled with this internal battle my entire life causing considerable distress. I've tried to live my life as others see me on the outside and while I've had a wonderful family and career, I can no longer continue as I have been.

The conventional treatment for GID is to bring the body and brain in congruence and in 2011 I made a decision to start a transition that would allow me to live and work as female. This decision was not an easy one and required considerable thought and support of psychologists specializing in gender issues. Once the decision was made in October, 2011, I focused my efforts towards working with physicians on hormone therapies; surgeons on surgical procedures and counselors to prepare me for my new life role. Since making this decision, friends and family have been incredibly supportive. Noreen has known of my struggle for the last 10 years, been very supportive and together we continue to build on the life we have shared the past 19 years.

You may be aware that I have been away from the office for surgical procedures. This was a facial surgical procedure associated with my transition and while I apologize for not being fully open about the reasons for the surgery at that time, I hope you will understand the reason why.

My new name is Teri Schwein and [I returned] to work the afternoon of Friday, December 14, 2013. I imagine some will be rather surprised at the moment, however, please feel free to contact me if you have questions. I would very much enjoy talking with anyone about anything regarding my situation or answer questions as best I can. If you'd like additional information, I've included a list of a few books and URLs with this letter which provides some additional background information on GID.

Teri

The following books are quite good and can be helpful:

Transgender Explained for those who are not by Joanne Herman, a quick read and quite good.

True Selves by Mildred L. Brown and Chloe Ann Rounsley, a bit clinical and slightly outdated but still highly regarded and accurate.

She's Not There, A Life in Two Genders by Jennifer Finney Boylan, an entertaining and touching autobiography that tells a story similar to mine.

Web Links About Gender Identity Disorder

<http://www.foxnews.com/health/2012/08/01/true-identity-learning-about-sex-reassignment-surgery/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_identity_disorder

<http://www.hemingways.org/GIDinfo/about.htm>

Editors Note: I had the privilege of meeting Teri and talking to her recently in Kansas City. Her story is an inspiring one of true courage, so I wanted to share it with Western Region. If you have questions Teri is more than happy to educate people on Gender Identity Disorder .

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Gay Rights Movement

The Latest Frontier in Civil Equality

By Chris Outler: Meteorologist, WFO Flagstaff, AZ



It was another chilly January day in Washington D.C outside the U.S Capital building when President Obama was sworn in for his second term as President. While delivering his inaugural address, he made history by being the first president ever to mention gay rights in an inaugural address. [1]

equality is on the rise, and progress will continue to be made in the decades to come.

This trend is very encouraging for the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered) community which, until 1973, the American psychiatric community considered to be a mental disorder. To see the progress that has been made in the 40 years since then is stunning, and marks the newest frontier in a push for civil equality.

Just three years ago, a serviceman or woman could be discharged from the military for being homosexual. "Don't ask, Don't Tell" encouraged anyone enrolled in the military to not disclose their sexual orientation or face discharge if they did. Military personnel were forced to hide their loved ones and live double lives, while as many as 13,000 people were discharged under the policy since 1993 [4].

Policies like this not only are discriminatory in nature, but promote stigma against the gay population, hindering the progress that continues to be fought for. On September 20th, 2011, "Don't ask, Don't tell", was officially repealed, ending an 18 year policy of discrimination.

The push for recognition of equal rights has even made it to your Facebook pages. When the Supreme Court heard arguments for the constitutionality of Proposition 8 and the Defense of Marriage Act, many supporters of marriage equality changed their Facebook profile pictures to a red equal sign, or a variation of one, promoted by the Human Rights Campaign. More than 2.7 million people changed their profile pictures on March 26th to show support for marriage equality. While companies such as Starbucks and Bud Light created their own supporting graphics, turning users Facebook feeds red in support of equality [5].

During that week, matters involving marriage equality and gay rights became major headlining topics; Time magazine even ran a cover story declaring gay marriage had

already won, regardless of the official outcome the courts decide. It was a bold state-

ment to make, but one not without merit, as even unlikely allies began voicing support for equality. Take conservative talk show host Bill O' Reilly for example, who stated "The compelling argument is on the side of the homosexuals... [they're] Americans, [they] just want to be treated like everybody else" [6]. For such a prominent name in conservative politics to voice support for a politically polarizing issue, further highlights the shifting attitudes regarding treatment of gay Americans.

Finally, the push for gay rights has become mainstream with allies such as Carrie Underwood, Cindy McCain, Hilary Clinton, and Brad Pitt just to name a few. But the most compelling support comes from rapper Macklemore, whose song "Thrift Shop" was met with huge commercial success. While "Thrift Shop" may have been a silly song about finding a bargain, I encourage everyone who reads this article to listen to his song "Same Love", which puts into perspective everything the LGBT community is fighting for. And with that said, I will let Macklemore sign off on this article.

*"When kids are walking 'round the hallway
plagued by pain in their heart
A world so hateful some would rather die
than be who they are*

...

*No law is gonna change us
We have to change us
Whatever God you believe in
We come from the same one
Strip away the fear
Underneath it's all the same love" [7]*



"Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law; for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well"

President Barack Obama, January 21st, 2013 Inaugural Address

President Obama's statement marked yet another milestone in history as American acceptance of gay rights continues to gain momentum. The past decade has seen incredible progress with regard to both public and political opinion supporting gay rights and marriage equality. Just ten years ago, Massachusetts became the first state in the country to legalize same sex marriage. Since then, nine other states have followed suit, as well as Washington D.C, and three Native American tribes [2].

The fight for marriage equality is more visible now than ever before, with the Supreme Court recently hearing cases involving California's Proposition 8 and the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) passed in the mid 1990s, while attempting to determine the constitutionality of both. On June 26, 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that Section 3 of DOMA is unconstitutional. In addition, the battle for public acceptance continues to be won. According to an average of several polls conducted in early 2013, 51% of Americans now support same sex marriage, with a minority of 42.5% opposing [3]. The long term trend is clear, that support for

