

March 2013



e-news

Subscribe to the new RSJI public e-newsletter! Send an e-mail to [Rsji-eneews@talk2.seattle.gov](mailto:Rsji-eneews@talk2.seattle.gov), and please share the link with your friends and colleagues. Follow us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/SeattleRacialEquity>

## Racial Equity: Think Globally, Act Locally

The Seattle Office for Civil Rights has signed on to the **National Plan of Action for Racial Justice**, a campaign launched by the US Human Rights Network and the Human Rights at Home Campaign. A national network of advocacy organizations is calling on the Obama Administration to adopt a comprehensive plan to end racial inequity and discrimination.

The campaign begins on March 21, 2013, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. On this day, national, state, and local governments are called on to express support for the universal norms of dignity, equality and fairness set forth in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

CERD prohibits racial discrimination and obliges governments to identify and eliminate laws and policies that are discriminatory, and to be proactive about combating prejudice and discrimination. CERD has been ratified by over 170 countries, including the United States.

Achieving racial equity will take more than the work of Seattle City government, more than the combined efforts of the Seattle community. It will take a broad partnership of governments, organizations, businesses and community members across the country.

The National Plan of Action will set concrete targets, create new tools for accountability, and improve coordination in efforts to address racial inequality, inequity, and discrimination to achieve full compliance with CERD. For information on how you can join this effort, see the Human Rights Network [website](#).

## Local implementation

Here at home, Mayor McGinn and the Seattle City Council proclaimed Seattle to be a [Human Rights City](#) in December 2012, at the urging of the Seattle Human Rights Commission. The proclamation commits the City of Seattle to realize the human rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative was recognized as an example of local implementation of international human rights standards in the 2012 Report [Bringing Human Rights Home: How State and Local Governments Can Use Human Rights to Advance Local Policy](#).

## **Prioritize racial equity: Seattle Public Schools to host meetings on its Strategic Plan update**

Here's the good news: we have the opportunity to make racial equity a clear priority of the Seattle School District as it updates its current Strategic Plan, *Excellence for All*.

Here's some more good news: the District has scheduled five community meetings to share information and ask for public comments about updating the District's Strategic Plan. These meetings are a great opportunity for community members to ask the District to make that priority a reality – including the District's commitment to develop clear goals, strategies and timelines for eliminating racial inequity.

The community meetings will be held:

- **Monday, April 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m.**, at Eckstein Middle School auditorium, 3003 N.E. 75th St. (Interpreters available in Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Amharic and Tigrigna).
- **Tuesday, April 2, 6:30-8:30 p.m.**, at Chief Sealth International High School auditorium, 2600 S.W. Thistle (Interpreters available in Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Amharic).
- **Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m.-noon**, at Garfield High School commons, 400-23rd Ave. (Interpreters available in Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Amharic and Tigrigna).
- **Monday, April 8, 6:30-8:30 p.m.**, at Ballard High School commons, 1418 N.W. 65th St. (Interpreters available in Spanish and Somali).
- **Tuesday, April 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m.**, at Aki Kurose Middle School lunchroom, 3928 S. Graham St. (Interpreters available in Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Amharic and Tigrigna).

What do some of these clear goals look like? End racial inequity in student discipline and special education. Ensure equitable access to advanced placement. Hire and retain qualified teachers of color. Ensure that schools with the greatest needs receive more resources. Give teachers training to better understand racism in Seattle today.

These goals are not new; the community has long called for them. What's different is getting the District's stated commitment, and the community's opportunity to urge the District to transform general goals into specific strategies.

The District expects to introduce the updated Strategic Plan to the School Board at the June 19 Board meeting for action at the July 3 Board meeting. The updated plan will guide academic and operational priorities for the next three to five years and include ongoing benchmarking to measure the District's performance. To learn more about the District's Strategic Plan [please click here](#).

## **First annual review looks at the science of implicit bias**

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity has released the inaugural edition of its [“State of the Science Review of Implicit Bias Learning.”](#)

“Examining implicit bias research is important for all who work for racial justice because of the rich insights into human behavior that this work generates,” says the Report’s Introduction. The Institute’s goal is to provide a comprehensive, accessible resource on implicit bias and highlight recent research findings and trends in the field.

---

## **City investigating allegations of improper payment of wages to construction workers**

*Allegations involve City-financed affordable housing projects*

The Seattle Police Department is conducting an active criminal investigation into allegations of improper payment and treatment of workers at affordable housing construction projects that have received City funding.

“Workers deserve fair and humane treatment on the job and a chance to build a better life for themselves and their families,” said Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn. “These are very serious allegations, and the Seattle Police Department will aggressively pursue this investigation.”

Based on information obtained by the City’s contract analyst, allegations of inadequate payment of wages to workers was uncovered in August and September on two affordable housing projects under construction at that time. Additional allegations have been made regarding wages and worker conditions on two additional housing projects, expanding the investigation. Evidence was forwarded to the Seattle Police Department, which has begun a criminal investigation into these allegations.

Since the allegations surfaced, the Mayor’s Office has been working with the Office of Housing, Department of Finance and Administrative Services, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, and Seattle Office for Civil Rights to evaluate systems in place for monitoring and compliance. The Mayor’s Office has also brought to the table nonprofit affordable housing developers, trade unions and stakeholders to solicit their feedback. At the conclusion of the first round of discussions, stakeholders agreed to convene their members to develop ideas on how to address these issues in new ways. They will work collaboratively with the City to explore improvements to our compliance and monitoring requirements to help detect and prevent worker exploitation.

[Click here for the full Mayor’s Office 3/5/13 press release.](#)

---

## College Bound Scholarships for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders

The College Bound Scholarship program promises tuition and a small book allowance for [income-eligible](#) students who sign up in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade and successfully apply to a higher education institution when they graduate high school. Students may sign up in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and need only apply once.

**The deadline for all applicants is by June 30 at the end of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.**

Choose a link below to see information for:

[Middle School Students & Families](#)

[High School Students & Families](#)

---

## KUDOS!

### To Jacque Larrainzar for new RET Toolkit trainings for Seattle Parks

*Hi Julie, this is a quick note to let you know how much we (leadership, management and the RSJI Change Team) at Seattle Parks appreciate the professional, stimulating, and customer friendly training presentations conducted by Jacque on the new RET.*

*I have been with Jacque now in training our Finance Division management team, the RSJI Change team, and our Planning and Development Management team and she has done a stellar job not just teaching us but responding to the many questions we had about the toolkit. I just want to say that these trainings are useful and will make a positive impact in helping us work toward eliminating racial inequity and providing programs and services that are accessible for those that have been left out by institutional and structural racism. Please pass on our gratitude to Jacque.*

*Thanks very much to you and your team for championing the RSJI!*

Charles Ng, Manager  
Contracts Administration and Support Office  
Seattle Parks and Recreation

### To Julie Nelson and Glenn Harris for Race: Power of an Illusion Training

*Hi Julie and Glen,*

*The "Race: Power of Illusion" training last week was wonderful. There were some new things for me and there were others that gave me a different perspective. It is amazing to see how decisions made generation(s) ago still make a difference in people's everyday lives. I was surprised to know the discrimination in housing and the impact on people's wealth that cascades down to future generations.*

*The material was great and it was put together well. Thank you for your hard work in making it happen. - Shree Ram Dahal, Immigration and Refugee Commission*

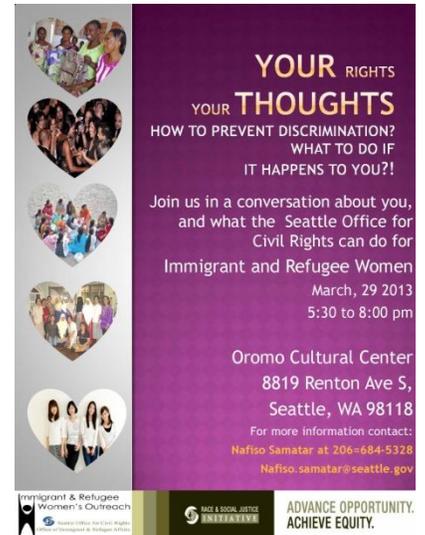
## Upcoming Events

### Your Rights, Your Thoughts! How to prevent discrimination and what to do if it happens to you.

Join us in a conversation about you, and what the Office for Civil Rights can do for Immigrant and Refugee Women:

