

City of Fargo MLK Human Relations Award Past Recipients

2002

Gladys Ray, a model of leadership, and respected American Indian elder, is being given the Human Relations Award for her knowledge, faith and service to American Indian support systems in the Fargo Moorhead metro area. Over the years, Gladys' work has been essential to understanding and attending to American Indians in the community. Gladys' work reminds us that creativity and respect are required in order to understand the American Indian perspective.

The People Escaping Poverty Project (PEPP) is being awarded for its anti-poverty efforts and work to support of low-income individuals and families in the areas of affordable housing, police accountability, immigration, health, and youth issues.

2003

CHARISM Community Center is a non-profit neighborhood based family resource center that serves the needs of low-income families in the McCormick Park neighborhood. CHARISM is being awarded for its success in creating opportunities for individuals and families to increase their strength and potential.

Mark Schneider is being given the Fargo Human Relations Award for a lifetime of service to others. Mark's work to combat race and gender discrimination, voting rights violations, police brutality and oppression of migrant workers reminds us that human rights are a permanent part of everyday life.

Ryan Thoreson, a senior at Shanley High School and model of youth leadership, is being given the Human Relations award for his faith, commitment and work to champion the ideals of social justice in service to the poor and underprivileged.

2004

Presentation Sisters of the Sacred Heart Convent is a religious congregation of Catholic women who are committed to promoting peace and justice. The Presentation Sisters are being awarded for over 120 years of service in the Red River Valley in the areas of health care, education, social services, spiritual enrichment and housing.

Dr. Larry Peterson is being given the Fargo Human Relations Award for a lifetime of service to others. Despite a busy life as a professor and chair of the History Department at NDSU, Larry is a tireless volunteer and outspoken human rights and peace activist.

Paul Yatskis, a senior at NDSU, is being given the Fargo Human Relations Award for his many endeavors on the NDSU Student Senate. Specifically, Paul's bold

efforts to support Native American affairs on campus has brought him to the front lines of human rights work. Mr. Yatskis truly is a model of youth leadership.

2005

Rev. Shawnthea Monroe-Mueller is being given the Fargo Human Relations Award for a lifetime of service to others. Rev. Monroe-Mueller's is being recognized for her commitment and work to speak out for peace and the ideals of social justice.

Ruth Meberg is being awarded for her many creative and innovative endeavors for women's issues. Ms. Meberg's bold efforts on campus and in the community has brought her to the front lines of human rights work in Fargo-Moorhead.

Radio Free Fargo, KNDS 105.9 is being awarded for its work to provide alternative/local music, news, and locally produced public affairs and cultural programming in the FM area.

2006

The **Mental Health Association of North Dakota** is a non-profit organization that works to end discrimination on the basis of mental illness. The Mental Health Association is being awarded for over 50 years of service in the Red River Valley for its advocacy in the areas of health care, education, social services, human rights and fair housing.

Jennifer Thomas is being given the Fargo Human Relations award for being a model leader for area youth. Ms. Thomas' face-to-face work with the Native and New American communities, as well as her work on behalf of neglected women and children, makes her a person that truly is on the front-line of human relations work.

Thomas Jefferson is being given the Fargo Human Relations Award for a lifetime of service to others. Mr. Jefferson is a man of compassion and integrity. He demonstrates this this strong commitment to others by being a tireless volunteer, mentor and champion of the ideals of social justice.

2007

Hornbacher's Food Company is being awarded for significant contributions toward building an inclusive Fargo-Moorhead community. Hornbacher's provides financial support and fundraising assistance to many community groups and nonprofit organizations in the area. In addition, Hornbacher's employs individuals with diverse backgrounds and disabilities and offers a number of unique and specialized products in its stores. Hornbachers' leadership and commitment to human relations helps make the FM area a better and more welcoming place.

Rachel Attebury is being given the Fargo Human Relations award for being a model leader for area youth. Ms. Attebury's volunteer work for families in need, equal rights and the environment, as well as her contributions on behalf of antiwar efforts,

makes her a person that truly is on the front-line of human rights work in the Fargo Moorhead area.

Jessica Thomasson is being given the Fargo Human Relations Award for years of dedicated service to others. Ms. Thomasson is a woman of intellect, compassion and integrity. Her thoughtful leadership and creativity to help meet the needs of individuals and families in the areas of housing, homelessness and community services has made a difference in the lives of so many people. Every day, Ms. Thomasson demonstrates this strong commitment to the public good by giving her time and energy to mentor, work and champion the ideals of social justice.

2008

FrostFire Creative/OPEN Magazine is being awarded for significant contributions toward recognizing and encouraging awareness of the City of Fargo's diverse community. Launched in February of 2005, FrostFire Creative's vision was to produce films that showcase the human reality and the changing way we see the world around us. OPEN Magazine published its first issue in May of 2007 and highlighted the growing diversity of the City of Fargo. The magazine stays true to FrostFire's overall vision and purpose while supporting and being committed to presenting all facets of life in the metro area including the struggles and successes of diverse populations.

The FM Student Council Ambassadors are being awarded the Human Relations Award for youth and young adults for their work in organizing the recent "Fill the Dome" food drive. These students, representing each of the area high schools, first had the idea that they wanted to see how well area schools (who knew each other only as competitors) could also work together. They executed a plan, engaged the community, recruited business and organizational supporters, negotiated donated space at the FargoDome and worked with the area Hunger Coalition. Amazingly, they were able to collect over 80,000 pounds of non-perishable food from all 43 schools in the metro area. With cooperative leadership, compassion and many hours of mental and physical work, the Student Council Ambassadors truly brought out the generosity of our community.

Sharif Hashim Hassan is being given the Human Relations Award as a respected leader in the Muslim community, and the "glue" that is helping hold together the Somali community in Fargo. Sharif Hashim became a US citizen in 2004 after 8 years of living in Fargo. He worked especially hard to learn English for basic communication. Since his arrival, he has been a pivotal figure at the Islamic Center. He has performed many religious duties, including Islamic weddings and religious rights of deceased persons. Particularly notable are his efforts to teach Muslim children the basics of Islam, Islamic history, culture and Arabic language. In the words of many who nominated him, Sharif Hashim is a wise and polite elder, an organizer and role model who is there whenever you need him.

2009

Peace Talk Radio, aired live on Saturday mornings at 9AM on 96.3 KNDS-FM, is being awarded the Human Relations Award for their efforts to inspire critical thinking about our world's problems and the inherent value of peaceful solutions. The program is hosted by Paul Dyer, Lew Lubka, and Paddy McLaughlin. Dyer is a former Special Forces Ranger of 12 years having served in a number of locations around the world. Lubka is well known in the community for his peace activism, and has worked with the ND Peace Coalition, FM Lighthouse and the ND Human Rights Coalition. McLaughlin is a licensed HeartMath provider, minister, 15 year veteran energy worker and peace activist currently with the Center for Peace in Fargo.

Carl Ben Eielson Student Leadership is being awarded the Human Relations Award for youth and young adults for their work to foster good will and inclusion within the community and to welcome, embrace and care for their classmates and neighbors through a number of community projects. Advised by Alicia Collins and Beth Ekre, this group of 118 6th, 7th and 8th graders have accomplished a number of service projects including the "Miles of Smiles" fund drive, which raised nearly \$10,000 benefiting victims of a Fargo house explosion. Through their actions, they have helped move our community forward, and in the words of their nominators, helped to "make this the best place on the planet to be a kid."

Michele McRae is being given the Human Relations Award for her tireless work leading the Giving + Learning program in connecting Fargo's growing refugee population with local residents willing to serve as tutors. Launched in 2001, the program has grown from three volunteers teaching English to over 500 mentors giving an hour each week to assist 600 newcomers with language skills, filling out job applications, earning driver's licenses, finding elder or child care, or simply shopping for groceries. Michele has provided connections to over 400 resource agencies to provide additional services to New Americans.

2010

Nealul and Atoung Andrew are being awarded the Human Relations Award for their enthusiastic and devoted efforts to assist New Americans in the F-M community as well as refugee families trying to escape war-torn Sudan. Nealul is a sophomore at Fargo South High, and Atoung is an eighth-grader at Discovery Middle School. Motivated by the horrific images coming from the country where they were born, Nealul and Atoung have committed themselves to helping by collecting toys, clothes, shoes and other necessary supplies they can give to New American families in the F-M area and to refugees that remain in Sudan.

