

City of Philadelphia

**Commission on Human Relations
Fair Housing Commission**



2008 Annual Report



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Executive Director.....	2
Commissioners and Staff.....	3
Mission.....	4
Historic Moments.....	4
Central Intake Unit.....	5
Compliance Division.....	6
Compliant Process.....	6
Complaint's Docketed and Closed in 2008.....	7
Compliance Division Highlights.....	8
New Domestic and Sexual Violence Law.....	9
Life Partnership Registrations.....	11
Community Relations Division.....	11
The Dispute Resolution Program.....	12
Community Relations Division Highlights.....	13
The Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission.....	17
Fair Housing Commission Highlights.....	17
Operating Budget.....	18



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS
The Curtis Center
601 Walnut Street, Suite 300 South
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Telephone (215) 686-4670
Fax (215) 686-4684

REV. RALPH E. BLANKS
Chairperson, PFHC

RUE LANDAU, ESQ.
Executive Director

Fellow Philadelphians,

I am pleased to present to you our 2008 Annual Report. This past year has been a time of exciting change for the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) and the Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission (PFHC). In June, I was appointed as the new Executive Director; shortly thereafter Mayor Michael Nutter appointed a slate of new Commissioners.

We were very fortunate to join some of the finest public servants in the City. PCHR staff work tirelessly every day to protect our civil rights, to promote positive inter-group relations in our neighborhoods, and to ensure safe, habitable housing.

Consider the following statistics: In 2008, our Compliance Division closed 251 discrimination cases and assisted in settlements recovering almost \$375,000 for complainants. In addition, 294 new discrimination cases were filed with our agency. Our Community Relations Division helped to resolve 386 neighbor disputes that may have escalated to violence without intervention. Of those disputes, 171 were resolved through our professional mediations. Through its public hearing process, the Fair Housing Commission resolved 203 landlord and tenant disputes and 199 new cases were filed.

In addition, the agency worked to ensure the smooth implementation of a new ordinance which requires employers to provide unpaid leave to victims of domestic abuse or sexual violence.

Finally, this year, marked the 10-year anniversary of Philadelphia's historic Domestic Partnership legislation. We are proud to report that since 1998, over 568 same-sex couples have registered their relationships with the City.

But we have more work to do. Sadly, acts of discrimination still occur every day. And, as our City grows more diverse, we must be vigilant in promoting communities that are respectful and inclusive of all its members.

Thank you for your support. We look forward to working with you throughout the upcoming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rue Landau".

Rue Landau, Esq.
Executive Director

**The City of Philadelphia
Commission on Human Relations
and
Fair Housing Commission**

**601 Walnut Street, Suite 300 South
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: 215-686-4670
TTY: 215-686-3238 www.phila.gov/humanrelations
E-mail: faqpchr@phila.gov**

The Honorable Michael A. Nutter
Mayor

Commissioners

Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR): Rabbi Rebecca T. Alpert, Regina Austin, Esq., Fernando Chang-Muy, Esq., Thomas H. Earle, Esq., Chukri Khorchid, Sarah E. Ricks, Esq., Nicholas D. Torres, Kay Kyungsun Yu, Esq.

Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission: Rev. Ralph E. Blanks, *Chairperson*, Rev. James S. Allen, Sr., Diane Canty, Anthony Lewis Jr., Laura Weinbaum

Staff

Administration: Rue Landau, Esq., *Executive Director*, Angela DeShields, *Administrative Officer*, Naarah' Crawley, Jack Fingerman, Henry Kogan, Barry Williams

PCHR Compliance Division: Rachel Lawton, *Deputy Director*, Joseph Farley, *Supervisor*, Wilma Holmes, *Supervisor*, Paulette Banks, Denise Benrahou, Bernard Bivens, Carolyn Collins, Matthew Cowell, Clarissa Larke, Deborah Rudbarg, Sheena Thomas-Austin, Michele White-Cooke

PCHR Community Relations Division: Ernest Greenwood, *Deputy Director*, John McNeil, *Supervisor*; Wutha Chin, Patricia Coyne, Shawna Holts, Nancy Rivera, Joseph Range, Jonah Roll, Veronica Szymanski

Fair Housing Commission/Central Intake: Rosemary Branigan, *Supervisor*, San Chin, Sophia Geyfetsman, Vivian Gray, Rhonda Kitchen, Brenda Madera

**The PCHR also has a North Philadelphia field office that is located at:
601 W. Lehigh Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19133
Telephone: 215-685-9761
Fax: 215-686-9768**

MISSION

Established under the Home Rule Charter, the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) 1) administers and enforces all statutes and ordinances prohibiting discrimination, and 2) conducts educational programs promoting equality and understanding among the City's diverse populations.