Friday, March 29, 5:30 to 8 PM  
Oromo Cultural Center  
8819 Renton Ave. S.  
Seattle, WA 98118

Questions? Contact Nafiso Samatar at 206-684-5328 or  
[Nafiso.Samatar@seattle.gov](mailto:Nafiso.Samatar@seattle.gov)



**YOUR RIGHTS  
YOUR THOUGHTS**  
HOW TO PREVENT DISCRIMINATION?  
WHAT TO DO IF  
IT HAPPENS TO YOU?!

Join us in a conversation about you,  
and what the Seattle Office for  
Civil Rights can do for  
Immigrant and Refugee Women  
March, 29 2013  
5:30 to 8:00 pm

Oromo Cultural Center  
8819 Renton Ave S,  
Seattle, WA 98118  
For more information contact:  
Nafiso Samatar at 206-684-5328  
[Nafiso.samatar@seattle.gov](mailto:Nafiso.samatar@seattle.gov)

Immigrant & Refugee Women's Outreach  
RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE  
ADVANCE OPPORTUNITY.  
ACHIEVE EQUITY.

### Train-the-Trainer Facilitation Workshop for "Race: the Power of an Illusion"

Would you like to become a facilitator for "Race: the Power of an Illusion" training in your own organization or in the community? Join us for a "train-the-trainer" session on Saturday, May 18 from 9 AM to 5 PM. To register, e-mail [maria.rodriquez@seattle.gov](mailto:maria.rodriquez@seattle.gov) or call 206-684-0548. *Pre-requisite:* you must have completed the "Race: the Power of an Illusion" workshop to participate.

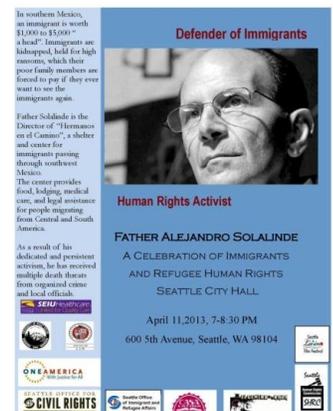
### Father Alejandro Solalinde, 2012 Human Rights Award Winner in Seattle

Join us in a community celebration to honor Father Solalinde's work and immigrant and refugees in Seattle. Father Alejandro Solalinde is a Catholic priest who has dedicated his life to providing a place of safety for migrants.

Thursday, April 11, 7 to 8:30 PM  
Seattle City Hall, Bertha Knight Landes Room  
600 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

Don't miss this chance to meet him and find out about his amazing work!

To learn more about Father Solalinde's work visit:  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/023/2010/en>



**Defender of Immigrants**

**Human Rights Activist**

**FATHER ALEJANDRO SOLALINDE**  
A CELEBRATION OF IMMIGRANTS  
AND REFUGEE HUMAN RIGHTS  
SEATTLE CITY HALL

April 11, 2013, 7-8:30 PM  
600 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

In southern Mexico, an immigrant is worth \$1,000 to \$5,000 a head. Immigrants are kidnapped, held for high ransoms, which their poor family members are forced to pay if they ever want to see the immigrants again.

Father Solalinde is the Director of "Hermanos en el Camino", a shelter and center for immigrants passing through southwest Mexico.

The center provides food, lodging, medical care, and legal assistance for people migrating from Central and South America.

As a result of his dedicated and persistent activism, he has received multiple death threats from organized crime and local officials.

SEATTLE OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS  
Seattle Office for Immigrant and Refugee Affairs  
OREAMERICA  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
Seattle Office for Immigrant and Refugee Affairs  
OREAMERICA  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
Seattle Office for Immigrant and Refugee Affairs  
OREAMERICA  
CIVIL RIGHTS