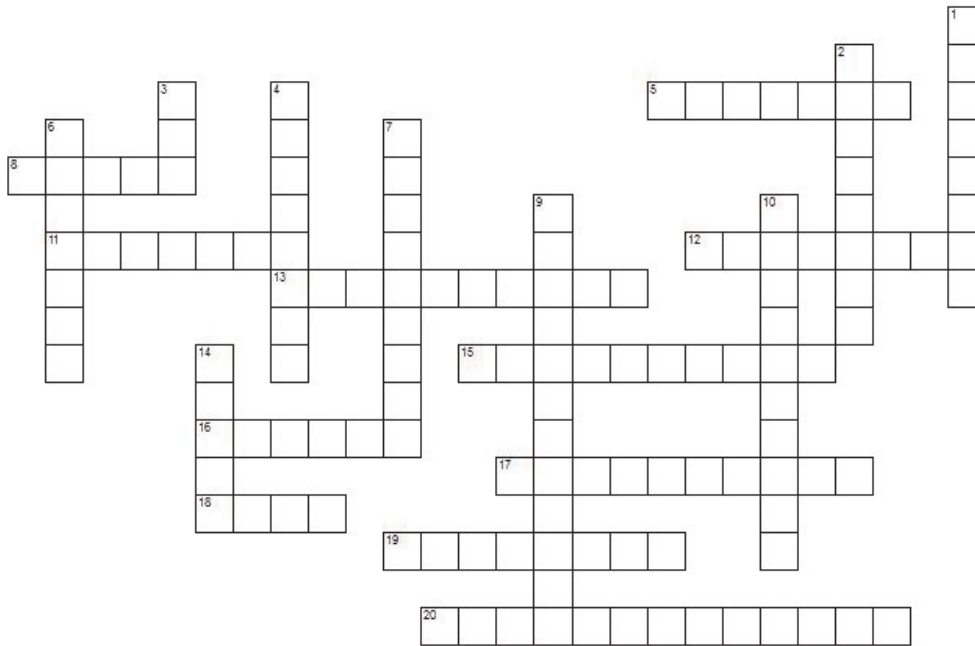
[1] Photograph of Presidential Inauguration. Retrieved 4/19/2013 via www.telegraph.co.uk
[2] Same Sex Marriage in the U.S.. In Wikipedia. Retrieved April 19, 2013, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex_marriage_in_the_United_States. [3] Silver, Nate. March 26th, 2013. "How Opinion on Same Sex Marriage is changing and what it means". New York Times. Retrieved April 19, 2013. [4] Don't Ask, Don't Tell. In Wikipedia. Retrieved April 19, 2013, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don't_ask_Don't_tell. [5] Kleinman, Alexis. March 29th, 2013. "How the Red Equal Sign took over Facebook, according to its own data". Huffington Post. Retrieved April 19, 2013 via huffingtonpost.com. [6] Patterson, Sean. March 27th, 2013. "Bill O' Reilly: Gay Marriage Supporters have a compelling argument". Web-pronews.com. Retrieved April 19, 2013. [7] Haggerty, B (Macklemore). (2012). Same Love [Recorded by Macklemore]. On The Heist album. Macklemore LLC.

Fun Office Activity!

The LGBT Community

A History in the Making

Answers to crossword puzzle on
last page of newsletter



ACROSS

- 5 Notable transgendered soldier of the American Civil War
- 8 Kozachenko was the first openly gay American elected to public office in 1974
- 11 State where the Stonewall riots occurred
- 12 What Happened to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in 2010
- 13 State where 1st same-sex marriage took place in 2004
- 15 Society founded in 1950
- 16 American Jazz musician and bandleader in the 1940s who lived as a man
- 17 Elected as city and county supervisor in CA
Organization founded by two transgendered woman to provide shelter and clothing to street gay people, street homeless people, and anyone needing help
- 18 Singer who protests for LGBT rights
- 20 Period where homosexuals were purged from their government jobs

DOWN

- 1 A transgendered woman who was granted entry to the U.S. Open after a ruling in her favor by NY Supreme Court in 1977
- 2 Woman who fought alongside Harvey Milk to defeat Proposition 6 (banning gays and lesbians from teaching in public schools)
- 3 This word was first used to reference homosexuality in 1938
- 4 LAPD raided this tavern during a New Year's Eve Party on January 1, 1967
- 6 Flag used since the 1970s for LGBT pride and social movements
- 7 Symbol used by the campaign against HIV/AIDS since 1991
- 9 Symbol worn by gay men in concentration camps
- 10 First lesbian paperback novel
- 14 First openly gay or lesbian Federal judge

Advancement in Equal Rights

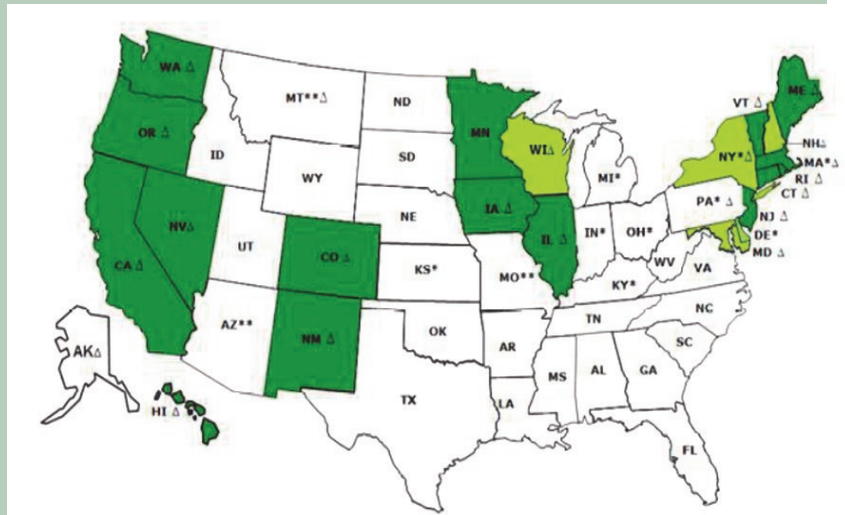
Amy Campbell: WR DAC LGBT SEPM, WFO Glasgow, MT

Change is a word that often triggers mixed emotions. Some think it is an exciting and long overdue process while others may become withdrawn, disgruntled or view it as a bitter pill to swallow. No matter what your personal reactions are to change, it will always occur. It is often said to be the only constant in life. I stumbled across a quote spoken by Isaac Asimov that was honest, yet hopeful, about change *"It is change, continuing change, inevitable change, that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be."* Over the last couple of decades, and especially within the last year or two, many advances have been made to allow certain civil liberties to the LGBT community. Two of the most prominent issues are non-discrimination in employment practices and legal marriage/partner benefits.

As Federal Employees we are all aware that the United States Government cannot by law "discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, membership in an employee organization, retaliation, parental status, military service, or other non-merit factor." This came from President Bill Clinton's Executive Order 13087 in 1998. However, these liberties are not shared by all public and private entities across the United States. In fact, only 21 states in addition to Washington D.C. offer protection to the LGBT community.

The image at right, taken from the Human Rights Campaign's website www.hrc.org, illustrates which states have laws and policies in place, as of June 2012, that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation (lime green) and both sexual orientation and gender identity (dark green) by public and private employers.

The states that have (*) next to their name have either an executive order, an administrative order or a personnel regulation that prohibit discrimination against public employees based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Those that have (**) only prohibit discrimination against public employees based on their orientation only. Of note, Missouri only covers employees in the executive branch. Those denoted with (Δ) provide state employees with domestic partner benefits. Pennsylvania lawmakers have recently introduced sweeping LGBT protections.



With the huge strides made in obtaining equal employment and inclusive workforces, how can this type discrimination continue legally? Individual states have taken measures to ensure discrimination based on sexual preferences and gender identity is prohibited because a national law is not in place. Initiatives for employment protections for lesbians, gays and bisexuals have been circulating since the 1970s. Various forms of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) have been submitted to Congress since 1994. It passed in the House of Representatives, but failed in the Senate in 2007.

The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) provided that, when used in a Federal law, the term "marriage" would mean only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and that the term "spouse" referred only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife. Because of DOMA, the Federal government has been prohibited from recognizing the legal marriages of same-sex couples for purposes of numerous Federal benefits programs. On June 26, 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that Section 3 of DOMA is unconstitutional.