In particular, the PCHR enforces the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance, Chapter 9-1100 of the Philadelphia Code, which prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, use of public accommodations, and the delivery of City services. Our Community Relations staff members work with community leaders, neighborhood organizations, local businesses, schools, and the police to resolve conflicts and promote intergroup harmony within Philadelphia's diverse communities. In addition, the PCHR processes applications of same-sex couples who wish to register their life partnerships with the City.

The PCHR consists of nine Commissioners, an Executive Director and a staff of professional investigators and mediators. The Commission receives and investigates complaints or it may initiate its own investigations of potentially discriminatory or unfair practices. It may hold public hearings and make public its findings.

In addition, the PCHR staffs the Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission (PFHC), which enforces the Fair Housing Ordinance, Chapter 9-800 of the Philadelphia Code and addresses unfair rental practices and other landlord-tenant disputes. There are five PFHC Commissioners. The Commission has the power to hold hearings and conduct investigations in connection with any unfair rental practice upon complaint or upon its own initiative.

HISTORIC MOMENTS

In 1951, Philadelphia became the first city in the United States to include a provision for an official human relations agency in its charter. That year, the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations assumed the powers and duties of the former, more limited Fair Employment Practices Commission.

City Council created the Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission in 1962 to address unfair rental practices, and in 1963 charged the PCHR with enforcing the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance, replacing the Fair Employment Practices Ordinance.

In 1967, two amendments were added to the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance, making housing discrimination illegal in the sale of owner-occupied, one- and two-family homes. Prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of sex were added in 1972. That year, housing and public accommodation provisions were also expanded, as well as provisions that protected the rights of people with disabilities. In 1980, marital status, source of income, age, and presence of children were added as protected classes to the housing provisions of the Ordinance.

In 1975, after discovering that many incidents reported as intergroup tensions were in reality disputes between neighbors, the PCHR established the Dispute Resolution Program (DRP) to help residents resolve disputes among themselves. Since then, other municipalities, as well as private and public agencies, have emulated the DRP.

Landmark amendments were added to the City’s Fair Practices Ordinance in 1982. These amendments made discrimination illegal in all areas on the basis of sexual orientation. The amendments also banned discrimination in employment on the bases of age 40 and above, as well as physical and/or mental disability.

In 1985, the PCHR began accepting complaints of discrimination in the delivery of City services. In 1986, the City Solicitor defined AIDS as a disability under the Ordinance. In 1987, the mayor issued Executive Order 1-87, which formalized the policy of prohibiting discrimination in the delivery of City services. The mayor also issued Executive Order 4-86, which prohibited discrimination based on AIDS in the delivery of City services.

City Council adopted Bill No. 412 in 1990, expanding the meaning of Public Accommodation in the Ordinance. The amendment added health care providers and mortuary services as a Public Accommodation, and protected from discrimination residents who lived with, or were perceived as living with, HIV and/or AIDS.

In June 1993, the PCHR began staffing the Fair Housing Commission, which addresses unfair rental practices in housing and other landlord-tenant disputes.

Historic life partnership bills were passed by City Council in 1998, entrusting the PCHR with implementing procedures and processing applications of same-sex couples who wish to register their life partnerships with the City. Amendments were also added to the City’s Fair Practices Ordinance, including a definition of life partnership and provisions prohibiting discrimination based on marital status in employment, housing, public accommodations, and the delivery of City services.

Philadelphia once again broke historic ground in 2002, when the Mayor signed a landmark amendment to the Ordinance that added Gender Identity as a protected class. That year, transgender citizens facing discrimination in employment, housing, use of public accommodations, or the delivery of City services became eligible to file complaints.

CENTRAL INTAKE UNIT

The Central Intake Unit interviews clients for both the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) and the Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission (PFHC).

