

Salem Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission

Alexandra Jovita Dass

Occupation: Diversity & Inclusion Program Administrator

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Ward: 1

Date Applied: 5/5/2017 10:16:09 AM

Business Name: Salem Health

Business Address: 890 Oak St., Salem

Supplemental Answers:

Have you attended a meeting of the Salem Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission? If yes, how many?

No, I have never attended a meeting of the Salem Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission.

Please list the citizen advisory committees, civic, charitable or other organizations upon which you have served including the dates and length of service.

I have been in Salem for almost four years, having come here for my Master's degree in 2013. During this time, I have not had the opportunity to serve on any citizen advisory committee or boards of charitable organizations, however I have served as member of the Honor Council of Willamette University's Atkinson Graduate School of Management from January 2014 to April 2015, and as the Chair from August 2014 to April 2015. I also served as the Vice-President of the Rotary Club of St. Joseph's College of Commerce in Bangalore, India, in 2009 and as President in 2010.

What do you believe you can contribute to the Salem Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission?

I bring to the table another element of diversity and another perspective, strategic thinking and listening skills that are so essential when we work to resolve concerns of discrimination, the ability to collaborate with teams and communicate effectively, the ability to evaluate a sensitive situation without any biases and use impartial judgment to make informed decisions

Please list those skills, knowledge, or perspectives which you believe will help you better serve and represent the Salem community through your appointment to the Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission.

Having grown up in India and studied at Willamette University amidst a diverse student population, and now working at Salem Health, diversity has always been a part of my everyday life. In the past year, I have had the opportunity to work on Diversity and Inclusion for Salem Health. I was able to create a five-year strategic plan on Diversity & Inclusion and develop action plans that enhance a culture of inclusion. I am working on culture assessments that address employee and patient grievances based on discrimination. Much of this work entails the Marion and Polk counties and this understanding of our community needs will help me better serve and represent the Salem community as a Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commissioner.

Please list your experience working on diverse teams, public bodies, or committees.

I come from a diverse background, one that encompasses linguistic diversity, religious diversity, cultural diversity, and disability. I was exposed to ethnic diversity during my employment post my undergraduate degree at Ernst & Young Global Shared Services, where I had managers and co-workers from various countries across the world. Through it all, I learned that each individual brings a unique perspective to the table and accomplishments are always driven by respect for one another. The same learning helped through my MBA program at Willamette where I worked with an ethnically diverse group of students to help the Oregon Symphony Association in Salem with a market assessment and the Boys and Girls Club of Marion and Polk counties with change management. Willamette's Honor Council was also a diverse team of staff and students who worked together to emphasize the importance of the Honor Code and draft a procedure to resolve concerns of any violations raised by any member of the business school, and then strategically make decisions to resolve issues, keeping in mind the diverse backgrounds that everyone came from. A practice that is considered ignoble in one culture could very well be the norm in another culture. As Gender Liaison of Willamette's chapter of the National Association of Women MBA's from September 2013 to March 2014 and President from April 2014 to March 2015, I had numerous other opportunities to work with a global community of women who strived for better education and career opportunities for women. I served for six months as a volunteer with Child Rights & You (CRY), a non-profit organization in India, in 2013, where my team inspected day care centers provided for children of lower economic backgrounds for quality education, food and other resources, created reports of findings for CRY that were escalated to local municipal offices for grants. Our tasks included educating parents and municipal schools on right to education and inclusion of children of all economic backgrounds.

As a part of its mission the Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission strives to reach out to the Salem Community. Please describe your affiliations within the community which may aid the Commission in this mission.

Having been in Oregon for almost four years, Salem has become home to me and I would love to give back to the community that has made me feel very welcome. It did take me a little more than a year after graduation to find my feet, but I have begun actively working to build relationships with the community. The Salem Multicultural Institute has been a great resource and a fun-filled way to reach out to others who, like me, are new to the community. I was a part of the planning committee for the World Beat Bash in March 2017 and my background as an Indian classical dancer has helped me partake in the World Beat Festival every year. I have been invited to serve on the Healthcare Team of Salem for Refugees. I have also expressed my interest in working with the Salem Young Professionals, and the Advisory Committee for Developing Equity Leadership through Training and Action (Oregon Healthcare Authority's Office of Equity and Inclusion) and hope to hear affirmation of the same later this month. And of course, as the Diversity and Inclusion Program Administrator at Salem Health and a recent alumnus of Willamette University, my affiliation with these two large organizations will continue to remain strong. Thank you for considering me to be a part of the Salem Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission.