



James Starnes, President

## From the Desk of the President — James Starnes

The Action Council is a 501C3 organization. As such, the organization does not endorse one political or religious doctrine. As expected, our members bring with them a myriad of beliefs and convictions. This healthy blend is revealed in our many discussions of circumstances affecting our society. The Action Council will always ensure that training promotes cultural competence and diversity. Political or religious statements made by any trainer, do not reflect the views of the Action Council as a whole.

In a few years, we will celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this vitally important organization. Many great individuals contributed to make this possible. Some nations have not enjoyed such longevity. The most brilliant minds in human service delivery have partnered with us. Together we have revealed best practice strategies which have changed the archaic one-size fits all approach to service delivery. We will continue to provide opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate on strategies aimed at improving the human condition.

The continued success of the Action Council requires that

we broaden our base. We must all be committed to teaching potential members the benefits of supporting the mission of the Action Council. The Board is committed to providing an increased number of trainings and events throughout the year. The membership is encouraged to actively participate, and assist with marketing. Being a member of the Action Council really does mean something. It indicates that you are serious about your chosen vocation. Those whom you are privileged to serve are the benefactors. As a true professional, you stand above many.



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## Announcing the 2014 Cross-Cultural Conference

The 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Cross Cultural Conference will take place February 27, 2014-March 2, 2014 at the Landmark Resort in Myrtle Beach.

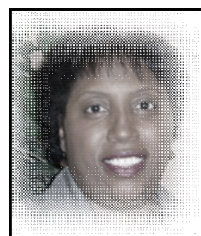
The theme selected for the conference is "Approaches for Reducing Poverty and Enhancing Family Well-being." As we continue the discussion of poverty, the goal of the conference is to provide participants and attendees with knowledge, skills and networking opportunities that will enhance the delivery and effectiveness of services in

their respective professions.

Once again, Friday has been designated Student Day and will offer workshops and networking opportunities for student attendees.



Willie Bethune, Conference Director



Nadine Livingston, Conference Co-Director



Ernest Shaw, LMSW, Editor

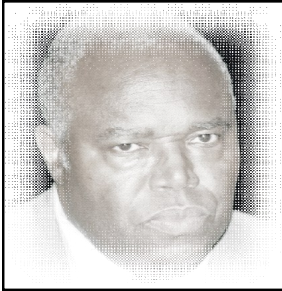
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## THE 2013 CONFERENCE: HOW DID WE DO?

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**By Ernest Shaw, LMSW**

Planning for next year's conference is nearly complete. However, we must take one last look at this year's conference. The 35th Annual Action Council Cross Cultural Conference was held at the Landmark Resort Hotel in Myrtle Beach, SC, from February 28 to March 3, 2013

The theme for this year's conference was: *The Culture of Poverty*. The conference objectives were: (1) Examine policies, programs and services designed to reduce poverty. (2) Offer strategies for enhancing social competence and empowering individuals and families to become self sufficient. (3) Identify programs and services that assist in enhancing the revitalization of communities. (4) Review pervasive conditions that impact the emotion and mental health of individuals and families. (5) Heighten awareness of assessment, diagnostic and intervention measures for prevention, treatment and recovery of behavior disorders. (6) Promote opportunities for networking and resource development.

Participants were asked to evaluate each presentation by rating it as excellent, good, fair or poor with numerical values ranging from 4 to 1 assigned to the ratings. A review of those evaluations revealed the following: The Educational Value of Conference was 3.86.

This number represented a slight increase over last year's 3.7846. The Extent Workshops for this year's conference were as advertised was rated at 3.72. This number also represented a slight increase over last year's 3.69. The overall conference average was 3.75.

The Opening Session was presented by Dr. Robert Hawkins, McSilver Assistant Professor in Poverty Studies, McSilver Institute on Poverty Policy and Research, at the Silver School of Social Work at New York University. "Dr. Hawkins is brilliant and articulate. Great use of the literature. I left with so much to think about," wrote one person.