As of July 2013 there are 13 states where same-sex marriage is permissible, they include: California, Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, Washington, Rhode Island, Delaware, the District of Columbia and Minnesota. In Nevada the Assembly Committee continues its momentum for same-sex marriage, and if it passes in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 legislation, it will appear on the 2016 ballot for voters to choose. The following places allow civil unions and domestic partnerships (which provides some benefits but not the full extent that marriage does): District of Columbia, Hawaii, California, Vermont, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maine, Utah, Connecticut, Washington, New Hampshire, Oregon, New Mexico, Maryland, Colorado, Wisconsin, Nevada, Minnesota and Illinois.

Many sources have reported that support for same-sex marriage has now surpassed 50% approval with full protection rights for all individuals nearing 70%. Whatever your personal feelings are on these matter, the fact is that a large push for widespread inclusion and acceptance is already underway. Many changes will likely continue in the months and years to come.

The NWS Diversity Ambassadors

A resource for NWS and its employees



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Jose Garcia: Leadership, Team/Workplace Diversity, Cultural Issues

Since the inception of the National Weather Service Diversity program, Mr. José Garcia has maintained a passion for promoting diversity as a leadership best practice. He served as one of the first Regional Diversity Coordinators for the Southern Region of the NWS, and also served on the National Weather Service Diversity Management Council from the early 90s through 2011. He was Chair of the National Weather Service Diversity Council from 2010-2011. During his tenure on the NWS Diversity Council, he was involved in the development of the NWS Diversity Marketing concept which resulted in the LMS online diversity curriculum, national diversity management presentation, and the NWS diversity poster initiative. As Meteorologist In Charge at WFO Amarillo, Texas he has been a leader for diversity initiatives at the local, regional and national levels.

Throughout his work with diversity management, Mr. Garcia has provided countless presentations on leadership, teamwork and cultural office issues as they relate to diversity. He has more than 10 years of facilitation experience and serves as one of the facilitators for the Southern Region Building Leaders for a Solid Tomorrow (BLAST) leadership development program. Mr. Garcia's Diversity Ambassador focus is on leadership, teamwork and cultural diversity, and he is available to assist or provide training/webinars in these areas.

Hope Hasberry: All Diversity Management and EEO related Issues

Since August 2012, Ms. Hasberry has worked as the acting Director of the National Weather Service's Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management. She has worked for the National Weather Service as an Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity Management Specialist since 2002. In this capacity she assists in developing the agency's EEO and Diversity Management policy, planning and communication. She also coordinates the agency's agenda in setting goals for its affirmative employment, training and strategic planning efforts. Ms. Hasberry provides training to NWS employees on a variety of EEO and Diversity Management related topics. Hope is the Weather Services' Federal Women's Program Manager.

Hope is a native of Heidelberg, Mississippi. She attended Jackson State University in Jackson, MS earning a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Economics. She also has a Master of Arts degree in Human Resource Economics from Howard University in Washington, DC.



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Todd Hall: Generation/age issues, family, work-life, dress/appearance, recruitment

After graduating from the University of California, Los Angeles, one of the most diverse universities in the Nation as ranked by U.S. News and World Report, Todd joined the National Weather Service as a Meteorologist in 2000. Serving four Weather Forecast Offices and two different regions, he takes a diverse approach to weather forecasting insisting that there are many different ways to view and analyze the atmosphere. Todd joined the National Weather Service Diversity Program in 2004 serving as NWS Western Region's Hispanic Special Emphasis Program Manager on Western Region's Diversity Action Committee (WR DAC). While serving on the WR DAC, he helped the group win a Regional Cline Award for Diversity. While chairing the committee between 2008-2011, Todd also co-chaired (with Dr. Joshua Scheck) the team that designed, marketed, and implemented the first online diversity management curriculum for all NWS employees. Currently, Todd remains active in the National Weather Service Diversity Program serving as a member of the NWS Diversity Training team, a team making future changes to the CLC Diversity Curriculum and mentoring Western Region's Diversity Focal Points on an interim basis.

Though Todd is well-versed in many diversity topics and issues, he chooses to specialize in generational diversity, diversity through dress, family and work-life issues, and targeted workplace recruitments.



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The NWS Diversity Ambassadors

A resource for NWS and its employees

Joshua Scheck: Generational Issues, Mentoring



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For years, Joshua Scheck has taken a practical approach to promoting diversity through understanding differences and communication. As a Science and Operations Officer at NWS Bismarck, he has been involved in training and mentoring employees for several years. Previous positions at NCEP Hydrometeorological Prediction Center offered Joshua an appreciation for diversity management as it pertains to promoting innovation and improved services.

As the NWS Bismarck EEO/Diversity Focal Point, he first presented on diversity management and generational differences in 2009 at the Northern Plains Leadership and Diversity Summit. Joshua was co-leader of the team that created the NWS Bismarck Buddy and Mentoring Programs locally later that year. Dr. Scheck co-led the team that designed, marketed, and implemented the first online diversity management curriculum for all NWS employees. He is currently leading a team charged with composing and implementing a NWS Central Region Climate Services Focal Point Mentoring Program. Dr. Scheck chose to focus on the areas of generational differences and mentoring based on his experiences, and he is available to provide advice and training/webinars in both areas.

Delyne Kirkham: Disabilities, Inclusion, Team Diversity

Delyne Kirkham's twelve year career with the federal government began in 2001 in Elko, Nevada with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). While at the BLM she worked closely with the Bureau of Indian Affairs program to train local Native Americans in firefighting and served on the BLM Special Emphasis Committee. She joined the National Weather Service in 2005.

For five years Delyne held a Diversity Focal Point position and was honored in 2010 to receive a national Cline Award for outstanding contributions to NWS WR Diversity Management Program through strong initiative and teamwork. Delyne was selected in 2011 to serve on the Western Region (WR) Diversity Action Committee as WR Special Emphasis Program Manager for Individuals with Disabilities. She is also editor of the WR Diversity newsletter that is published quarterly. Before her federal service, she supervised a local program teaching job skills to individuals with disabilities.

Delyne assists with information to WR Focal Points and personnel on individuals with disabilities, special emphasis month program recognition, diversity management, inclusion, quality of worklife and teamwork. She is on the committee that created and reviews the CLC Diversity Curriculum for the NWS Diversity Certification program and the NWS Quality of Worklife team. As one of the Diversity Ambassadors, Delyne chooses to focus on persons with disabilities, gender, inclusion and teamwork.



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David Rowell: Team Diversity; Gender issues; GLBTQI



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As both a genuine believer and a practitioner of diversity principles, David Rowell has been widely involved in fostering diversity and inclusion in working closely with NOAA, NCEP, OMAO, and NWS. He is presently the Vice-chair of the NWS Diversity Council. David has been a diversity instructor for several years teaching diversity at the NWSTC and conducting diversity workshops in the field.

