

League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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6/18/98

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June 19, 1998

RECEIVED JUN 2 2 1998

Judy Duffy, President The League of Women Voters 550 Rice Street St. Paul. MN 55103

Dear Judy,

I am sending you a copy of the materials recently produced by the Study Circle Resource Center on issues related to immigration. I believe Florida helped develop this book and is currently engaged in community dialogue about migration. More detailed information is available about the study circle process itself.

As I mentioned to you, the Jane Addams School for Democracy and its partners — the College of St. Catherine, the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Humphrey Institute and Neighborhood House, a settlement in St. Paul's West Side neighborhood — are exploring potential interest in a study circle campaign in this area. We have been in conversation with the Study Circle Resource Center, and some of us attended a workshop put on by them. Sponsorship by a respected, nonpartisan group or groups is a key element, which is why we would like to talk with the Minnesota League of Women Voters. There is precedent for League involvement in such work. In Oklahoma, for example, the state League co-sponsored a highly successful campaign called "Balancing Justice in Oklahoma." This resulted in passage of a comprehensive legislative program that included funding for a community based restorative justice component.

The purpose of our meeting is to explore potential mutual interests in working together in such an effort and to talk generally about the study circle process and outcomes. I will call you early next week to confirm a time, hopefully on the morning of July 10th. I look forward to seeing you then.

Sincerely,

non Kari

Nan Kari







## Changing Faces, Changing Communities

Immigration



race, jobs, schools, and language differences

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

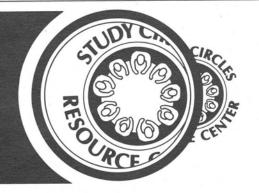
A guide for public dialogue and problem solving



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# FOCUS



The Newsletter of the Study Circles Resource Center

TUDY

Vol. 8, No. 4 Fall 1997

#### **Laboratories for Democracy**

CIRCLES

Study circle programs suggest stronger ways of governing

Wherever you turn, people are talking about how public life in America isn't working very well. For a variety of reasons – among them, sagging voter turnout levels, changes in civic associations, dissatisfaction of citizens with their government, and the decline of civility from radio talk shows to the halls of Congress – many people are worried that our democracy isn't working the way it should be.

Concentrating on the disconnection between citizens and government may help us become more aware of the problem, but it doesn't necessarily tell us how to improve the situation, or even suggest whether improvement is possible.

Meanwhile, study circle organizers are showing us that improvement *is* possible. A growing number of community-wide programs can now showcase settings where public officials, community organizations, and large numbers of citizens are working together in ways that are collaborative and productive. They also offer lessons for how communities can create more structured, sustained, citizen-activated avenues for participation in governance. In short, they are providing glimpses of what a transformed American democracy might look like.

#### Study circles and strong citizenship

If you asked most Americans what the role of a citizen should be, they would mention responsibilities like voting and obeying the law. They would probably also say it is important to stay informed on the issues, volunteer, and take part in community activities. Much of what goes on in study circles – people working to understand each other's views and beliefs, analyzing common problems, finding out ways to get

involved in addressing those problems – helps fulfill these widely-held notions of citizenship.

But study circle organizers are also creating a stronger, more complete definition of citizenship. When thousands of people are involved in a study circle program, the result is an informal but powerful bargain between citizens and government. On one hand, citizens gain opportunities for their voices to be heard in a meaningful way; on the other hand, public officials gain the added problem-solving capacity that comes from an engaged citizenry. Citizens and government become partners rather than adversaries, and the entire community benefits.

Formalizing this bargain between citizens and government will require innovation and practice. The organizers of the three study circle programs which follow have begun to fill this need. They are inventing methods for giving meaningful input on legislation, ways to resolve difficult community conflicts, and mechanisms for citizens, local organizations, and local government to identify and work together on community problems.

Meaningful policy input – In **Oklahoma**, the League of Women Voters and several other organizations initiated a statewide study circle program on criminal justice and corrections. In the "Balancing Justice" study circles, over 1,000 citizens were joined by judges, sheriffs, and legislators in productive deliberation about how to handle the twin challenges of skyrocketing corrections costs and falling public confidence in the justice system. The study circles occurred in thirteen communities, and over 50 state

Continued on the next page



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(overlower of 1 month, legislators

had already begun sitting

in & Ching legislation) Creating Mat'ls - Cane Resources.

Nankari 331-9342

Jemeline - rest 2 yrs

· form an exploratory group

· funding

· Summer 1999 - pilot projects

Exploratory Group - addoms / LWV

· Develop Task Forer of Co/sponsors

Janeaddams

m/W Eves

mon's 4:30-5:30 planning

7-9- Sessions

Childrens grp

Summers on Sat's.

Pablic achievement - high schools



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#### MEMORANDUM

TO:

BOARD MEMBERS, JEAN TEWS, PEGGY THOMPSON

DATE:

7/20/98

FROM:

Judy Duffy

RE:

Potential new project: Study Circles & Changing Faces, Changing Communities

On Friday, July 10, Sally and I met with Nan Kari of the College of St. Catherine and the Jane Addams School and Harry Boyte of the Center for Democracy at the HHH Institute. He was accompanied by two students, Nick and Jennifer.

The purpose of the meeting was to explore the possible cooperation between the LWVMN, the Jane Addams School and the Center for Democracy in establishing study circles around the state on the issue of immigration. Study circles are composed of about 10-12 people from a variety of backgrounds to learn and discuss the issues surrounding a certain topic and then reach some sort of conclusion that can be supported by the group as a whole. The concept has been around for a while and used in a number of places. In 1997, the LWV of Oklahoma convened study circles statewide to learn about and discuss the issues surrounding new corrections laws. The study circles ultimately engage lawmakers and discuss the issues with them in order to reach workable solutions.

Both Sally and I believe this cooperative venture would be an exciting project for us to undertake for many reasons. First of all, it fits into the Making Democracy Work emphasis just renewed at the national convention. It would allow us to work in coalition with many other groups and individuals within our communities statewide. The topic, Changing Faces, Changing Communities (immigration) is one that can help us as we work to diversify our own organization. This is a defined project that local Leagues can undertake and make a difference within their own communities. The Oklahoma League discovered that it drew new members.

The LWVMN would be the lead sponsor. The Jane Addams School and the Center for Democracy would be actively involved. Initial steps would be to set up a task force and explore the feasibility of working with other groups and individuals.

The time frame: the project would begin in January, 1999 and run into 2000. The elections would be over; we would be implementing the Future Plan; a new state study would be proposed at the LWVMN Convention and we would be laying the groundwork for our own Capital Campaign. This seems to be the optimum for taking up a project such as this.

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TO: Steering Committee members/coalition partners Changing Faces, Changing Communities project

FROM: Janna Wallin Haug

DATE: March 19, 1999

At the steering committee meeting on MOnday of this week, we collected contact information from people serving on the steering committee or as coalition partners and observers. We felt it might be helpful for each of you to have this information. Here is an initial copy by e-mail. A hard copy will be distributed at a later date.

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## Imagining America:\* Immigration Raises Questions for Us All

There are many ways to think about issues of immigration. Study circle campaigns across the country have focused on problems that emerge with increasing numbers of immigrants: housing patterns, jobs, schools, immigration quotas and recent policy changes. However, the framework for such discussion of immigration tends to create an "us" and "them" consciousness. It reflects the assumption that America is a relatively fixed culture. In this frame, the problem is how to integrate newcomers.

Our Minnesota campaign can provide national leadership by asking larger questions for which immigration provides the mirror. Although central to a flourishing democracy, deeper questions rarely are topics of public debate. "Who are we as Americans?" "What does citizenship mean and what do we expect of citizens? How do we shape our shared future in an increasingly diverse society? And, what questions do immigrants raise about this? Should there be a citizenship test? What should be on it? These questions are relevant to all of us. They rest upon the notion that our future is open and we all are involved in its construction. As Mai Moua, a Hmong woman and new citizen put it, "America is in the making." We all have something to contribute to the unfinished work.

If we use a broad framework such as "Imagining America," we can move from a "we – they" stance to one that reflects a diverse "we." We all have a stake in the issues; we are part of the solutions. The existing study circle materials could be adapted for the proposed reframing. We might use some to the existing examples like housing and neighborhood patterns, schools or jobs. However, the thrust of the campaign would be to explore the deeper questions named above. Discussion topics could include examining the different conceptions of citizenship embodied in these questions.

There are three general conceptions of citizenship evident throughout American history. Citizen as a person with legal rights is the underlying definition that informs most public policy. The fundamental right is the right to vote. The expectations for citizens are to obey the laws, to serve on juries, and to pay taxes. In this conception, the citizen is mainly a private person who consumes public services and is engaged in private pursuits. The citizenship test reflects this conception.

A second understanding is the citizen as a responsible member of a community. Here the ideal is to be patriotic, to care for neighbors and family, and to live an upstanding and moral life. The primarily civic activity is volunteerism. And the third concept of citizenship defines citizens as co-creators of our common life and our democracy. Contribution through work that contributes to a collective life – sometimes called the "common good" -- is central to this idea. This is what Mai Moua was getting at when she said "America is in the making." It assumes democracy is an unfinished work to be taken up with each generation.

None of these definitions are wrong, but the balance among them and how we collectively understand citizenship has profound implications not only for new immigrants, but also for everyone. Assumptions shape public policy and civic expectations. Moreover, there is strong evidence that people what to discuss large questions of meaning and purpose. Focus groups undertaken by John Doble and Associates found that the more people discuss citizenship and related issues, the more profoundly engaged they become. Such discussions can open people's civic imaginations and lead people to act in new ways. It can generate a new sense of hopefulness about breaking out of "either-or" dichotomies that currently frustrate public debate.

<sup>\*</sup> The term is borrowed from the title of the White House Millennium Council campaign



## Who Are We? The Many Faces of America

One beautiful, powerful question that we can ask each other is "What is your experience?"

