

**News & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Centre of Human Rights - Education Team**

**Year in Review Snapshot!**



**Is it April already?!**

The 2013/2014 academic year certainly flew by, and despite the never ending cold weather the Centre for Human Rights is excited to begin engaging in its Spring/Summer activities!

But before we move forward, let's take a look back and review the past year's accomplishments in advancing human rights education at York:

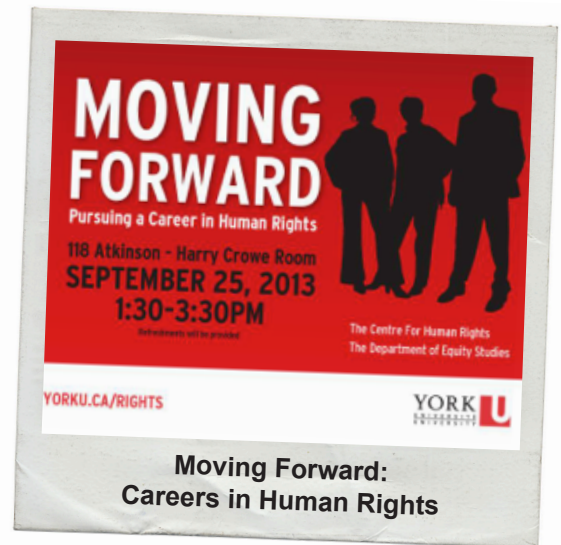
- **Education Sessions:** The CHR offered over 40 human rights workshops/information sessions. This translates into over 500 York community members receiving human rights education!



- **Community Engagement Program:** Over the past year the CHR collaborated with York's Employment Equity Officer (Learning & Organization Development) and the Recruitment team, to co-facilitate a series of information sessions to neighboring employment centres in the Jane & Finch and Rexdale areas. Over 30 individuals from the Toronto District School Board and Seneca Employment agencies participated in the workshops learning more about employment at York as well as their rights in employment

**Key Diversity Events**

Held for the 2013/2014 academic year includes





...and many more!

The Centre for Human Rights extends its deepest gratitude to the York community for its continued support in the promotion and advancement of human rights education. Let us continue building campuses that value **Respect, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion!**



## Advancing Human Rights Through the Recognition and Celebration of United Nations' International Days

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This academic year the York Centre for Human Rights and a number of other Centers, Departments, Schools and Faculties at York University have partnered to recognize and to celebrate a number of United Nations designated International Days. In the Fall Term, we held a public lecture and special panel session to acknowledge the International Day of Peace with Professor Emeritus Robert Matthews, University of Toronto, on September 21st, and International Human Rights Day, on December 10th, with Dr. Hadayt Nazami, Barrister and Solicitor; Francisco Rico-Martinez, Co-Director, FCJ Refugee Centre; and, Hasti Almasi, President, York Model UN. This Winter Term three events were held including a special panel session for World Day of Social Justice, February 20th, that featured a number

of outstanding practitioners and instructors/researchers including: Avvy Yao-Yao Go, Barrister & Solicitor, Clinic Director, Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Law Clinic; Michael Kerr, Coordinator, Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change Campaign; Professor Peter Dawson, Department of Sociology, York University; and Professor Lorne Foster, Department of Equity Studies and the School of Public Policy and Administration, York University. For our International Women's Day ceremonies, that were held on March 6th, we were very fortunate to have Olivia Chow, formerly the MP for Trinity Spadina and currently the front runner in the City of Toronto mayoral campaign, as our special guest speaker, who spoke about the importance and necessity of having more women in elected public office in Canada to a packed and engaged audience in York University's Senate Chambers, 940N Ross Building.

Our last event for the year will be held on Friday, April 4th, Refugee Rights Day in Canada, and it will feature an outstanding panel comprised of Barbara Jackman, Barrister & Solicitor, and one of the foremost legal counsel in refugee law in Canada, Loly Rico, President of the Canadian Council for Refugees, and Ken Sandhu, Interim Chairperson, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. Refugee Rights Day in Canada is held every year to celebrate the Supreme Court of Canada's famous 1985 Singh decision, one of the first judgements of the Supreme Court under Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is also affords the opportunity for all of us to contemplate the 'state of refugee rights' in Canada today.