While David is fluent in all aspects of diversity and diversity management his focus is on gender issues and GLBT, especially current workplace impacts and trends. This includes being knowledgeable in various facets of such: gender traits in the work place, women's and men's issues, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, Trans-gendered, etc. David has also been heavily involved in team building (training, facilitation ...) for a many years and is broadly knowledgeable about all factors that affect team performance, team synergy, and team relationships. He has a knowledge bank of information on hand in all these areas and can further assist with research and resources. David can offer information, advocacy, training, and support (e.g. assistance with workshops, webinars, panels ...).

A personal note from David : Beyond the academics let me say that I have a heartfelt passion in seeing everyone treated fairly, treated respectfully, and above all given the chance to be themselves fully - bringing everything they have to the table, and achieving to their fullest potential. I hope I can be a resource in both the understanding of these issues and the leveraging of diversity in the workplace.

The NWS Diversity Ambassadors

A resource for NWS and its employees

Cheryl Latif: EEO, Disabilities, Diversity Toolbox Point-of-Contact

Cheryl Latif's twenty year career with the federal government began in 1992 with the U.S. Customs Service (now Customs and Border Protection). She was hired as an Import Specialist at JFK Airport, NY and for ten years she also held the collateral position of Disabilities Program Manager. In 2003 she joined the NWS in her full time role as Eastern Region EEO Manager.

Cheryl provides information to ER personnel on the EEO process and, in addition to conducting her own special emphasis month program activities at ERH, assists the EEO focal points in the field with their celebrations of these months as well. She also makes various forms of diversity training available for the Diversity Focal Points to give to their staff members.

After learning about the high number of employees that can be categorized (according to MBTI results) as "introverted", she created a presentation on the differences between extraversion and introversion that was used at an Eastern Region MIC/HIC Conference and a SOD conference.

She is on the committee that reviews the CLC Diversity Curriculum for future changes and was the project leader in forming the national NWS Diversity Toolbox, which acts as a clearinghouse of diversity information for NWS employees. As one of the Diversity Ambassadors, Cheryl chooses to focus on persons with disabilities and EEO.



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Shari Mutchler: Marriage/marital status; Women's/family Issues

Shari's special focus is on women and family life issues. Shari has over 20 years experience in the NWS and NCEP as a forecaster, mom, and wife, working rotating shifts. She has studied the effects of rotating shift work on health, family and social aspects of life in an effort to find ways of improving /minimizing its negative impacts. Shari was a charter member of the NOAA EEO council in 1998, and a member of the NWS Central Region team for Women and Minorities through 2002. Shari currently serve as the AWC Diversity Focal Point.



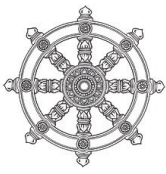
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Need help with your Diversity Program?

Call a Diversity Ambassador!

- The NWS Diversity Ambassadors actively keep abreast of diversity trends, and thus, in addition to Diversity Council members, and the NWS Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management Office, they are a national contact resource for diversity questions, guidance, and resources to all NWS employees.
- Volunteer Ambassadors actively acquire specialized knowledge or experience in specific areas such as race/cultural issues, GLBT, gender issues, age/generations, family issues, etc... Information artifacts associated with these focus areas (data, readings, etc...) are retained in a knowledge base that can be called upon through the Ambassadors.
- Diversity Ambassadors can act as advocates for their areas of specialization, being a voice on related matters (participating in conference calls, policy meetings etc...)
- Not only will they have subject matter expertise, which could be called upon by Focal Points, but the Ambassadors may be called upon to add their knowledge in participation on panels, or in workshops, etc...
- Volunteer Ambassadors may also put together and/or lead Webinars on topics that they have an expertise in. Ambassadors could also conduct Diversity Training in the field in the absence of a local Focal Point if funding and availability permit.
- Acting in a general advisory capacity, the Diversity Ambassadors can advise and assist Diversity Focal points and other NWS staff with planning local workshops and other local diversity activities.



Marysville Buddhist Church celebrates Hanamatsuri- -the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha-

By Alan Takamoto: Hydrologist, CNRFC, Sacramento, CA



The Marysville Buddhist Church (located in Marysville, California) held an open house on April 7, 2013 to commemorate the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha over 2,500 years ago in Kapilavastu, India. This celebration is known as Hanamatsuri.

This year's Hanamatsuri featured an "open house" with the opportunity to meet the church's new ministers Reverends Tim and Carol Castle.



Taiko drums and instruments.
Many of the drums were hand made by the local Taiko Club.

The Marysville Buddhist Church is a temple within the Jodoshinshu-Hongwanji-ha ("True Pure Land School, Denomination of the Temple of the Primal Vow") popularly known as Nishi Hongwanji, headquartered in Kyoto, Japan. The Jodo Shinshu represents the largest Buddhist sect in Japan with over ten thousand temples. Buddhism is found under the Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) tradition of Buddhism and founded by Shiran Shonin (1173-1263).



Reverends Carol and Tim Castle in formal robes worn during festive occasions. They are standing next to the "Hanamido", a flower-decorated altar representing the Lumbini Garden where Shakyamuni Buddha was born.
This altar is displayed only during the Hamatsuri celebration.

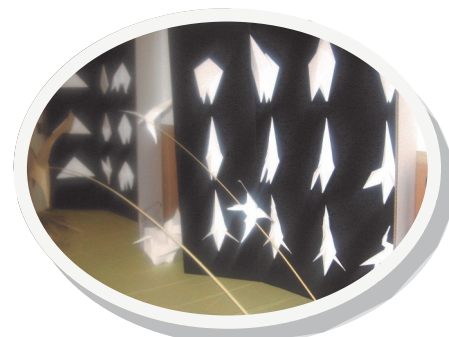


Dharma Dojo Demonstration with Taiko Drummers. The Dharma Dojo is led by Sensei Howard Martel. Dharma Dojo pupils are dedicated to applying the same lessons from the Buddha Dharma to physical and mental fitness earned through their "Courage" martial arts training.



Japanese Garden and Koi Pond.

Many events occurred during the day; including a meditation service, a memorial service and an introduction to Buddhism presentation by Rev. Tim and Carol Castle. Some of the other events include; a sushi preparation demonstration, taiko drumming, martial arts and origami (paper folding) demonstrations.



Origami (paper folding artwork) demonstration given by Ken Kagehiro.

The Hongwanji (Temple of the Primal Vow) originated from a temple built at the site of Shiran Shonin's mausoleum.

For followers of the Jodo Shinshu teachings (or Dharma), one takes refuge in immeasurable wisdom and eternal life that embraces and enters the lives of all people. This is without regard to socioeconomic status, or distinction between moral good or evil. This wisdom and compassion take form as Amida Buddha. The Buddhist church has been an institution in Marysville the past 105 years. Along with church services, pupils can attend Dharma School (Sunday school) and other events sponsored by service clubs are also held there.

A luncheon, or "Otoki", was prepared and served by the church's Buddhist Women's Association.



"Otoki" or luncheon prepared by the Buddhist Women's Association.



Sushi Preparation Demonstration performed by Koichi Mizushima, owner of Kamon Sushi Restaurant in Sacramento and a member of the ministerial staff at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento Hongwanji Betsuin (branch church).