— Mary Pipher, psychologist

How can we talk productively about the state of our union? One way to start is with our own stories, our own experiences, and a basic question: Why do we describe ourselves and each other in so many different ways?

When asked who we are, or when describing someone else, we mention race, or religion, or home state. Sometimes we vary these descriptions depending on the audience and what we think people are trying to find out. When asked about our national identity, some of us feel comfortable saying, "I'm an American," and some of us don't. Some of us hyphenate the description, to include our country of origin, or describe ourselves in other ways.

What do these labels mean to us? There is a lot of passionate talk about the "right way" to describe each other. Do these labels reveal something about our past experiences, present concerns, or hopes? Do these descriptions reveal our attitudes toward our country or about who belongs here?

By telling our stories, we may discover how our diverse experiences have shaped us, divided us, and linked us. Through this dialogue, we may come to understand each other better and begin to find ways to move toward a more perfect union.

#### **Discussion Starters**

- 1. Introduce and describe yourself to the group.
  - (a) Why have you described yourself the way that you have? In what ways are the group members' descriptions alike or different? What do you make of these similarities and differences?
  - (b) In what ways have your upbringing, experiences, or thinking influenced your description?
  - (c) Might you vary your response in different situations or company? Why or why not?
- 2. How have others described you?
  - (a) Do the ways that others see and describe you match the ways you think about yourself, or are their descriptions different from your own?
  - (b) In his interview for the film Talk to Me: Americans in Conversation, historian John Kuo Wei Tchen said,

People always ask me where I'm from. If they're Chinese, I need to tell them that I'm from JiangXi Province. If they're American, it's not enough to tell them I'm from Wisconsin. I have to tell them that my parents came from China. I was born in General Hospital the year after my family arrived in this country, and I'm the first American citizen in the family.

What does his statement mean to you?

3. Think about the labels you use for yourself or that others use to describe you. Who or what do these labels connect you to? Who or what might they set you apart from? What does this suggest about your connection to the country?

#### **Activities**

- 1. View Section 1 of the discussion-starter video

  Toward a More Perfect Union with the whole group.
- 2. Take a moment to read each of the quotations under the heading "What some Americans are saying." How do these quotes relate to the discussion today? Which statement do you find most interesting? Why?
- 3. Relate a story that expresses an important aspect of your heritage, or of becoming or being American.
- 4. (a) Pair up and interview each other about your family backgrounds. When you reconvene with the whole group, you will be telling your partner's story. You might start your interview with these questions: "Where were you born?" "Where did other family members come from?" "How did your family express your cultural heritage through language, cooking, faith, music, or in some other way?" "Have the same traditions and values remained important to you?" Add your own questions. When the group reconvenes, try to retell your partner's story. All together, consider the similarities and differences in your experiences.
  - (b) You might follow these introductions with further discussion about how your families handled cultural differences. In what cases did your family adapt or assimilate; in what cases did your family maintain your own traditions? How frequent or infrequent were interactions with different cultural groups, and what were those interactions like?
  - (c) If your discussion group wants to go even deeper, look at the role that prejudice played in your homes. Did you learn attitudes of prejudice or tolerance when you were growing up? Was part of growing up learning how to cope with prejudice? What do you think about this in hind-sight? Have times changed?

5. Divide into groups of two or three. Tell each other about funny, awkward, or painful situations that have to do with how people describe each other. You might recount a time when you were unsure of how to address or describe someone from a different group, or a time when you knew that someone felt unsure of how to describe you. What, if anything, do these moments tell us?

#### What some Americans are saying ...

I have German on my father's side and Irish on my mother's. It was quite an interesting marriage, a German and an Irish person. Then, on my mother's side, my grandfather was an American Indian.

— Debra Burtle, businesswoman

My padrino, Cleofes Vigil, used to be asked all the time how long he had been in this country. And Cleofes would look at them very pensively and say, "I can take you to my grandfather's grave and to his grandfather's grave and to his grandfather's grave. That's how long I've been in this country." I think our family goes back to 1598, to the settlement and conquest of New Mexico.

— Vicente Martinez, photographer/community organizer

All I know is that I came from North Carolina and happened to move to Pittsburgh, PA, and I'm an American. That's my vision, where people begin to realize that we have nothing else but this.

- Ray Henderson, social worker/ex-steelworker

We live in West Orange, New Jersey. Basically we're just an all-American family, other than being African-American and Native American.

— Monique Perry, student

Each generation of our family moves away from where we started. I really don't practice any of the Italian customs; I couldn't really tell you what any of them are.

— Greg Vadala, student

How many generations does it take for somebody to be called an American? What is a hyphenated American? — Amniel Alcalay, writer/translator

I feel limited by the classifications that we have to put ourselves into. What are you? OK, I'm a white Jewish male. Oh, you're Jewish, are you Sephardic or Ashkenazi? I'm Ashkenazi. Are you from Eastern Europe or Russia? I'm from Eastern Europe. OK, I'm an American. Are you liberal, conservative or moderate? I'm moderate. Baseball: do you like the Mets or the Yankees? I happen to like the Mets.

— Jared Michael Strauss, student

Some questions pointing to " Next time "



## SESSION 2



### How is our community changing?

You often hear people say "Our world is changing so fast." One way or the other, we all feel the effects of these changes. This is why they seem to overpower us at times.

Newcomers to this country change our community. This has been true throughout our country's history.

How are our communities changing now? How can we use what we know about these changes to build a better community?

Each of the following views is written in the voice of a person who holds that view. Use these views to start talking about issues and to come up with your own best thinking.

#### VIEW 1 Racism is on the rise.

Racism has always been a major force in the community. Having so many newcomers here makes it even harder to deal with racism. People still judge others because of the color of their skin. Immigrants from Europe are accepted more easily than people from Latin America, Africa, or Asia. Sometimes, white people think Asian and Latino people are new to this country, even if they have lived here a long time.

Newcomers also bring old racist ideas and cultural conflicts with them. We need to bring issues of race and racism out into the open so we can deal with them.

#### VIEW 2

## Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries.

Teaching young people is a hard job. It is even harder to teach people who are new to this country, who aren't used to being here, and who may not speak English. This is especially true of cities where the schools have less money and there are more students who are newcomers to America.

Schools have always been places where people learn about our country and our culture. Today, all kinds of different ethnic groups and cultures are filling up our schools. This is a challenge for the schools. The schools need a lot more help if we expect them to do their job.

#### VIEW 3 We have stopped trying to keep our common culture.

All Americans used to have the same values and ideals. Children used to learn the Pledge of Allegiance, sing the "Star-Spangled Banner," and read the "Gettysburg Address." We still do these things, but no one seems to really care about being an American. Why? Because of all the new people coming here.

Newcomers have their own books, songs, politics, languages and beliefs. Schools for both children and adults spend too much time on these issues and not enough on civics or American history. It doesn't even seem like we're living in the same country anymore. There are certain ideals that make us Americans, and we need to hold on to them.

#### VIEW 4 It creates problems when people don't speak English.

When you shop, talk to a neighbor, or take a taxi, and the people you meet don't speak English, it's a problem. At the very least, people who speak another language are annoying. At the most, they make you feel like you are not part of the same community or even the same country. The problem is getting worse with more and more new people moving here.

There are whole parts of our town where people never speak any English and don't seem to want to learn it. Now businesses and the government print things in other languages. Don't they care if people can't read English? To get along and to work together, we need to be able to communicate.

## QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN DISCUSSING THE VIEWS

- Which view(s) is closest to your own? Why? What are the beliefs or things you have done or seen that have helped form your ideas?
- ◆ Think about a view you don't agree with. What might lead someone else to agree with that view?
- What other views would you add?
   What points of view are missing?

#### VIEW 5 New cultures make our community better.

Each new group of people coming here brings a whole new culture. This has always been true. Immigrants bring all kinds of new music, foods, languages, clothes, and ideas. This is so great for our community. It makes us more diverse and exciting. People should not have to give up their cultures just to be like other Americans. We should celebrate the many cultures around us.

#### VIEW 6 When new immigrants do well, racism gets worse for African Americans.

As we get more diverse, things seem to be getting more unfair. Racism is one of America's oldest problems. It is more hidden and more painful than ever. On TV, newcomers see people of color as drug addicts and robbers. Racism in institutions is everywhere: in banks, stores, welfare offices, the courts and more.

African Americans are hurt by this. When a new immigrant group does well in our community, white people ask, "Why can't you people succeed?" To have a diverse community that is fair and open, we need to address racism in institutions head-on.

#### VIEW 7 People are coming here just to make money, not to become Americans.

The reasons people come to America are changing. The more recent newcomers seem to be mostly interested in making money. They want the benefits of being an American, but do not want to be part of the community. Many of them want to go back to their own country some day.

If people just want to make money, keep their own cultures, and remain separate from everyone, we end up with communities with no common bonds. We need to insist that people who want to move and work here must also want to become Americans.

#### Final questions (Use these questions to summarize your discussion.)

- What did you learn from this meeting? What new insights and ideas did you get from listening to others?
- How has our community gotten better with the coming of new immigrants? Name three or four of the most important benefits.
- What are the three or four biggest problems we face in our community around immigration, race, language, and schools? Why are these problems so important? >

#### - For next time 🕒



- Is it easier or harder to find a good job than it was a few years ago? Does immigration seem to have anything to do with this?
- ▶ How have newcomers to our community affected jobs, wages and money? What does this look like? For example, do we have new types of jobs coming into the community?

## SESSION 3



## How are jobs and the economy changing in our community?

Being able to earn a living is a big concern for almost everyone. Whether you came here recently or have lived here all your life, getting and keeping a job is very important.

The ways people get jobs and money in our community are changing rapidly. How are these changes taking place? How can we use what we know about these changes to make it easier for people to earn a good living?

Each of the following views is written in the voice of a person who holds that view. Use these views to start talking about these issues and to come up with your own best thinking.

#### VIEW 1

#### There are more people competing for jobs.

People want jobs that will give them a decent wage, help them support their families, and make them feel secure about the future. There don't seem to be as many of those jobs as there used to be. To get a good job these days you need more skills, schooling, and experience than ever.

