ACRB works daily to leave no stone unturned when it comes to doing whatever the agency can do to improve relations between our citizens and our local police force.

We are of course known for conducting thorough formal investigations of alleged misconduct cases by sworn officers of the Atlanta Police & Corrections Departments. We also conduct informal mediations that allow a citizen and an officer involved in an incident to sit before a professional, impartial mediator and resolve their differences.

More than ever, this spring and summer, we are all over the city attending festivals, block parties, concerts, mall presentations, rallies, NPU meetings, and conferences of all kinds, informing citizens about us.

Now we are also excited about launching an ACRB Healing Circle in conjunction with Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) V’s grant-funded Healing Circle Program.

Healing Circles are a method of communication that brings people together to strengthen neighborhoods, share concerns, and address community problems. Circles can provide support for people who have been affected by violence and/or experienced loss due to violence.

Circles are safe, private and accepting environments. Everyone participates at their own comfort level. Circles maintain respect for everyone. All stories shared in the Circle are confidential. Participants discuss problems and/or concerns affecting them.

Police and citizens have an equal place to express themselves within the ACRB Healing Circle. Check acrbgov.org for the time and place for our next Healing Circle. It is all a part of doing whatever we can to reach out to citizens and police to provide outlets to express your inner feelings and perceptions about each other without conflict or controversy.

ACRB Shares Information and Receives Praises from an International Delegation

The View of the Executive Director

An international fact-finding delegation from government and Non-Government Organizations (NGO), charities and the judicial system from the Ukraine met with Executive Director Lee Reid at the ACRB offices at Atlanta City Hall.

The members of the delegation listened with interest as Mr. Reid shared with them the many programs and services offered by the agency to improve relations between citizens and police.

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“If I were a police officer, I would...” was the theme of the 2018 Atlanta Citizen Review Board Art & Essay Contest (A&EC). It was bigger and better than ever. The event not only drew more participants from City of Atlanta than last year, but the Special Open Entry Category (SOE) also attracted contestants from Metro Atlanta. The contest is open to all grade levels, and all age groups can participate under the SOE.

What set this year’s contest apart from previous years was the extent to which school children seized the opportunity to express their feelings about police relations by dealing directly with deeply disturbing and personal life experiences with a stroke of a brush or a pen. Some of them took the contest to another level by creating artwork and essays that dealt with domestic violence, bullying, gang warfare, suicide and rape.

They expressed what they would do about these issues if they were a police officer. Some of the images and imagery were so alarming and seemed so real that in a few cases, law enforcement and school board officials were called in to investigate what was depicted to ensure the safety of the contestant.

We all have seen news headlines that have focused on mistrust between citizens and police. The ACRB’s aim is to promote public confidence in law enforcement and lessen the possibility that future incidents of urban unrest will occur. This is why the ACRB not only investigates and mediates cases of alleged misconduct by sworn Atlanta police and corrections officers, but it also uses its mandate to educate the public regarding citizen oversight and individual rights. The A&EC provides a platform for all citizens to be heard, unhindered by anything other than their imagination, skills and life experiences.

Winners were honored with a special noontime reception and luncheon at Atlanta City Hall on May 21st before the 1:00pm meeting of the Atlanta City Council where they were featured in a special televised recognition ceremony. The winners and their families were acknowledged. Crawford Long Middle School earned a special award for Best School Spirit. Its principal Lisa Hill was awarded a proclamation on behalf of the school, which submitted the most entries to the contest, from its District 12 Councilmember Joyce Shepard.
Your Story: “When I think of ACRB...”

“When I think that’s great, I might can get some of my money back...”

Harvey Fields claims his personal property, including cash and credit cards, was stolen and used after he was pulled over in a rental truck and arrested.

If a citizen is subject to an arrest by a sworn officer of the Atlanta Police Department (APD), that officer during the course of an incident has a right to seize a citizen's belongings pending the outcome of a case. Once the matter is resolved, in most cases, all seized properties are returned. Mr. Fields contends that did not happen in his case.

And so it was on August 26, 2016, that Mr. Fields was stopped by Atlanta Police Officers Christopher Beauvil and Leon Delain as he was helping a friend move. The U Haul vehicle he was driving had been reported stolen.

Fields was initially detained by the officers, later arrested, charged with theft by conversion, subsequently jailed, served six months, and sentenced to five years probation without restitution.

Theft by conversion occurs when a person lawfully obtains possession to personal property or funds of another, then converts the property for their own use without permission. Fields kept the U Haul truck for six months.

