

## **CULTURAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE REPORT 2017**

The Cultural Awareness Committee strives to eliminate cultural barriers through the utilization of evidence based practices and to foster positive communication between clients, colleagues, and communities. The goals of the Committee are to identify cultural barriers, create cultural diversity training opportunities, provide resources and facilitate inter-agency communication.

The CAC aims to offer all members of VCCJA an opportunity to better understand diversity and the role it plays in providing quality services to clients who are on pretrial or probation supervision.

### **Committee Charter**

This year we reviewed and updated the committee charter to reflect the current mission, objective, and purpose of the committee.

### **Regional Cultural Events**

“What’s Happening Around... “ Is a publication of current cultural events held in communities throughout Virginia and is updated every two months by committee members. Our goal is to keep all members up to date on cultural events happening in and around Virginia.

### **Community Cultural Partnership Initiative**

This year the Cultural Awareness Committee continued its Community Cultural Partnership Initiative. The CAC, in collaboration with criminal justice professionals, representatives of local communities, colleges, and universities, facilitates a specific diversity forum on topics of ethnic and cultural diversity. These forums give participating VCCJA members an opportunity to discuss and exchange thoughts on both differences and similarities with the panelists in a relaxed setting. The CAC also provides a complementary lunch.

In April, the CAC hosted an educational forum in the Richmond area on diversity around the LGBTQ community. However, the committee found there to be low registration. CAC regathered, and collaborated with the conference committee to host our second forum at this year’s VCCJA conference. The committee is excited for this new endeavor and hopes for a great turnout.

### **Taste of Culture at the VCCJA Conference 2017**

The Cultural Awareness Committee will again host its signature international culinary event. Due to last year’s success, we are once again bringing cultural game night back, encompassing international foods, teas, coffees with fun filled night of games and prizes that focus on how other cultures socialize. We are hoping for a great turn out and everyone in attendance having a lot of fun.

### **Cultural Spotlight**

The CAC Cultural Spotlight highlights a member of the VCCJA every quarter and provides them an opportunity to share their cultural background. They are also able to share their insight on how their culture has impacted their life. This has taken a backseat this year to other events, the committee will be

examining the format to improve the consistency of the spotlight.

**Committee members:** Charlene Johnson, Elsa Vasquez

**Co-Chairs:** Jacqueline Bowen, Stacci Wert