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Hate Crime Prevention

A Hate Crime refers to “any criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated...by bias or prejudice based on real or perceived race, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, gender, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factor...”. In Ontario alone, these crimes have increased by 93% in the past decade, with studies estimating only one in ten crimes ever being reported.

In an attempt to address this issue, WWOW (in collaboration with the University of Waterloo and the Kitchener–Waterloo African Women’s Alliance) is working on a blueprint for hate crime prevention in the region. This initiative is funded

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Hate Crime Prevention	1
WWOW’s Civic Participation Initiative	1
Summer Energy Tips	2
Upcoming Events	2

by the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, who in 2007, pledged 1.35 million dollars to communities across the province working on hate crime issues.

WWOW’s primary goal with this project is to create a platform for improved communication between community groups, educators and members of the criminal justice system. Key players will be the Waterloo Regional Police Services, the University of Waterloo, and various African Community Groups.

Cont’d on page 2

Civic Participation in Waterloo Region

One month before the 2007 Ontario General Election, WWOW hosted a workshop on civic participation in the tri-city area. The workshop, entitled “Engage Women Now”, was a joint effort involving the Canadian Council of Muslim Women and the Kitchener–Waterloo African Women’s Alliance. The workshop featured talks from female candidates in the Kitchener–Waterloo riding, namely Judy Greenwood Speer (GRN), Louise Ervin (LIB), Catherine Fife (NDP) and Elizabeth Witmer (PC). As part of the workshop participants also learned about the Canadian political process from agencies such as Referendum Ontario, Elections Ontario and Fair Vote Canada.

This workshop, the first of its kind for WWOW, was well attended with participants from the tri-city area as well as Guelph, Brantford, Woodstock

and Stratford. Feedback from the event was positive, but consistently conveyed that there is a need within the immigrant community for public education on civic duties and responsibilities. Participants thought this to be especially true for women who are typically under-represented in the political arena.

To meet the community needs highlighted in workshop feedback, WWOW will embark on a series of courses in the Fall of 2008. Styled after courses offered by Equal Voice (Canada), WWOW’s workshops will provide an introduction to the workings of both municipal and provincial levels of government, while encouraging participants to exercise their right to vote and seek public office. For more information on this initiative, please contact our Program Director – Sadia Gassim.



Saving Energy this Summer

Compiled by WWOW volunteers

- Get some fresh air! Consider using a clothesline to dry your laundry.
- Keep blinds, shades and drapes closed during the hottest part of the day to keep the house cool.
- Use floor and ceiling fans to create gentle breezes to keep you and your family comfortable.
- To save more on central AC costs, try cooling your home to only 24°C or 25°C instead of the low 20's. Each degree below 26°C will noticeably increase your electricity use.
- Be sure to use the vacation setting or turn off the water heater when you are out of town.

For more tips visit the Natural Resources Canada website at:
http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/english/tips/hometips_summer.cfm

Hate Crime Prevention , cont'd from page 1

Throughout the 6-month duration of the project, two community workshops will be held where stakeholders will be given an opportunity to network, express their concerns, and exchange ideas on how to reduce the incidence of hate crime. WWOW, as project facilitator, will work closely with the Sociology Department at the University of Waterloo to tease out critical issues highlighted in these workshops, ultimately producing a series of recommendations that will be presented at a forum in September of 2008. For more information on the Hate Crime Prevention Program please contact Project Coordinator Golden Munyaka at 519.888.4567 ext. 38520 or mag@uwaterloo.ca

¹ Definition as given in *Addressing Hate Crimes in Ontario – Final Report of the Hate Crimes Community Working Group to the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, 2006.*

Upcoming Events

- Hate Crime Prevention Workshops:
 - Saturday May 24, 2008, 10 am to 3 pm at the Kitchener Public Library
 - Saturday June 21, 2008, 10 am to 3pm, Cambridge (Location T.B.A.)

To join WWOW's e-mail list for news of future events please write to us at wwow@web.ca

Thanks For Your Support

WWOW would like to say thank you to all of our volunteers and friends!

WWOW is always seeking new volunteers – if you would like more information on how you can get involved please contact us. To make a monetary donation in support of WWOW's programs, please contact us for payment options. Tax receipts will be issued for all donations over \$20.

Write to us at:

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Visit
www.wwow.org/hcp.htm
for more information on
Hate Crime Prevention in
Waterloo Region.