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**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Human Rights Conference**  
**January 16, 2010, 10am-5pm**  
**Whatcom Community College, Syre Center**

The Whatcom Human Rights Task Force, along with co-sponsor Whatcom Community College, are pleased to present the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Human Rights Conference on Saturday January 16, 2010, to be held at Whatcom Community College's Syre Center. The theme chosen for this year's conference is *Books not Bars: Education, the Media and America's Prison System*. The keynote speakers will be Gerald Hankerson and Jeff Shaw.

On April 9, 2009 Gov. Gregoire pardoned Gerald Hankerson, who had been convicted of aggravated murder. Hankerson had always maintained his innocence, which was finally proven after spending greater than half his lifetime behind bars—he entered prison when he was just 18 years old and was released at the age of 40. If we are to continue to believe that we are a nation which upholds justice, compelling stories like this need to be acknowledged, understood and addressed. We are very proud to have Mr. Hankerson speaking at the 2010 conference.

The afternoon address will be offered by Jeff Shaw, an award-winning journalist and long-time human rights activist. Mr. Shaw spent several years working on treaty rights issues for the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission before a Fulbright Scholarship took him to Okinawa, Japan to report on the challenges facing the indigenous people and environment of that area. He is currently the Director of Communications for the North Carolina Justice Center.

This year's conference will offer over 20 workshops and training sessions for educators, youth, and community members. Teachers can receive continuing education "clock hours" for their attendance, and youth can participate in the annual MLK Youth Summit—an exciting opportunity to join with youth from across the county to address human rights issues in ways that are directly relevant to them. The event is being supported by Whatcom Community College, Bellingham School District, the Woodring College of Education, and Northwest Indian College, as well as numerous community organizations. The intention of the conference is to provide a safe and neutral space wherein all interested parties can learn and share ideas about human rights, education and democracy.

Registration for clock hours as well as free coffee service will begin at 9:30AM, with the opening ceremony and keynote address at 10AM. Workshops will run throughout the day. The conference is FREE and open to ALL community members. Free accommodations include parking, light refreshments, and sign language interpreters. No advanced registration necessary. Additional information, including a full schedule, is available at [www.whrtf.org](http://www.whrtf.org). Please feel free to contact us at (360) 733-2233 or [whrtf@whrtf.org](mailto:whrtf@whrtf.org).