The intake interview is a detailed and confidential process that is designed to determine if a client has a jurisdictional complaint that could be addressed by either the PCHR or the PFHC. If a concern is not within our jurisdiction, the client will be referred to the appropriate agency.

<i>Central Intake Services</i>	
	Number
Cases.....	879
Requests for Information through Intake.....	6,962
Total Agency Requests for Information	15,540

COMPLIANCE DIVISION

Our Compliance Division enforces the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance that prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, use of public accommodations, and the delivery of City services. The Compliance Division also educates the public and conducts trainings on discrimination law.

Under the Fair Practices Ordinance, it is illegal to discriminate in employment or delivery of City services on the bases of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age (40 and over), sex (including pregnancy and sexual harassment), sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, marital status, or retaliation. The same bases are covered in terms of housing, with the following exceptions: mental disability is not covered; however, presence of children, source of income, and *any* age are covered. In use of public accommodations, the bases are the same as those covered in employment, except that age and retaliation are not covered.

Complaint Process

By law, a discrimination complaint must be filed within 300 days of the last alleged discriminatory act. A complaint is considered to be filed once it has been signed, verified, and received by the PCHR; it is considered docketed once it has been approved by a supervisor and assigned to an investigator. Due to the PCHR's work-sharing agreement with the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC), most of the cases filed with the PCHR are dual-filed with the EEOC. In addition, the EEOC refers many of its Philadelphia complaints directly to the PCHR for investigation.

Once a case is assigned to an investigator, the investigation process begins. While we strive to complete each investigation promptly, some cases are more complicated than others and take more staff time and resources to complete. Most cases filed with the PCHR contain multiple counts of discrimination. Throughout the investigation process, investigators try to conciliate cases, frequently making multiple attempts at resolution before an agreement or other result is ultimately reached.

Parties are required to cooperate with investigations. In the event that a party fails to cooperate, the Commission can issue a subpoena to compel the production of documents or the presence of witnesses.

Cases may be resolved in one of five ways:

- **Settlement:** a voluntary settlement is reached between the complainant and respondent;
- **Charge not substantiated (CNS):** no evidence is found to support the allegations once the investigation is completed and all documentation, witness testimony, and evidence have been analyzed;
- **Administrative closure:** a complainant decides to pursue the case in state or federal court; or the complainant failed to cooperate or is unable to be located;
- **Withdraw:** the complainant chooses not to pursue the case;
- **Public hearing:** evidence is found that supports a charge, a finding of probable cause is made and the Commissioners hold a public hearing, render a decision, and issue an order. Decisions from the Commission are appealable to the Court of Common Pleas.

Complaints Docketed and Closed in 2008

Area	Docketed (Pending)	Closed
Employment	260	226
Housing	13	11
Public Accommodation	19	12
City Services	2	2
Total	294	251

Complaints Docketed by Basis in 2008

Basis	Employment	Housing	Public Accommodation	City Services
Race	93	3	8	1
Color	93	3	8	1
Religion	15	1	1	0
National Origin	40	1	2	1
Ancestry	6	1	2	1
Sex (Gender)	84	5	3	0
Sex Harassment	18	3	0	0
Sexual Orientation	17	2	4	0
Gender Identity	1	0	2	0
Disability	78	6	3	0
Age	42	0	NC*	0
Marital Status	1	0	0	0
Retaliation	87	1	NC	0
Source of Income	NC	0	NC	NC
Presence of Children	NC	0	NC	NC
Other	4	0	2	2

Complaints Closed By Basis in 2008

Basis	Employment	Housing	Public Accommodation	City Services
Race	89	2	4	0
Color	74	2	3	1
Religion	15	1	1	0
National Origin	30	0	1	1
Ancestry	10	1	0	0
Sex (Gender)	70	3	2	1
Sexual Harassment	19	2	0	1
Gender Identity	1	0	0	0
Disability	43	0	1	0
Age	36	0	NC	0
Marital Status	1	0	0	0
Retaliation	87	1	NC	1
Source of Income	NC	1	NC	NC
Presence of Children	NC	0	NC	NC
Other	1	1	1	1

*Note: The number of protected class bases docketed and closed exceeded the total number of complaints. This is because more than a single basis and more than one type of discriminatory act may have been part of a single complaint. * NC= Not Covered*

Distribution of Case Closures

Case Closing Type	Employment	Housing	Public Accommodation	City Services	Total
Administrative	51	5	4	0	60
Charge Not Substantiated	102	4	5	2	113
Settled with Benefits	61	1	2	0	64
Withdraw with Benefits	8	1	1	10	10
Total	222	11	12	2	247

COMPLIANCE DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

In 2008, the Compliance Division assisted in settlements recovering \$374,743.62 for 55 complainants. The following cases illustrate some of the work done by this unit.

