



CIVIL RIGHTS ON DECK

NATIONAL DISABILITY
EMPLOYMENT
AWARENESS MONTH



ONE SERVICE, MANY STORIES: HIGHLIGHTING HISPANIC HERITAGE

By Patrick Ferraris, Communications Specialist, CRD, USCG HQ

The Coast Guard observes National Hispanic Heritage Month every year from September 15th to October 15th to honor the cultures and contributions of Hispanic Americans to the Nation and Service. The theme for 2023 is “Todos Somos, Somos Uno: We Are All, We Are One.” Commands and units throughout the Coast Guard honored Hispanic Heritage Month and its theme in various ways this year. At District 5, the Portsmouth Federal Building Leadership Diversity Advisory Council (LDAC) hosted Rear Adm. Jo-Ann Burdian on September 28th as part of their “Leadership Talk” series. Burdian, the Coast Guard’s first Latina promoted to flag rank, shared her journey and leadership vision to inspire others. Burdian also joined Ms. Blanca Sanchez, Director, Civilian Human Resources, Diversity & Leadership Directorate, as joint keynote speakers for Coast Guard Headquarters’ celebration. On the west coast, Base Alameda held a Hispanic Heritage Month event that comprised of multiple activities, including a performance of the song “Estrellita Dónde Estás” (Twinkle Twinkle Little Star) by the children from the Base Alameda Child Development Center and a live cooking demonstration of Hispanic and Latin dishes by Command Special Aide CS2 Rosie Segura. Throughout the calendar year, all commands and units are encouraged to conduct programs and activities that highlight and raise awareness for contributions made by diverse individuals and groups to American history and culture. [View the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute’s \(DEOMI\) planning guide for ideas and tips.](#) Pictured: Left: Rear Adm. Jo-Ann Burdian provides remarks to the District 5 workforce at their Hispanic Heritage Month event. (Photo by PO2 Brandon Hillard) Center: High school students from the Oakland Military Institute perform traditional Mexican songs. (Photo by CDR Hale Allegretti) Right: Mr. Richard Tschampel, CGHQ Hispanic Heritage Month Executive Champion, presents Ms. Blanca Sanchez and Rear Adm. Jo-Ann Burdian tokens of appreciation for their roles as keynote speakers during CGHQ’s NHHM event. (Photo by Telfair Brown)



COAST GUARD BARRIER ANALYSIS ON THE HORIZON

By Netosha Washington, Equal Employment Manager, CRD, USCG HQ

Workplace barriers are any obstacle that prevents individuals from fully participating and realizing their potential in the workplace. Federal agencies must prevent discrimination and eliminate barriers that impede free and open competition in the workplace based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, and other protected groups. To fulfill this ongoing responsibility, agencies must perform barrier analyses to find places where obstacles might prevent certain groups from successfully participating and create effective plans to remove these obstacles. Beginning in 2024, the Civil Rights Directorate (CRD) will oversee a third-party (contractor) who will conduct a barrier analysis to identify and help develop solutions to address barriers that may prevent equal access to employment opportunities

for the Coast Guard’s current and future workforce. The barrier analysis process involves the five critical phases of the employment life cycle: 1) Recruitment; 2) Hiring; 3) Training and Development; 4) Promotions; and 5) Separations. Using rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods, the contractors will analyze workforce data, conduct focus groups, validate or challenge assumptions, and directly engage with and involve the workforce. Conducting a barrier analysis will aid the Coast Guard in meeting federal regulatory requirements, inform future policies, procedures, and practices that eliminate impediments to equal opportunity, help remove workplace barriers, and achieve a discrimination-free work environment.

CIVIL RIGHTS DIRECTORATE STAFF RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

By CDR Andrew Grantham, Executive Assistant, CRD, USCG HQ

Congratulations to Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Jessica Nicholson, Zone 7 Equal Opportunity Advisor, and Mr. Patrick Ferraris, Communications Specialist, on being recognized for their dedication and service to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) in the Coast Guard. CPO Nicholson received the Civil Rights Service Provider (CRSP) Superior Service Award for the period of July 2021 to June 2023. Nicholson counseled and guided over 150 commands and approximately 7,500 employees and instructed over 1,000 personnel in Civil Rights Awareness. Nicholson also spent numerous hours volunteering in schools and assisting over 25 commands with their Partnership in Education (PIE) and Special Emphasis programs. The Department of Homeland Security recognized Mr. Patrick Ferraris as the DHS EEO Practitioner of the Year across all Components. Ferraris designed, developed, and led a communication campaign to address the top basis for complaints (retaliation) in the Coast Guard. Post-campaign results reflected a 43.8% decrease in complaints that included retaliation as a basis compared the same period in FY20-22. Ferraris also developed and distributed special observance toolkits throughout the year to Coast Guard public affairs offices, providing valuable resources for units to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion. *Pictured: Top: Dr. Terri Dickerson (left), Civil Rights Director, presents CPO Jessica Nicholson with the CRSP Superior Service Award. Bottom: Mr. Patrick Ferraris holds the DHS EEO Practitioner of the Year award.*



NEW EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ADVISOR JOINS REGION 3 IN ALASKA

By Arcady Darter, Deputy Regional Director, CRD, Region 3




The Civil Rights Directorate welcomes aboard SCPO Mike Christensen, the new Equal Opportunity Advisor for Region 3, Zone 12 in Juneau, Alaska. SCPO Christensen has served in the Coast Guard for 23 years on various cutters and Naval Engineering support units. Christensen is a recent graduate of the Equal Opportunity Advisor Course at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute. He and his wife have three daughters and they enjoy hiking, softball, and cross country running together. Christensen also enjoys collecting and restoring vintage audio equipment. Welcome to the team SCPO Christensen!