Marysville Buddhist Church,
Marysville, California

More information about the church:

Marysville Buddhist Church, 125 B St.
Marysville CA 95901

Website: www.marysvillebc.org
(Includes links about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism)

This is a continuing series on how we can learn from our Native American cultures and their emergency management concerns and needs. My hope is that learning more about how tribal governments operate can assist our staffs develop better decision support tools and help promote weather safety to those who live or work on the many reservations in the United States. This is article 5.

What is Indian Self-Determination?

Vernon Preston: WR Native American SEPM, WFO Pocatello, ID

As we have learned in the past articles American Indian tribes share a special relationship with

the United States government. During the 200 plus years of our federal government various policies and agreements were made with tribes in exchange for vast amounts of land, economic and social help. The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 was an early step in the renewal of tribal self-governance, in the creation of tribal constitutions and an employment council. It was somewhat limited, as all tribal actions were subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior who could change them without negotiation.

In the 1950s some members of Congress passed legislation to renew the effort to have Native Americans assimilate, and to terminate the special relationship between the Federal government and tribal nations. The government sought to terminate the legal standing of numerous tribes, judging their members "ready" to be independent US citizens. More than 100 tribes and communities were terminated.

The failure of the termination policies become obvious with assessment by the late 1960s. Native Americans and the federal government began to work for a return to greater Indian rights represented by the earlier IRA. The passage of the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 (ICRA) was influential. ICRA guaranteed the application of much of the Bill of Rights in Indian Country, a guarantee which Native Americans on reservations had not enjoyed.

According to scholar Sam Cook from the 1996 publication Red Ink: <http://faculty.smu.edu/twalker/samrcook.htm> :

"The term self-determination seems to have first entered the vocabulary of Indian affairs in 1966, when the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) convened to develop an agenda to counter the threat of termination policy. Termination will be remembered as the last consolidated federal effort to assimilate Indians into the mainstream of American society. Reaching its zenith in the 1950s, termination policy purported to extinguish, once and for all, the so-called trust relationship, that is, the political relationship of good faith between the federal government and the Indian tribes. Thus, it must be concluded that when the members of the NCAI evoked the term self-determination, they were

asserting the right of natives to be culturally distinct as well as politically autonomous."

The turning point in relationship between the Federal government and tribes started with a Special Message on Indian Affairs to Congress given by President Nixon on July 8, 1970. This special message spelled out three main reasons why forced termination was wrong for our country. Summarizing these objections to Indian termination President Nixon noted:



Forced termination is wrong because "...Termination implies that the Federal government has taken on a trusteeship responsibility for Indian communities as an act of generosity toward a disadvantaged people and that it can therefore discontinue this responsibility on a unilateral basis

whenever it sees fit. But the unique status of Indian tribes does not rest on any premise such as this. The special relationship between Indians and the Federal government is the result instead of solemn obligations which have been entered into by the United States Government. Down through the years through written treaties and through formal and informal agreements, our government has made specific commitments to the Indian people. For their part, the Indians have often surrendered claims to vast tracts of land and have accepted life on government reservations. In exchange, the government has agreed to provide community services such as health, education and public safety, services which would presumably allow Indian communities to enjoy a standard of living comparable to that of other Americans."

Secondly..."The practical results have been clearly harmful in the few instances in which termination actually has been tried. The removal of Federal trusteeship responsibility has produced considerable disorientation among the affected

Indians and has left them unable to relate to a myriad of Federal, State and local assistance efforts. Their economic and social condition has often been worse after termination than it was before."



Secretary of Interior meeting with Native American Tribal Leaders

Continued Reading ... *What is Indian Self-Determination?*

Vernon Preston: WR Native American SEPM, WFO Pocatello, ID

Thirdly...*"The very threat that this relationship may someday be ended has created a great deal of apprehension among Indian groups and this apprehension, in turn, has had a blighting effect on tribal progress. Any step that might result in greater social, economic or political autonomy is regarded with suspicion by many Indians who fear that it will only bring them closer to the day when the Federal government will disavow its responsibility and cut them adrift."*

President Nixon's new goal and policies directed that: "... must be the goal of any new national policy toward the Indian people to strengthen the Indian's sense of autonomy without threatening this sense of community. We must assure the Indian that he can assume control of his own life without being separated involuntary from the tribal group. And we must make it clear that Indians can become independent of Federal control without being cut off from Federal concern and Federal support."

Source: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1970, pp. 564-567, 576-76.
<http://www.schlosserlawfiles.com/consult/nixon70.pdf>

Taking the lead from this new policy statement Congress worked on developing new laws to have the Federal Government recognize that Indians do have the right of Self-Determination. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (Public Law 93-638) authorized the Secretaries of the Department of Interior, Health, Education and Welfare, and some other government agencies to enter into contracts with, and make grants directly to, federally recognized Indian tribes. The tribes would have authority for how they administered the funds, which gave them greater control over their welfare.

So how does this work today? If a tribe wants a new emergency operations center, day care facility, police station, etc., the tribe contracts with the appropriate government agency (a "638 contract"). When it receives the grant, it manages the construction and operation of the infrastructure. This enables the tribe to manage its affairs more quickly, rather than waiting for projects to be managed by a federal agency. Thus tribal leaders have direct control over their infrastructure and how they manage their affairs instead of dealing with changes from each administration in the Federal government. Since the 1970s, additional policies, statements and Executive Orders have helped strengthen Indian right to Self-Determination. You can learn more about these at:

<http://www.schlosserlawfiles.com/consult/PoliciesReConsult%20w-IndianTribe.htm>

Dr. Traci Morris, who is a member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, summarizes how tribal members see Self-Determination:

"In Indian Country you often hear the word Self Determination. It is more than just a buzz word! The term is most often used in legal and policy discussions regarding Native Americans..... It can be said, then, that in the context of Indian affairs, self-determination is a tribally-derived term. By the same token, the concept of self-determination entails a totality of tribal goals. These goals can be placed in three interrelated categories: 1) tribal self-rule; 2) cultural survival; and 3) economic development. The tribal pursuit of these goals is clearly reflected in the most visible issues in Indian affairs today religious freedom and gaming, for example. But policy-makers often fail to realize the profound manner in which these goals are necessarily interrelated."

Source: <http://tracilmorris.com/2009/03/17/american-indian-self-determination-what-does-it-mean/>

Additional Readings:

- <http://www.nativeamericannetroots.net/diary/782/indian-selfdetermination-threatened>
- <http://www.tribal-institute.org/lists/pl93-638.htm>
- <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/OIS/Self-Determination/index.htm>
- <http://web.hks.harvard.edu/publications/workingpapers/citation.aspx?PubId=7477>

Vern



December 1970 Taos Pueblo Indians with Richard Nixon

Roots of Empathy: The Power of the Baby in Making the World a Better Place

By Andy Haner: Meteorologist, WFO Seattle, WA

Following the birth of my youngest daughter, Emory, in June 2012, I walked my 9-year old, Cassie, to school each day. Cassie's 3rd grade teacher approached me to see if my wife Layla and I, along with our new baby, would be willing to participate with her class in a program called Roots of Empathy. Cassie always spoke excitedly about "Baby Levi's" visits to her class last year. So, Layla and I agreed to re-pay Baby Levi's favor and participate. It has been a rewarding experience for our whole family, so I'm using this article to share our experience making monthly classroom visits with our baby to a 3rd grade classroom.