Dr. Hawkins then joined Christine Boone, ACSW, DSW, Professor of Social Work, SC State University and Ana M. Scheyett, PhD, MSW, LCSW, Dean and Professor at the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina in the opening plenary session chaired by Carl Jones, Ph.D of Clark Atlanta University. One observer described their performance as, "Good panel discussion, good participation by audience! All panelists were excellent."

The President's Luncheon Speaker was Bud Ferillo, Producer and Director of *Corridor of Shame* and Communications Specialist at the Children's Law Center. "Bud Ferillo is a good speaker and dedicated human being. I applaud his efforts to improve the lives of children and adults in South Carolina "noted one observer. A student attending the conference wrote, "Mr. Ferillo was beyond great! The information he shared was inspiring and really touched me. He makes me proud to be a part of the human services program at Midlands Technical College."

Five concurrent workshops and a Special Plenary session were presented on the first full day of the conference. Sue Berkowitz, JD, Executive Director of South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center presented *Issues and Challenges for Low-Income Families*. "Excellent presentation, Attorney Berkowitz is passionate about the work she does and tries to advocate for the poor people in South Carolina." Lois Wilson, JD, RN, Legal Nursing Consultant presented, *Legal Issues in Nursing*. Julie Smithwick-Leone, LMSW, the Executive Director of PASO's Programs at the USC Arnold School of Public Health presented a discourse on the topic, *At-Risk Latino Families: Understanding and Reaching Out*. Dr. Carol Apt, PhD, Professor of Sociology at South Carolina State University examined, *What Is Culture and Why Is It Important*. One participant wrote, "Interesting presentation! I enjoyed her presentation style and information that was presented. I've attended several cultural competency workshops, but this was the most interesting I have attended." Sergeant Mark Arnold of the Mount Pleasant, SC Police Department discussed *Diversity Centered Leadership for Law Enforcement Professionals*. Edolphus "Ed" Towns, MSW, Former Congressman, D. NY was the featured speaker at a Special Plenary. The social worker, minister and fifteen term representative was described as "an amazing speaker a wealth of knowledge."

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## “Never Again?”



During April and May of each year, communities around the country observe the Holocaust Days of Remembrance to commemorate the 20th century genocide and its victims. Established by an act of Congress, the 'Days of Remembrance are observed by state and local governments, military bases, workplaces, schools, churches, synagogues, and civic centers' (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2013). Genocide is a state-sponsored attempt to eliminate an entire category of people, whether because of their race, religion, tribal affiliation, political position or other characteristic that perpetrators deem undesirable.

The Holocaust did not target only Jews, nor was it the first or the last genocide in human history. The first people designated for

elimination in Nazi Germany were those with physical and/or mental handicaps. Hitler's plan for world domination could be summed up simplistically as 'rasse und raum' (German for 'race and space'). In addition to his plans to take over most of Europe and parts of Asia, he wanted to create a super-race of blond, blue-eyed, physically perfect humans, and one way to do that was to eliminate those people who possessed characteristics that were believed capable of weakening the human race. As the ones in charge, Hitler's Nazis decided what characteristics fit the bill and which people possessed traits that would pollute the gene pool. All mental and physical handicaps, as well as certain personality characteristics, were thereby deemed genetic in origin, which meant they could be passed on to future generations. What transpired was that anyone who fell into disfavor with the prevailing regime was marked as 'life unworthy of life,' and was killed.

The atrocities committed during World War II were so horrific that many still recoil at the suggestion that we should make a concerted effort to remember what happened. But if we don't remember, we allow other genocides to occur. The slogan that emerged from the Holocaust, 'Never Again,' has not stood the test of time. There have been genocides in Africa, Eastern Europe, Central America, and Asia since the end of World War II.

Many people avoid the subject of genocide because they believe that it is beyond human comprehension. This is a falsehood; we understand a lot about it. We even know what political, economic, and social conditions in a given country are risk factors for genocides. Others think that to understand a phenomenon as complex as a genocide is to condone it. To understand is not to excuse; this too, is an invalid argument. Others avoid the subject because they fear becoming tainted by immersing themselves in accounts of the evil that human beings do to one another. This is a cowardly excuse, and one that can contribute to the existence of genocidal regimes.

