

IN THE COMMUNITY



Central Office staff participated in the Neighborhood Block Party and Wellness Festival from August 9th through 13th at Pope Park in Hartford. The event was sponsored by the Charter Oak Health Center and broadcast by radio station Hot 93.7. CHRO Attorneys M. Dumas Keuler, A. Simonetti, K. Jacobsen, R. Zamlowski and C. Sharp and HRO Investigators J. Cheeks, D. Carter, D. Bruce, J. Beckford, V. Kennedy, S. Jones, C. Roman and N. Vegizzi provided information, brochures, flyers and **Anti-discrimination posters** in English and Spanish to the Hartford Community who attended the event. CHRO employees were able to address many of the community's concerns regarding discrimination in housing, employment and credit. CHRO staff also addressed a variety of questions regarding children with disabilities and their treatment in schools. One of the most memorable moments of the Festival was when a nine year old girl approached the booth and said, "Excuse me, miss, but what does discrimination mean?" My reply was "Discrimination is when you treat someone unfairly because they are different from you". The little girl said, "Oh, I understand. I have that problem at school. I get teased and bullied because I'm black and the kids talk about my color because I'm dark. It makes me really sad". The profound despair in the eyes of a nine year old child reaffirmed what civil rights workers have always known—**discrimination hurts**. The little girl walked away with a brochure in her hand, skipping with a smile on her face once I told her that someone from the CHRO could come and speak at her school, and talk to the students about discrimination and unfair treatment. Her last words were "Yes... I can't wait to tell my mother".

CHRO Investigator from the Southwest Regional Office, Carolyn Anderson participated in a Career Day held at the L. W. Beecher Inter/district Museum Magnet School of Arts & Sciences in New Haven, on May 18, 2010. Ms. Anderson represented the CHRO and spoke to the students regarding the mission of the Agency to eliminate discrimination throughout the state. She also handed out literature and answered the many questions the students had regarding unfair treatment.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Employment Settlements during investigation

August \$483,822

Housing Settlements during investigation

August \$11,000

UPCOMING EVENTS

On **September 29, 2010**, the CHRO will host an informational session entitled "**Inside the**

CHRO's **Complaint Process** **Rm 2E** at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, CT. **Admission is Free.**

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER



Edward Mambruno has served as a Commissioner with the CHRO for the past eight years. He started his career with Housing and Urban Development as a financial analyst administering rent increases for public housing. He began his state service as the state Americans With Disabilities Act Director. He also served as the ADA Legislative liaison where he developed progressive programs for persons with disabilities and was instrumental in the passage of bills to protect, empower and better the lives of persons with developmental disabilities in the state. Currently, Commissioner Mambruno is the Independent Ombudsperson for the CT Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Commissioner Mambruno sees his role on the Commission as an opportunity to serve as a watchdog for the human rights of persons with disabilities.

Q: What makes you interested in Civil Rights?

A: I believe the rights of the intellectually disabled and other individuals with disabilities must be protected.

Q: What is your vision for the Commission?

A: The Agency must be funded at a level where it enforces all of the statutory provisions it has been empowered to protect.

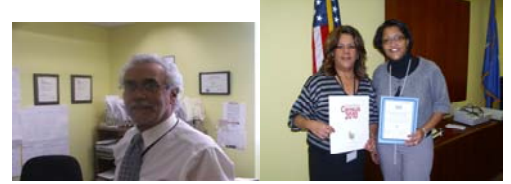
The Commissioner's advocacy for individuals with disabilities has been nationally recognized.



He was one of only 21 individuals in the nation, appointed to a two year term on the President's Committee on Mental Retardation

by the Former President of the United States George W. Bush.

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT SOUTHWEST-BRIDGEPORT



The CHRO has diligently worked to address the needs of its stakeholders while confronting the issue of shrinking resources. The Southwest (SW) Regional Office once flourished with 12 investigators and 3 clerical staff persons, but as a result of attrition and the economic climate, it is currently among the least staffed regions in the agency. In spite of the severe cuts to the staff during the FY 2010, the SW region closed 313 cases with an investigative staff of 4 full time investigators, 1 part-time investigator, 1 intake officer and 2 clerical support persons. SW maintained the highest number of cases filed in the agency at 492, with each investigator managing an average caseload of 40 or more cases. Approximately **\$1,000,000.00** in monetary settlements (including confidential amounts) was negotiated by SW Investigators. The **Regional Manager, Tanya Hughes** remarked, "With over 185 cases pending assignment, we recognize that we could do more to service the needs of the Fairfield community and are accelerating our efforts to work with less to produce more during these very challenging times in our nation's economy. Kudos and a job well done, SW staff!"

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE

The Federal Highway Administration and the CT Department of Transportation allowed the Contract Compliance Unit to shadow the two agencies as it conducted field review audits on two Fairfield county projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Although CHRO and federal Contract Compliance requirements differ, the audits provided CHRO's Contract Compliance Unit with ideas regarding how to jump-start its field review process. Currently, state statutes and CHRO regulations allow for the Contract Compliance Unit to conduct field review audits.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

For the 2009-10 fiscal year: the human rights referees conducted two hundred and nine (209) conferences, four (4) default hearings, and seven (7) public hearings that totaled fifty-four (54) trial days. The referees ruled on four hundred and sixty-seven (467) motions. The total settlement figure for discrimination cases is \$522,924. The settlement figure does not include the dollar amounts for settlements in confidential agreements nor does it include the dollar amounts in whistleblower agreements. The total amount awarded in final decisions of discrimination cases was \$61,905.75. The total amount awarded in final decisions of whistleblower cases was \$5,000. The Superior Court dismissed ten (10) appeals of referee decisions.