Why is it important for us to recognize and celebrate the United Nations' International Days? The recognition of UN international days, I believe, is absolutely essential for any institution of higher learning. Consider the following reasons why it behooves us to do so.

## **Advancing Human Rights Through the Recognition and Celebration of United Nations' International Days Cont'd...**

First, when we acknowledge and hold international day events we are supporting the vision and mission of the UN which are, to quote the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, as follows [emphasis added]:

- To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- To establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- To promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

These are all, unquestionably, notable ideals and objectives that each of us can subscribe.

Second, York University and particularly, our Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, adopts a "social justice" orientation and approach. The recognition of UN declared international days is entirely consistent and in keeping with York University's broader educational philosophy.

Third, all universities, it seems, have undertaken recently explicit policies and programmes to "internationalize" their curriculum and to provide their students with opportunities to "study abroad" and to facilitate research collaborations with sister institutions and researchers in other countries. This internationalization agenda has been taken up by York University and the recognition of UN international days is consistent entirely with this higher educational policy and programme thrust.

Fourth, UN international day ceremonies remind us, in a very tangible way, of the significance and relevance of human rights in the world today, irrespective of whether they are at

the international, regional, state, or local level. Recognizing and acknowledging the inherent value of human rights as being universal, indivisible, interdependent and inter-related assists us to appreciate that we are all endowed and should be able to exercise our fundamental human rights, but, at the same time, noting that we also have the responsibility to protection and to develop further all of our human rights and to help to advance their progressive realization.

Fifth, holding UN international day ceremonies reminds us of our individual and collective responsibilities to work toward the achievement of all of the higher moral and ethical ideals of creating a better and more equitable, prosperous and sustainable world for all peoples of the world.

Finally, the UN has called on its member states to help educate their citizens and permanent residence on the importance and value of human rights through the recognition of its declared International Days. This should be done at all levels in our educational system, including, of course, the tertiary level of education.

Thus, for all of these reasons and many others, we should be undertaking the effort to plan and to participate in our UN International Days events and activities at York University. This is only one small effort, of course, among many on our campus to help to ensure that that we acknowledge, recognize, and work toward the advancement of all of our human rights. This is a common collective endeavour that brings all of us together at York University and helps to bind us across all our diverse and wide ranging Faculties and disciplinary and research Units.

We welcome everyone to join us in our UN International Day ceremonies at York University and in the promotion, protection and advancement of all of our most fundamental and precious human rights.

## Men's Team Recap.

by Michael Hassani, Team Lead

Hi All!

The CHR's Men's Team was able to get up and running this academic year and we'd like to let y'all know what we've been up to.

First off, for those that don't know the Men's Team is a group of self-identifying males who aim to raise awareness with other males about violence against women by creating opportunities for safe and thoughtful discussion of how social constructs and stereotypes of gender impact gender-based violence.

We've spent this year further developing our mission and putting it into action with a recognizable brand. Importantly, we've also been making many valuable relationships with groups on campus like SASSL and YFS. Over the term we've successfully held movie nights, group discussions, and workshops themed around deconstructing masculinity. This year's movie screenings included *Boyz in the Hood*, *Don Jon*, and *The Gatekeepers*. We also co-hosted a successful event with SASSL and the White Ribbon Campaign titled *Blueprints for Change*.

We're looking to put on even more events next year and we'd love for anyone that'd like to volunteer to reach out to us via the CHR. Follow us on twitter [@TheMensTeam](#) and look out for us next year!



For more information about our workshops, please go to: [www.rights.info.yorku.ca/education-training-presentations/](http://www.rights.info.yorku.ca/education-training-presentations/)

## Connect with the CHR!

Visit our Website to get more information about our services, events, workshops, and human rights resources [yorku.ca/rights](http://yorku.ca/rights)



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