One of the most disturbing aspects of Holocaust Studies is the realization that the atrocities in that genocide were carried out by sane, otherwise normal, rational human beings. If we could establish that Nazis were insane or that they were all of a certain personality type, or even that they really didn't know what they were doing, it might make us feel better. But the reality is that Nazis were not insane, nor did they represent a specific constellation of personality traits, and they knew exactly what they were doing. To think that the capacity for such evil may reside in all of us is disturbing, to say the least. But unless we face what we fear we are bound to relive it over and over again. Let's take the opportunities for reflecting and remembering offered by the Days of Remembrance to rededicate ourselves to eliminating all forms of genocide. Remember: People are responsible for committing genocides and people are responsible for stopping them.



**Tracey Richardson**



One of the ACTION council board members, Tracy Richardson was selected in 2013 to serve as a Leadership Fellow for the South Atlantic Region of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Ms. Richardson has been participating in this Delta leadership and mentoring program in order to improve her eldership skills within Delta. Her accomplishments not only include Delta Leadership Fellows, but she was named 2013 Delta Women of the Year for the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Anderson Alumnae Chapter. Ms. Richardson takes pride in advocating for those who have no voice as well as operating within the five programmatic thrusts to deliver community service. The

programmatic thrusts are economic development, educational development, international awareness, political awareness, physical and mental health development. Her final appointment in 2013 was the appointment to the African American Leadership Council, which is a sub committee with Anderson United Way, which also provides activities for community agenda items for Anderson County, from the perspective of African American philanthropic, civic, and board activities of Anderson county. All in all, Ms. Richardson not only serves the ACTION council with diligence, but also her community.

**Remembering Bill Leeke**



Throughout much of the history of the Action Council and the Cross Cultural Conference the South Carolina Department of Corrections has been a partner. Correctional professionals contributed to the success of conferences and the plight of offenders and successful

correctional programs have been the subject of many presentations. Our state lost a true correctional professional recently with the death of William Dent "Bill" Leeke on July 17, 2013. Mr. Leeke earned degrees in psychology and criminal justice from Furman University and the University of South Carolina to prepare him for his life's work. He served as Commissioner of the SC Department of Corrections from 1968 to 1987, and was the longest serving commissioner in the country at the time of his retirement. During his award-winning tenure he was a national leader in his field and an instrument of positive change in our state.

Leeke ended racial segregation in the inmate population and aggressively provided employment opportunities for blacks and women. The *State*

*Newspaper* featured an iconic photograph of the commissioner meeting with local black attorney John Roy Harper and the Rev. Jessie Jackson. In 1969 Leeke tabbed Jesse Gilliam, a black graduate of Columbia's Benedict College for the important position of Assistant Director for Specialized Services. The next year Stoney Psychiatric Center, a cooperative effort between SC Department of Corrections and SC Department of Mental Health began operations at the Central Correctional Institution. In 1971 Gilliam and Leeke hired Dr. Reed Pondexter Johnson, the black chief of the forensic program at SC State Hospital to serve as Chief of Psychiatric Services at the department of corrections.

These developments marked the recognition that mentally ill individuals were ending up in our prisons, and paved the way for an underfunded agency to provide some measure of mental health services to a growing prison population.

In 1977, Camille Griffin Graham was appointed Warden of the Maximum Security Center at the Department of Corrections and the state's largest female prison bears her name today. Mr. Leeke exemplified the cross-cultural spirit long before it was fashionable to do so.



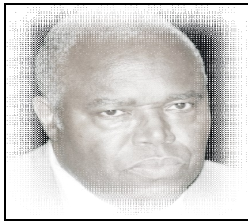
**Remembering the Honorable Norris O. Rearden, Jr.**

The Action Council family is saddened to learn of the death of retired Colleton County Magistrate Judge Norris Rearden, the brother of long term Action Council board member Harrison Rearden, entered into eternal rest on June 23, 2013.

He was 75 years old.

We express our deepest sympathy and will keep the Rearden Family in our thoughts and prayers.





