

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD  
**CHAIRS REPORT, APRIL 18, 2012**

The CRB members and staff have been actively working to reduce tensions related to the shooting death of Miami Gardens teenager Trayvon Martin. Trayvon Martin is the nephew of CRB Executive Committee member Ronald Fulton. As you know, Trayvon Martin's death and the official response or lack of response to it, has created a national and international focus on issues regarding racial profiling and criminal justice. This conversation has been particularly poignant in Miami-Dade County. The CRB has conducted the following activities:

-Soon after we were notified by Mr. Fulton about his nephew's death, staff reached out to the Sanford Police Department in an unsuccessful effort to obtain further information.

CRB members and staff have attended numerous events associated with the death of Trayvon Martin. These included.

- CRB Vice Chair Reinaldo Valdes attended the funeral at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Miami Gardens on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- On March 21, a rally and march in Liberty City drew two to three hundred people
- A rally and march in the Little Haiti/Lemon City community organized by Haitian American leaders. About 1,500 people attended this event on March 28th.
- On March 22 and 23, demonstrations and/or walk outs took place that involved involving tens of thousands of students at 31 Miami-Dade County senior and junior high schools. The School principals and Superintendent Carvalho allowed the events without repercussions to students, as long as the students did not break any laws and returned to classes following the events. We are aware of two incidents involving students who had walked-out. A group of students became disruptive and some committed minor vandalism at the Macy's store in the Cutler Ridge Mall and other group wrecked displays and knocked over merchandise at a Walgreens Store in North Miami Beach. We are not aware that any students have been arrested at this time for their activities in those incidents.
- The CRB chair attended a rally in Goulds, Florida organized by area religious leaders on March 23rd.
- CRB members and Office of Community Advocacy staff participated in a special meeting of the Sanford City Commission that paid tribute to Trayvon Martin's family. The meeting was followed by a rally attended by ten to twelve thousand people, including civil rights activists Rev. Al Sharpton and Rev. Jesse Jackson. CRB Staff coordinated with representatives of the Sanford City Manager's office in an effort to help ensure that the representatives of the CRB and Black Affairs Advisory Board had an opportunity to participate. CRB member Priscilla Dames Blake and Black Affairs Director Retha Boone Fye represented our community at those events.
- Buses carried several hundred Miami-Dade residents to a rally in Sanford Florida that was organized by the Florida NAACP Conference of Branches and the Miami-Dade NAACP Branch. CRB past chairs Adora Obi Nweze and Dr.

Bradford Brown were key organizers. We understand that about three thousand people marched peacefully through downtown Sanford from a local park to the police department.

- The CRB Chair was a speaker at the Miami Neighbor-hoodie Rally conducted at Bayfront Park. Several thousand people attended the rally and heard from Trayvon's parents, the family's legal team, celebrities and civil rights leaders. Talk about your perspectives. The CRB staff worked closely with County Commissioner Barbara Jordan and the event organizers to help ensure that accommodations were in place for a peaceful and productive event. The CRB Goodwill Ambassadors provided much needed crowd control and about thirty county employees participated.
- There is a Gospel Music Event commemorating the anniversary of the shooting of Dr. Martin Luther King in Liberty City and a call for justice for Trayvon Martin has been incorporated into the program.

The CRB also had an opportunity to meet with senior attorneys from the Office of State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle. Ms. Rundle's staff had made us aware very early on that Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law may play a significant role in the handling of the Trayvon Martin case. CRB Executive Committee member Ed Shohat facilitated a meeting with CRB members and the attorneys, including Don Horn, Kathleen Hoague, and Jose Arrojo along with Ms. Rundles Communications Director Ed Griffith. The attorney's described the key provisions of the law and how they may impact the Trayvon Martin case.

Following the attorney's briefing, the CRB members convened to discuss the key points and determine what provisions and outcomes of the law they believe need to be amended. Those recommendations were incorporated into a CRB Position Paper. See position paper in your meeting package.

The CRB Position Paper addresses the need for unity and acknowledges the leadership of the Martin family, as well as teenagers and young people, in demanding justice through non-violent action. The paper recommended specific changes to the Stand Your Ground law and other legal provisions and recommends support for actions being undertaken by Florida and local leaders to reduce tensions and promote equal justice.

During all of the public conversation, it became clear that there was a need to provide an opportunity for the young people to be heard. This is a theme that Ronald Fulton had emphasized with us since the funeral of his nephew. At my request, the CRB began working with the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust to convene a Youth Speak Out on Trayvon Martin and related issues. The event was scheduled for April 12 in the auditorium of Miami Carol City Senior High School. Young people, ages 21 years and under, were invited to address a panel of youth leaders and local officials and to be heard by the community-at-large. School administrators and student leaders at Dr. Michael Krop, Norland, Carol City and American Senior High Schools worked with us to

reach out to the youth and the north Dade community. County Commissioner Barbara Jordan and School Board Member Wilbert Holloway were early supporters and lent their prestige to the planning. Unfortunately, on April 11, the day before the Youth Speak Out, we were informed by the Associate Superintendent, that the event may not be held on the high school. He stated that the event would be disruptive to students preparing for the FCAT exams. We will have an opportunity to discuss next steps later in our meeting.

Also, included in your meeting package is a newspaper article about the activities of the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service who has been in Sanford to calm tensions and empower community members. The CRB works closely with the Community Relations Service who has been recognized for their activities, which are consistent with the efforts of the CRB and its staff, during times of community tension.

Dr. Richardson was a guest on WQBA Radio 1140 AM at 5 p.m. this evening, Monday, April 9, 2012. He was interviewed on the program "Prohibido Callarse (Prohibited to Stay Quiet). The programs' hosts were Roberto Rodriguez Tejera and Helen Aguirre. The interview will be conducted in Spanish.

The interview went extremely well. The staff of WQBA was pleased, as well as those who called in to participate. Questions and concerns covered a number of areas including, the Trayvon Martin tragedy, Stand your Ground law, perceptions of blacks by Cuban Americans, what blacks prefer to be called, i.e. African Americans first, or Americans; Cuban American and African American relations, etc. It was a full hour conducted MOSTLY in Spanish. Even though I speak and understand Spanish, I felt more comfortable addressing many concerns in English so that my choice of words were politically correct. Raul Diaz, former chair of CRB, was also present and participated in the segment.

The CRB is looking into the in-custody death of George Salgado, age 21 years. On April 13<sup>th</sup>. Mr Salgado was reported naked and acting erratically, and West Miami and Miami Gardens Police responded. During their attempts to restrain him, Mr. Salgado was tasered several times. He later died at Larkin community hospital. His family is raising questions about the cause of death and the injuries to his body. Eddie Harris has more to report.

The CRB Executive Committee also discussed concerns around the multiple shooting in North Miami. Two people were killed and twelve were injured outside of a funeral. Many, if not all, of those killed and injured were innocent bystanders. Community members stated that the shooting was gang related and that gang activity in the area is a growing problem. The CRB Executive Committee asked that the issue be addressed by the Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Committee. There is a plan to convene the committee meeting in the affected community during the coming weeks. Your participation is appreciated.