Janeen Kobrinsky is being awarded the Human Relations Award for her significant role in creating a more respectful, compassionate and accepting environment for all people in the Fargo-Moorhead Community. Her work as a Rabbi and spiritual leader at Temple Beth El in Fargo has had a positive effect on many people not only within her congregation but throughout the FM area. Janeen has played a key role in the success of Camp KACE, a week-long summer camp for kids with cancer and their siblings. Janeen is also a former member of the Fargo Human Relations Commission where she led a number of initiatives, including the Stuff-the-Bus Campaign in which thousands of needed items were collected in a City bus and

distributed to area homeless shelters. She also created and continues to create original works of art to serve as the Fargo Human Relations Awards.

Stacie Loegering has been selected to receive the Human Relations Award for her leadership and ability to inspire those she works with. Currently the Director of Information & Crisis Services at FirstLink, Stacie has maintained a passion for the difficult work of suicide prevention and awareness. Stacie has also applied her significant leadership skills to engage and empower the LGBT community through her work with the Pride Collective and Community Center (PCCC). She has helped to increase the visibility of PCCC within the greater FM Community, develop stronger relationships with local businesses and communities of faith, and become a dynamic partner with the area's colleges and universities in providing educational opportunities both on and off campus. As a Co-Chair for the annual FM Pride event, Stacie has helped to increase attendance and increase the number of diverse events that meet the needs of the local LGBT community and its allies.

2011

Taylor Gess is a Fargo South Senior who has worked tirelessly to make sure that we are a community that values youth. She is recognized as a dynamic youth leader, with involvement in the Homeless and Hungry project, the annual Youth Summit, as a member of the Metro Youth Partnership board of directors and numerous other activities involving youth in our community.

FM Community Bike Workshop is a community-driven organization providing education, training and access to bicycle transportation and repair. They are committed to inclusivity, and to the positive environmental, health and social impacts and empowerment created by the simple act of riding and repairing a bicycle.

Dwight Schroeder is a financial counselor and educator at the Village Family Service Center who has displayed a great amount of understanding and compassion for those he works with. He works closely with individuals and families from a variety socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, and values all people that come to his classes. He provides individual attention where needed, and is careful to treat each client with respect and dignity.

2012

Handi-Wheels, Inc. has a mission to provide a safe and reliable means of accessible and affordable transportation to individuals who have a disability, persons who are elderly, and individuals who live within the limits of poverty. In 2010, Handi-Wheels provided 15,000 rides to people in need. The Handi-Wheels office is staffed almost exclusively by dedicated volunteers who themselves have a disability.

Kayla Smith and Abby Roche participated in the North High DECA organization. As part of this organization, Kayla and Abby created a program enlisting other North High School students and staff to "Spread the Word to End the Word." The presentation refers to the use of the word retarded to describe students with special

needs or who have done something displaying poor judgment. The initiative was begun independently, and has included presentations to many of the Fargo school district's 22 schools.

Howard Barlow's career has been about service to people. He continually advocates for those less fortunate, those without resources and equality for all citizens. Howard works passionately to address issues related to homelessness and hunger, having helped create the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition, the Fargo-Moorhead Coalition for Homeless Persons, and having played a key role in the development of Fargo's 10-year plan to end chronic homelessness.

2013

Barry Nelson has been a long time advocate for local refugees and area youth, and continues to advocate for equality among all citizens through his work as president of the ND Human Rights Coalition.

Fraser, Ltd., through its mission "Supporting children, youth, and adults on their life's journey toward independence", Fraser, Ltd. has worked hard to respect diversity and eliminate discrimination by providing acceptance and equality for all people served by its programs.

2014

The **FM Sheltering Churches Project**, which began 3 years ago, provided 1,418 nights of shelter for 325 individuals in its first year. This project benefits not only homeless people it shelters, but the entire community, as well as the church members who volunteer. Currently, 18 congregations have made a commitment to offer their buildings to provide overflow sheltering for the homeless.

Levi Bachmeier is an active young member of the Fargo-Moorhead area in various service projects and leadership roles. In 2011 and 2012, his position as advisor to "Fill the Dome" involved mentoring high school students as they organized and executed an annual food drive that raised approximately \$150,000 and brought in 165 tons of food. Levi is currently a youth advisory council member to the Fargo City Commission, student body president and a resident assistant at Concordia College.

Nancy Halilovic has been an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher at the Fargo Adult Learning Center for a number of years and has gone above and beyond to provide the best learning environment for her students. She is dedicated to her students and willing to try new things, develop lesson plans that reach multiple learners, and step in to teach the Elder Citizenship Class, for Lutheran Social Services - New Americans; this class wouldn't be possible without Ms. Halilovic.