## The 2013 Conference: How Did We Do?

Ernest Shaw, LMSW, Editor

(continued )

The morning of the second full day of the conference featured eight more workshops. Lois Wilson, JD, RN presented *Code of Ethics: A Dynamic Process*. Ernest Shaw, LMSW presented *Incarceration and Criminal History as Factors in Perpetual Poverty: The Case For Reform and Re-entry*" Kelsey Butler, a student at SC State University and Delindus Brown, PhD, SC State University and Gloria Hayes, PhD, SC State University presented *The Influence of Creative Classroom Teaching on the Education of Children Living in Poverty*. One participant noted, "Kelsey was extremely well prepared and did an outstanding job." Joe Benton, LMSW National President National Association of Black Social Workers presented *Being Poor is Expensive, Part I: Implications for Social Policy and Change*. Stephen McLeod-Bryant, MD, Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee presented *The Comprehensive Initial Psychiatric Evaluation*. George R. Garrison, Ph.D. Professor of African American Studies at Kent State University spoke on the topic, *Poverty Issues: Its Effect on Adolescents and Teens*. Rebecca Barnette, LISW-CP, Department of Veteran Affairs described *Homelessness Among Veterans*. Shirley Furtick, MSW, LISW-CP/

AP, LMFT,  
Department of  
Veteran Affairs  
and Marjorie

"...extremely well prepared and did an outstanding job..."

Brittain Hammock, LISW-CP, MSW, Diplomat and Professor at Benedict College discussed *Ethical and Clinical Practice*.

The featured speaker for the *Otis Corbitt Awards Luncheon* was Thomas M. Scott, Th. D. Associate Professor of Religion at Clark Atlanta University. He was eloquently introduced by Clark Atlanta University Student Government President Tyler J. Green and one participant noted that the young Green had a great future and others thought that he should be asked to speak next year. Dr. Scott was described as, "A profound, thought provoking scholar."

The afternoon of the second full day of the conference featured four more workshops. Phil Clinton Bowman, MD, PhD, the Director, Pee Dee Mental Health Center presented *Personality Disorders: How to Diagnose; How to treat*. One person wrote, "Excellent! Phil makes it look easy. Excellent!" LeAnn Gardner, LMSW, MDiv of the Dee Norton Lowcountry Children's Center presented *Dynamics of Spirituality: Where Does it Fit Into Evidence Based Treatment*. Dr. Carol Apt, PhD, Professor of Sociology SC State University presented *The Beliefs and Behaviors of People Raised in Poverty*. Amber Lange, Site Director of the *Emerging Scholars Program* Clemson University described her program. At the end of the day Conference Director Willie Bethune, MSW, LISW, -AP/

CP presided as  
Stephen McLeod  
Bryant, MD Patricia  
Stone Motes , PhD,  
Carl Jones, PhD and Daniel T. Craft, PhD summarized the day's educational offerings.

**"Fantastic presentation"**

The final day of the conference featured four more workshops and the Closing Brunch presentation. Teshome Tadesse, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Sociology, South Carolina State University spoke on *The Availability of Resources for Single Mothers Raising Children in Poverty*. Laura Spears and Dawn Porter of SC Vocational Rehabilitation spoke about *Disability and Poverty: The Impact of Vocational Rehabilitation Services on Self-Sufficiency*. "Fantastic presentation-Best one I've attended the entire conference," one person noted. Joe Benton, LMSW National President National Association of Black Social Workers presented *Being Poor is Expensive, Part II: Implications for Social Policy and Change* and Ret. Colonel Avis Buchanan, RN, MS presented *The Psychological Affects of War on Military Families*.

The Closing Plenary was presented by Pat Patrick, LISW, Director of the Families First Program with SC Department of Social Services and his effort was described as "Powerful! Excellent!"

Participants were asked to name speakers that they considered outstanding. Several of this year's speakers were named. Participants were also asked to suggest speakers for next year's conference. Again, several of this year's speakers were named.

Last year Fifty-seven individuals addressed the question of whether or not their personal goals and objectives were met during the conference. All fifty-seven answered yes." This year ninety-six per cent of the respondents answered in the affirmative. Only twenty-two individuals addressed the issue of whether or not they planned to attend the conference next year. However, eighteen said that they would and the other four answered "maybe."

