

**ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**AGING & HUMAN SERVICES**  
**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**  
*Joshua Brewster-CoChair*  
*Vante Burkes—Co-Chair*  
*Kelsey R.M. Bush, Commission Liaison*



**COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY:**  
James R. Guy, President  
Eric Colvin, Commissioner  
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner  
Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner  
John E. O'Connor, Commissioner

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## HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

### 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

#### Purpose

Since 1963, the St. Mary's County Human Relations Commission (HRC) has been empowered to promote understanding and harmony of relationships between the people of the county and to use its influence and persuasion to direct the community's efforts to the solution of problems that cause racial and other tensions stemming from acts of discrimination within the county.

#### Activities

The HRC co-sponsored the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Prayer Breakfast held at St. Mary's College of Maryland by attending planning meetings and assisting with public relations. HRC continues to work with St. Mary's College in their diversity, equity and inclusion efforts on campus. The HRC partnered with the SMC Mediation Center and Public Library to help facilitate the "Longest Table" event held over the summer, in which conversations were had with the general public over dinner regarding topics of concern in our community. HRC has also partnered with the Mediation Center and other community organizations to convene community conversations and training opportunities around the topic of diversity, equity and inclusion.

#### Challenges

The membership continues to struggle with ways to accomplish its goals of advocating for human/civil rights and cultural diversity. Several ideas have been discussed, but a dwindling membership continues to be a challenge, as an active membership is necessary to carry out some of the activities that have been discussed.

#### Plans

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In October 2018, the HRC members convened on a Saturday to strategize and prioritize for the coming year. The following are some ideas that were discussed in order to make the HRC more relevant in these turbulent times:

1. Serve as a neutral forum for investigating conflicts in the community, such as within the school system or county government.
2. On behalf of the Board of County Commissioner's assess the diversity, equity and inclusion environment within county government and issue a report and recommendations.
3. Partner with other human services organizations to convene public conversations regarding human relations and conflict resolution.

The HRC decided to focus on Item # 2 above. However, the HRC has yet to convene a committee to move this forward. New members were added in December 2018, so this discussion will be raised again at the first meeting of 2019.

#### Membership as of December 31, 2018

Joshua Brewster, Co-Chair (2<sup>nd</sup> Term ends June 2021)  
Vante Burkes, Co-Chair (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends June 2022)  
Mary Ferns (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends June 2021)  
Joanna Colvin (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends June 2022)  
Jesus Godinez (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends December 2022)  
Steve Hall (1<sup>st</sup> full term ends Dec. 2022)  
Alexis Zoss (1<sup>st</sup> term ends June 2022)  
Scott Stillings (1<sup>st</sup> term ends June 2022)  
Laura Adams (resigned Jan. 2019)  
Tara Cruz (1<sup>st</sup> term ends December 2022)  
Gabrielle Lawrence (1<sup>st</sup> term ends December 2022)  
Jean Bailey (1<sup>st</sup> terms ends December 2022)