

New Arrivals

Kimberly R. Jones started working as an Investigator 1 for the Fair Housing Investigation Unit of the West Virginia Human Rights Commission on January 3, 2023. Kim graduated from St. Albans High School and worked for Workforce West Virginia for 21 years as an Employment Programs Claims Deputy and Quality Control Analyst prior to joining the HRC. Kim and her husband of 27 years live in Elkview with their dog, cockatiel, and six chickens. She is a mother of two adult children and thoroughly enjoys being a “Gmaw” to one granddaughter and grand-kitty.



Peter A. Olaoluwa, Accountant/Auditor III, arrived at the HRC on March 1, 2023. Peter received his Charter as an Accountant from The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria 20 years ago, and most recently worked as the Business Analyst for Wealth Management and Consulting, CPA, LLC. He also worked for Oludiran & Co., Shonga Farms Holding, Dangote Cement, First Deepwater Discovery Limited, and Bellpoint Energy Limited. Peter wants his new coworkers to know that he is a dedicated employee and lover of team spirit.



Human Rights at the Capitol



The HRC was proud to be part of Black Policy Day: Civic Engagement Through Collectiveness on February 15, 2023, at the West Virginia State Capitol. The HRC displayed an outreach table, pictured to the left, to educate the public on all areas of discrimination. At the conclusion of the program, HRC Executive Director Tia Welch was one of the keynote speakers. Commission members were also at the Capitol on February 7, 2023 for Deaf Awareness Day, and on January 18, 2023 for Disability Awareness Day, pictured below from left to right.



Executive Director and General Counsel Interviewed for Podcast

On January 9, 2023, Executive Director Tia Welch and General Counsel Cameron McKinney were interviewed for a podcast by Trey Morrone of the West Virginia law firm, Bowles Rice LLP.

The podcast, WVEduCast - An Education Law Podcast, is published monthly by the law firm for education professionals in West Virginia, and can be heard at the following link: https://ftp.firmseek.com/bowles/email/education/podcast/WVEducast_Ep20.mp3. Tia and Cameron discussed how the HRC provides training and education that could benefit school systems, and how the Human Rights Act could apply to schools as employers and places of public accommodation.



Women of Power in Las Vegas

On March 9 - 11, 2023, Executive Director Tia Welch and Investigator 1 Kimberly Jones attended the Women of Power Summit at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Women of Power Summit is a professional leadership conference designed especially for executive women of color. The event brought together over 1,500 influential corporate professionals and businesswomen from across the country and allowed attendees to learn from industry leaders and participate in interactive workshops to examine leadership and management skills. The Women of Power Summit is organized by Black Enterprise, a magazine and media company based in New York City.



Town Hall Meetings



The HRC, in collaboration with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, hosted a town hall meeting on prevention of employment discrimination and harassment in the workplace for Appalachian communities on March 3, 2023, at West Virginia State University.

An additional Town Hall was held March 23, 2023, at Bluefield State University that included staff, students, and community members for this exciting event that was well received by all.

Commission Celebrates St. Patrick's Day



The Fun & Celebration Committee hosted a pizza party in recognition of St. Patrick's Day on March 17, 2023. Pictured here are committee members Sherry Walker and Kayla Craig preparing to serve the eager staff.

International Women's Day

At the end of February 2023, Director Welch asked if anyone had any ideas for March Women's History Month for the good of the Commission. As a result, on March 31, 2023, an informal film festival was held to celebrate and commemorate Women's History Month. Throughout the month, selections were submitted by staff, recognizing a woman who embodies the spirit of this celebration. Selections ranged from Ruth Bader Ginsburg to Jeanette Lee and included short animations, movie trailers, live musical performances, and poetry reading, all chosen by members of the HRC.



Issues and Eggs



The HRC, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, was a leadership sponsor of the 2023 Issues and Eggs Annual Legislative Breakfast hosted by the Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce at the Embassy Suites in Charleston, WV on January 17, 2023.

This event is well attended by businesses, colleges, universities, non-profits, and elected officials to hear the 2023 agenda of state legislators to move West Virginia forward.

Representatives of the HRC Included Joseph Saunders, Housing Unit Investigator; Mark Elswick, Supervisor; C. Joan Parker, Administrative Law Judge; Tia Welch, Executive Director; Cheryl Vance, Housing Office Assistant, and Cameron McKinney, General Counsel. Delegate Mike Pushkin (D-Kanawha), who joined the HRC staff's table, is also pictured (center).