

DAVIS-DUNNINGS BAR ASSOCIATION

April 8, 2013

State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend Street
Lansing, MI 48933
lawday@mail.michbar.org

Re: Law Day 2013 Contest Submission

Dear Law Day 2013 Contest Committee:

The Davis-Dunnings Bar Association (DDBA) proudly submits its entry for the State Bar of Michigan 2013 Law Day Contest, "Hey! That's Not Fair!," a coloring storybook inspired by the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. The DDBA embraces the State Bar's pipeline model on diversity. Accordingly, it was a natural fit for the DDBA to partner with the Turning Point of Lansing (TPOL), the recipient of the DDBA's 2013 Humanitarian Award, to develop a contest submission.

Furtherance of the causes of equal rights, equal opportunity, and equal treatment before the law in the State of Michigan are core elements of the DDBA's stated mission. In 2012, the DDBA was privileged to co-sponsor the dedication of the State Bar of Michigan Legal Milestone commemorating the Elliott-Larson Civil Rights Act of 1976. The Elliot-Larson Civil Rights of Act of 1976 continues to be a major tool in the ongoing struggle to ensure equal treatment under the law, for all.

Sadly, however, that dream remains unrealized for too many, although great strides have been made. Many efforts have been mounted that seek to eliminate some of the barriers these groups confront. To that end, the TPOL, implemented a mentoring program focused upon young men of African descent who attend middle school and high school. Since its founding over ten years ago, the TPOL has successfully transformed scores of them from boys to men, utilizing the seven principles of Kwanzaa.

At a lively storyboarding session, the young men of Turning Point discussed the history of the struggle for civil rights in this country and shared examples of unfair treatment they either directly experienced or witnessed. From this sharing, the idea for the story evolved and crystallized the crux of discrimination into the exclamation and title, "Hey, that's not fair!" In addition to the story, the boys developed the characters. One of the "artists" among them created drawings of the character the professional graphic artist used as a model for the book's illustrations.

The coloring book is directed at primary school children. It allows them to imagine varied ethnicities for the story's characters, highlighting how the problem of discrimination affects us all. Moreover, the young men of Turning Point recognized the Elliott-Larson Act's fundamental principle of fairness applies to the injustice of bullying in Michigan schools. As the story unfolds, the two main characters stand up for the rights of students who want to have the freedom to use a school water fountain without fear, or intimidation. At the story's conclusion, the students' teacher uses the Elliot-Larson Civil Rights Act as the example to illustrate the wrongfulness of the older boys' actions.

Going forward, we hope teachers and lawyers who volunteer in Michigan schools for Law Day use the book as a resource and educational tool. We believe the message of the story encourages and empowers young people to embrace their own uniqueness as well as that of others. Our differences do not render us unequal. "Hey! That's Not Fair!" can help to spread awareness and understanding of that truth while demonstrating how laws help to improve society for the betterment of all.

Sincerely,

2012-2013

Executive Board

Davis-Dunnings Bar Association