“The two officers stopped me, they said the U Haul that I had rented from U Haul had been reported stolen,” said Fields. “So I complied with them. I pulled over and I stopped. They told me to put my hands behind my back, that I was detained. I put my hands behind my back. I had three other people in the truck with me because in the process of that day I was helping someone else move, one in the car with me and two in the back of the truck... Once they stopped me, they detained me, and they put me in the (police) vehicle. After that they took me to jail. Upon arrival...it seemed the things that were in the truck that was mine was never turned in.... I lost money. I lost credit cards. I lost change and all my identification cards. Everything was lost,” Mr. Fields said.

Mr. Fields claims to have lost $2500 from the vehicle's glove compartment. He also claims to have a credit report that proves that someone used his credit cards while he was imprisoned.

He filed a complaint and submitted his evidence against Officers Beauvil and Delain to APD’s Office of Professional Standards (OPS), the police department’s internal affairs division. “They sent me a report saying the officer was not at fault because they find no factual information that things weren’t turned in.”

Although he cannot remember exactly how or when, within six months of the incident, Mr. Fields did file a complaint against the officers with the ACRB. He said he did not realize until this story that the Board had ruled in his favor.

ACRB Welcomes a Ukraine Delegation

(Continued from page 1)

The members emerged from the 90 minute session favorably impressed with the agency. “It (ACRB) is a progressive and interesting instrument...that gives the citizens an opportunity to control the work of police,” said

Darnya Tolkach, Advocacy Coordinator for the Ukraine-based Right to Protection, a charitable foundation from the delegation that provides legal and social assistance to asylum seekers. “We definitely will take some of this experience and implement it in our country because this is a very important influential part of how the citizens can incorporate and influence the processes that they couldn’t normally influence.”

The group is hosted by the Open World Leadership Center, (OWLC) an agency of the US Congress, that conducts a ten-day exchange program for foreign delegates. The OWLC program provides them first hand experience with American community life and accountable government. It has hosted 24,000 leaders in all 50 states since 1999.

Erika Shields has not officially responded to the Atlanta Citizen Review Board whether she accepts the finding of the OPS or the ACRB. (As of this writing, APD Chief)

As standard operating procedure, ACRB complainants are always sent a letter informing them about the outcome of their case which is also made available at www.acrbgov.org.

He had initially challenged the OPS ruling, but was unsuccessful. But now that he has become aware of the favorable ACRB finding, having long since given up trying to recover his losses, Harvey Fields is once again encouraged to try again. “I think that’s great. I might can get some of my money back.”
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND BE HEARD!

The keyword in the Atlanta Citizen Review Board is CITIZEN. The agency is only as effective as the level of Citizen involvement. This is why ACRB urges all Citizens to regularly monitor, question and support its work. This is why ACRB urges all Citizens to know where your elected officials stand on civilian oversight of police and corrections. This is why it is so important for Citizens to be registered and vote. This is why Citizens need to join and be active in community groups. Get involved in Neighborhood Planning Units (NPUs). Attend Public Safety meetings, Atlanta City Council meetings and KNOW YOUR RIGHTS TRAINING WORKSHOPS. Become a member of the ACRB Board. Currently there are three vacancies. Contact ACRB for details. Fill the chambers to capacity when Council votes to fund issues that matter to Citizens like you.

ACRB & Tens of Thousands Attend 34th Sweet Auburn Spring Fest

Our Integrity Street Team (IST) conducted a massive outreach event at the 34th Annual Sweet Auburn Spring Fest. Tens of thousands of people of all races, creeds, colors and ages braved the sweltering 90 plus degree heat to enjoy the vast variety of amusements, food, fashions, fashion accessories, refreshments, and products for entertainment, health, beauty, nutrition and culture. City of Atlanta Citizen Review Board (ACRB) and other service organizations attend festivities such as these to give away materials about our programs and services and inform citizens in detail about them. Thanks to our IST members who answered all questions, passed out thousands of pieces of information and walked among the tens of thousands of visitors who made the 2018 Sweet Auburn Spring Fest a big success. The team reported that citizens were aware of news reports about alleged police misconduct in the Atlanta area and other places nationwide. Their conversations with them were intense, and they had much to say. “I’m hearing, ‘Oh, yeah, I need that (ACRB Info. Bag), I got a son. Yeah, I saw that video about what happened to that old lady (a 65-year old woman dragged from her car during a traffic stop in Alpharetta)’...So they’re just talking about things they’ve seen, and they want to protect themselves right now,” said IST member Andrea Boswell. “That says (to me) that we need the Atlanta Citizen Review Board because people don’t have a voice, they need a voice. People need to know that they have weapons. And the Atlanta Citizen Review Board is a weapon. You don’t fight these fights with guns.”