2015

Growing Together is a community gardening group composed of more than 100 diverse individuals and families, who grow and share thousands of pounds of

produce from community gardens each year. For over eight years, the families, primarily New Americans, come together each week and work in the community gardens. While the produce is the most visible product of this effort, it is the deep friendship, sense of community, and connections to the earth that are developed.

Kristina Heggedal is an active young member of the Fargo-Moorhead area in various service projects and leadership roles. She demonstrates a commitment to improving the community through engagement with numerous nonprofit and youth-led organizations. These projects include Fill The Dome, Youth Summit, The Fargo Youth Initiative, Philanthropy and Youth (PaY), TEDx and TEDxYouth. Kristina's work is community focused—she shows up, has fun and is eagerly invested in Fargo to create lasting and meaningful improvements that help build a stronger community.

Andrea Jang is an amazing advocate of people from many different backgrounds, especially for the New Americans with whom she works closely, as a Community Outreach Coordinator at CHARISM Neighborhood Center. Andrea is constantly thinking of new ideas for assisting refugee members by helping them increase their skills, learn new things, and feel welcome in their new city of residence. Andrea always goes above and beyond to help families from many different ethnicities, while juggling many other duties and responsibilities.

2016

The Emergency Food Pantry is a food distribution program that's mission is to provide families and individuals facing emergency situations with healthy food. As the first independent, nonprofit hunger relief entity in Fargo-Moorhead, the Emergency Food Pantry has been helping to put food on the family table during times of crisis in Cass and Clay counties for over 40 years.

Kevin Brooks is an advocate for human rights, dignity and people from many different backgrounds. In addition to being a full-time professor at NDSU, Kevin works tirelessly with organizations including Giving+Learning, African Soul American Heart and the New American Consortium for Wellness and Empowerment, to eliminate discrimination in our community.

Fatma Abdulahi is a role model and advocate in the Somali community and an overall ray of sunshine. Her tenacity and positive attitude shine as she shares her story with others. Fatma has become a speaker to educators in our district and other groups in the community.

2017

Matthew's Voice Project (MVP) is an effort to assist students in our public schools who are identified as experiencing homelessness. Much of MVP's focus is on unaccompanied youth (no parents or guardians in their lives), providing them with the support and encouragement they need to complete high school. Their continued goal is to assist homeless students with more pressing day-to-day needs such as housing; quality shoes to last; clothin needs to include dress clothes for work;

winter/snow gear; cell phones and pre-paid minutes; technology needs such as jump drives to store homework on; YMCA memberships; gas cards and taxi fares for transportation to their jobs.

Hukun Abdullahi is the director of the Afro American Development Association, a non-profit founded on the spirit of charity and community empowerment. The organization was established in the year 2014 by a group of concerned development-oriented students to respond to human suffering among marginalized and New American communities in the states of Minnesota and North Dakota. Hukun is actively involved in making a difference in the lives of hundreds of New Americans who have resettled in Fargo and Moorhead. He actively engages in activities that promote diversity, acceptance, and solidarity. He collaborates tirelessly with other organizations to ensure New Americans' access to human rights and dignity.

Darci Asche is the director of development at the New American Consortium for Wellness and Empowerment Center (WE Center). She started assisting refugees in her hometown after the Vietnam War. She has worked passionately with refugees most of her life in both volunteer and professional positions, including 20 years with Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota (LSSND). She joined the WE Center to be a resource to refugees when they leave LSSND. The WE Center provides New Americans a space for their ethnic communities to gather and enjoy fellowship.

2018

Prairie St. Johns (PSJ) is a psychiatric hospital facility that's mission is to offer hope and healing to individuals facing behavioral health and substance use challenges. It has been a leader in continually improving its quality of care and its culturally sensitive programming. Whatever the need is, PSJ adapts in order to fulfill their responsibility to the community to provide excellent services. For over 20 years, it has served thousands of individuals and their families from Cass and Clay counties and beyond.

Nastesho Ulow is a natural young leader of the FM community who stands up for what she believes in and takes initiative to make change. In order to address the feeling of isolation she found common amid she and her peers at school, she and two friends created the Minority Inclusion Association at West Fargo High School with the goal of educating and creating a more inclusive environment that values every student. She went on to speak for various other groups, including TedX, the Bush Foundation, and Women in Faith, with in hopes of helping our community to be less susceptible to hatred and racism.

