

# CIVIL RIGHTS ON DECK



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## Serving a "Taste of the World"

TISCOM's "Taste of the World" event was held on 12 January 2012 in Alexandria, VA. During this celebration, Coast Guard personnel from the Civil Rights Directorate, TISCOM, and other local units experienced and rediscovered the origins of many cultures and traditions via food sampling, guest speakers and live entertainment. Honorary guest speaker, Master Chief Petty Officer (ret.) Joe Campa, the 11th MCPO of the Navy, pictured (above, far right) with CDR Pedro Jimenez and Ms. Floretta Cabiness of the Civil Rights Directorate. Submitted by LT Caleb James

## CIVIL RIGHTS DIRECTORATE

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## Removing Barriers to Employment for Veterans with Disabilities

During a recent public meeting, members of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) discussed issues surrounding transition and retention of disabled veterans in civilian employment. Representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the Department of Defense (DOD) participated as panel members.

The discussion highlighted some of the resources available to vet-

erans with disabilities, including:

- VA and DOL vocational rehabilitation and job training services (see <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/>)
- DOL's Job Accommodation Network (JAN) (see <http://askjan.org/>), which provides information and resources regarding accommodation for individuals with disabilities.

Enforced by the EEOC, the Rehabilitation Act protects not only applicants for employment, but

also civilian federal employees.

Other statutory protections for veterans with disabilities include the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act, which prohibits discrimination against former service members and is enforced by DOL.

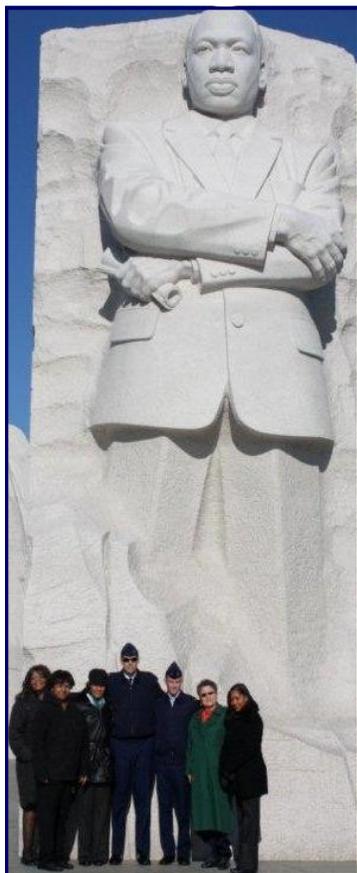
For additional information regarding this public meeting, see the EEOC website at:

[www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/meetings/11-16-11/index.cfm](http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/meetings/11-16-11/index.cfm).

Submitted by Ms. Erika Selmon



## CG-2 Staff Embodies MLK Holiday Theme: "Remember.. Celebrate.. Act!"



Submitted by Ms. Deborah Gant

In keeping with the annual Martin Luther King observance, Rear Admiral Thomas Atkin, Assistant Commandant for Intelligence and Criminal Investigations, pictured with staff members, visited the National Memorial to the slain civil rights leader. They viewed iconic quotes from speeches and tributes to achievers of hard won victories for peace, freedom and justice. Actions such as this serve the civil rights mission by educating the workforce and countering unproductive beliefs that may exist and affect the workplace.

## Complaints Corner: Involuntary Reassignment Deemed "Knee-Jerk Reaction" by EEOC



A nurse at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) alleged that she was harassed on the bases of her national origin (Iranian) and religion (Muslim), as well as subjected to retaliatory action for prior protected EEO activity when she was subsequently reassigned. The VA argued that the nurse and her coworker accused each other of harassment, and the supervisor had interpreted the allegations as a sign that they could not get along within their unit. They further claimed that the supervisor maintained impartiality by moving both employees. The EEOC called management's decision to reassign the nurse as a "knee-jerk reaction" to her harassment allegations, and ordered the agency to return the nurse to her original unit. Additionally, the EEOC awarded the nurse \$7,000 in nonpunitive damages, and mandated EEO training for her coworkers and supervisor.

Source: *Mohammadi v. Department of Veterans Affairs*, 111 LRP 73283 (EEOC OFO 11/15/11).

Submitted by Mr. Johnny McAfee

## Non-Verbal Communication... Speaks Loudly.



Research shows that 55% of communication is non-verbal. Are your signals clear? Many problems in the civil rights arena often boil down to a breakdown in communication. Improving skills and techniques in this area may help to avoid EEO/EO issues altogether.