Information from the Roots of Empathy website, www.rootsofempathy.org. On the website, many facts in these excerpts are footnoted and cite research studies.

Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based classroom program that has shown significant effect in reducing levels of aggression among school children while raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy. Roots of Empathy's mission is to build caring, peaceful, and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults. Roots of Empathy strives to break the intergenerational cycle of violence and poor parenting. The goals of the program are to:

- To foster the development of empathy
- To develop emotional literacy
- To reduce levels of bullying, aggression and violence, and promote children's pro-social behaviors
- To increase knowledge of human development, learning, and infant safety
- To prepare students for responsible citizenship and responsive parenting

Phrases such as "drive-by shooting", "road rage", "schoolyard shootings", "terrorist bombings", "domestic violence", "child abuse", "bullying", and "hate crimes" all highlight the emotional ineptitude that plays out in our world every day. It highlights the need for a program such as Roots of Empathy.

Roots of Empathy is a program that reaches school children from Kindergarten to Grade 8. At Cassie's school, the program is offered to 3rd and 4th grade students. At the heart of the program are a neighborhood infant and parent(s) who visit the classroom every month over the school year. The baby is supposed to be between 2 and 4 months of age at the time of the first classroom visit. A trained Roots of Empathy Instructor coaches students to observe the baby's development and to label the baby's feelings. In this experiential learning, the baby is the "Teacher" and a lever, which the instructor uses to help children identify and reflect on their own feelings and the feelings of others. This "emotional literacy" taught in the program lays the foundation for more safe and car-

ing classrooms, where children are the "Changers". They are more competent in understanding their own feelings and the feelings of others (empathy) and are less likely to physically, psychologically and emotionally hurt each other through bullying and other cruelties. Children learn how to challenge cruelty and injustice. Messages of social inclusion and activities that are consensus building contribute to a culture of caring that change the tone of the classroom. Evaluations indicate significant reductions in aggression and increases in pro-social behavior. Results such as:

- Increased helping behavior in up to 78% of students
- Increased peer acceptance in up to 74% of students
- Increased perspective-taking in up to 71% of students
- Increased sharing in up to 69% of students
- Increased pro-social behavior in up to 65% of students
- Decreased social aggression in up to 39% of students

Social/emotional learning

Research on social/emotional learning (SEL) shows that students who participate in SEL programs have:

- Significantly better social and emotional skills
- Lower levels of stress and depression
- Better attitudes about themselves, others, and school
- Improvements in social and classroom behavior
- Fewer conduct problems and less aggression
- Better grade point averages and standardized achievement test scores.

Aggression

- Aggressive children are at higher risk of alcohol and drug abuse, accidents, violent crimes, depression, suicide attempts, spouse abuse and neglectful and abusive parenting.
- Aggression is a known risk factor for



Andy Haner, Layla Haner, and facilitator Rene Hawkes with Baby Emory during a Roots of Empathy classroom visit at Olympic Hills Elementary School.

academic difficulties and reduced likelihood of graduation.

Pro-social behavior

Researchers have found that grade 3 students' level of pro-social behavior is a better predictor of academic outcomes five years later than was their academic achievement.

In self-report surveys, 99% of students in Roots of Empathy reported learning that it is dangerous to shake a baby. They also have many more strategies to help a crying baby and believe more in their ability to be a parent. Students learn about a baby's brain development. Almost all students (97%) reported learning that it is important for a baby's brain development and growth that they are loved and cared for.

Conclusion

So far, researchers have evaluated Roots of Empathy's impact on children up to three years after program completion. Results show children become more caring, helpful and kind, and feel more accepted by their peers. They also have greater knowledge of what to do as a parent. These qualities are not only important in their own right, but also have positive, longer term implications for the future well-being of children. Results suggest Roots of Empathy is a protective factor against aggression and holds promise for reducing the intergenerational cycles of violence and poor parenting. Research has shown consistently positive outcomes over various evaluation years, geographical areas, samples, methodologies, and data sources.

My Own Experience with *Roots of Empathy*

Continued by... Andy Haner: Meteorologist, WFO Seattle, WA

Once each month, my wife Layla and I take our baby, Emory, to a 3rd grade classroom at Olympic Hills Elementary School, located in the northeast corner of the city of Seattle. Olympic Hills draws from a heavily low-income, immigrant population. 73% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches and students speak 17 different native languages. Only 29% of students are white. Olympic Hills' principal has compared her job to working at the United Nations.

Each of our **Roots of Empathy** classroom visits starts with the children standing in a circle, singing a welcome song for Baby Emory as we walk into the classroom. Either my wife or I slowly make the rounds among the children, giving each child at least 3 seconds to connect with the baby in some way; research shows that even 3 seconds of exposure to a baby will raise endorphin levels, which has many benefits. It's amazing to watch how even the children who seem "harder-edged" soften their approach toward the baby. After making the rounds, we all sit down around a green blanket on the floor, placing the baby (wearing a onesie with the word "Teacher") in the middle of the blanket, which is considered the baby's "safe zone".

Our facilitator then helps the children figure out how the baby is developing, or if there have been developmental milestones since the last visit. Can the baby crawl yet? Does the baby have teeth yet? Can the baby eat solid food yet? Can the baby handle small items with her hands yet? We sometimes weigh and measure the baby to track her physical growth.

Each visit includes a theme, such as feeding, safety, communication, and more. With each theme, there is an important lesson to learn. For example during the safety theme, children learn about the life-and-death implications of Shaken Baby Syndrome; they learn the importance of properly handling their own anger if a baby will not stop crying. As parents, Layla and I got to share how we do, or would, handle a situation when we might feel angry because the baby will not stop crying. What might a baby be trying to tell us when she cries? During other themes, we have gotten to

show off the many items which we pack in our diaper bag, we've let the children know what we have to do to baby-proof our home, and we've gotten to show off ways of getting the baby to laugh. During classroom visits, the children try to gauge how the baby is feeling that day. As parents, we try to provide insight into why Baby Emory might be feeling a certain way that day.

Out of 8 classroom visits so far this year, Baby Emory has cried only one time. It happened on a day when the children saw Emory roll over for the first time. The children's reaction was so excited that it surprised Emory, and she started to cry. Even a crying moment lent itself to a teaching moment on how the baby felt and what caused her to cry.

One visit that sticks out to me was a day when the 3rd-grade class had a substitute teacher. When Layla, the facilitator, and I arrived, it was clear that the substitute and the students were having a rough day. The children were rowdy and unfocused as we arrived, and the substitute teacher was having trouble controlling the students with a barking, intimidating tone. As our hour-long visit progressed, the children became more and more settled and focused. The substitute teacher's demeanor gradually but dramatically shifted; over one hour, she became much more soft-spoken, likeable, and approachable. On our way out of the classroom, the substitute revealed to our facilitator that she herself was pregnant and was wondering how to get her baby into the program this fall. It was heart-warming and rewarding to know that Baby Emory's Roots of Empathy classroom visit likely made the rest of that day much more pleasant for both the children and the thankless substitute teacher.