Sexual Orientation Complaint Settled

An auto dealer agreed to pay a complainant \$11,000 to settle his complaint of alleged discrimination in the workplace. The complainant alleged that the auto dealer discriminated against him by creating a hostile work environment in allowing anti-gay comments and graffiti in the workplace, and subsequently terminating him after he complained — all based on his perceived sexual orientation and/or retaliation.

A finding of probable cause was made, but the respondent and complainant settled the matter prior to a public hearing. In addition to the monetary settlement, the respondent agreed to train all employees on protected bases under The Fair Practices Ordinance, and to provide additional sexual-orientation-specific training to all managerial staff, and adopt an inclusive anti-discrimination policy and forward it to all staff. The respondent also agreed to post the policy in conspicuous locations and provide the complainant with a neutral employment reference.

Medical Testing Facility Settles Complaint

A medical testing facility agreed to pay a Hispanic complainant a \$10,500 settlement. The complainant charged that her employer discriminated against her based on her national origin and/or ancestry in denying her a promotional opportunity that was awarded to a less-qualified, non-Hispanic candidate. The employer denied that it had discriminated against the complainant but agreed to settle the complaint.

Complaint Settled Against Dentist

A local dentist agreed to pay a female complainant a \$10,000 settlement. The complainant alleged that the dentist discriminated against her because of her religion and/or disability by harassing her and creating an uncomfortable work environment for her. The respondent subsequently terminated the complainant. The respondent denied that it had discriminated against the complainant but agreed to settle the complaint.

Race Discrimination Complaint Settled

A construction company agreed to pay a Black complainant \$9,000 to settle his complaint. The complainant alleged that the construction company discriminated against him by laying him off and subsequently terminating him for allegedly sleeping on the job.

The respondent denied that it had discriminated against the complainant but agreed to settle the complaint after a charge of retaliation was filed against the company.

Complainant Receives Job Back

A janitorial company agreed to restore a disabled male complainant to his full-time position after he filed a complaint. The complainant alleged that the respondent discriminated against him because of his disability and/or age and/or gender when it failed to grant him reasonable accommodations and terminated him while not doing so to a similarly situated younger female employee. The respondent denied that it had discriminated.

SEPTA TransPass Complaint Moves Forward

On September 19, 2008, the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) voted unanimously to investigate a gender identity discrimination complaint brought against the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). The complaint alleged that SEPTA's policy of requiring that a person's gender be specified on their TransPass can lead to discriminatory treatment by SEPTA employees and is in violation of the City's Fair Practices Ordinance.

SEPTA filed a request to dismiss the complaint, claiming that the Commission does not have jurisdiction over the transportation agency. The PCHR, relying on a recommendation from the City Law Department, ruled that it has jurisdiction and will investigate the complaint. SEPTA is now cooperating with the PCHR in the investigation of the complaint.

New Domestic and Sexual Violence Law

Effective January 5, 2009, a new ordinance titled "Entitlement to Leave Due to Domestic or Sexual Violence" became law. The PCHR is charged with enforcing the new law, which is in effect until January 5, 2010.

The new law requires employers to provide up to eight weeks (depending on the size of the employer) of unpaid leave annually to victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking, or has a family or household member who is a victim.

Employees may take this leave to receive applicable victim support services. The Ordinance provides for job and benefits protection during the leave and prohibits retaliation against employees or interference with leave rights.

Leave under the new domestic or sexual violence law does not extend an employee's leave entitlement beyond the 12 weeks he/she may be entitled to annually under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). As with the FMLA, the leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced work schedule.

Employees may take leave to do any of the following for themselves, their household, or their family member:

- Seek medical attention for physical or psychological injuries
- Obtain help from an organization that provides services to domestic or sexual violence victims
- Obtain counseling or therapy
- Make safety plans, including possibly relocating to increase safety
- Seek legal assistance

An employee requesting the leave must provide the employer with at least 48-hour notice of the leave unless it is not practicable for the employee to do so.