The annual conference presented by the Action Council for Mental Health and Human Services is a time-honored tradition for many professionals. While the conference does feature nationally known experts in a variety of fields, workshops conducted by our board members, human services professionals along with religious leaders also contribute greatly to our educational effort and the whole conference experience. Many human services professionals use contact hours earned at the conference to satisfy their yearly requirements for licensure purposes. We believe that we play

## Informed Consent – Know Your Rights

**Carol Apt, Ph.D.**

If you go to a physician and he/she wants to perform surgery or any procedure that is invasive and/or carries a significant risk, you will, hopefully, be asked to sign a statement of informed consent. The rationale behind informed consent is that if a patient does not know or understand what the procedure is all about, he/she is not informed enough to consent to it.

The 2012-2013 edition of the American Medical Association's "Code of Medical Ethics" states clearly that patients can only make informed choices if they have sufficient information to do so. This includes information from the physician about why he/she thinks the patient should have the procedure, what exactly the procedure entails, what the risks are, and how those risks will be addressed by medical personnel.

All of this must be communicated in language that the patient can understand, not in 'Medicalese,' which most non-medical people don't speak fluently. Unless there are extraordinary circumstances, such as when a patient is unconscious or otherwise not able to communicate, physicians are under an ethical obligation to provide patients with all the information they need to make informed choices.

Physicians are also obligated to answer all of the patient's questions and to help him/her make informed choices. In South Carolina the physician performing the procedure is legally obligated to discuss all of this with the patient; a receptionist from the doctor's office who shoves an alleged informed consent form under your nose and says, "sign this," is in violation of the law, and you have every right to refuse to sign it until the physician has explained everything to you and has answered all your questions.

Until that happens, your consent cannot be considered valid.



## Criminal History as a Factor In Perpetual Poverty

**Ernest Shaw, LMSW**

On the first day of our recent conference, someone evaluating a workshop dealing with poverty wrote the following: "I wish we could get laws to erase criminal records once debt has been paid so jobs would be available for those who made errors..." I read those comments with interest long after the conference was over but on the second day of the conference I spoke on the topic *Incarceration and Criminal History as Factors in Perpetual Poverty: The Case For Reform and Re-entry*.

I now recall that it was a presentation that I did not want to do. I spent more than seventeen years working with prisoners, and I witnessed up close the correlation between imprisonment and continuing poverty. When I was asked by a member of the conference planning committee to address a related issue, I suggested that the committee ask someone currently working with prisoners to speak instead. After all, almost five years had passed since I had last worked in a prison and I felt that I was no longer an "expert" on the subject, if I ever had been, and that it was time for me to move on. Yet as I continued to try to say no with some authority, I suddenly asked myself how difficult must it be for a former inmate to move on after being released from prison if someone who merely worked in a prison could not.

Therefore, I agreed to speak on the topic requested and immediately began preparing a presentation in which I attempted to make the case that high rates of incarceration should not be overlooked as a prescription for a life of continued poverty and that we must do more to make it possible for prisoners to successfully rejoin society after paying their debt to society. I not only delivered my presentation at the conference, but I also had the opportunity to reprise my presentation a few weeks later at the *First Annual poverty Forum* at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Columbia.

Incarceration reduces employment prospects, earning potential and access to many resources that those without a criminal history utilize to escape the cycle of poverty. Ex-inmates can be prohibited by law from working in many industries, living in public housing and receiving various governmental benefits. (Travis and Visher, 2007) found that the stigma of having served time in prison can be an insurmountable obstacle even when a former inmate is eligible for employment. Job seekers without criminal records were offered twice as many positions as those with a criminal record.

*Continued on page 8 - Criminal History as a Factor*

## COMMENTARY: Echoes from Sanford, Florida

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**Ernest Shaw, LMSW, Editor**

***The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the editor do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Action Council***

Late on a recent Saturday night, a Florida jury acquitted a mixed race Hispanic neighborhood watch volunteer of shooting and killing an unarmed black seventeen year old as a nervous nation looked on. The shooting a year and a half ago and the recent verdict shone the spotlight on Sanford, Florida again. A week earlier I saw the movie *42* which so vividly chronicled the inhumane treatment afforded Jackie Robinson, the man who integrated major league baseball in 1947 and I was reminded that the good citizens of Sanford ran Robinson out of town during spring training the year before because black and white players were not allowed to play on the same field in Sanford.