Another highlight occurred when the PBS NewsHour ran a story on Roots of Empathy as part of their American Graduate series, a series aimed at exploring ways to lower the high school dropout rate. A NewsHour producer came out from Washington, DC, to visit two schools with the program, including our classroom on February 28. The story aired on March 28. The story that aired



Andy Haner making the rounds with Emory Haner during the welcoming hello song at the start of a Roots of Empathy classroom visit.

(8 minutes long) can be found at:

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/american-graduate/jan-june13/empathy_03-28.html.

A separate blog entry did not actually air on TV, but it focused more on my own motivation for arranging time off work and participating each month; that entry includes a 1 ½ minute video and is at

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2013/03/roots-of-empathy.html>.

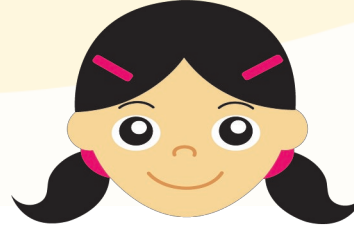
Participating in Roots of Empathy has been a completely rewarding experience for both Layla and me. In fact, I don't think Layla or I expected it to be as rewarding as it has been. The reward is knowing that our baby's visits have touched the children in a way that they will carry forward with them for years to come. As a meteorologist, I value that the program's success is rooted in solid research, and I value that the program's outcomes are being tracked and verified, even years in the future. I foresee Roots of Empathy becoming commonplace in American schools by the time our children's children are attending school. The "power of the baby" to foster a more civil society is real!



Emory Haner observes 3rd grade children during a Roots of Empathy classroom visit.

Developing Children in a Multicultural Environment

Contributed by Michael Fitzsimmons: Incoming WR Diversity Action Committee Chair, WFO Elko, NV
With resource credit to: GreatSchools Staff "How important is cultural diversity at your school?"



As our nation becomes ethnically and culturally diverse, more of our pre-schools and public schools are becoming increasingly diverse as well. One of the challenges that become common place is the language barrier not only in communicating with students but with parents as well. More and more teachers are being asked (and eventually may be required) to be multilingual to help shrink the language gap among students and parents.

Students, especially at the pre-school age have a unique opportunity to understand the different backgrounds and perspectives of students different from themselves at a very early age. This in essence helps control the cultural and ethnic biases that could develop in older students. Addressing this concept at the pre-school or public school setting is one thing but it needs to be enhanced and continued in the child's home life. If parents have cultural and ethnic biases, it will not only send the wrong message to the child but could favor the child following the parents lead and bringing these biases to school. A strong communication effort needs to be in place and the parents need to "buy off" on what the school is teaching in order for the child to be subject to a consistent message.

At the school level, it becomes the teacher's responsibility to never tolerate disrespect and to strive to create an environment where all children can feel valued and can learn. One way of conquering this would be to allow the children to help establish ground rules for the classroom. Another way would be for the teacher to provide within their lesson plan a series of classroom activities on diversity. Something as simple as bringing a piece of culture or heritage from home and showing/discussing it would have a huge impact on the other children. This type of activity would not only enhance classroom partic-

ipation but will also help in the establishing of friendships.

As is well known, not all children will be prone to acceptance of the above mentioned methodology. With some children being more hesitant than others, teachers and principals must ensure that all children are engaged in learning. This may mean looking beyond the classroom to the child's home life to see where they study, type of meals and sleeping patterns they have along with addition support needs.

Parents can help establish a positive environment that allows achievement of all students at the school by:

- Find your school and check the test scores on the school profile, and where available, pay particular attention to the results by subgroup.
- If your school has disparities in outcomes for different groups of students (often called "the achievement gap"), you should ask why and find out what measures the school is taking to close the gap.
- Ask how the school addresses the needs of diverse students and if there are support programs available for students who are not meeting the standards. Ask if there is specialized instruction for students who are English language learners.
- Does the school have a cultural fair or assembly to highlight diversity? If not, work with your PTA or parent group to organize one.
- Express your concern if you see different discipline consequences for different groups of students, or if the best teachers are only teaching the strongest students.
- Observe who is involved in student leadership. Is it an ethnically diverse group? If not, ask why.
- Does the school have tracked classes for high and low ability grouping? If

so, if you see racial or ethnic patterns in these classes, i.e. more racial minorities in lower ability groups, ask why.

- What's the makeup of the school staff? Are all the teachers white and all the aides people of color? Is there a racial hierarchy at the school? Ask what the school can do to change these patterns.
- Does your parent group reach out to parents of ethnically diverse students?
- Don't be alarmed if you see groups of students separating by ethnic group at lunch or recess. "It's not necessarily a bad thing to be in their own group at recess" says Rosemary Henze, author of *Leading for Diversity: How School Leaders Promote Positive Interethnic Relations*. "They can gain a lot from a feeling of belonging." But do pay attention to what goes on in the classroom. "Classroom activities that give kids the opportunity to interact with different groups can help to break down barriers," notes Henze.
- Does the principal use a variety of avenues to get parental input? Henze says, "Parental involvement may not be a cultural expectation in some cultures. Schools should not ignore the silent parents. Principals need to listen to all parents and experiment with other ways of getting parental input-written forms, translators and phone calls. Schools should find multiple ways and times to communicate, not just when there are problems with a student."

Heeding the above mentioned advice and having a strong principal-teacher-parent-child relationship will foster the best results for the child. By doing so, all cultural and ethnic differences will be accepted as the child grows through their adolescent and adult years.

Diversity Focal Point Spotlight

Larry Smith

Larry, can you tell us a little about yourself?

I grew up in western Pennsylvania, which is not the diversity capital of the world. Everyone in the area pretty much grew up and died in my town, so the area was pretty closed minded to new ideas and cultural change. In my early years I moved to Ocean City, MD where I managed a kite shop. This move opened my eyes to a whole new world of cultural diversity which spurred me on to make a better life for myself. My bachelor's degree was earned at California University of Pennsylvania where I was Meteorology Club president. I was an adult student at Cal-U, so being president of the Meteorology Club allowed me to interact with a diverse group of students who were much younger than I was. These interactions with a diverse age group have given me the ability to work well with both young and old. I've been told that it is hard for people to figure out my age because I'm mature, yet young and outgoing.

After graduating from Cal-U in 2004 I moved to Elko, Nevada where I participated in the Student Career Employment Program. Elko is a small town and was definitely a culture shock for me. Although it was small, Elko afforded me an opportunity to experience a slower paced lifestyle that is withering away from modern society. I left Elko in August of 2004 to work on my Master's degree at the University of Missouri. Working on my Master's degree exposed me once again to the free thinking world of academia. The academic world offers splendorous diversity in thought, age and culture. Embracing free thought is amazing and I really enjoyed the free flow of ideas, it felt like we could solve many of the world's problems simply by talking through them. It would be an asset to the NWS if we could incorporate this kind of free thought into operations rather than following a stringent set of guidelines set forth to us from ages gone by.