Many jobs have moved overseas. For other jobs, the wages keep falling as people agree to work for less and less. Some jobs are being filled by newcomers willing to work for less money: for example, janitors, construction, and service jobs. With each newcomer, the chances of getting a job go down.

#### VIEW 2 Some people are trapped in poor jobs.

There are whole groups of people working at poor and dead-end jobs. They live day-to-day, working in garment, hotel, meat-packing, and other industries. Many are recent immigrants who cannot read and don't have many skills. These jobs are very hard on the body. Many of these jobs are also very dangerous.

Racism also plays a role. If the workers were white, people would not allow such bad working conditions. Some people who hire newcomers take advantage of them by denying them basic rights, and exposing them to many health hazards. An immigrant worker who does not have a green card will remain silent because he or she is afraid of being deported.

#### VIEW 3 People new to this country are hard workers.

Over the years, immigrants have added a great deal to our work force and economy. They bring new skills and ideas. Even newcomers with low skills are eager to work hard and succeed. Having more people compete for more jobs is good for business.

When people move here they are at the bottom of the job ladder, but with hard work and long hours, they can make a better life for themselves. Many immigrants have started new businesses which, in turn, create more jobs. As rich and poor strive for a better life, each person's efforts improve life for everyone.

#### VIEW 4 It is harder to find the "American Dream."

Many people still want the "American Dream," which means that with hard work we can be successful and we can prosper. In today's complex world, basic job skills are no longer enough. Jobs in fields like medicine, law, and engineering demand years of schooling that cost a lot of money.

Blue-collar jobs are also demanding more and more high-tech skills. Today almost everyone needs to know how to use a computer. People who came here years ago did not face these issues. Many newcomers today don't have the schooling or high-tech skills needed to reach the American Dream.

## QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN DISCUSSING THE VIEWS

- Which view(s) is closest to your own? Why? What are the beliefs or things you have done or seen that have helped form your ideas?
- Think about a view you don't agree with. What might lead someone else to agree with that view?
- What other views would you add? What points of view are missing?

#### VIEW 5 Workers from many cultures are needed more than ever.

More and more the economy is connected all around the world. We rely more on other countries for trade and goods. Communities with diverse cultures have an advantage. Companies benefit greatly from having a work force that knows many languages.

Cities with strong ties to other parts of the world can more easily build bridges of trade and business to other countries. A diverse community is attractive to tourists from around the world. Newcomers have started many new businesses themselves and are helping to build the economy of our cities.

#### VIEW 6 There is a much greater burden on our social services.

With more and more people in need, our social services and schools have a hard time keeping up. It costs money to support new immigrants

who are poor, do not know our culture, and can't speak English.

In 1996, the U.S. Congress made it harder for newcomers to get welfare. Political refugees, though, can still get welfare, housing, and classes to learn English. Meanwhile, these welfare cuts also affect many other poor people. People who are already here end up making sacrifices to fund the programs that newcomers need.

#### Final questions (Use these questions to summarize your discussion.)

- What did you learn from this meeting? What new insights and ideas did you get from listening to others?
- What are the common concerns?
- What are the two or three most important changes you have seen in our local economy in recent years? What seems to be driving these changes?

♦ What can each of us do to make a difference?

For next time

How can the institutions in our community and nation help make the changes we want?

What can the government do? What direction should our public policies take?

How can families, schools, religious groups, the news media, and business help?

"America is in the making..."

Mai Moua, new citizen

In recent years there has been much worry and a good deal of writing about the rancor and lack of civility so pervasive in our public life today. People are concerned about the consequences of widespread feelings of powerlessness and disengagement that many young people voice -- dramatically evident in the Littleton tragedy.

Some see our growing diversity as a threat to a sense of national unity. Many worry that schools are not adequately preparing the next generation with the skills and knowledge required for active citizenship. All of these issues raise important questions about how we learn to be Americans.

What does it mean to be an American? The development of civic identities is a central part of this collective learning. We often think about the process of becoming citizens as something new immigrants do. But in fact, we also have marks of adult "citizenship" for U.S. born young people. Sixteen allows a driver's license; 18 permits voting and requires males to register for the draft; and age 21 sanctions drinking. Each of these passages helps shape an "American" identity and conveys some sense of responsibilities of citizenship, as well as the rights of citizens. Yet rarely do we as a nation talk about the deeper meanings of citizenship.

The term citizenship can be a loaded one. It can raise conflicts born out ofthe historical, political and legal experiences for groups struggling for inclusion. For Native Americans, it may symbolize a status imposed on them by force. For Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans, it may bring up questions of legality and documentation. For African Americans, citizenship became imaginable only after slavery was abolished, but full citizenship did not become possible until the sweeping movements for freedom and civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s. As Dr. Martin Luther King stated, "This growing self-respect has inspired the [African American] with new determination to struggle and sacrifice until first-class citizenship becomes a reality."

For communities of color, citizenship can offer either a conceptual stumbling block or an entry into the American dream of full participation in public and social life. For others, American citizenship has come to focus too much on "rights," without a corresponding emphasis on "responsibilities." There is not agreement on what is a "good" citizen.

Three distinct views of what citizenship means and how we learn its meanings can be traced through American history:

VIEW 1) The civics view. In this view, the citizen is a bearer of rights - the right to free speech and freedom of assembly, the right to worship as one pleases, the right to a free press, the right to bear arms. These are hallowed rights in our history, suggested by the

"Bill of Rights" in the Constitution. "Don't Tread on Me" was a famous Revolutionary slogan.

>From the civics point of view, the most fundamental public right of citizens is the right to vote for our representatives, who then do the public's business. Civics education mainly focuses on the workings of government- how a bill becomes law; the division of powers; the court system. Citizen responsibilities, beyond voting, include obeying the laws, paying taxes, and serving on juries.

The civics view of citizenship is in many ways the "official view." When immigrants take the citizenship test (see the accompanying test questions), they are mainly asked about government and political leadership. When the United States promotes democracy education abroad, the stress is on elections and rights and the rule of law.

VIEW 2) The community view. Critics of the civics view in recent years argue that a stress on government and rights is fine as far as it goes, but it's gone too far. We have largely lost our sense of responsibilities and the ties that bind us together. We ask "what can we get?" but neglect "what do we owe?" We have become a nation of radical individualists, who have lost our connection to community. "We the people" have become "me the people."

In the community view of citizenship, the citizen is not only someone who has rights but also someone who has responsibilities. Programs to strengthen volunteerism, and new initiatives such as community service, aim at strengthening the idea of community membership. The nation's living presidents gathered in 1997 in the Summit on Volunteerism to advance this view. "The era of Big Government is Over. We need an Era of Big Citizenship," said Bill Clinton. The community view of citizenship is what he meant.

Advocates of the community view of citizenship often stress an emphasis on character education, as well as service -- teaching values of patriotism, honesty, and respect for others.

VIEW 3) The work-centered view. Rights and responsibilities are important, say advocates of this view. But in recent decades we've lost the heart of American citizenship - its tie to work. Work, whether paid or unpaid - often had civic meanings. It meant the local businessman who extended credit to his neighbors when times got hard. It was the public health nurse who worked in the community. It included the "CCC boys" who built parks and planted forests in the Great Depression. It meant citizens who established common schools and libraries and parks and voluntary fire departments.

Without a focus on the actual, messy, ongoing work of citizenship, advocates of "productive citizenship" say, citizenship becomes either an occasional activity (such as voting) or is easily sentimentalized. The symbol of voluntarism today, the heart, is fine. But what about other traits of citizenship -- the boldness and willingness to challenge

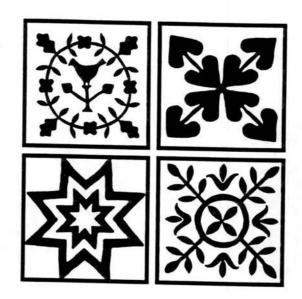
injustice, or the sense of pride and stakeholding in our common life that comes from actually creating things of civic benefit? Citizenship understood as common work allows us to join with people with whom we may have big disagreements, or whom we may not even like, for the sake of the larger civic cause.

America must recover productive citizenship if our democracy is to be vibrant and healthy once again, say proponents of this view. The symbols and rituals of citizenship are thinned out. We need to look at new civic rituals for youth - such as demonstrations of their public contributions; and we need to rethink the citizenship test to emphasize productive and lasting civic contribution.

#### Discussion Questions:

The challenge for us as "one nation from many" is to explore the different meanings of citizenship and how we learn to be Americans -- both for US born citizens and those immigrants who wish to become new citizens.

- 1. What do we mean by a "good citizen?" And how do we help young people learn to be citizens? What are the common rituals that signify preparation for public life. Are these adequate? What other rituals or rites of passage might be created?
- 2. Briefly review the current procedure for immigrants to gain U.S. citizenship (see supplemental materials). How should citizenship be measured? Should there be a test, as there is now? Is the current test the right one? If not, what should be on the test?



## SESSION 5

# Making a Difference: What can we do to build a stronger community in an age of diversity?

I have a feeling that we're all waiting for something to happen, for some divine intervention that will sit us all down at one table; each race, each class, each faction, and somehow we'll legislate, negotiate, mediate, and make everything all right. There's this assumption that we're missing some essential ingredient, but in fact all the ingredients are here. It's as if we are in a kitchen and have all the components to make the bread laid out, and we're looking from bowl to bowl unable to make that leap of imagination to mix this with that and put it in the oven and eat it. We're waiting for other people to do it, and that's totally antithetical to our can-do, will-do, know-how, make-shift, made-up country.

— Allan Gurganus, writer

We have talked and thought about how we describe ourselves, about how we come together or stand apart, and what it means to be an American. What can we do with the information and insight we've gained over the course of these conversations? How will we make that leap of imagination that Allan Gurganus talks about and work together to forge a common life that sustains all of us?

#### **Discussion Starters**

There are more questions here than you will have time to address. Choose a few that you think will be most interesting to your group.