Hamida Dakane has become an outspoken and compassionate voice for nondiscrimination, human rights, and collaborative community empowerment. She is a tireless advocate for marginalized peoples and new Americans through various capacities, including her work at Lutheran Social Services, the Afro-American Development Center, and beyond. In the face of her own and her family's experiences with bigotry, she has chosen to actively participate in community events and discussions that promote intercultural understanding. She is a positive and

energetic role model for many in the community and an overall “shining star” of the community, in the words of one nominator.

2019

Family HealthCare Center and Family HealthCare Pharmacy, NDSU work in tandem to provide effective health care, dental care and pharmaceutical services to all. These agencies specifically reach out to the most vulnerable populations in our community – refugees and immigrants, homeless individuals, and the marginally served. Together, these agencies provide high-quality, consistent, and affordable care to those with low incomes and diverse cultures. By doing so, this partnership minimizes unnecessary hospitalizations, emergency room trips and complications from untreated health problems – bringing health to our entire community.

Ellen Mahli is a lifelong volunteer and advocate for people in need of compassion and justice. She was a nurse for 58 years, including 34 years at what is now Sanford Health. During her years of service, she specialized in mental health, substance abuse, clinical ethics, geriatrics and healthcare management. She has worked closely with Churches United for the Homeless and helped to establish the Gladys Ray Shelter. Among her many activities today, Ellen serves on the Center for Interfaith Projects, a Presentation Associate and board member of the Presentation Sisters’ Peace, Justice and Prayer Center Collaboration, chairs the Catholic Health Initiatives Villa Nazareth, Friendship, and Riverview Place Board of Directors.

Haley Dellaneva has always had a heart for helping those in need. She is the founding organizer of Haley’s Milk Run, a community motorcycle run that supports families who can’t afford milk during school snack breaks. Through ticket sales, sponsorships and door prizes, the motorcycle run has raised over \$175,000 in seven years. Haley works with family members and friends to plan and prepare for the annual event. Now a junior in high school, she was in elementary school when she noticed that not everyone had milk during their mid-morning snack. She decided then she could do something about it.

2020

Legacy Children’s Foundation taps the power of relationships and community as it equips vulnerable teens with the skills and encouragement they need to succeed academically and socially. The nonprofit supports several neighborhood-based, after-school centers where Fargo and West Fargo students meet with mentors. Students, most of whom are new Americans or low-income, also organize community service projects each month. In the past, students have sewn hats for the homeless, started a food pantry, and visited with residents at a nearby memory care unit.

Lenard Wells, housing director for the F5 Project, is an advocate for felons who seek a new life outside of confinement. In particular, he has a heart for helping African American men secure housing, food and work. Lenard knows what it’s like to hustle and overcome great odds. He was acquitted of attempted murder, and now reaches out to those facing similar challenges. He regularly shares his story to help others imagine how they can break the cycle of crime and build their families and

communities.

Zamzam Abdi is a student at North Dakota State University who believes in creating an environment where young Somalis students can celebrate their heritage and culture. To provide her peers with a place where they could feel valued and heard, she founded the NDSU's Somali Student Association. In addition to studying finance, Zamzam volunteers at the Somali Community Development of North Dakota and provides free cleaning services to the local mosque. She selflessly serves others, providing translation, transportation, and other services needed by her new American neighbors.

2021

Clara Derby believes racial injustice is closely linked to environmental brutality. As a result, she is a strong advocate for Black Lives Matter, as well as a leader for climate and environmental changes. In response, Clara arranged the Climate Emergency March combined with members of the BLM in Fargo during September of 2020. She also organized a march against the abuse of people of color.

Nola Storm is one of the co-founders and current vice president of Growing Together Community Gardens, a project that encourages more than 150 New American families to plant and care for community garden plots. Last year, Growing Together donated more than 2,500 pounds of produce to the Emergency Food Pantry. While much produce is grown, the project and Nola have also succeeded in growing relationships between community members.

WIN-Liberia provides support for Liberian women and children in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Founded by Precious Grapeh, the nonprofit caters to the specific needs of single mothers, youth and vulnerable adults by strengthening their traditions and core values. Services include mentoring, after-school programs and financial literacy education. WIN-Liberia has played a particularly important role during the pandemic as it helps community members succeed through challenges brought on by economic loss and uncertain times.