Frank Bettger, a motivational author, turned his career around by focusing on being positive. He said, "Think about all the things you have to be thankful for ... and smile. The world will smile with you." He also asks, "Have you ever noticed that the breaks seem to go to the person who has a sincere, enthusiastic smile?"

- Do you smile at people? We get back what we send out.
- Do you acknowledge people, or do you give the impression that you are too busy? Does your cell phone cause you to ignore the people around you?
- Do you come across as tense? If so, people may avoid you, not offering information or assistance.

Good relationships require more than words. Focusing on non-verbal communication will make a big difference, and will help you to start your year off right. For additional info, check out [http://bit.ly/nonverbal\\_skills](http://bit.ly/nonverbal_skills). Submitted by Mr. Bill Cashman

## Z1 Makes Training Accessible for Workers with Disabilities

Alternative communication methods now enable deaf employees to actively participate in Civil Rights Training for the first time in the Boston area. Prior to this, hearing impaired employees faced many challenges in accessing training, such as a lack of American Sign Language interpreters. Civil Rights Directorate, Zone 1 overcame this precedent by employing cutting edge technologies: Relay Conference Captioning (RCC) (see <http://www.fedrcc.us/fedrcc/>) and a device known as the UbiDuo (see <http://www.scomm.com/ubiduo>).



Above: CPO Kathy Gallivan, Zone 1 Equal Opportunity Advisor, and Mr. Bill Cashman, Zone 1 Civil Rights Manager, demonstrating the UbiDuo system.

RCC, also referred to as the Federal Relay Service, is available to all Federal Employees who work for agencies that have a Task Order with Sprint and employ deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals. The technology gives such employees equal access as participants in conferences calls, trainings, and other multi-party phone interactions. How it works: Once a call is scheduled, RCC assigns a web address where a captioner keys all dialogue in real time. The method allows an interactive forum for deaf users, who may ask questions and offer input along with hearing parties. The UbiDuo facilitates one-on-one communication through two small keyboards which communicate wirelessly - allowing each user to type what they would normally speak.

Interested? Contact the Department of Defense's Computer Electronics Accommodations Program (CAP) (<http://cap.mil/>), which provides equipment free of charge to other agencies.

Submitted by Mr. Bill Cashman

★ **Are You a PIE Success Story?** Coast Guard is identifying members of its workforce who first learned about our agency through affiliation with a school Partnership in Education (PIE) program. Are you one? If you or someone you know joined or became employed at Coast Guard as a result of a unit visit to your elementary, secondary or high school, please let us know. Contact Gwendolyn White at [Gwendolyn.E.White@uscg.mil](mailto:Gwendolyn.E.White@uscg.mil) or (202) 372-4519, and leave your name and contact info. ★★☆☆

## Congrats to MSU Baton Rouge and MSU Morgan City for Partnership in Education Achievement!



Marine Safety Unit (MSU) Baton Rouge received the 2011 Partnership in Education (PIE) Unit Award for volunteering more than 200 hours to education and outreach programs. They were recognized for their dedication and commitment to increasing student academic achievement through participation in the local Volunteers in Public Schools program and the school-based "Real Men Read" literacy program.

Pictured above, left to right: PO Belinda Douglas; LTJG Brian Dochtermann; PO Sienna Allison; LCDR Quincy Davis; LT Victoria Saxon; & PO Kayla Spore, pictured with students from Jefferson Terrace Elementary.

MSU Morgan City received the 2011 PIE Collaborative Award for its efforts with Aid to Navigation Team (ANT) Morgan City, and two community-based organizations. Jointly, they provided educational assistance and tools to students at five local schools that resulted in notable improvements in reading and math. Through MSU Morgan City and ANT Morgan City, fifty-one active duty and civilian personnel volunteered 465 hours mentoring and tutoring 2,000 students in grades K-12.



Pictured: CAPT Peter Gautier, Commander Sector New Orleans; CAPT Jonathan Burton, Commander MSU Morgan City; BMC Mark Emerson, Officer in Charge ANT Morgan City

**We commend MSU Baton Rouge, MSU Morgan City, ANT Morgan City, and other units service-wide for their commitment to duty, PIE, and community outreach!**

Submitted by Ms. Gwendolyn White