



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Commission on the Status of Women

DATE: March 5, 2009
BOARD MEETING DATE: March 17, 2009
SPECIAL NOTICE/HEARING: None
VOTE REQUIRED: Majority

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jei Africa, President, CSW
Honora R. Miller, Director, CSW

SUBJECT: 2008 Annual Report

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the 2008 Annual Report from the Commission on the Status of Women.

VISION ALIGNMENT:

Commitment(s): Realize the potential of our diverse population. Provide equal access to educational opportunities. Ensure basic health and safety for all.

Goal(s): **1-** Our diverse population works well together to build strong communities, effective government and a prosperous economy. **4-** Residents have many educational and training opportunities beyond high school. **5-** Residents have access to healthcare and preventive care. **8-** Help vulnerable people- the aged, disabled, mentally ill, at-risk youth and other- achieve a better quality of life.

BACKGROUND:

Since 1982, the Commission on the Status of Women of San Mateo County has served the Board of Supervisors by keeping actively informed about the diverse needs of women in our County. The Commission identifies policies, programs and legislation to address the needs of women, girls and families and makes recommendations to the Board for consideration. The Commission also addresses women's needs directly by helping create partnerships that ignite positive change, and by honoring the achievements of women through the annual Women's Hall of Fame, now in its 25th year. In 2008, commissioners were busy on a number of fronts that will be outlined briefly in the following section.

DISCUSSION:

Women's Leadership Development

The Commission orchestrated the development of a local chapter of the California Elected Women's Association (CEWAER), newly renamed California Women Lead, to provide a non-partisan forum to encourage, train and support women to seek appointed and elected positions throughout San Mateo County and beyond. Several commissioners are members of the founding Board of Directors of that Chapter and are involved with efforts to organize appointments training, campaign training and networking opportunities for appointed and elected women.

2008 Women's Health Conference

The Commission initiated and planned the regions first major women's health conference titled: Feeling Great in '08 held on April 5, 2008 that was attended by more than 600 women. The conference focused on helping women make small changes that lead to life-long benefits. Collaborators included the County Health Department, County Medical Center, major hospitals and the Bay Area Parent Magazine.

Status of Women Indicator

The Commission initiated work on a Status of Women Indicator to be published in late 2009 highlighting economic and social variables that will provide insight into how women are doing in San Mateo County.

Women's Clothing Drive

During 2008, the Commission organized a successful clothing drive with County Employees for women's work attire that was held on January 7th & 8th, 2009 for the Career Closet, a local non-profit that assists women who are entering/re-entering the workforce with clothing and confidence-building to help them on their path to employment. Nearly 200 County employees donated women's clothing, shoes and accessories.

Women's Correctional Center

In 2008, the Commission kept abreast of the changing needs of the county's correctional system through attendance at meetings of the Jail Overcrowding Task Force and the Criminal Justice Committee. Commissioners contributed to the planning of the County's community outreach meetings on the placement of the new jail facility, toured the Maguire Correctional Facility to better understand the contrast in services being offered to male and female inmates, and visited the Santa Rita Jail in Dublin, CA to learn about their parent/child contact visit program with members of the Sheriff's Jail Planning Unit.

Assessing the Status of Women

In 2008 the Commission continued its ongoing “What Do Women Want?” Speak Ups campaign with targeted groups in the county. A listening tour was held that included focus group sessions with the Human Investment Project’s Self Sufficiency Program, and Seniors at the Fair Oaks Community Center.

Events

2008 Women’s Hall of Fame: This event has recognized extraordinary and dedicated women for the past 24 years and continues to be a time honored San Mateo County tradition. Clarise Blanchard, Barbara Hammerman (inducted posthumously), Nancy Lane, Suzanne McKechnie Klahr, Claire Mack, Susan Manheimer, and Maureen Perron were inducted into the 24th Annual Women’s Hall of Fame on March 27, 2008. The Young Women of Excellence honored were Lisa Chan and Natasha LaVogue.

Women’s Art Exhibit: During the month of March (Women’s History Month), the Commission co-sponsored with the Arts Commission a Women’s Art Exhibit in the Hall of Justice showcasing the work of local women artists and focusing on the theme, “The Female Gaze”.

Children’s Memorial Flag Raising: For the past decade the Commission has organized this ceremony in memory of children who have died as a result of violence as part of a nation-wide public awareness effort. This event was officiated by Supervisor Mark Church on Friday, April 25, 2008. Debbie Appel, Legal Program Director at Communities Overcoming Relationship Abuse and Lt. Marc Alcantara, Detectives Bureau Commander spoke about the impact of domestic violence on children and the County’s efforts to remove weapons from perpetrators of domestic violence through the Domestic Violence Firearms Compliance Task Force.

Women’s Health Week: The Commission organized a Board proclamation on May 6th in collaboration with the Health Department celebrating women taking responsibility for their own health and the importance of community support for women’s health. The proclamation noted that women at all ages and different stages of their lives need a gender specific approach to their health issues.

Women’s Equality Day: The Commission organized a Board proclamation for Women’s Equality Day (August 26th) to commemorate the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution granting women the right to vote and to promote awareness about the continuing need to work toward achieving full equality.

Plans for 2009

The Commission recently updated its strategic work plan for 2008-2011 at an annual retreat. In addition to the ongoing work described above, the plan includes: (1) Celebration of the 25th Anniversary Women’s Hall of Fame on March 20, 2009; and (2) Co-sponsorship of a women’s health expo with Mills-Peninsula Health Services in

October 2009.

FISCAL IMPACT:

All activities undertaken by the Commission are covered by profits from the Women's Hall of Fame awards banquet.

The Commission would like to thank the Board of Supervisors for its ongoing support and encouragement.