

South Bend Human Rights Commission

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April 2013

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HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS LUNCHEON

April is Fair Housing month and the Human Rights Commission will host its 24th Annual Scholarships and Awards Luncheon. This year, the awards luncheon will feature as the speaker Phil Newbold, CEO of Beacon Health Systems. Phil has been Memorial's CEO for the last 24 years. Most recently, he was selected as the CEO for Beacon Healthcare System, which is the newly formed affiliation between Memorial Hospital & Health System and Elkhart General Hospital.

The awards luncheon will be held on April 12th at the Kroc Center. The Fair Housing Training will begin at 8:30 a.m. until 11:15 a.m. The Luncheon will begin at 11:30 a.m. until approximately 2:00 p.m. The awards are given to individuals, businesses and organizations for their commitment to human and civil rights. Tickets are \$35 per person or \$270 per table of eight. This year's sponsors include the South Bend Human Rights Commission, and the cities of South Bend and Mishawaka. *For more information, contact Fred Harris, Jr. at 574.235.9355.*

EEOC Update: Leading Senior Assisted Living Company Settles Religious Discrimination Suit with EEOC

ABILENE, Texas – Senior Living Properties, LLC, which owns 35 senior assisted living facilities in Texas, will pay \$42,500 and furnish extensive injunctive relief to settle a religious discrimination lawsuit by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency announced today. The EEOC had charged the company with denying a religious accommodation to an employee.

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Common Council Appoints New Commissioner



Muhammad Shabazz II is a student at Indiana University South Bend. He is the Facilities Coordinator for the IUSB Civil Rights Heritage Center. Muhammad is a lifelong resident of South Bend. He has two children and a wealth of family and friends. He is active in many groups and organizations working to educate the Michiana community on human rights issues and the history of African Americans in the area. Most recently he helped with the research for the First Schuyler Colfax Day in South Bend, March 2013.

EEOC Update Continued

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Amanda Spalding, dietary services manager at the company's Sweetwater Healthcare Center in Sweetwater, Texas, sought to be excused from working on Sundays based on religious observances consistent with her Christian faith. For most of her over three years of employment with Sweetwater, Spalding was not required to work on a Sunday. This work schedule was respected by the company until it hired a new administrator, Peggy Scruggs. According to the EEOC, after Scruggs was hired, she told Spalding in no uncertain terms that she would have to be available to work on Sundays, telling her that God would excuse her from this religious restriction because she worked in the health care field. The EEOC charged that Scruggs dismissed Spalding's requests that she continue to refrain from working on Sundays and told her that if she would not work on Sundays, "there's the door."

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits religious discrimination and requires employers to make reasonable accommodations to employees' and applicants' sincerely held religious beliefs as long as this does not pose an undue hardship. The EEOC filed suit (Civil Action No. 1:11-CV-192-C) in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Abilene Division after investigating the case, finding reasonable cause to believe that the alleged discrimination took place, and first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement.

New Location

*The Human Rights Commission has moved to **319 North Niles Avenue, Suite 150 A.***



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South Bend, IN 46617
574.235.9355