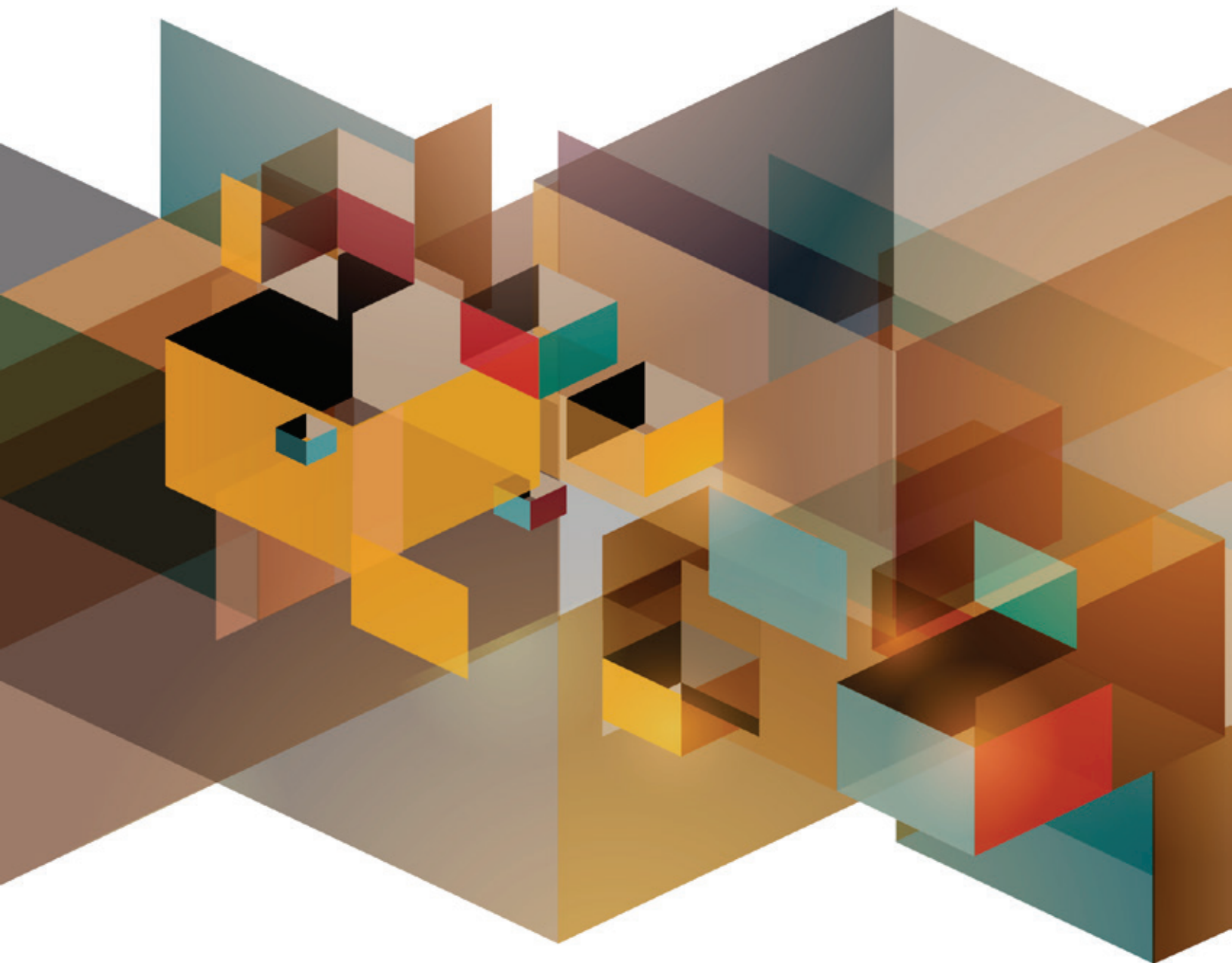


# Social Justice & Racial Equity

Third Quarter Update (July–September 2019)



# Accountability

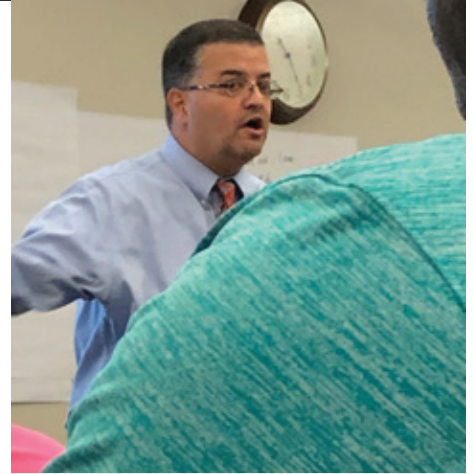
In July, the City co-sponsored a session titled **Local Government Service Interactions and Impacts on Citizen Well-Being**. The program presented by Dr. Sarah K. Bruch, former assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Iowa, discussed ways that ongoing discrimination, administrative burden, and perceptions of treatment determine how community members perceive government as well as their overall citizenship, and feelings of belonging.