After earning my Master's degree I accepted an intern position at WFO Medford, located in beautiful southern Oregon. Southern Oregon is a place where a person can still enjoy an abundant life working a nontechnical career; such as logging, construction, and gold mining. I really enjoyed the things in life that southern Oregon had to offer; plenty of hiking, skiing and mountain biking. Of course this area has its own colorful culture as well; covering music, art, and featuring a Shakespeare festival.

I was sad to leave southern Oregon in 2007, moving to Monterey, California for a promotion. Moving to Monterey has been a blast of culture and diversity! California itself offers a beautiful coast and plenty of mountains to enjoy, with a fertile valley supporting a vast agriculture market. Diversity, with a laid back surfer culture along the coast, migrant workers supporting agriculture in the valley, brilliant minds developing new technologies in Silicon Valley and... did I mention the wine? To make a long story short, all of this traveling and moving around has exposed me to new ideas, shaping me into the open-minded person that I am today. Do I miss western Pennsylvania? Yes, but I would never give up the life experiences that I have earned through my career in meteorology.

What does diversity mean to you?

Diversity by definition is the condition of having, or being composed of, differing elements; with the inclusion of different types of people.



In the work place I find that diversity is often thought of as the basics such as; men and women working together, accepting homosexuality and of course age differences. To me diversity means knowing your staff and tapping into their abilities. At the National Weather Service we are blessed with a group of multitaled individuals whose skills and interests vary greatly; i.e. diversity. When we bring these various skills and differing problem solving approaches together remarkable things can happen!

What is the most rewarding thing about being a Diversity Focal Point?

Probably the most rewarding thing about being a Diversity Focal Point is bringing people together. This is especially true if we are solving a problem together.

What is your biggest challenge as a Diversity Focal Point and how do you handle it?

One of the biggest challenges for me is also our greatest asset. This challenge is bringing together people with differing styles of problem solving. I am a free thinker and love to think outside the box. I also don't like to be constrained by rigid guidelines. In the National Weather Service thinking outside the box seems to be a great trait to have. However, we also have brilliant coworkers who are great organizers and straight line thinkers who rely on a clear set of guidelines to perform their duties by. Both types of thinkers have their pluses and minuses, and blending their thought styles together can present a challenging hurdle, especially when trying to develop office policy. I deal with this problem by listening to my coworkers and keeping an open mind when dealing with their differences. When developing new office policy or guidelines I consult many individuals for their input. This provides me a glimpse into how others think and also lets everyone know that I value their opinion.

How do you encourage diversity in the workplace?

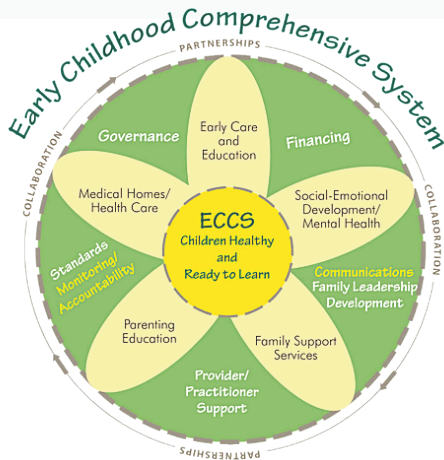
I'm still relatively new at being diversity focal point, so I'm still learning. For the most part my style of encouraging diversity in the workplace is setting a good example for my coworkers by being a nice person. That encompasses listening to what others have to say and encouraging them, whether they are doing a great job, or pushing through some hard times. I also encourage my coworkers to embrace new ideas and to value others opinions.

How do you think an effective diversity program could help the NWS improve?

This is a good question and a difficult one to answer. The goal of a diverse institution should be to encourage a harmonious workplace which taps into everyone's skill and knowledge set. So a successful diversity program would improve the National Weather Service by promoting these ideals and assist in recognizing the value and wealth of the NWS's greatest assets, which is its employees.

HEAD START PROGRAMS- VOLUNTEERING: Building Educational Skills, Diversity and Trust

By Michael Fitzsimmons: Incoming WR Diversity Action Committee Chair, WFO Elko, NV



The main emphasis or goal of the Head Start Program is to provide social and educational competence in the families it serves.

The Head Start Pre-school and Early Head Start programs provide a wide range of services which includes education, health and mental health services as well as physical develop-

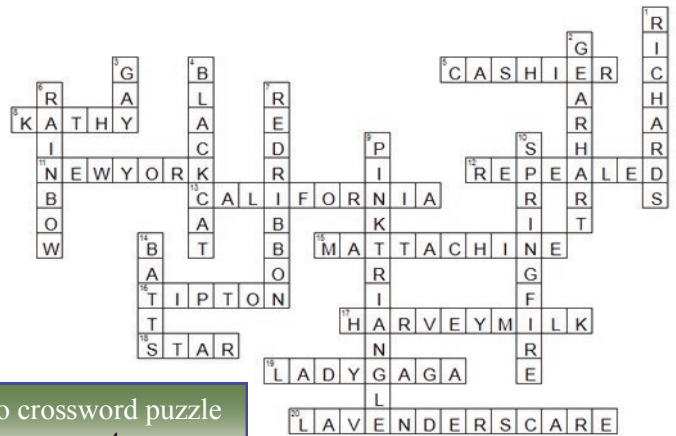
ment, nutrition and social services along with addressing parental needs. The overall success of the program relies on the interaction of the parents and family members with the child. The Northeastern Nevada Head Start Program is located in Elko, NV.

I had the privilege and honor to support Head Start during "Male Role Model Day" this past January. This was an event for the males in the family of each child to provide guidance, support and love during the child's three and a half hour afternoon stay at Head Start. Although, I wasn't a relative of the young male child I was being a role model for, I was encouraged by the faculty to support their

"Male Role Model Day". In fact, I was the only male role model to support any of the children in the afternoon class. What was disappointing was the lack of support for the children from the other families. After some thinking, I realized that a number of fathers couldn't make it due to being employed at the mines and working twelve hour shifts.

From the "Male Role Model Day" forward, my participation with the children from the Elko Head Start Program has expanded significantly. I began volunteering on a regular basis working with all the children to help them learn to spell their names, count as high as one hundred and read countless books to them. Being friends with everyone and sharing what you have when you're playing with others is skills that are taught right away at Head Start. The children have taken a strong liking to the way I help and pay attention to them. When they are out of line, I have been able to reason with them and help them follow the teacher's instructions.

Volunteering for the Northeastern Nevada Head Start Program has a two-fold purpose. Above and beyond is to provide a level of support, love and an opportunity for the child to be able to look up to someone they can place their trust in. However, the time volunteered also goes to an "in-kind" program that helps reduce the cost of the child being in the Head Start Program. Five hours a month is requested each month to help defray costs.



Answers to crossword puzzle from page 4

WR DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER, EDITION XV, Summer 2013

Published by:	The WR Diversity Action Committee (DAC)
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