#### Working on the issues that face us

- 1. What have you heard and learned during these discussions that has surprised you? What will have the largest impact on your attitudes? on your actions in the community?
- 2. What events in our local history have had an impact on how people work together, or avoid working together?
- 3. If there are tensions in our community that relate to difference, what efforts are currently underway to address these tensions? How can we build on those efforts? How can we expand them?

#### Moving to next steps

What next steps can we take to make a difference? Of the various ideas listed in this session, which seem the most promising? What groups and individuals in this community or outside might support us as we act on these ideas?

#### 1. What can I do as an individual?

- Take leadership. You don't have to be an elected official, or a well-known civic leader, to be effective. Approach top community leaders and encourage them to foster public dialogue. At the same time, begin dialogues in your own neighborhood as a way to reach out beyond the group you belong to. Your initial work to bring people together will give you the experience and credentials for a larger role in the community.
- Talk about community issues whenever you can. Speak up when people take positions that work against intercultural understanding and communication.
- Support local businesses that are run by people who are from diverse backgrounds.

- Read about different cultures and traditions.
   Start with your own and branch out from there.
- Learn about your local history and use what you've learned to inform your conversations.
   Public libraries, historical sites and societies, and history museums are all good resources. Chapters from books, articles, oral histories, and visits to museum exhibits can be used to jumpstart conversations. (See the Resource section at back for places to turn for help.)
- Ask yourself what you can do to help bring your skills to the people in your community. Can you help more people to recognize and take advantage of opportunities?
- Volunteer to teach new immigrants how to speak or read English.
- Tutor people who want to learn to read, or who want to learn a language you know.
- · Be an informed voter.
- Find out about your representatives in government. Are the people in your community well represented?
- As elections near, volunteer to help register people to vote, or work to get out the vote.
- Greet people who are different from you in a friendly way.
- Ask yourself some basic questions. Do you know and associate with people from different backgrounds? Why or why not?

#### 2. What can we do in our homes and neighborhoods?

- Our community's children will grow up in a diverse world. How can we prepare them to work with (in the workplace and in the community) people from different backgrounds? Here are some ideas:
  - (a) Encourage local merchants to carry toys and books for children that reflect and respect differences among people.

- (b) Avoid stereotyping; teach children to be concerned with the content of a person's character.
- (c) When groups mark special occasions or celebrate holidays, find out what the celebration is about. What do Yom Kippur, Kwanzaa, Easter, and Ramadan mean to the people who observe them? Talk with your children about the meanings of holidays.
- Welcome new neighbors, and seek out opportunities to meet newcomers in the community.
   Reach out especially if they are people from a different background than yours.
- Before you barbecue, ask yourself what national holidays mean — July 4th, Washington's Birthday, Lincoln's Birthday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and more. What do these holidays commemorate? In an age as diverse as ours, are these days important for something besides leisure time? Ask others what they think.
- Have an open block party in your neighborhood.
   Ask guests to bring a favorite traditional dish from their family's heritages.
- Start a neighborhood "community service project" that includes young people from all backgrounds.
- 3. What can we do in our community to create a common life?
  - Make study circles an ongoing part of the community, on all sorts of issues. Include community groups of all kinds as study circle sponsors, so that all community members will know that they are welcome to take part. Media participation can also promote widespread involvement: in some places, radio and TV stations run public service announcements to encourage participation in the study circles, and newspapers print supportive editorials.

- Convene community-wide cultural development planning. This could be an effective way to channel the energy generated by a successful round of community conversations about cultural identity and diversity. This process could draw out a range of community members' ideas about how they'd like to see cultural life change.
- Encourage the newspaper to write a series of stories that documents the history of the community. Who has settled in the community, and why? How have groups related to each other? Some newspapers have done extensive series on current-day relations between racial and ethnic groups.
- Start a community arts project. Use the arts and media as ways for people to express themselves and their own cultural identities. Community arts projects can take many forms: photo-text exhibits; video and audio "speak outs"; murals and other pieces of public art. In some communities, short plays have been "discussion starters" for community conversations.
- If there are ongoing tensions between groups in the community, leaders from these groups can form an alliance to discuss ways of working together. One example of this is in New York, where African-American and Korean-American leaders formed "The Black/Korean Mediation Project."
- Teach young people about diversity by helping them learn about the art that comes out of different traditions. For example, The Baltimore Learning Network, run by community volunteers, coordinates projects that link the schools to the city's cultural institutions.
- Sponsor cultural outings for multicultural groups of students, where the groups can visit sites that help them learn about each other's backgrounds.

- Sponsor projects where community members from all backgrounds will have opportunities to work together and break down patterns of segregation. For example, organize park cleanups in areas that are usually segregated.
- Hold a film festival that highlights diversity issues. One example of this took place in Glen Ridge, NJ, as a result of a study circle program on race relations.
- Encourage and support civic leaders who are out front on the issues of diversity, who understand the importance of addressing these issues honestly and with everyone's involvement.
- Create a community leadership program that includes people from all groups in the community, and that offers skills training in crosscultural dialogue, mediation, and cross-cultural problem solving.
- Congregations from different faiths and backgrounds can hold joint services, or work together on community problems.

#### Activities

1. With the whole group, view Section 4 of the video *Toward a More Perfect Union*.

Affirmative action

2. (a) Spend some time as a group looking at the issues listed below. They represent some public concerns where diversity issues can surface in communities. Are any public matters that involve diversity issues missing from the list? Add your own. Then rank the top five issues for your community.

Bilingual education Cases of bias or prejudice Discrimination in housing English-only laws Gangs Hate crimes How museums represent our history and cultures How schools represent our history and cultures Immigration Interfaith marriages Interracial marriages Multiculturalism Policies about Native lands Prayer in public schools Public funding and displaying of art Same-sex marriages The glass ceiling Unequal pay scales Welfare

(b) Take one of these issues, and describe the typical public debate about it. In what ways does our diversity have an impact on that issue? Have inequalities, or the tensions and mistrust among us, hindered us in moving ahead on this issue? What voices aren't heard in the debate? What have we learned in our conversations so far that would help our community talk about the issue in more constructive ways and begin to deal with it differently?

#### Add 3 and 4 from Part I



Include extra readings/citizenship test, etc.

Action ideas

Add:

Individuals

Help immigrants go through naturalization

Learn (as opposed to read) about other cultures and traditions

Keep a file on local immigration stories. Use these to convince public officials to change the immigration laws so that fewer people move here

Don't do business with places that hire workers who came here illegally

Write or call your elected officials and tell them how you feel about changes in immigration policy

Write letters to your local papers about problems caused by high immigration.

Teach immigrants their basic rights: minimum wage, safety at work, fair housing, and freedom from family abuse

Support and join national groups that push for the same things you believe in.

Confront or report people who are breaking the immigration and naturalization laws.

Homes and Neighborhood

Reach out and welcome new neighbors who are immigrants

Hold classes on being a good citizen. Explore what that means in America.

Start and ESL class for your new neighbors

Start programs to teach poor people job skills, about housing, reading and writing, and more. Immigrants are not the only people who are poor and need help.

Work with a number of racial groups and cultures to take on a common community problem.

Community

Work with local city or county officials to pass resolutions calling for less immigration.

Start a historial retrieval project

Insist that public officials, agencies, and the chamber of commerce make businesses hire only legal immigrants.

Help new immigrant parents talk to their children's teachers and school officials.

Hold a big citizenship drive to help those who want to become citizens. Teach them where to get help.

 $\Rightarrow$ 

[Are there other action ideas related to citizenship that could be added here?]

Create services for everyone (not just newcomers) that provide job training, job placement, and housing advice.

Offer workshops to local officials and other public servants on cultural diversity

Find ways to get young people into study circles. Including youth in talks about these important issues is very good for the community and our nation.

Pilot: Every grap starts with Chapter 1

Then each grap moves to 1 of other Chapters; one group continues at Ch. 1

On Ch. 5 - use action examples rather than text as is.

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Forward - to Contestuales is sure - global (State/local essues.

(Minnesota Pride - Mr Préjudice) - Vedes (KTCA?) maybe 5 yes ago
- Provide handouts

- Flources from participants

## CONVENTION

## Responding to immigration...







## **League Initiates Community Conversations**



by Janet Gendler

A record 8,977 immigrants came to Minnesota directly from their native countries in 1996 (Minnesota Planning publication). Many of these were refugees—more than forty percent of Minnesota's immigrants that year—from places such as the former Soviet Union, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Cameroon, and Southeast Asian countries. In addition, Minnesota's economy is strong at this time, and immigrants are attracted to a welcoming job market.

Their integration into the communities in which they settle, however, has not always been smooth. In response to this development, LWVMNEF is beginning a two-year project to focus community discussions state wide on immigration and the accompanying issues of race, jobs, housing, language differences, and education.

#### **Study Circles**

This project will use Study Circles, a process for small-group deliberation developed in 1990 as a project of the Topsfield Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan foundation whose goal is to improve the quality of public life in the United States.

Groups of 8-12 people representing a cross-section of their communities will meet to discuss immigration and how it affects their community, to get to know one another, to consider different points of view, and suggest solutions for problems. They may use discussion materials and a guide developed in cooperation with the Study Circle Resource Center to help

focus serious and broad public conversation among conservative and liberal voices, uninformed but interested citizens, service veterans, those who lived here originally, recent immigrants, community leaders, and other folks.



#### Pilot programs

Pilot programs are planned for May and early fall with a target of 1,000 participants in 100 study circles throughout the state during January, 2000. During this month each study circle would meet four or five times, with an ultimate outcome of an action plan for the group.

Study Circles have been used successfully in Oklahoma, where the League of Women Voters and several other organizations initiated a study circle program on criminal justice and corrections called "Balancing Justice."

Over 1,000 citizens joined judges, sheriffs, and legislators in deliberation about how to handle the challenges of skyrocketing corrections costs and falling public confidence in the judicial system. Over 50 state and local civic organizations and churches co-sponsored the project with

study circles in 13 communities. A bill enacted into law a month after the study circles were completed upheld the two major policy themes identified by the study circle participants.