In his 1971 book, *The Chickenbone Special*, Dwayne Walls wrote about several southern blacks, including some that I knew as they were forced to abandon the South and migrate to the cities of the north in search of new lives. Walls wrote about Rochester, New York, one of the destinations of thousands of black migrants from the south. He found that the second largest group came from my home County of Williamsburg in South Carolina and the largest number came from Sanford, Florida. It is ironic that George Romney, running for president in 1967, came to Williamsburg County to investigate, while his son Mitt Romney running for president forty-five years later made one of his last campaign stops in Sanford the day before the 2012 election.

Sanford's latest day in the sun was not a good one. The jury verdict is the hallmark of our criminal justice system. Those six women had to choose between competing visions of a defenseless teenager shot by a man a dozen years older who profiled him, pursued him and killed him; and another vision of a man hardly fit to prevail in a fight who was set upon by a better fighter that he killed in self defense because he feared for his life. The jury rendered the verdict as they were charged. There are two tragedies here: the first are the circumstances that brought the two men to the same place at the same time. However, the second tragedy is the fact that one's opinion as to whether or not the verdict was the right one is still determined by one's race. As a nation, we still have work to do. However, the so far peaceful protests around the nation are signs of hope.




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“Excellent conference with up to date information “

*Continued from page 5- How Did We Do?*

a major role in providing relevant and affordable educational opportunities to attendees while providing presenters with opportunities to present research findings and accounts of best practice models to professionals with direct care responsibilities.

One attendee wrote, “Excellent conference with up to date information on impact of poverty and political impact in families.” Our goal is to broaden our appeal to include the entire spectrum of the human services field. A nurse attending the conference wrote, “I really appreciate Lorraine Tracey and Elaine Leonard in getting the Nursing CEUs for us ...” The fact that two college students were praised for their performances would suggest that our future is bright. We greatly appreciate hearing from the people who support our conference by attending each year and we look forward to your attendance next year.

Many people come to prison with low employment and low earnings histories as a result of factors too numerous to list here. In all but a few cases, incarceration only exacerbates these challenges. The Pew Charitable Trusts found in 2010 that serving time reduces hourly wages for men by approximately 11 percent, annual employment by 9 weeks and annual earnings by 40 percent. By age 48, the typical former inmate will have earned \$179,000 less than if he had never been incarcerated. What can a person buy with that kind of money?

In Exodus 34:7, the writer wrote of “visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.” He could have been writing about the effects that a father’s trip to prison might have on his children. (Johnson, 2009) found that having a parent incarcerated hurts children both educationally and financially. Children with fathers who have been incarcerated are significantly more likely than other children to be expelled or suspended from school (23 percent compared with 4 percent). I believe that the seeds of both future imprisonment and poverty are often sowed back when “Johnny” begins having problems in middle school.

President Bush signed the Second Chance Act of 2007 that awarded grants to groups to provide resources to help reduce recidivism. The South Carolina Sentencing Reform Commission of 2010 may be another step in the right direction. If there truly is a correlation between a criminal history and the perpetuation of poverty we must reform our criminal justice system by refining the art of knowing who to lock up and when to end the punishment to all those who have paid their debt if the offender is to maintain or regain their shot at the American Dream.

Citations:

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**ACTION COUNCIL FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
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## Who We Are

The Action Council for Cross-Cultural Mental Health and Human Services, Inc. (ACCMHS) is a voluntary organization dedicated to enhancing the involvement of minority citizens in the management, delivery and utilization of mental health and human services. The Council represents public and private business/industry and organization representatives, professionals, and volunteers who have an interest in cross-cultural issues.

The Council exists for the purpose of understanding diverse cultures, enhancing cultural relations and providing a forum for multi-cultural issues and management/personnel concerns. This includes educational training, resource management and networking toward providing service delivery and cultural awareness.

## Why You Should Belong

Statewide and regional support is needed to make the Council’s goals a reality. By your membership and interest, you join in enhancing the participation of professionals from diverse cultures in mental health and human services.