



SPOTLIGHT ON DIVERSITY

Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force

Visit us at:

http://www.ars.usda.gov/Aboutus/BA_Diversity_Task_Force

United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Research Service

BA Diversity Taskforce Invites You!

You are cordially invited to become a member of the [Beltsville Area Diversity Taskforce](#) (BADT). Our goal is to ensure that BARC performs the research mission of ARS at the highest scientific level possible through the recruitment and retention of a culturally diverse workforce.

Each year, BA Director Dr. Joseph Spence issues an invitation for BARC employees to consider nominating themselves for membership on the taskforce. Incoming BADT chair Verneta Gaskins and outgoing chair Manan Sharma join Dr. Spence in encouraging you to consider becoming a member of the 2010-2011 taskforce.

“If you would like to join the Beltsville Area Diversity Taskforce, here is your chance!” said Gaskins. “If you want to be involved in developing and hosting a Research Symposium for graduate students, working on school programs and maintaining the Student Discovery Garden, planning Special Emphasis events, optimizing BA Best Hiring Practices, or helping provide news about these activities to BA staff, then please come to the September meeting of the Taskforce (*see time and place information on page 2*). Help make Beltsville a place where *everyone* can contribute to agricultural research.”



Creating Student Discovery Garden - BARC staffers (from left) Martha Tomecek, Stewart MacMaster, Lew Ziska, and Mary Ann Guaragna prepare to spread soil in raised beds for the Student Discovery Garden. Grand opening for the Garden is scheduled for Sept. 8 - see details on page 3. (Photo: Verneta Gaskins.)

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What does it take?

Attendance at a monthly meeting of the full taskforce to discuss goals and ongoing progress. This usually lasts about an hour. In addition, each taskforce member is requested to participate in the work of at least one of the subcommittees that cooperate on achieving BADT's goals. The taskforce style is collaborative and collegial. We work together, and everyone's contribution is respected.

What do the subcommittees do?

A partial list of activities (both completed and ongoing) includes:

- Celebrating diversity through community service projects and outreach programs, as well as through cultural observances and educational programs for BA staff

Communications Subcommittee

- Promoting communication of BADT initiatives to the Beltsville Area, through conducting the BA Diversity Taskforce Survey (completed), producing *Spotlight on Diversity*, and maintaining BADT's website
- Serving the internal communication needs of BADT and its subcommittees through encouraging and facilitating use of BADT's SharePoint site

Leadership Advisory Subcommittee

- Making recommendations to the Beltsville Area Office concerning Best Hiring Practices aimed at increasing diversity in the BA work force (document on non-SY positions completed; document on SY positions in preparation)
- Hosting a symposium early in 2011 at which graduate students from 1890 Land Grant colleges and universities will present their research and interact with BA scientists

September meeting time and place:

Tuesday, Sept. 14, at 9:30 a.m. in building 003, room 238.

Got questions?

Call or e-mail the current chairpersons:

BADT – Verneta Gaskins (301)504-6510; verneta.gaskins@ars.usda.gov

Leadership Advisory – Eton Codling (301)504-5708; eton.codling@ars.usda.gov

Science and Technical Education Outreach – Lewis Ziska (301)504-6639; l.ziska@ars.usda.gov

Special Emphasis – Verneta Gaskins (301)504-6510; verneta.gaskins@ars.usda.gov

Communications – Wendy Jacobs (301)504-6591; wendy.jacobs@ars.usda.gov and Tasha Sprague (301)504-5864; tasha.sprague@ars.usda.gov

Science and Technical Education Outreach Subcommittee

- Educational outreach to local schools, particularly in underrepresented or inner city areas, with the goal of educating the next generation of scientists
- Creating and maintaining a Student Discovery Garden that illustrates different science areas within the Beltsville Area

Special Emphasis Subcommittee

- Relaying to BA that our cultural diversity helps sustain the vibrancy of our research

Too beautiful to eat - These intricate flowers sculpted out of melons by Nit Malikul of the Systematic Entomology Lab graced the buffet table at the May 2010 Asian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month celebration organized



by BADT's Special Emphasis subcommittee. Attendees of the "Taste of Culture" luncheon voted for their favorite dishes. Winners were Sue Sparling (beef bulgogi), Seung Ik Jang (pork bulgogi), Hyunsoon Kim (kimchi), and Sukwon Kang (japchae). (Photo: Verneta Gaskins)

Helpful Websites

Cooperative Resolution

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/programs/coopres/>

Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity (ODEO)

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/complaint.htm>

Outreach and Recruitment

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/recruitment.htm>

Reasonable Accommodation

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/accomodation.htm>

Spotlight on Diversity is produced by the Communications Subcommittee of the Beltsville Area Diversity Taskforce. Members of the Communications Subcommittee are Tasha Sprague (co-chair), Wendy Jacobs (co-chair), David Baer, Ken Deahl, Cecilia Wilkinson Enns, Janet Novotny, Catherine Parsons, and Ali Sadeghi.

Grand Opening: Student Discovery Garden

Who:

Everyone is invited!

When:

Wednesday, September 8, 2010, noon - 1:00 p.m.
(Rain date Friday, September 10, same time.)

Where:

BARC-East, between buildings 006 and 007, on the road that runs behind the clock tower (First Street)

Why:

Celebrate the creation of the Student Discovery Garden, a recruitment and outreach tool for sharing BA research with the diverse student local student community and educating the next generation of scientists.

Observe Diversity Throughout the Year

January – Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday

February – Black History Month

March – National Women's History Month

May – Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month;
Cinco de Mayo

June – National Gay & Lesbian Pride Month

August – Women's Equality Day

September – National Hispanic Heritage Month

October - National Disability Awareness Month

November – National American Indian Heritage Month