City staff attended a film screening and discussion of *The Power of An Illusion: The House We Live In*. This event was sponsored by the Johnson County Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

In August, the City agreed to give Kirkwood Community College \$25,000 per year for 5 years for its **English Language Learner expansion**. Addressing these issues in this way is directly aligned with the Council's Strategic Priority of promoting a strong and resilient local economy through cooperation with the Iowa City Community School District, Iowa Workforce Development, Kirkwood Community College, Iowa Works, and others to increase access to skills training and good jobs. The rapid increase in the non-English speaking refugee and immigrant populations creates an opportunity for the community that we should address. The lack of English language skills limits employment and thus, economic opportunities for a large segment of our population, and if our workforce could grow simply with the addition of English language skills, it would help employers' difficulty in filling open positions.

In August, the **Midwest LGBTQ Older Adult Conference**, formerly known as the LGBTQ Senior Summit, occurred. This annual summit provided workshops and networking opportunities to address the needs of older LGBTQ people in Iowa. Topics at this conference ranged from addressing social isolation to political engagement. The City was a sponsor.

In September, the **Parks and Recreation Department** was selected to attend the National Recreation and Park Association's Community Engagement training. The training included a case study of two projects recently completed by Iowa City Parks and Recreation as a part of its use of Equity Toolkits.



In August, City staff attended a **Toxic Employees-Toxic Workplace seminar**. The speaker for this event, Mauricio Velasquez, President and CEO of Diversity Training Group, led a discussion on toxic workplaces and how to keep one's work environment respectful.



In September, the **Inside Out Reentry Community Parole Simulation** took place at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The parole simulation helped community members gain a greater understanding of what it's like to reenter the community after incarceration, as well as how to join together to provide an increasingly supportive environment for those who are reintegrating into society. The program was sponsored by the City's Social Justice and Racial Equity grant.



CITY OF IOWA CITY : SOCIAL JUSTICE & RACIAL EQUITY

# Justice

In July, Mayor Throgmorton joined 100 mayors in signing the **LGBTQ Rights Support brief** for the US Supreme Court. The friend-of-the-court brief signed supported three key LGBTQ cases that will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court this fall. These cases question whether Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on sex, prohibits LGBTQ discrimination too.

In July, Mayor Throgmorton signed a proclamation designating July 26, 2019 as the signing of the **Americans with Disabilities Act**. This year celebrates the 29th anniversary of the ADA. The proclamation encouraged all Iowa City residents to join together to affirm the principals of equality and inclusion for persons with disabilities as embodied in the ADA and the laws of Iowa City.



In August, Iowa City joined the amicus brief in the lower courts filed by the City of Los Angeles on behalf of cities, counties, the National League of Cities and the United States Conference of Mayors **resisting the termination of DACA**, and will also join the amicus brief that is being prepared in the Supreme Court case.



CITY OF IOWA CITY : SOCIAL JUSTICE & RACIAL EQUITY

# Conversations

In July, the University of Iowa Labor Center conducted a public community discourse on **Women in Trade: Presentation and Reception** at the Iowa Memorial Union. Keynote speaker, Tarn Goelling lead the discussion on the first-hand experiences of women in trade. The program was funded by the City's Social Justice and Racial Equity grant.

In August, City staff participated in a partnership/ provider Unity Circle sponsored by the Iowa City Community School District. The purpose of this Unity Circle was to support **Equity and Inclusion in the Iowa City district** and to educate attendees on everyone's individual needs.

In September, the **City Manager's Roundtable** heard updates on upcoming events and the progression of social justice and equity goals in the community. Organizations that participated include the Center for Worker Justice, Black Voices Project, League of United Latin American Citizens, Refugee and Immigrant Association, Inside Out Reentry, Community Police Review Board, and Neighborhood Centers for Johnson County.



