



Owatonna Human Rights Commission Newsletter

Summer 2022

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The OHRC meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm in the Second Floor Meeting Room at City Hall, 540 West Hills Circle in Owatonna, MN.

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A Day in My Life as a Property Manager

By Susie Effertz

This edition of the OHRC Newsletter is taking a more “personal” approach due to a particularly heart-warming week. On three different occasions, this property manager (PM) was privy to neighbors positively interacting with neighbors. Read these compelling anecdotes below:

On the first occasion, one resident reached out to her neighbor with a basket full of treats, just because. They have been neighbors for 15 years but have never actually tried to socialize or get to know one another. Two neighbors from two different cultures. When asked why now, she explained that times are different due to the past two years of COVID. Loneliness, isolation, depression, less family support and interaction are things many people are and have been experiencing, so she wanted to take that first step to let her neighbor know she was there for them and just generally cared.

The second occurrence this week was when a resident was in the office doing paperwork when another resident came in to drop off some paperwork and I took the opportunity to introduce these two gentlemen. Yes, they are from the same culture; however, they have lived across the street from each other for four years and never once met. Handshakes and warm greetings were exchanged with an overall gratefulness to have met one another.

The third occurrence was the reintroduction to a foreign language, Somali. Before the days of COVID and closed offices, every time a resident came to the office, the opportunity to practice was used. Both parties benefitted, the opportunity to speak English and vice versa. It seems those days of cultural interaction have returned and are welcome.

At this particular property, managed by this PM, there are 300+ children. Those children are of all cultures and go to school together, take the bus together, walk home together, and play together. Learn community from the children.

“Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much”

~Helen Keller

IT TAKES A VILLAGE Per Wikipedia, *“It takes a village to raise a child”* is an African proverb that means an entire community of people must interact with children for those children to grow in a safe and healthy environment. The shortened coined phrase, *“it takes a village”* could also be used to describe community and how to get along with each other. How about breaking down *“it takes a village”* to *“start with your neighbor and learn from your children.”*