

Cambridge Human Rights Commission
51 Inman Street, 2nd floor
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 349-4396

2012 FAIR HOUSING MONTH WINNING POSTERS



First Prize
by Lucas Gibson, Kennedy/Longfellow School



Second Prize
by Joann Cassama, Kennedy/Longfellow

The Cambridge Human Rights Commission is a city law enforcement agency that investigates complaints of discrimination that occur in Cambridge – in housing, employment, education and public accommodations. These laws prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender, physical and mental status, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, family status, military status, and source of income. If you feel like you have been discriminated against, we are here to help. Our offices are open Mondays 8:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., Tuesdays-Thursdays 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Fridays 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and our telephone number is 617-349-4396

Hablamos Español

The Cambridge Human Rights Commission does not discriminate on the basis of disability. The CHRC will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modification in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon request. Our office is wheelchair accessible.

CAMBRIDGE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

DATELINE

Newsletter of the Cambridge Human Rights Commission



<u>Contents</u>	
From the Desk of the Executive Director.....	1
Discrimination in Public Accommodations.....	2
19 th Annual Fair Housing Month Awards.....	3
2012 Fair Housing Ceremony Photo Gallery.....	4
2012 Fair Housing Month Contest Winners.....	5
First Prize Winning Essay by Meklit Melaku.....	6
A Note From the Chair.....	7
Welcome New Commissioners.....	7
2012 Winning Fair Housing Posters.....	8



**From the Desk of the
Executive Director
*Colleen Johnston***



Greetings from the CHRC! The Commission continues to investigate complaints of discrimination that occur in Cambridge - in housing, employment, education and public accommodation. After receiving many questions about what constitutes a public accommodation, we've included an article in this edition explaining the term.

In April, we held our 19th Annual Fair Housing Month Ceremony. Twenty-six of the outstanding entries to our poster and essay contest were recognized during the ceremony. Coverage of our event begins on page 3.

In addition to our staff, the Commission has 11 volunteer commissioners. Chairperson Melissa Gonzalez-Brenes explains more about the work of our commissioners on page 7. Also on page 7, you can read about our two recent appointees, Brendan St. Amant and Adrian Velazquez.

We hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter and encourage you to contact us if you have questions about the Commission's work.



Cambridge City Council

Henrietta Davis, Mayor
E. Denise Simmons, Vice Mayor
Leland Cheung
Marjorie Decker
Craig Kelley
David P. Maher
Kenneth E. Reeves
Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.
Minka vanBeuzekom

City Executive Administrators

Robert W. Healy, City Manager
Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

CHRC Staff

Colleen Johnston, Executive Director
Mariah Freark, Attorney Investigator
Carmen S. Negrón, Office Manager/ Project Coordinator

CHRC Board of Commissioners

Melissa Gonzalez-Brenes, Chair
Mercedes Evans, Vice Chair
Elaine Angelone
Matthew Barrett
Clio Stearns
Chanta Bhan
Bonita Cox
Randa Shedid
Brendan St. Amant
Caitlin Steirman
Adrian Velazquez

YOU ARE PROTECTED UNDER THE HUMAN RIGHTS ORDINANCE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

WHAT IS A PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION? Any establishment that is open for business to the general public. Examples of such establishments are hospitals, banks, restaurants, hotels, gyms, etc.

You are protected against discrimination based on membership in a protected class. Protected classes include disabilities, race and color, national origin, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, military status, source of income and religion. If you are turned away or treated differently in any public accommodation in Cambridge you may be able to file a complaint with the Cambridge Human Rights Commission.

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to give us a call at 617-349-4396.



A Note from the Chair...
Melissa Gonzalez-Brenes

In addition to our dedicated staff, the CHRC includes eleven Cambridge residents who are appointed by the City Manager and serve in a volunteer capacity. As commissioners, we review and mediate cases, act as hearing officers when needed, and work with staff on outreach efforts to educate members of the public about their civil rights. The Commission is a professionally diverse group, including attorneys, a social scientist, a teacher, a chaplain, a college administrator, a management consultant, and a former nurse.

Our outreach work this past year has included presentations to ESL students at the Cambridge Learning Center (CLC), and collaborative work with other organizations around immigrants' rights. We are excited about a new partnership with the Community Engagement Team of the CLC to reach out to immigrant communities.

The Commission continues to conduct thorough and unbiased investigations of discrimination complaints that occur in Cambridge. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions about the Commission's work, or would like to join our mailing list.



MEET OUR NEW COMMISSIONERS

The Cambridge Human Rights Commission has a board of 11 commissioners. On April 18, 2012 the City Manager appointed two new commissioners to a three year term.



Brendan St. Amant is an attorney at Donnelly, Conroy & Gelhaar, LLP, and a graduate of Harvard Law School and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He is a Trustee for the East Cambridge Scholarship Fund and a member of the Boston Bar Association Public Interest Leadership Program. Prior to practicing law, Brendan was a high school teacher in Pittsburgh and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Niger from 2002-2004. Upon graduating from law school, he served as a law clerk to the Honorable Alvin W. Thompson, Chief Judge for the District of Connecticut.

.....



Adrian Velázquez has been a resident of Cambridge for the past six years. He is a graduate of Universidad del Sagrado Corazón in Puerto Rico and holds a masters degree from the Harvard University Extension School. While at Harvard, he co-founded the Harvard-MIT Puerto Rican Caucus and co-organized its first conference on economic development in Puerto Rico. Currently, he works at LASPAU, a nonprofit dedicated to the advancement of higher education in Latin America. Adrian is also a graduate of the IDCL program for greater Boston and he will be attending Suffolk Law School in the fall.