In July, staff of the Office of Equity and Human Rights spoke at the **Captivate Conference** hosted by Ed Collaborators. This conference focused on professional development and networking to propose solutions to enhance engagement and improve student success by addressing the barriers that prevent positive culture.



# Outreach

In July, the Office of Equity and Human Rights participated in the **Youth Engaging Leadership and Learning** program hosted by the Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County. In this summer program, the students were encouraged to move towards developing awareness of the value of positive “role models” in a society, develop greater understanding of leadership roles, and identify role models on local and national levels.

In August, the Iowa City Community School District’s Transition Services class visited Iowa City Transit for their annual **Transit Tour/Transit Tips field trip**. There were approximately 25 students and staff that divided into two groups. Those that have come in the past utilized their time on a City bus, filming an instructional video about ‘boarding/paying fares’ and ‘riding’ the bus. The others, who were new to the class, sat through an informal presentation by Susan Bethel, Transit Operations Supervisor and Kelly Schneider, the Johnson County Mobility Coordinator. Susan provided an overview of Iowa City Transit, with an emphasis on how to troubleshoot difficult situations while riding. Some of the issues addressed were behavior expectations of passengers, how to handle feeling scared or bullied, what to do if you have lost an item, and what to do if you are lost or miss your stop. Kelly explained her position to the group and provided information on alternative modes of Transportation. She also explained the “Google trip maker” online tool, that is useful when planning bus travel throughout the Iowa City/Coralville area.

The presentation wrapped up with a Q&A session, a tour of the Iowa City Transit Facility, and a ride through the infamous “bus wash”.

In July, the University of Iowa’s Staff Language and Culture Services presented a panel discussion on **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: New Americans in a Changing Iowa Workplace**. This panel was split into two parts: discussing cultural awareness in the workplace and managing cultural diversity for success. Councilmember Mazahir Salih introduced the event.

In August, staff of the Office of Equity and Human Rights spoke at the first **Community Leadership Program** session of the year. The topic for this session was “Community and Place”.

In August, the City held a Young Eagles program offering **free flights to kids** at the Iowa City Municipal Airport. The Young Eagles program partnered up with volunteer pilots from the **Experimental Aircraft Association** for a 15 to 20-minute flight around the Iowa City area. After the program, participants had the opportunity to learn more about planes, safety, and the possibilities that exist in the world of aviation.

Throughout this quarter, the Office of Equity and Human Rights ran an ad in the *Daily Iowan* in an effort to inform residents on their rights and how to file a complaint if they believe their rights have been violated.



In September, homeownership, homelessness, housing development, rentals, and leadership were discussed at the **2019 Housing Iowa Conference**. The annual conference was held at the Double-Tree by the Hilton Cedar Rapids Convention Complex. Attendees learned about Iowa’s housing market and how to tackle homelessness in their communities from experts like Darren Woodson, Daniel Ruettiger, and Tami Evans.

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In September, the Office of Equity and Human Rights ran an ad in *GoGuide Magazine* detailing the services of the office and its contact information for residents who are interested in equity, human rights, or filing a complaint if they believe their rights have been violated in any way.



CITY OF IOWA CITY : SOCIAL JUSTICE & RACIAL EQUITY

# Training

In September, City staff met with University of Iowa staff to discuss **diversity, equity, and inclusion** in the community. This meeting covered campus updates regarding faculty diversity numbers, student diversity enrollment, implicit bias training for businesses, and community implicit bias customer service training.



In July, staff of the Office Equity and Human Rights participated in a webinar sponsored by the **Human Rights Campaign on Equal Access to Sex-Segregated Facilities**. The Human Rights Campaign is a nonprofit organization advocating and lobbying for LGBTQ rights and equality nationwide.

In September, the Office of Equity and Human Rights participated in the Fair Housing Institute's webinar on **Criminal History and Occupancy Policy – The Impact of Disparate Impact**. This webinar covered HUD's proposal of new regulations in an effort to relieve housing providers from their anxiety about disparate impact. The webinar also gave recommendations for developing criminal history policies that avoid fair housing challenges.

Social Justice and Racial Equity Report – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter

Children's Services Department

- 1) During July and the first two weeks of August, 47 afternoon snack times were held in the children's storytime room. Every weekday afternoon between 3 and 3:30, a free snack was offered to those ages 1-18 in order to help address youth food insecurity in our community. The snack was provided through the USDA school meal program and consisted of a juice box and a food item such as a Pop-tart or bag of chips. Around 40 children a day, or an average of 200 children a week, ate a free snack during the month of July at the library.
- 2) 6 Summer Reading Program Special Access encore events were held. These Special Access encore events consisted of a repeat of a program, such as a craft, performance, or film, held immediately after the general public event, this time for young people who are neurodivergent and their siblings/families, designed to be a low-key, smaller-group environment in which individuals could feel successful who might generally struggle within a larger-group, more stimulating environment. These Special Access encore events were: Just Dance!, which allowed participants to play and dance along to the Wii game of the same name, held on July 2; Winter in July, where participants made a beaded snowflake craft, had a sensory experience/science experiment making "snow" from household ingredients, and competed in an indoor snowball fight, on July 12; The Science Center of Iowa's interactive science presentation entitled Journey Through the Solar System, on July 18; World Wednesday: Greek Mosaic Art, which involved learning about the history of mosaic in Greek art and creating an artwork in that style, on July 24; a movie screening of How to Train Your Dragon, on July 29; and a storytelling program presented by local performer Darrin Crow, on August 1.
- 3) 1 Special Access early-open event in conjunction with the Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, in which the library opened an hour early just for those with physical/mental differences to experience the library in a low-key environment at their own pace, and several sensory stations related to space exploration, designed and run by AmeriCorps students, were also available to explore.
- 4) 6 World Wednesday events were held, which focus on learning about a world culture. A short video is shown explaining the history and cultural significance of the activity to be engaged in, followed by children doing a hands-on activity that explores some element of a world culture they might not know much about. For example, making tres leches cakes and yarn pom-poms from specific regions in Mexico, painting Moroccan-style tiles, or playing a traditional South Korean ddakji board game. These World Wednesday programs took place every Wednesday afternoon in July and the first week of August and were for school-age children.
- 5) 1 Tween Universal Stories club meeting, in which children attended to talk about the All Iowa Reads children's book selection for this year, *Amina's Voice*, and Skype with the author, Hena Khan. This book is a middle-grade novel that focuses on a Muslim family who has immigrated from Pakistan to America, their family and culture, and how their community reacts when their mosque is vandalized.

- 6) 1 book display titled "America: Brought to You by Immigrants," featuring books both fiction and nonfiction focused on immigration policy, issues, and immigrants' voices and stories, for children of all ages. This display was up for 2 weeks at the entrance to the children's department (over the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday) and circulated approximately forty books.
- 7) 1 Soul Food and Book Tasting event was held for school-age children and families on August 9. During this event, attendees rotated through five stations at which they had the opportunity to sample a different soul food dish at each station. Also, at each station, while eating, participants selected from an array of books focused on the African American experience to also "sample." These books were for a range of ages and in a range of formats, genres, and spanned both fiction and nonfiction, but focused on "own voices" authors and stories.
- 8) 1 Intellectual Freedom Festival Short Film Festival, held on September 12 and geared toward preschool-age children and their adult caregivers. At this event, attendees viewed a collection of short film versions of classic or popular children's books that have been challenged or banned at some library at some point in history, such as *Where the Wild Things Are*, *The Snowy Day*, and *Babar*. Attendees were made aware of historical and ongoing threats to intellectual freedom and celebrated their right to read and consume any sources of information they choose.
- 9) A session of Sunday Funday, a craft program, was held on September 22 for all ages and focused on Hispanic Ojos de Dios in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. This is a traditional craft involving weaving that means "Eyes of God" in Spanish.
- 10) 2 sessions of Book Babies held on September 27 during International Week of the Deaf brought awareness of Deaf culture, the benefits of learning ASL and alternate forms of communication, and taught attendees some American Sign Language. Babies and their adult caregivers were taught signs for colors and animals by an instructor in the language department at the University of Iowa and practiced these signs through stories, songs, games, and rhymes.

#### Community & Access Services

July: Adoption display for "Explore a Universe of Stories" series - This display of nonfiction, fiction, and children's books was suggested by a staff member to address stereotypes about people who are adopted.

The ICPL Bookmobile focused on serving locations where children gather and July and August were busy months on the Bookmobile. A stop that was very busy was the Pheasant Ridge Neighborhood Center with many neighborhood children and families visiting the Bookmobile each week. The Bookmobile also visited the weekly Party in the Park programs, hosted by the IC Parks and Recreation Department, and met many people who had never visited the Bookmobile.

The theme of the 2019 Summer Reading Program was "A Universe of Stories" and programs were planned for people of all ages. The SRP Game cards for children were translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish and Swahili.