In addition, the employer may require the employee to provide a certification of the domestic or sexual violence and the reason that the employee must take the leave.

Under the Ordinance:

- An employee may take up to 8 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period if the employee works for an employer who employs 50 or more employees.
- An employee may take up to 4 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period if the employee works for an employer who employs fewer than 50 employees.
- This leave, when added to any leave that the employee has taken under the FMLA cannot be more than the 12 weeks in a 12-month period provided under the FMLA.
- Employees may use any paid leave available under the employer's policies during this leave, but it will not increase the amount of leave that the employee can take.
- Employees are entitled to maintain all benefits accrued prior to taking the leave.
- Upon return from leave, the employee must be restored to his or her original position or an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay and other terms and conditions of employment.
- For the duration of the leave, an employer must continue the health benefits for the employee and the employee's family or household members on the same terms as if the employee were not on leave; the employee must continue to pay the employee's share of the cost.
- All information provided by the employee to the employer pursuant to the law must be kept confidential.

An employee may file a complaint against an employer if the employer refuses to grant the employee leave or retaliates against the employee for taking, or requesting to take leave.

The Ordinance granting the leave expires on January 5, 2010. An official notice of the law must be posted wherever employees are performing work.

Life Partnership Registrations

This year marked the 10-year anniversary of Philadelphia's historic life partnership legislation. Since its passage on May 19, 1998, 568 same-sex couples have registered their relationships with the City.

The life partnership legislation:

- Amended the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance to include a definition of *life partnership* as being a long-term committed relationship between two unmarried individuals of the same sex.
- Amended the Ordinance to include marital status as a protected class, making discrimination on the basis of marital status illegal in areas of employment, housing, use of public accommodations and the delivery of City services.

- Allowed life partners of City employees to be eligible for benefits under the City's various employee benefit plans, and allowed members of the municipal retirement system to name any person, including a life partner, as a beneficiary.

Life Partnership Registrations

Year	Number
2008	39
2007	30
2006	44
2005	40
2004	58
2003	46
2002	52
2001	55
2000	52
1999	84
1998	68
Total	568

COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIVISION

The Community Relations Division (CRD) deals with all matters of intergroup conflict and neighborhood disputes within the City. The CRD uses a variety of approaches to encourage people of all backgrounds to cooperatively coexist with one another regardless of group identity. Clients are provided with assessment, conciliation and follow-up services during a crisis.

A key function of the CRD is to help empower communities by building coalitions that work together to solve common problems or concerns. This is achieved by working in cooperation with the police; business, community, and religious leaders; and other government and private agencies.

The CRD also provides schools, communities and government agencies with informational sessions and training programs on issues relating to cultural diversity and intergroup harmony. These educational activities are designed to reduce and prevent intergroup tension, addressing issues before they rise to the level of intergroup conflict.

Staff members are fluent in several languages and are able to accommodate clients speaking any language.

The Dispute Resolution Program

The CRD's Dispute Resolution Program (DRP) focuses on providing mediation, conciliation, counseling, and referral services to neighbors and others who have ongoing conflicts. Many DRP cases are referred to the PCHR by the District Attorney's Office, the police, or the courts.

The DRP mediates disputes that have not yet escalated to violence and are not being litigated in court. The program helps prevent the escalation of neighborhood problems into potentially violent events. A trained and experienced CRD mediator conducts formal mediation sessions to help the parties identify the nature of their conflict. Once the disputing parties reach an understanding, the mediator develops a confidential and legally binding agreement.

The DRP services are offered to individuals, households, and groups who have an ongoing relationship with each other. They are usually neighbors but can also be business people whose shops or stalls are near each other, coworkers, or members of a church, fraternal organization, or community group.

