

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**City of Duluth Communications Office**

Mayor Emily Larson  
411 West First Street • Duluth, Minnesota 55802 • [www.duluthmn.gov](http://www.duluthmn.gov)

*For more information contact Kate Van Daele,  
Public Information Officer at 218-730-5309*

**DATE: 12/10/2021**

**SUBJECT: Duluth Human Rights Commission issues statements for International Human Rights Day**

**BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer**

**Duluth Human Rights Commission issues statements for International Human Rights Day**

[Duluth, MN] Each year on December 10th, International Human Rights Day is commemorated, recognizing the day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the most basic rights of all individuals such as the right to nationality, life and liberty, freedom from torture and discrimination, freedom of movement, and protection against arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile.

To bring International Human Rights Day closer to home, the Human Rights Commission asked the City of Duluth Human Rights staff and Commissioners what human rights mean to them. Their responses are below:

“Human Rights are important because they belong to all of us! They are the basic rights of freedom and they are here to protect us. It is important that we celebrate Human Rights Day but also use this time to educate the community on what their Human Rights are.” Human Rights Officer Carl Crawford

“Human rights recognize all people are equal, and by the very nature we are all equal, we all hold the unalienated right to freedom. Freedom comes with the understanding that all people are deserving of the ability to thrive in their community and we work collectively for justice as a society to remove systemic racism.” Commissioner Carl Huber

“Human rights to me are the commitments we have made to each other to honor, see, and value the humanity in each of us and to provide everyone with the minimum guarantees that you would want for you and your family.” Commissioner Bettina Keppers

“Human rights are basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person. These rights belong to us throughout our entire lives, and cannot be taken away. Human rights are inherent to all of us, no matter our nationality, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation, or any other status. Every human has the right to be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.” Commissioner Tyra Jaramillo

“Human Rights are based on principles of equality and dignity, and belong to each of us regardless of what we believe, how we look, or how we choose to live. They are not only protected by numerous local and international laws, but each of us are entitled to these rights simply because we are human. With these rights comes the responsibility for each of us to protect this freedom for ourselves and others.” Human Rights Assistant Laura Laaksonen

“Human rights means everyone has equitable access to inclusive, supportive systems for things such as personal care, healthcare, educational opportunities, and many more, where we can all grow and thrive in our diverse, global society.” Commissioner Marsha Lue

“For me, human rights are what allow each of us to live authentically as we are--no matter what we look like, who we love, where we live, what beliefs we have, or how we choose to live. Human rights are the foundation of dignity and respect. Just as we all have inherent rights, we also have a responsibility to protect the rights of others.” Commissioner Sarah Lyons

“To me it means I have a responsibility to try to ensure that people and institutions know what human rights entail, know the importance of human rights, work to ensure people’s human rights and when people’s human rights are violated to stand up against those injustices. We all need to work to guarantee that everyone’s human rights are protected at all times and in all places.” Commissioner Sandra van den Bosse

---

Below is a statement from the Commission on work that is bring done in Duluth, opportunities to get involved, and work that is left to do.

There is much work to be done to ensure basic human rights are protected for everyone here in Duluth, in Minnesota, across the country and around the world. Now’s the time to self-reflect on what human rights mean to you as an individual in our

community.

What work is there to do? If you have a child you could have a conversation with their teacher about how they are incorporating different peoples lived experiences into their curriculum so our youth have the opportunity to learn about people from all walks of life. You could host a book/movie club dedicated to learning about the intersections of people's identities and discuss your thoughts, feelings, and reactions with everyone in attendance; share what had the greatest impact on you, something you learned, something you hadn't reflected on before. You could ask the hard questions about equity, access, and privilege with your closest family and friends. You could actively confront bias, racism, prejudice, and discrimination in our community and reach out to community members impacted by hate crimes, discrimination, and bias to check-in on them and their mental well-being. You could work to dismantle systems of oppression at your workspace, in an educational setting, or at your religious/spiritual institution, for example. You could stand up, speak out, and do a lot of listening and learning by attending some of the upcoming events the Human Rights Commission has planned in 2022.

Where can you do the work? Schools. Hospitals. Community organizations. Businesses. Religious and Spiritual Institutions. Your family. Your friends. Social circles. Your neighborhood. Anywhere and everywhere!

Interested in opportunities to impact human rights in Duluth? There are openings on the Human Rights Commission! Apply today by clicking the following link: <https://duluthmn.gov/boards-commissions/duluth-human-rights-commission/>.

###