The LWVMNEF will be the lead sponsor of this project in Minnesota. A League steering committee of Executive Director Sally Sawyer, President Judy Duffy, Development Director Andrea Lex, and Board Member Janet Gendler joined Harry Boyte of the University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute and Nan Kari of the Jane Addams School for Democracy in St. Paul to plan.

A seed grant from the law firm of Siegal, Brill, Greupner, Duffy & Foster PA has enabled the League to hire a project director, Janna Wallin Haug. Currently, this core group is working to form partnerships with community organizations for the Study Circles project.

#### Information at Convention

The Study Circles on Immigration is a separate initiative from whatever traditional two-year study delegates to the LWV State Convention may choose in April. Two workshops at the Convention on April 17 will give participants a chance to ask questions about Study Circles. Local Leagues will have an opportunity to take leadership roles in this project, and individual members can and should participate.

Janet Gendler was Co-Chair of the justcompleted Election of Judges Study. She has been Vice-President, Community Services, for the Minneapolis League.

#### Changing Faces, Changing Communities

Community Discussion Circles on Immigration in Minnesota League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund Project Pilot Event Outcomes

#### **Pilot Description**

On the morning of May 18th, 1999, approximately 60 community members gathered at the Minnesota State Office Building to participate in a pilot event for *Changing Faces, Changing Communities* Community Circles on Immigration in Minnesota. The pilot event was designed to demonstrate and test some of the questions that will be used by Community Circles meeting statewide in the spring of 2000 focusing on immigration.

Questions addressed during the pilot included: What does it mean to be an American? What impact does immigration have on language, culture, the workplace and marketplace? And what does it mean to be a citizen? Participants in the two-hour session included project steering committee members, representatives of a broad range of community groups, youth involved in the Public Achievement program at Humboldt High School in St. Paul, media representatives, and members of the League of Women Voters.

Participants met in small groups in order to facilitate deeper discussion and evaluation of particular chapters and questions of the proposed study guide. During the first half of the small group sessions, each group was involved in an activity designed to make group members more familiar and comfortable with one another and to set the stage for further discussion. Each individual brought a story or something tangible to share with members of their group, such as a photo, newspaper clipping, family curio, fabric, tool, art object, -- something that expressed an important aspect of their heritage, or of becoming or being American. Each group was allowed 45 minutes to complete this activity.

After a brief break, participants reconvened in small groups for the second part of the pilot that ran a full hour. At this time, each of the groups was assigned a separate chapter of the study guide. These sessions were challenging because participants were not only trying to get a sense of how a Community Circle works, they were also asked to evaluate and react to the particular chapter to which they had been assigned.

In order to do this, the groups spent up to 45 minutes on the particular questions or views laidout in each chapter. The facilitators then spent the last 15 minutes guiding participants through a discussion of their views on the usefulness and quality of the questions, activities and views outlined in each chapter.

The pilot closed with a session in which all participants were invited to reconvene in a large group to discuss the various outcomes in the individual sessions. The responsibility for reporting on each of the groups rested with a pre-assigned group reporter. However, facilitators and others who wished to remain for this session were encouraged to offer comments and insights on the group dynamics and reactions to the discussion guide.

#### **Pilot Outcomes**

Generally, it was felt that the opening exercise was effective in introducing participants to one another and establishing a sense of community. This was important since this sense of community had to be set very quickly given the abridged nature of the pilot. Ordinarily, Community Circle participants would have five weeks to become acquainted with one another.

The high school students were felt to be an exceptionally important element of the pilot. Their stories were brief, but very moving. The intergenerational aspect of their participation is very valuable and youth should be strongly encouraged to participate in all communities in which Community Circles will be held. Organizers and facilitators should think carefully about how to fully engage young participants, and how to intentionally draw them into the discussion as soon as possible. The discussion guide should also include views and questions that reflect young people's questions and concerns.

While careful consideration was given to bringing together as diverse a group as possible for the pilot, participants felt the groups could have been still more varied in terms of ethnic backgrounds. Also, the pilot participants could have been even more varied in their political views. Bringing together individuals who already share common views can be interesting and engaging, but does not lead to the tough discussions that must take place in communities that are deeply divided on issues surrounding immigration and diversity.

There were several tips for facilitators. These included: the need to keep two or three individuals from dominating the discussion; the need to repeat the questions several times in order to keep the group focused; and the recommendation that facilitators ask questions in a variety of ways in order to elicit responses and discussion that addresses ideas and underlying assumptions that are not always obvious or even included in the discussion guide.

It is nearly impossible to include every single view, assumption or fact on a given subject in the discussion guide. However, through a combination of open-ended questions, examples, and supplementary materials, facilitators should be able to lead participants through a discussion that is focused while also representing a broad range of opinions and views.

The final chapter of the discussion guide will be entitled "What kind of Minnesota do we want to build?" This session will raise the basic questions of where do we go from here? What kind of Minnesota do we want for ourselves? For our children? What ideas do we have for action in our respective communities? And how, given an alternate view of citizenship, do we respond or contribute? While this chapter will be focused almost entirely on ideas for action by individuals, at the community, state and federal levels, some participants felt the discussion on action ideas shouldn't wait until the final session but should be integrated through the entire five-week series.

Participants also raised questions as to whether or not there are plans to publish the discussion guide in other languages and/or to use translators. Organizers plan to encourage the use of translators in communities where they are needed. However, the cost of translating the entire discussion guide into more than one language might be prohibitive.

Changing Faces, Changing Communities: Community Circles on Immigration in MN June 21, 1999 Funding Update & Projection - LWVMNEF

| Company/                                     | Request | Request          | Received | Received | Refused | Committee                              |
|--|---------|------------------|----------|----------|---------|--|
| Foundation                                   | Date    | Amount           | Date     | Amount   | Date    | Committee  F thought  like a cor  - an |
| Beim Foundation                              | 3/15/99 | \$3,000          | 5/14/99  | \$2,000  |         | & ilanimolat                           |
| 2. Blandin Foundation                        | 5/18/99 | Approx. \$25,000 |          |          | 6/7/99  | 9 HVWCGVV                              |
| 3. Burlington Northern                       |         | Maybe \$5,000*   |          |          |         |  |
| 4. Santa Fe Railroad                         |         |                  |          |          |         | lille a Col                            |
| 5. Carolyn Foundation                        | 1/31/99 | \$2,500          |          |          |         |  |
| 6. Dairy Queen                               | 6/18/99 | \$1,000          |          |          |         | - Cler                                 |
| 7. General Mills                             | 4/15/99 | \$25,000         |          |          | 5/17/99 |  |
| 8. Grotto Foundation                         | 3/15/99 | \$5,000          |          |          |         | Pending                                |
| 9. Honeywell Foundation                      | 5/4/99  | \$35,000         |          |          |         | Pending                                |
| 10. Josten's Foundation                      | 4/15/99 | \$5,000          |          |          |         | Pending                                |
| 11. Knight Foundation                        |         | Maybe \$20,000*  |          |          |         | Will be sent this week                 |
| 12. McKnight Foundation                      | 1/15/99 | \$25,000         |          |          | 3/3/99  |  |
| 13. Medtronic Foundation                     | 1/15/99 | \$25,000         | 5/13/99  | \$10,000 |         |  |
| 14. National Car Rental                      | 6/10/99 | \$500            |          |          |         | Imm/Gen Op Pending                     |
| 15. Northern States Power<br>Company         | 6/17/99 | \$5,000          |          |          |         | Imm/Gen Op<br>Pending                  |
| 16. Otto Bremer Foundation                   | 5/21/99 | \$45,000         |          |          |         | Will know in July                      |
| 17. Siegel, Brill, Greupner & Duffy Law Firm |         | \$10,000         |          | \$5,000  |         |  |
| 18. Soros Foundation                         | 6/16/99 | Maybe \$25,000*  |          |          |         | Letter of Inquiry Sent                 |
| 19. St. Paul Companies                       | 6/1/99  | \$5,000          |          |          |         | Pending                                |
| 20. St. Paul Found.                          | 6/17/99 | Maybe \$20,000*  |          |          |         | Letter of Inquiry Sent                 |
| 21. Wallin Foundation                        | 5/6/99  | \$2,500          |          |          |         | Pending                                |
| TOTAL without "Maybe"s                       |         | \$219,500        |          | \$17,000 |         |  |

<sup>\*</sup>With the "Maybe"s then total would be \$289,500

Judy, I handed this out at the Steening Committee meeting & thought you'd like a copy.