The DRP Can:

- Help assess the nature of a dispute in a confidential setting and provide a client with the skills necessary to solve the dispute
- Attempt to establish communication between disputing parties
- Provide formal mediation services and develop a confidential, legally binding agreement

The DRP Does Not:

- Allow staff to take sides in a dispute
- Force or compel people to participate in the program
- Act as a substitute for a court of law
- Do anything that may harm anyone, including violating someone's confidentiality

The DRP Cannot Help:

- People in the same household
- People in intimate relationships
- Victims of serious crimes or property damage
- Strangers who have had a single dispute or incident and who are not likely to ever see each other again
- Disputants who are already in court or whose dispute is in front of an administrative body (e.g., the Zoning Board of Adjustment)

CRD Services	
Dispute Resolution Program (DRP)	
Cases.....	386
Mediations.....	171
Referrals and requests for information.....	4,663

COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

The Dispute Resolution Program in Action:

Case Example:

A CRD Representative was asked by The Good Shepherd Mediation Program to facilitate a mediation that was ordered by Landlord-Tenant Court. The female disputants were both residents of a facility for those previously homeless or recovering from drug and alcohol addiction. Loud music, slamming doors, privacy issues, gossip, and arguments threatened the stability of the facility and both disputants were facing eviction.

Both women agreed to meet for a formal mediation. After hours of discussion, problem solving and reconciliation, the women and the mediating representative were able to draw up an agreement that all could sign. The agreement was taken to court and the judge ordered that both parties were allowed to stay at the facility provided they lived by the agreement they had drawn up with PCHR assistance.

Case Example:

Neighbor A is a single, middle-aged female who works nights and spends most of her free time and money maintaining her home and flower gardens. The home was given to her by her recently deceased father.

She complained that Neighbor B's household caused damage to her property, including her flower beds, and allowed trash to blow onto her property. In addition, she claimed the family talked and played their music too loudly and was disrespectful in their actions and words.

Neighbor B is a young immigrant family with three very active little boys. The father is often out of the house working long hours while the mother takes care of the children and worries about Neighbor A complaining to the landlord about the boys' activities. The family contends that Neighbor A dislikes them because of their race and religion, and that she has made fun of their accents and national origin.

After multiple complaints to the police and Neighbor B's landlord as well as several face-to-face arguments, Neighbor A filed a complaint with the PCHR hoping to find a resolution. The PCHR representative made several contacts with both neighbors, who eventually agreed to a formal mediation to work out their differences. Two CRD representatives co-facilitated the process. After nearly four hours of lively debate and support from the mediators, the neighbors created an agreement that has held to this day.

Honors and Awards

CRD staff members **Jonah Roll** and **Patricia Coyne** received awards in 2008. Roll received a Community Service Award at the 12th Police District Open House Southwest Pride Day. Coyne was added to the Philadelphia Beauty Showcase National Historical Museum Hall of Fame and received the Museum's Founders Award.



Jonah Roll holds his award as PCHR Community Relations Officer Joe Young looks on. Photo: Rue Landau

Violence Free Schools

The Principal of a specialized high school requested the PCHR's assistance in addressing a conflict among a group of 25 female students that he feared could spread into their communities. Five of the students, who allegedly precipitated the conflict, had been suspended. A CRD staff member met with the Principal, Vice Principal and school police officer to chart a plan that included involving the Philadelphia Anti-Violence/Anti-Drug Network (PAAN).

The CRD staff member contacted the parents of each student involved in the conflict and convened and facilitated a meeting of the girls, their parents, school staff and PAAN at the school on the day the suspended girls were being reinstated. After much impassioned finger pointing and outbursts, the discussion became more focused, the girls agreed to be accountable for their actions, and the parents took responsibility for their children. The school staff listened to some concerns about the handling of the suspension and became committed to reviewing their procedures. All girls signed a good conduct pledge and returned to school.

Victim-Offender Conferencing Works

In order to help combat youth violence, A CRD representative served as a trained facilitator in Victim-Offender Conferencing (V-OC) again this year. In 2008, the representative worked on seven cases with both male and female offenders, ages 15 to 17, their parents, and participating victims from five of Philadelphia's police districts.

V-OC is a product of the Philadelphia Family Court Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Task Force. This diversion program addresses the unmet needs of victims of crime and first-time juvenile offenders.

The offenders must take responsibility for their actions and be willing to meet with their victims in person and attempt to "make things right," by apologizing, explaining their actions or making reparations. Because of this personal, empowering experience, the success rate is high, with recidivism rates at only 15-20% among teen offenders going through the program.

