

City of Seattle
Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs

Michael Killoren, Director

Michael McGinn, Mayor



DEPARTMENTAL BRIEFING ON 2010 RSJI WORK PLAN

July 14, 2010

To: Nick Licata, Chair
Housing, Human Services, Health, & Culture Committee

From: Michael Killoren, Director

Subject: Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs presentation on 2010 Race and Social Justice Initiative Work Plans

I am looking forward to sharing the Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs' Race and Social Justice Work Plan with your committee on July 14, 2010.

Despite this difficult fiscal environment and ever increasing constituent needs, I am pleased to see that RSJI continues to be a priority for the Mayor and City Council. Eliminating race-based inequities in our city is difficult work, and requires a long-term commitment. Your shared commitment and support is critical to our success.

The Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs has had an active RSJI Change Team since 2004. In fact, our Office was the first to contact Mickey Fearn as he was starting to launch the initiative. From the beginning, he understood the power that the arts have in bringing diverse cultures together. He described arts and culture as the bridge of understanding among people.

In reflecting on the role of race and social justice in our work, these core values are integrated throughout all phases of our work. This is made clear to every staff person and explained to our Commissioners. This work permeates every facet of our programs and services, our work in the community, our outreach, and our hiring. As a team, we are constantly challenging ourselves and each other to determine if we're truly doing everything within our power to reach, serve, engage and reflecting the diverse communities that are Seattle.

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Change team:

Each of our Office's four lines of business are represented on our Change Team. For our Race & Social Justice work plan, each member works with their team to establish at least one goal they will focus on for the year. The Leadership Team and the RSJI Change Team also establish an annual goal. These goals are above and beyond all the race and social justice work we do that is already integrated into our day-to-day lines of business.

Accomplishment Highlights:

- Our staff, commissioners and panels reflect the diversity of the City.
- Our smART ventures program and the team that created it won the Seattle Management Association's first Race & Social Justice Award in 2008 for the impact the program has had in serving Seattle's diverse communities (people of color, immigrants, seniors, youth, low-income, the physically challenged, the LGBTQ community).
- Our independent peer panel review process prioritizes our RSJI values in all funding and artist selection decisions.
 - Assemble diverse panels that reflect the cultural and racial diversity of Seattle, in addition to artistic and cultural areas of expertise.
 - In 2009 we used the RSJ Equity Filter to review our entire panel process and implemented strategic actions to create even greater equity. One specific change was our orientation process for panelists. We now clearly emphasize our race & social justice values – they are purchasing artistic services for the residents of the City and their decisions need to reflect the diversity of the City as well as have relevance for diverse communities. We hand out the City's demographic data and talk about disparities that exist as an initial step in the process.
- We share our RSJ values with all those who apply and those we fund, guiding them to think about underserved communities in the work they do.
- Ethnic Arts Connection serves performing and visual artists who represent Seattle's diverse ethnic communities by connecting them with potential presenters. With our community partners, we provide skill-building workshops for the artists and cultural awareness workshops for the presenters.
- Neighborhood & Community Arts funds many of the diverse ethnic and cultural festivals in neighborhoods throughout the City from South Park to Rainier Beach to Georgetown to Wedgwood.
- We've been an active department, especially in addressing the race and social justice disparities, on the South Park Action Agenda, the Southeast Seattle Action Agenda and the City's Race & Social Justice Summits.
- Our Public Art Curator worked with the City's Affinity groups to establish a rotating gallery highlighting the work of diverse artists.

- We program City Hall Exhibits offering community-based groups the opportunity to showcase their stories.
- Seattle Presents offers an incredible array of cultural performances year-round – over 2/3 of which represent immigrant and communities of color.
- To celebrate the centennial of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, we partnered with the Pagdiriwang Festival to re-enact a mock village of the Igorot people from the Philippines, turning what was a painful memory from 1909 into a powerful race and social justice learning experience for the entire community in 2009.

Attached is our 2010 Mid-Year report. We have also included the RSJ measures we track for our programs.

This is hard work. We have some tough conversations about race in our Office and continue to grapple with how we can better serve all the City's constituents. Capacity and the difficult economy have been a challenge. But ironically, that has made the race and social justice work we do even more vital than ever before. Art and culture bridges diverse communities. It reaches people regardless of language or age. It reflects how communities view themselves and want others to view them. It offers a voice to many who have no other way to share what is of value to them.

I look forward to sharing our work, and strategizing with the Committee about how we can collectively work for racial equity.

Cc: Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs Change Team
SOCR – Julie Nelson, Glenn Harris and Darlene Flynn