



HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS EAGERLY LISTENED AS GOVERNOR MALLOY SPOKE TO THEM ABOUT CIVIL RIGHTS, FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY AT KIDS' SPEAK



Governor Dannel Malloy gave the keynote speech at Kids' Speak 2011.

The **2011 Connecticut Kids' Court Competition** was kicked off this year when hundreds of students, teachers, sponsors and administrators converged on the State Capitol for Kids' Speak on April 26th. The day was filled with interactive exercises, improvisations, discussion and peer dialogue on topics that range from hate crimes in America's schools to health care disparity and education. Students from fourteen schools across the state heard the words of **Governor Malloy; Attorney General George Jepsen; Comptroller Kevin Lembo; Deputy Treasurer Jonathan Harris**, and other prominent speakers. **Monique McClain**, a student who had been bullied in Middletown, courageously spoke out about her experience standing up to bullying. Panel members included **Regina Hopkins, DOE; Bill Howe, DOE; Alfreda Turner, President and CEO, Charter Oak Caleb Lopez SRO South Windsor**

Police, **Glen Cassis, AAAC**, and Human Rights Attorneys **Cheryl A. Sharp** and **Michelle Dumas Keuler**. Group facilitators included:

Referees **Thomas Austin** and **Donna Marie Wilkerson-Brillant**; Human Rights Attorneys **Kimberly Jacobsen; Robin Kinsler Fox; Alix Simonetti**; **Principal Attorney Charles Krich**; **Regional Manager Tanya Hughes**; **Lucy Hernandez** from **Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs**, and **Frances Sharp**. A special thanks goes out to **Charles Perry** and student volunteers from Trinity College, UCONN Law School & Manchester Community college!

Commission on the Status of Women. The finalists will orally present their essays that evening to a panel of prominent judges. Student will win various prizes including Governor Citations and savings bonds.



Student improvisation during break-out session

SPOTLIGHT CAPITOL REGION

Congratulations and kudos to the **Capitol Regional Office**, whose investigators closed forty (40) complaints during the month of April, by either completing full investigations, settling or issuing releases so that Complainants can proceed in court.

Office of Public Hearing

For the period July 1, 2010 to April 30, 2011, the referees have conducted (144) conferences, (6) hearings in damages, and (5) public hearings. Thirty-nine discrimination cases and (18) whistleblower cases have been closed. The total settlement figure for discrimination cases for the fiscal year to date is **\$100,000.00**. These settlement figures do not include the dollar amounts for settlements in confidential agreements. For the fiscal year to date, the total amount awarded via final decisions is **\$186,008** for discrimination cases and **\$177,917** for whistleblower retaliation cases.

The **Kids' Court Essay Competition** will be held on **May 24, 2011**. CHRO staff is currently reviewing the students' submissions in order to determine the finalists. The CHRO is co-sponsoring the competition with **Jack & Jill, Inc., LPRAC, APAAC, Charter Oak Health Center**, the **CT Department of Education**, the **Permanent**

Buzz . . . CHRO webmaster **Jim O'Neill** has updated the Agency's website! Check it out www.ct.gov/chro

Fair Housing Month kicked off on April 6th when the CHRO sponsored a Fair Housing Seminar at the Capitol entitled "Can I Live Here." Members of the public and housing providers enjoyed a panel discussion which included presentations from **Ndidi Moses, DOJ; Michelle Johnson, HUD**; Human Rights Referee **Thomas Austin** and **State Representative Butler**. This event, organized by the Legal Department and Housing unit was a resounding success. Fair housing month activities continued as Human Rights Attorney **Robert Zamlowski** participated in an **interactive** panel discussion at an all day training seminar for Housing Authority professionals on April 27, 2011. Approximately 100 people were in attendance to hear the panel discuss the topic of reasonable accommodations in housing for persons with disabilities. On May 5, 2011 Human Rights Attorneys **Robert Zamlowski** and **Michelle Dumas Keuler** moderated another Panel discussion entitled "Reasonable accommodation – Emerging Issues and Creative Solutions" and led an interactive group exercise following the panel discussion at the Thirty-Second annual Fair Housing Conference sponsored by the Fair Housing Association of Connecticut. CHRO Investigator/mediator **Dori Bruce** was on the Panel that also included a HUD representative, a disability rights attorney and two Public Housing officials.

STAND AGAINST RACISM

On April 29th staff members from the Capitol, Southwest, Eastern and West Central regional offices participated in the "Stand against Racism" program sponsored by the YWCA. The staff wore "racism hurts" stickers & gave members of the public information about the CHRO'S complaint process. **Thanks for taking a stand!**

TRANSGENDER LIVES CONFERENCE

On April 30th Human Rights Attorneys **Cheryl Sharp** and **Alix Simonetti** spoke at the Transgender Lives Conference at the UCONN Health Center. The conference was held to raise awareness of legal and health issues that affect the lives of Transgender individuals. Attorneys **Sharp** and **Simonetti** spoke about filing CHRO claims and the work-share agreement with HUD, EEOC & CHRO.

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE

The Contract Compliance/Affirmative Action Unit, on a weekly basis, provides Technical Assistance to state agencies & contractors doing business with state. The one-on-one TA's are provided to help facilitate agency and contractor compliance with state affirmative action and contract compliance laws.