Youth Aid Panel Training

Similar to V-OC, staff was asked by Good Shepherd Mediation Program to assist with training at Family Court, 1801 Vine Street. The training was for new volunteers to the Youth Aid Panel (YAP), a diversion program that allows juvenile offenders who have admitted guilt to avoid facing the criminal justice system. YAP operates through the Philadelphia District Attorney's Juvenile Division and is open to first-time offenders, juveniles and their parents go before a panel of trained, volunteer community members who pass sentences that include: restitution, serious self-reflection and community service. Anger management or conflict resolution classes might also be assigned.. The offender signs a contract to complete the sentencing term within three months. Adult monitors from the panels maintain contact throughout the three-month period.

Conflict Resolution Workshop Conducted at Conference on Women and Violence

Women's Way contacted the CRD to present an hour-long workshop on conflict resolution at their November 2008 conference, "Women and the Culture of Violence — Taking a Stand for a Violence-Free Community," at Temple University.

The workshop, "Basic Skills and Resources for Effective Conflict Resolution," was designed to:

- Stimulate insights into what conflict is and how it can be created
- Describe approaches and responses that can be used to seek positive resolutions to conflict
- Identify and share resources on conflict resolution for the Philadelphia area
- Share information about PCHR with a focus on CRD, emphasizing the impact and involvement of women

Mayor Nutter opened the conference and talked about addressing violence at its most basic level, stating, "it's the little things that boil over into the big things." CRD staff opened their workshop with this quote and talked about how conflict resolution effectively addresses escalating violence by targeting conflict at its roots. They walked through tips for de-escalating conflict and offered additional resources, including information on educational and training opportunities. The workshop had approximately 100 attendees.

“Revolutionary Thinking” Highlighted at Annual Conference of State Mediators

In April 2008, CRD participated in the Pennsylvania Council of Mediators annual conference, “Revolutionary Thinking in Pennsylvania,” which highlighted the ongoing efforts of the Advisory Committee of the Joint State Government Commission's Task Force on Alternative Dispute Resolution to identify best practices in conflict resolution and develop a plan to promote dispute resolution alternatives. CRD staff participated in workshops on the effect of mediator/third-party influence on decision-making, the limits of restorative justice attempts, and developing group problem-solving skills through games.

Interagency Civil Rights Task Force

In 2008, the PCHR revived the Interagency Civil Rights Task Force. The Task Force strengthens connections among public and private agencies, including local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, City departments and local non-profit groups. This year, the group was expanded to include representatives from many immigrant and refugee groups, anti-violence organizations, LGBT organizations and school safety advocates. The Task Force seeks to track trends in inter-group conflict as well as hate and bias incidents and crimes, and to coordinate effective responses

CRD Staff Participates in South Philadelphia Community Information Project



The South Philadelphia Community Project featured a parade of nations in native costume and dress. Photo by: Naleyah Gray

In April 2008, CRD staff participated in a Community Information Fair Project in South Philadelphia. The event was a collaboration of the Coalition for Latin-Americans and Immigrants and the San Mateo Carnival Group. Various City agencies gathered and provided information that related to accessible legal, health, and social services. Children's activities, ethnic music and entertainment were also provided.

PCHR Hosts International Delegations

The PCHR hosted four international delegations as part of the international relations program of the International Visitors Council (IVC) of Philadelphia. Three delegations included representatives from Africa, the Balkans and Iraq. The fourth consisted of individuals from 16 countries who participated in a multi-regional project to explore the function and structure of local government.

Among the visits, 12 religious and community leaders from Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia visited the PCHR in April under the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program. They had a very informative meeting with PCHR staff and local interfaith community leaders to discuss ways to foster inter-religious understanding.



Refugees and immigrants from Burma as well as native-born Americans gather to celebrate the first anniversary of the arrival of Burmese families to Philadelphia.

PCHR Participates in First Annual "PhilaBurma Picnic" for Philadelphia Area Burmese Refugee Community

Over 400,000 Burmese have fled into refugee camps as they escaped Myanmar and the world's longest-running civil war. As many as 80,000 Burmese refugees have resettled in the United States. Over 200 of these refugees now live in Philadelphia.

PCHR involvement with the Philadelphia Burmese community began when the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) requested that the PCHR and the Police Department meet with the growing population in South Philadelphia regarding safety concerns.