DISABILITY AWARENESS RIGHTS TIMELINE


The resilience and determination of the disability community and their allies have shaped significant milestones and legislative changes for civil rights and inclusive hiring practices. This timeline traces disability rights progress and sheds light on key moments in history that shaped the Nation and paved the way for greater opportunities for people with disabilities. You can view the full timeline on the [Civil Rights Directorate's website](#).

1945




President Harry S. Truman approves a Congressional resolution declaring the first week in October "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week."


Individuals with disabilities stage sit-ins at federal buildings, demanding civil rights recognition and Section 504 enforcement under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.



1977




1990




President George H.W. Bush signs the Americans with Disabilities Act guaranteeing Americans with disabilities unrestricted access to public buildings, equal opportunity in employment, and equal access to government services and employment.

Executive Order 13548 is signed and commits the federal government to becoming a model employer for persons with disabilities and for Departments to improve recruitment and hiring of qualified individuals with disabilities.



2010



2023 Rehabilitation Act 50

Marks the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the first federal legislation to address access and equity for people with disabilities.



Civil Rights Directorate

Dr. Terri Dickerson

Director

CDR Andrew Grantham

Executive Assistant

Mr. James Ellison

Assistant Director

Ms. Tabettha McFeders

Division Chief

Ms. Catherine Solomon

Division Chief

Mr. Eduardo Zayas

Division Chief

Mr. Vesone Dean

Regional Director

Mr. Patrick Ferraris

Communications Specialist

Contact Information

2703 Martin Luther King Jr.
Ave., S.E. Washington, DC
20593-7000

Phone: (202) 372-4500

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THREE COAST GUARD MEMBERS HONORED BY LATINA STYLE

By Patrick Ferraris, Communications Specialist, CRD, USCG HQ



LATINA Style recognized three Coast Guard members as recipients of the 2023 LATINA Style Distinguished Military Service Award: Petty Officer Second Class Rosa Gomes Gavidia, Marine Science Technician, Sector Juneau; Petty Officer First Class Monserrat Lazaro Rivera, Intelligence Specialist, District 14; and Lt. j.g. Melanie Arroyave, Recruitment Action Unit Officer, Sector Virginia. Petty Officer Gomes Gavidia served as both the Partnership in Education (PIE) Coordinator and the coordinator for Sector Alaska’s Hispanic Heritage Month observance. As the PIE coordinator, Gomes Gavidia promoted opportunities for Coast Guard members to volunteer in the local community and make considerable impacts towards the lives of hundreds of children through activities like tutoring and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) projects. “It is an honor to be a Latina and to represent the Coast Guard,” Gomes Gavidia stated. “I am mostly proud to represent my family’s roots through a Service that gives me the opportunity to do so.” During the award period, Petty Officer Lazaro Rivera promoted active participation in the District 14 Leadership and Diversity Advisory Council (LDAC), serving as the group’s Secretary and collaborating with recruiting offices to hold outreach activities aimed to raise awareness about the Coast Guard and its career opportunities. “I am proud to be part of the Coast Guard,” Lazaro Rivera remarked. “My experiences taught me that, regardless of rank or background, every member can positively impact the Service.” Lt. j.g. Arroyave served on the Coast Guard Women’s Advisory Board, where she provided recommendations to the Commandant regarding the recruitment, retention, advancement, and well-being of women Coast Guard members. “I do feel a sense of responsibility to proudly represent my culture, both as a Latina and a Coast Guard officer,” Arroyave, a Colombian-American, said in a [Coast Guard press release](#). “It’s a unique culture within a unique culture and I feel seen and honored to be recognized for that,” she continued. Read more about the recipients and their accomplishments on the [Civil Rights Directorate’s website](#).

TRIBAL NATIONS ASCENDING TO NEW HEIGHTS

The Nation recognizes National Native American Heritage Month (NNAHM) every November. This is a period of time to celebrate the cultures, histories, traditions, and contributions of Native Americans and Alaska Natives to American society. This year’s theme, “Tribal Nations Soaring to New Heights,” symbolizes the progress, growth, and exceptional achievements of indigenous communities. NNAHM plays a vital role in educating the public about the unique challenges faced by Native American and Alaska Native communities, dispelling stereotypes, and fostering cultural preservation. All Coast Guard Commands and units are encouraged to commemorate NNAHM by highlighting indigenous individuals’ accomplishments and contributions to our Service and Nation.