## Changing Faces, Changing Communities: Community Circles on Immigration in MN June 21, 1999 Funding Update & Projection - LWVMNEF

| Company/                                     | Request               | Request          | Received | Received        | Refused | Comments                              |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|----------|-----------------|---------|---------------------------------------|
| Foundation                                   | Date                  | Amount           | Date     | Amount          | Date    |                                       |
| 1. Beim Foundation                           | 3/15/99               | \$3,000          | 5/14/99  | \$2,000         |         |                                       |
| 2. Blandin Foundation                        | 5/18/99               | Approx. \$25,000 |          |                 | 6/7/99  | A STATE OF THE STATE OF               |
| Burlington Northern     Santa Fe Railroad    |                       | Maybe \$5,000*   |          |                 |         | Letter of Inquiry sent<br>Imm/Gen.Op. |
| 5. Carolyn Foundation                        | 1/31/99               | \$2,500          |          |                 |         | Pending                               |
| 6. Dairy Queen                               | 6/18/99               | \$1,000          |          |                 |         | Imm./Gen.Op                           |
| 7. General Mills                             | 4/15/99               | \$25,000         |          |                 | 5/17/99 |                                       |
| 8. Grotto Foundation                         | 3/15/99               | \$5,000          |          |                 |         | Pending                               |
| 9. Honeywell Foundation                      | 5/4/99                | \$35,000         |          |                 |         | Pending                               |
| 10. Josten's Foundation                      | 4/15/99               | \$5,000          |          |                 |         | Pending                               |
| 11. Knight Foundation                        | TO THE REAL PROPERTY. | Maybe \$20,000*  |          |                 |         | Will be sent this week                |
| 12. McKnight Foundation                      | 1/15/99               | \$25,000         |          | N. HUERT PERSON | 3/3/99  | THE PROPERTY OF                       |
| 13. Medtronic Foundation                     | 1/15/99               | \$25,000         | 5/13/99  | \$10,000        |         |                                       |
| 14. National Car Rental                      | 6/10/99               | \$500            |          |                 |         | Imm/Gen Op Pending                    |
| 15. Northern States Power<br>Company         | 6/17/99               | \$5,000          |          |                 |         | Imm/Gen Op<br>Pending                 |
| 16. Otto Bremer Foundation                   | 5/21/99               | \$45,000         |          |                 |         | Will know in July                     |
| 17. Siegel, Brill, Greupner & Duffy Law Firm |                       | \$10,000         |          | \$5,000         |         |                                       |
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| 20. St. Paul Found.                          | 6/17/99               | Maybe \$20,000*  |          |                 |         | Letter of Inquiry Sent                |
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| TOTAL without "Maybe"s                       | t covered             | \$219,500        |          | \$17,000        |         |                                       |

<sup>\*</sup>With the "Maybe"s then total would be \$289,500

#### Others:

McNeely Foundation Assets \$10,350 at 12/31/95, \$2,500 to \$5,000, deadlines none

Bigelow Foundation Assets \$107,072 \$5,000 deadline 3 months prior to August meeting (call & find out date of August meeting)

Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation Assets \$117,650, \$5,000 call & make inquiry, deadlines ongoing - 3x per year as set by board

O'Shaughnessy Foundation Assets \$66,000, Request \$5,000 ? Preferred contact: letter of inquiry annual board meeting

Minnesota Initiative Funds

Ordean Foundation Assets \$31,740, Request \$5,000, deadlines ongoing, prefer to receive proposals middle of month

James R. Thorpe Foundation Assets \$8,178, Request \$5,000, deadline Sept. 1, letter of inquiry, request guidelines

Weyerhauser Foundation

Onan Foundation

Mardage Foundation

Tennant Foundation

Deluxe Corporation \$20,000 Deadlines ongoing

Dain Bosworth \$10,000 July 31 deadline

Jaye F. & Betty F. Dyer Foundation \$2,500 to \$5,000 deadline June 30

Margaret H. & James E. Kelley Foundation \$2,500 to \$5,000 deadline October 1

Juoy

# CHANGING FACES CHANGING COMMUNTIES

A COMMUNITY CIRCLE PROJECT SPONSORED BY THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA EDUCATION FUND

## SESSION 1 - Who are we? The changing faces of Minnesota.

This session will address our own immigration stories, our individual indentities, our sense of place. This chapter should specifically help us link our present to our past...to draw upon anecdotes, stories and relics representing who we are.

How can we talk productively about who we are? One way to start is with our own stories, our own experiences, and a basic questions: What is an American?

When asked who we are, or when describing someone else, Minnesotans mention vocation, the town from which we come, our ethnic background, our race, or how many children we have. Sometimes we vary these descriptions depending on the audience and what we think people are trying to find out. When asked about our national identity, some of us feel comfortable saying, "I'm an American," and some of us don't. Some of us hyphentate the description, to include our country of origin, or describe ourselves in other ways.

What do these labels mean to us? Do these labels reveal something about our past experiences, present concerns, or hopes? Do these descriptions reveal our attitudes toward our country or about who belongs here?

By telling our stories, we may discover how our diverse experiences have shaped us, divided us, and linked us. Through this dialogue, we may come to understand each other better and begin to find ways to make a better Minnesota.

## Tips for the facilitator

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you facilitate this session:

(www.

#### Discussion Starters/Activities:

- 1. Relate a story that expresses an important aspect of your heritage, or of becoming or being American. (Please feel free to share either a story or something tangible -- an object such as a photo, newspaper clipping, family curios, fabric, tool, art object, etc.)
- 2. You might follow these introductions with further discussion around questions such as: What are the similaries and differences in your stories/experiences? How frequent or infrequent were interactions with

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Participants

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different cultural groups in the community and what were those interactions like. In what cases did your family adapt or assimilate; in what cases did your family maintain your own traditions?

3. Take a moment to read each of the quotations under the heading "What some Americans are saying." Which statement do you find most interesting? Why? What would your own statement be like?

What some Americans are saying ...

I have German on my father's side and Irish on my mother's. It was quite an interesting marriage, a German and an Irish person. Then, on my mother's side, my grandfather was an American Indian. - Debra Burtle, businesswoman

My padrino, Cleofes Vigil, used to be asked all the time how long he had been in this country. And Cleofes would look at them very pensively and say, "I can take you to my grandfather's grave and to his grandfather's grave and to his grandfather's grave. That's how long I've been in this country." I think our family goes back to 1598, to the settlement and conquest of New Mexico. - Vicente Martinez, photographer/community organizer

All I know is that I came from North Carolina and happened to move to Pittsburgh, PA, and I'm an American. That's my vision, where people begin to realize that we have nothing else but this. - Ray Henderson, social worker/ex-steelworker

We live in West Orange, New Jersey. Basically we're just an all-American family, other than being African-American and Native American - Monique Perry, student

Each generation of our family moves away from where we started. I really don't practice any of the Italian customs; I couldn't really tell you what any of them are. - Greg Vadala, student

How many generations does it take for somebody to be called an American? What is a hyphenated American? - Ammiel Alcalay, writer/translator

I feel limited by the classifications that we have to put ourselves into. What are you? OK, I'm a white Jewish male. Oh, you're Jewish, are you Sephardic or Ashkenazi? I'm Ashkenazi. Are you from Eastern Europe or Russia? I'm from Eastern Europe. OK, I'm an American. Are you liberal, conservative or moderate? I'm moderate. Baseball: do you like the Mets or the Yankees? I happen to like the Mets. - Jared Michael Strauss, student

#### Final questions (Use these questions to summarize your discussion.)

- Why did you want to be part of this study circle program?
- ◆ What did you learn from this meeting? What new insights and ideas did you get from listening to others?

#### For next time

When it comes to immigration, race, schools, and language differences, what problems are we facing?

## Extra facilitator tip:

## Additional activities for involving participants in study circles

Some members of your study circle may find it difficult to work with the amount of written text used in the discussion sessions. Although we have tried to keep the language as clear and simple as possible, even people who are good readers sometimes prefer a more "hands on" approach to understanding new ideas. Such approaches can also bring a sense of action to the discussion process, preparing participants for the closing study circle sessions in which they explore different action options. Here are a few ideas for involving participants in the sharing of experiences and ideas about immigration and community change:

- Ask people to bring in a photograph, drawing, or any other object that illustrates for them the impact that immigration has had on their life and their community.
- Invite people to make a list of individuals or groups in their communities who are working to make a difference on the issues being discussed in their study circle. Ask them to take a few minutes to talk about what these individuals and groups do. Examples can range from things such as informal day care at a neighbor's house, to police-sponsored block watches.
- Ask participants to talk with their friends and neighbors about the issues being discussed in their study circle. Suggest that they seek out people who may not feel comfortable in a study circle, but who they think are likely to have important insights.
- Ask the study circle participants what else they might like to do to gain a better understanding of the issues being discussed.

## SESSION 2 - What's happening around me? (Part I)

This session will address our views of the changes taking place in our various communities, including the clash of culture and values, language differences, and the issues surrounding education and schools.

You often hear people say "Our world is changing so fast." One way or the other, we all feel the effects of these changes. This is why they seem to overpower us at times.

Newcomers to this country change our community. This has been true throughout our country's history.

How are our communities changing now? How can we use what we know about these changes to build a better community?

Each of the following views is written in the voice of a person who holds that view. Use these views to start talking about issues and to come up with your own best thinking.

## Tips for the facilitator

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you facilitate this session:

- Before community circle participants open their discussion guides, ask them to talk about some of the views that exist in their community relating to schools, race, education and language.
- Now open the guides. Ask a few members of your group to volunteer to read each view out loud OR ask members to read each view to themselves.
- After reading the views, ask some of the "Questions to think about" listed below.

#### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN DISCUSSING THE VIEWS

- ◆ Which view(s) is closest to your own? Why? What are the beliefs or things you have done or seen that have helped form your ideas?
- ♦ What surprises you about these views; what makes you uncomfortable?
- Think about a view you don't agree with. What might lead someone else to agree with that view?
- ◆ What other views would you add? What points of view are missing?

#### VIEW 1

Racism is on the rise.

Racism has always been a major force in the community. Having so many newcomers here makes it even harder to deal with racism. People still judge others because of the color of their skin. Immigrants from Europe are accepted more easily than people from Latin America, Africa, or Asia. Sometimes, white people think Asian and Latino people are new to this country, even if they have lived here a long time.

Newcomers also bring old racist ideas and cultural conflicts with them. We need to bring issues of race and racism out into the open so we can deal with them.

#### VIEW 2

Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries.

Teaching young people is a hard job. It is even harder to teach people who are new to this country, who aren't used to being here, and who may not speak English. This is especially true of cities where the schools have less money and there are more students who are newcomers to America.

Schools have always been places where people learn about our country and our culture. Today, all kinds of different ethnic groups and cultures are filling up our schools. This is a challenge for the schools. The schools need a lot more help if we expect them to do their job.

#### VIEW 3

We have stopped trying to keep our common culture.

All Americans used to have the same values and ideals. Children used to learn the Pledge of Allegiance, sing the "Star-Spangled Banner," and read the "Gettysburg Address." We still do these things, but no one seems to really care about being an American. Why? Because of all the new people coming here.

Newcomers have their own books, songs, politics, languages and beliefs. Schools for both children and adults spend too much time on these issues and not enough on civics or American history. It doesn't even seem like we're living in the same country anymore. There are certain ideals that make us Americans, and we need to hold on to them.