2012 FAIR HOUSING AWARD CEREMONY PHOTO GALLERY



Keynote Speaker
Timothy Robison



Timothy Robison with CHRC Chair
Melissa Gonzalez-Brenes and
Executive Director Colleen Johnston



Teachers Ryan Platner and
Karen Thompson receiving
awards



Contest student winners and staff



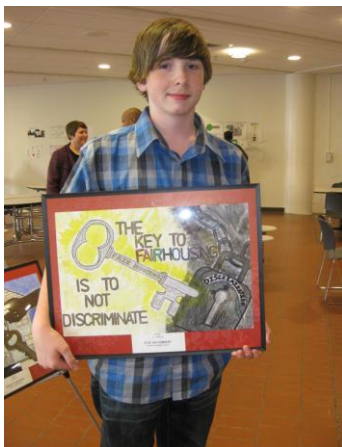
CHRC staff and commissioners



Poster judges:
Ken Barrett, FaruQah A. Rushdan,
Kate Thurman, Mariah Freark,
sitting down, Carmen S. Negrón,
Corey Pilz, Elizabeth Menges,
Marianne Colangelo and
Colleen Johnston

Additional photos can be found on our website

2012 FAIR HOUSING MONTH CONTEST WINNERS



First Prize Poster
LUCAS GIBSON
Kennedy-Longfellow School



Second Prize Poster
JOANN CASSAMA
Kennedy-Longfellow School



First Prize Essay
MEKLIT MELAKU
Morse School

TOP PRIZE POSTER WINNERS

1 st	Lucas Gibson	Kennedy-Longfellow
2 nd	Joann Cassama	Kennedy-Longfellow
3 rd	Perri Wilson	Graham & Parks
4 th	Maya Gunther	Graham & Parks
5 th	Emma Nour Belabbes	Kennedy-Longfellow
6 th	Makayla Durant	Kennedy-Longfellow
6 th	Daviana Englander	Kennedy-Longfellow
6 th	Sofia Kaufman	Graham & Parks

TOP PRIZE ESSAY WINNERS

1 st	Meklit Melaku	Morse
2 nd	Brianna Forte	Morse
3 rd	Sabrin Mohamednur	Morse

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL THE
WINNERS**

HONORABLE MENTION

Graham & Parks		Kennedy-Longfellow	Morse
Winifred Austin	Katie McCloskey	Elizabeth Ball	Ophir Danenberg
Alia Campbell	Garyne Nazaire	Mary Gashaw	Fahmida Pasha
Sophie Knight	Maria Penrice	Jachun Lee	
Sophie Lipkin	Rachel Varden	Crystal Oviedo	
Eliza Luden			

**FIRST PRIZE
2012 FAIR HOUSING ESSAY**

By Meklit Melaku

FAIR HOUSING

Fair housing is a crucial part of a good and healthy community. How can everyone be expected to be good and neighbors and grow together if everyone isn't equal? It's a huge problem to be discriminated by your sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc. It's just wrong and appalling. We are all equals and need to treat each other as such. What will we become if we allow ourselves to discriminate and abuse each other because of our differences? It can never be taken that far. I believe that we can create diverse and welcome communities by being fair and open minded. It's a very bright future.

I believe that fair housing is more important than people think. Nobody will truly understand until they've been turned away from doors because of who they are. Possibilities and potential homes just denied to them. It must be so frustrating and quite frankly infuriating. I would certainly be outraged. Simply put, it isn't *fair*. I think that it means a lot to these people that great lengths are being made so that they can be on the same levels as others. They certainly deserve those chances.

To me fair housing means equal opportunities and chances. Nobody is singled out or treated differently. Discrimination is a disgusting thing that I hope is being put down. I feel like fair housing is opening doors for a lot of people that were usually shut in their faces. Now landlords and employers need to check themselves and be fair. That pleases me immensely. I just think of the people who are finally getting what they deserve. It's truly a great thing that these laws are being enforced to better our communities. That's what fair housing really means to me as a proud community member of Cambridge.

**CAMBRIDGE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S
19TH ANNUAL FAIR HOUSING MONTH
AWARDS CEREMONY**

The awards ceremony for the Cambridge Human Rights Commission's Annual Fair Housing Month Poster and Essay Contest was held on Wednesday, April 25, 2012 in the Media Cafeteria at Cambridge Rindge & Latin School. Commission Chair Melissa Gonzalez-Brenes emceed this year's ceremony and Timothy Robison, Acting Region 1 Director of the Office of Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity of the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, delivered the keynote address. Twenty-six students were awarded prizes for their contest entries. Meklit Melaku of the Morse School, who won first place in the essay contest, read her essay on this year's theme, "**The Key to Fair Housing Is to Not Discriminate.**" Lucas Gibson of the Kennedy/Longfellow School was awarded first prize in the poster contest. Top prize winners were awarded gift cards donated by **Cambridge Savings Bank, East Cambridge Savings Bank and Cambridge Trust Co.** All contest participants were given t-shirts generously donated by these banks. **Many thanks** to the banks and the following businesses for their support and generous donations: **Boston Duck Tours, Lanes and Games, Newbury Comics and MIT Credit Union**, as well as to teachers Lydia Garcia, Ryan Platner and Karen Thompson for encouraging their students' participation in the contest.