Since then, a dialogue between the Burmese refugee community, local non-profits and City agencies has continued. Over 125 individuals and families attended the first annual "PhilaBurma Picnic," which was held in July 2008. The PCHR as well as many other non-profit groups and agencies offered information on how to access translation and other services.

THE PHILADELPHIA FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION

Since 1993, the PCHR has staffed the Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission (PFHC), which enforces the Fair Housing Ordinance, Chapter 9-800 of the Philadelphia Code and addresses unfair rental practices within the City. The PFHC is a neutral agency that advocates fairness in rental property relationships. Five commissioners meet and hear approximately six cases each week, and the PFHC staff provides educational outreach.

A Fair Housing complaint may be filed if:

- A tenant is being threatened with illegal eviction
- A landlord is raising rent in the face of housing code violations
- Another term of a lease is being violated
- A landlord is retaliating against a tenant for reporting housing code violations to the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) or for filing a complaint with the PFHC

Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission 2008 Service Report	
	Number
Intakes.....	199
Cases heard.....	203
Referrals and requests for information.....	3,915

FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

Unfair Rental Practices and Retaliation

Case Example:

A Tenant filed a complaint with the PFHC based upon unfair rental practices and retaliation. Her rental property was in very poor condition; she noted severe plumbing and electrical defects, cracks in the front steps, a broken refrigerator, an infestation of rodents and a leak in the kitchen ceiling that started an electrical fire in the light fixture. She contacted the Department of Licenses and Inspection (L&I) to report the defects.

Even with the property in such poor condition, her Landlord wanted to increase the rent by \$475 per month, which he claimed reflected the fair market rent. The Tenant refused to pay the increased rent and instead requested that repairs be made. The Landlord refused to make the repairs and issued her an eviction notice.

After multiple hearings in front of the PFHC, the Commissioners ordered the Landlord to make the necessary repairs and awarded the Tenant an \$800 rent credit. The Landlord ultimately made the repairs and the Tenant was able to remain in the property.

Case Example:

After living in a property for two years, a Tenant came to the PFHC to file a complaint based upon unfair rental practices and retaliation. The Tenant complained to her Landlord about the poor condition of her property but her Landlord refused to make the repairs. The Tenant called L&I and after an inspection the Landlord was cited for failing to provide heat, broken doors and knobs, exposed electrical wires, and a rodent infestation among other issues. In addition, the Landlord did not have a license to rent the property. Shortly after the Tenant contacted L&I she received a notice to vacate the premises.

Since the property had been deemed dangerous by L&I for failing to have heat and a renter's license, the PFHC Commissioners awarded the Tenant a four month rental credit. In addition, the Landlord was ordered to make repairs in a timely manner.

Case Example:

A Tenant filed a complaint with the PFHC claiming that her new apartment had structural damage, a mice infestation, faulty plumbing and poor drainage. She alleged that her Landlord sent her an eviction notice after she complained to him about the violations.

The Landlord recently inherited the property from a relative. He alleged that he attempted to fix the problems, however, when he and a contractor went to the home, the Tenant had her belongings piled four feet high throughout the house. The Landlord noted that the situation posed a fire hazard. He told the Tenant to move her belongings; she refused to cooperate.

At a PFHC hearing, it was evident that the Landlord was making a good faith effort to accommodate the Tenant. The Commissioners ordered the Tenant to keep her escrow current and to cooperate with the contractor. At a second hearing, the Tenant admitted that she had not been placing her rent in escrow account and she was not cooperating with the contractor. The Commissioners ruled that the Tenant must pay her rent in full and that the Landlord could enforce the terms and conditions of the lease.

PCHR Operating Budget - Fiscal Years 2007-2009

Description	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Adopted Budget
Personal Services	\$2,111,219	\$2,070,825	\$2,090,386
Contracts/Leases	\$37,882	\$34,224	\$47,131
Material & Supplies	\$25,602	\$16,542	\$19,274
Total	\$2,117,703	\$2,121,591	\$2,156,791

Revenue Generated	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Budgeted
EEOC Case Closing Reimbursement	\$95,920	\$118,250	\$124,850

Note: The PCHR has a work-sharing contract with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to investigate complaints of discrimination that have been filed with the EEOC. The revenue generated goes directly to the General Fund of the City of Philadelphia. In federal FY2008, the PCHR investigated 215 EEOC complaints and received \$118,250.