#### VIEW 4

It creates problems when people don't speak English.

When you shop, talk to a neighbor, or take a taxi, and the people you meet don't speak English, it's a problem. At the very least, people who speak another language are annoying. At the most, they make you feel like you are not part of the same community or even the same country. The problem is getting worse with more and more new people moving here.

There are whole parts of our town where people never speak any English and don't seem to want to learn it. Now businesses and the government print things in other languages. Don't they care if people can't read English? To get along and to work together, we need to be able to communicate.

#### VIEW 5

New cultures make our community better.

Each new group of people coming here brings a whole new culture. This has always been true. Immigrants bring all kinds of new music, foods, languages, clothes, and ideas. This is so great for our community. It makes us more diverse and exciting. People should not have to give up their cultures just to be like other Americans. We should celebrate the many cultures around us.

#### VIEW 6

When new immigrants do well, racism gets worse for African Americans.

As we get more diverse, things seem to be getting more unfair. Racism is one of America's oldest problems. It is more hidden and more painful than ever. On TV, newcomers see people of color as drug addicts and robbers. Racism in institutions is everywhere: in banks, stores, welfare offices, the courts and more

African Americans are hurt by this. When a new immigrant group does well in our community, white people ask, "Why can't you people succeed?" To have a diverse community that is fair and open, we need to address racism in institutions head-on.

#### VIEW 7

People are coming here just to make money, not to become Americans.

The reasons people come to America are changing. The more recent newcomers seem to be mostly interested in making money. They want the benefits of being an American, but do not want to be part of the community. Many of them want to go back to their own country some day.

If people just want to make money, keep their own cultures, and remain separate from everyone, we end up with communities with no common bonds. We need to insist that people who want to move and work here must also want to become Americans.

Final questions (Use these questions to summarize your discussion.)

- ◆ What did you learn from this meeting? What new insights and ideas did you get from listening to others?
- ♦ How has our community gotten better with the coming of new immigrants? Name three or four of the most important benefits.
- ♦ What are the three or four biggest problems we face in our community around immigration, race, language, and schools? Why are these problems so important?
- ◆ What ideas do we have for action that could be taken to address these problems, either as an individual, in our homes and neighborhoods, or in the larger community?

For next time

- O Is it easier or harder to find a good job than it was a few years ago? Does immigration seem to have anything to do with this?
- ① How have newcomers to our community affected jobs, wages and money? What does this look like? For example, do we have new types of jobs coming into the community?

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## SESSION 3 - What's happening around me? (Part II)

This session will address issues of the workplace and marketplace in our respective communities.

Being able to earn a living is a big concern for almost everyone. Whether you came here recently or have lived here all your life, getting and keeping a job is very important. Keeping our local communities economically strong is also important in order to maintain services, schools, churches, etc. for all those who live there.

The ways people get jobs and money in our community, and the ways communities create new job opportunities are changing rapidly. How are these changes taking place? How can we use what we know about these changes to make it easier for people to earn a good living and to create strong vibrant communities?

Each of the following views is written in the voice of a person who holds that view. Use these views to start talking about these issues and to come up with your own best thinking.

## Tips for the facilitator

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you facilitate this session:

- Before community circle participants open their discussion guides, ask them to talk about some of the views that exist in their community relating to immigration, jobs and the local economy.
- Now open the guides. Ask a few members of your group to volunteer to read each view out loud OR ask members to read each view to themselves.
- (9) After reading the views, ask some of the "Questions to think about" listed below

#### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN DISCUSSING THE VIEWS

- Which view(s) is closest to your own? Why? What are the beliefs or things you have done or seen that have helped form your ideas?
- ◆ What surprises you about these views; what makes you uncomfortable?
- Think about a view you don't agree with. What might lead someone else to agree with that view?
- What other views would you add? What points of view are missing?

#### VIEW 1

There are more people competing for jobs.

People want jobs that will give them a decent wage, help them support their families, and make them feel secure about the future. There don't seem to be as many of those jobs as there used to be. To get a good job these days you need more skills, schooling, and experience than ever.

Many jobs have moved overseas. For other jobs, the wages keep falling as people agree to work for less and less. Some jobs are being filled by newcomers willing to work for less money: for example, janitors, construction, and service jobs. With each newcomer, the chances of getting a job go down.

#### VIEW 2

Some people are trapped in poor jobs.

There are whole groups of people working at poor and dead-end jobs. They live day-to-day working in garment, hotel, meat-packing, and other industries. Many are recent immigrants who cannot read and don't have many skills. These jobs are very hard on the body. Many of these jobs are also very dangerous.

Racism also plays a role. If the workers were white, people would not allow such bad working conditions. Some people who hire newcomers take advantage of them by denying them basic rights, and exposing them to many health hazards. An immigrant worker who does not have a green card will remain silent because he or she is afraid of being deported.

#### VIEW 3

People new to this country are hard workers.

Over the years, immigrants have added a great deal to our work force and economy. They bring new skills and ideas. Even newcomers with low skills are eager to work hard and succeed. Having more people compete for more jobs is good for business.

When people move here they are at the bottom of the job ladder, but with hard work and long hours, they can make a better life for themselves. Many immigrants have started new businesses which, in turn, create more jobs. As rich and poor strive for a better life, each person's efforts improve life for everyone.

#### VIEW 4

It is harder to find the "American Dream."

Many people still want the "American Dream," which means that with hard work we can be successful and we can prosper. In today's complex world, basic job skills are no longer enough. Jobs in fields like medicine, law, and engineering demand years of schooling that cost a lot of money.

Blue-collar jobs are also demanding more and more high-tech skills. Today almost everyone needs to know how to use a computer. People who came here years ago did not face these issues. Many newcomers today don't have the schooling or high-tech skills needed to reach the American Dream.

#### VIEW 5

Workers from many cultures are needed more than ever.

More and more the economy is connected all around the world. We rely more on other countries for trade and goods. Communities with diverse cultures have an advantage. Companies benefit greatly from having a work force that knows many languages.

Cities with strong ties to other parts of the world can more easily build bridges of trade and business to other countries. A diverse community is attractive to tourists from around the world. Newcomers have started many new businesses themselves and are helping to build the economy of our cities.

#### VIEW 6

There is a much greater burden on our social services.

With more and more people in need, our social services and schools have a hard time keeping up. It costs money to support new immigrants who are poor, do not know our culture, and can't speak English.

In 1996, the U.S. Congress made it harder for newcomers to get welfare. Political refugees, though, can still get welfare, housing, and classes to learn English. Meanwhile, these welfare cuts also affect many other poor people. People who are already here end up making sacrifices to fund the programs that newcomers need.

Final questions (Use these questions to summarize your discussion.)

- ◆ What did you learn from this meeting? What new insights and ideas did you get from listening to others?
- ♦ What are the common concerns?
- ◆ What are the two or three most important changes you have seen in our local economy in recent years? What seems to be driving these changes?
- ◆ What ideas do we have for action that could be taken to address the concerns rasied in this session, either as individuals; in our schools, neighborhoods, and businesses; or in the larger community?

#### For next time

- What is a good citizen?
- ① What do you think it means to be "an American?"
- What are the current "rituals" or "rites of passage" for becoming an adult citizen in our society? Do they send young people the right message? What else might we do as communities or a whole society?

## SESSION 4 - What is a citizen?

This session will deal with the myths and assumptions of what it means to be a citizen and our expectations of citizens. What are the traditional views of citizenship? In what other ways can we view citizenship?

"I see myself as part of the American life. Maybe I'm a new part, but I'm definitely a part. What is America? Who are Americans? America is in the making. It isn't a complete picture. Whoever comes adds to it."

Mai Neng Moua, a new citizen

The discussions about your backgrounds and the changes in your community related to immigration may have brought up another, deeper question: "what is a 'citizen,' after all?" "What does it mean to be 'an American?" We can't really decide how to address issues in our communities that relate to citizenship unless we have figured out what citizenship means, or should mean, in the first place.

Today, some see growing diversity as a threat to our common identity. Others worry that schools are not adequately teaching the next generation about democracy.

What does it mean to be an American? We often think that "becoming citizens" is what immigrants do when they pass the citizenship test. But in fact, all young people have markers on the way to full citizenship. There is the driver's test at age 16. Voter registration at 18. Legal drinking at 21. Each of these are "rites of passage." But do they convey the right message, or the whole message about citizenship we want to teach as a nation?

We don't talk much about these rites of passage or what we mean by citizenship. This is a chance to do that.

"US Citizenship" can be a loaded term. For American Indians, it once represented a foreign idea, even an imposed idea – many felt themselves part of sovereign nations. For Hispanics, "citizenship" can bring up questions of benefits, or language. For black Americans, "first class citizenship" was the rallying cry of the civil rights movement which spread across the south in the 1960s. As Martin Luther King put it, "this growing self-respect has inspired [the African American] with new determination to struggle and sacrifice until first-class citizenship becomes a reality."

Citizenship can mean either an obstacle or a door into full participation. Some believe Americans have come to focus too much on "rights," and now neglect what we owe each other. There is no single definition of what makes a "good citizen."

## Tips for the facilitator

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you facilitate this session:

- Before community circle participants open their discussion guides, ask them to talk about some of their views of citizenship.
- Now open the guides. Ask a few members of your group to volunteer to read each view out loud OR ask members to read each view to themselves.
- After reading the views, ask some of the "Questions to think about" listed below

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#### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN DISCUSSING THE VIEWS

- ◆ Which view(s) is closest to your own? Why? What are the beliefs or things you have done or seen that have helped form your ideas?
- ◆ What surprises you about these views, or what makes you uncomfortable with these views?
- ◆ Think about a view you don't agree with. What might lead someone else to agree with that view?
- What other views would you add? What points of view are missing?

#### VIEW 1

#### The civics view

The citizen is a person with civil and political rights. This can take the form of a "let me alone" view of citizenship; or a citizen as an informed voter, with the obligation to keep abreast of the news.

Person on the Street #1: I pay my taxes. I obey the law. That is what citizenship is about. The right to be left alone, not to have to do what I don't want to do, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone.

I have what you might call a libertarian viewpoint. Live and let live. Citizenship is being free to be. We are far too regulated as a society.

Person on the street #2: To me, citizenship is a set of precious rights that we have to defend by public involvement. Women had to fight for more than 100 years for the right to vote! The right to freedom from sexual discrimination in the workplace wasn't won until the 1960s. We have the bill of rights — the right to say what we believe; to worship as we please; to meet together without government intervention. What makes us great is that everyone has the right to live the way they choose to live. We are free to choose. The danger is that our rights will be taken away one by one.

#### VIEW 2

#### Membership in community

The citizen is a responsible member of the community.

Person in the street #3. What about our responsibilities to each other and to the community,? Where are young people learning values of respect and concern for others these days? All they hear is "me, myself and I!" People are having babies without getting married. Divorce is too easy. Kids don't show respect for property. Even dangerous criminals are claiming their "rights." Values aren't taught in school like they used to be.

Without a stronger sense of responsibility, the nation is going to end up like the Balkans, with everybody fighting each other.

We need to encourage more people to volunteer – coach Little League; work in the food shelter, visit nursing homes. Programs like community service should be required. I liked the "Summit on Volunteerism" in 1997, where the Presidents called Americans to care for the less fortunate.

We need to have more values education in our schools. We need to balance rights with responsibilities.

#### VIEW 3

#### Citizenship is work

The citizen is someone who does work that leaves a public legacy, a "builder of the commonwealth."

Person on the street #4: We've lost the most important part of citizenship – the idea that it is work.

When we work to build something, we look at it in a different way. We have a different level of ownership. That's as true for the community or the country as it is for a private business. Today, we ask, what can we get? We've become a nation of consumers. My question is, what can we create together that makes a difference? How do we get back to the idea of citizen as a producer, or co-creator?

We used to have a lot of forms of public-minded work, paid and unpaid. Think of the businessman whose store served as a neighborhood gathering place. Or the public health nurse who knew everyone in the community. Or communities that built their libraries.

Or people like my grandfather, who still calls himself a "CCC boy," and says he helped to build "national treasures" through his work on public parks and forests.

We've lost the pride that comes from building things that last, that benefit everyone. Paid work today is for the paycheck. And "volunteerism" just means helping out in your spare time, "after hours." That's not citizenship; that's just being nice. I ask, how do we leave a legacy?

We are quarrelling with each other so much because we've lost the art of discussing and arguing. We don't know how to work well with people different than ourselves.

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Final questions (Use these questions to summarize your discussion.)

- ♦ What did you learn from this meeting? What new insights and ideas did you get from listening to others?
- ♦ The challenge for us as "one nation from many" is to figure out what we want citizenship to mean, and how we teach its meaning both for US born citizens and for new immigrants who want to become citizens. What do we mean by "a good citizen"? How should we help young people learn to be citizens? Are the rituals we have like passing the driving test adequate? Should there be others?

- ♦ Briefly review the current procedure for immigrants to gain U.S. citizenship (see supplemental materials). How should citizenship be measured? Should there be a test, as there is now? Is the current test the right one? If not, what should be on the test?
- ◆ What ideas do we have for action that could be taken to address the concerns about citizenship raised in this session, either as individuals; in our schools, neighborhoods, and businesses; or in the larger community?

#### **SESSION 5**

## Making a difference: What can we do in our community?

As we try to take on the issues of immigration, race, jobs, schools, and language differences, we need to involve everyone. Facing the problems and chances for progress when newcomers arrive in our community is a job worth doing.

Coming together to learn from each other and share ideas is a very real form of action. Finding ways to keep talking and include more and more people from the community is a very good next step. Community circles often lead to action groups in which some people decide to put their ideas from the community circles into action.

The following questions will help you think about actions you might want to take to address the issues you have discussed in earlier community circle sessions.

#### PART I

Thinking together about how we can make a difference (45 minutes)

Use the following questions to come up with ideas for action steps. As you discuss the questions below, keep track of the ideas that emerge by writing them on newsprint or on a chalkboard. Try making three different lists of the types of actions that can be taken by individuals, small groups, and institutions (for example: churches, schools, businesses, government).

- 1. Think back to the issues and concerns discussed in your study circle. What things would you most like to see people in our community work on? Why?
- 2. What can each of us do to make a difference?
- 3. How have other communities like ours faced these issues and changed things for the better? What ideas in the list of "Action ideas from other communities" seem promising? What other action ideas would you like to see put into use in our community?
- 4. What efforts are already going on in our community to address these issues? What groups or institutions (private and public) are trying to do something and make changes? What other groups could help, and how can we reach them?

#### PART 2

Setting priorities for action (45 minutes)

Use the following questions to decide what needs to be done to begin organizing for action, and to help you prepare for an action forum:

- 1. What two or three ideas seem most practical and useful?
- 2. What would it take to turn these ideas into reality? What kinds of support or help do we need in order to take these steps?
- 3. What resources are already in place that could help us move ahead? Where is our community already strong?
- 4. What is our next step? What other groups should we link up with?

5. Will we be meeting with other study circles to share ideas for action? If so, what ideas do we want to present?

#### PART 3

Final questions (30 minutes)

- ◆ What have you learned so far that has surprised you? What will have the biggest impact on how you think? On your actions in the community?
- ♦ How has your participation in the community circles affected the way you think about issues of immigration, race, jobs, schools, and language differences? How will it affect your involvement in the community?
- ◆ How will you continue to make a difference on these issues in the community?

#### Action ideas from other communities

The ideas for action listed below reflect many different views about issues of immigration, race, jobs, schools, and language differences. Use them as a resource to jump-start your own thinking.

People with very different opinions about these issues can all find action ideas that match their views. Which action steps best fit your views about immigration and the effect it is having on our community?

#### What can each one of us do?

- Take leadership. You don't have to be a public official or a well-known person to lead. Ask top community leaders to talk about this issue in public. Start study circles with your neighbors. Your skills will improve and your role in the community will grow.
- Be an informed voter. Learn about your elected officials. Are the people in your community wellrepresented?

After being in several study circles, one group in New Jersey focused their efforts on local school board elections.

- · Write or call your elected officials and tell them how you feel about changes in immigration policy.
- · Support and join national groups that push for the same things you believe in.
- · Be willing to change any racist ways or ideas you might still have.
- \* Write down what you have learned about becoming a U.S. citizen and share it with others
- \* Be an informed voter.
- \* Find out about your representatives in government. Are the people in your community well represented?
  - \* As elections near, volunteer to help register people to vote, or work to get out the vote.
  - \* Become a mentor for a teenager in a new immigrant family

- \* Greet people who are different from you in a friendly way.
- \* Ask yourself some basic questions. Do you know and associate with people from different backgrounds? Why or why not?

#### If you are a native-born U.S. citizen....

- Help immigrants, even long-time community members, go through naturalization. This is the formal process of becoming a citizen.
- Learn (as opposed to read) about other cultures and traditions. Start with your own and branch out to others.
- Keep a file on local immigration stories. Note the ones that talk about the costs to the community. Use
  these stories to convince public officials to change the laws so that fewer people can move here.
  - · Don't do business with places that hire workers who came here illegally.
  - \* Support local businesses that are run by people who are from diverse backgrounds.
  - · Help teach someone to read or write English.
  - · Support your local border patrol.
  - · Write letters to your local papers about problems caused by high immigration.
- Teach immigrants their basic rights: minimum wage, safety at work, fair housing, and freedom from family abuse.

In Howard County, Maryland, the Foreign-Born Information and Referral Network was founded to help immigrants adjust to American life, learn English, file for citizenship, find jobs, and enroll their children in school. It also offers workshops on citizenship and immigration law.

- Join the Peace Corps or other programs that help poorer countries get the skills they need to compete in the world economy.
  - · Confront people who are breaking the immigration and naturalization laws.
- \* Invite new immigrants to join your celebrations of American holidays (a trip to Fourth of July fireworks, a Memorial Day service)

\* Start a historial retrieval project. Learn about your local history and use what you've learned to inform your conversations. Public libraries, historical sites and societies, and history museums are all good resources. Chapters from books, articles, oral histories, and visits to museum exhibits can be used to jumpstart conversations.

#### If you are a second-generation U.S. citizen....

- \* Interview your parents about their immigrant experience and put their story in a safe place where future generations can read about how their ancestors came to America.
  - \* Tutor people who want to learn to read, or who want to learn a language you know.
- \* Volunteer to take new immigrants shopping, to the library, to the laundromat, to help them understand their new community.

#### If you are a new immigrant or citizen....

- \* Learn to speak English
- \* Embrace other cultures in your community and learn about them by attending local festivals.
- \* Share your culture by volunteering to teach about it at your child's school or by becoming involved in local celebrations.
- \* Read a newspaper every day.
- \* Learn who your local representatives are to the school board, city council, county board, state legislature and Congress. Contact one about an issue concerning you.
  - \* Get a library card and learn to use the public library.

#### What can we do with our neighbors?

- \* Have an open block party in your neighborhood. Ask guests to bring a favorite traditional dish from their family's heritages
- \* Before you barbecue, ask yourself what national holidays mean July 4th, Washington's Birthday, Lincoln's Birthday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and more. What do these holidays commemorate? In an age as diverse as ours, are these days important for something besides leisure time? Ask others what they think.
  - · Reach out and welcome new neighbors who are immigrants.
- Hold events that bring people together, such as sports events or lunches with foods from different cultures.

In Miami, Florida, city commissioner Willie Gort organized domino contests between the neighborhoods of Little Havana and the mostly African American Black Grove. The contests go beyond just playing dominos, and foster lots of cultural and community exchange.

- · Hold classes on being a good citizen. Share U.S. history and culture.
- Start an ESL (English as a Second Language) class for your new neighbors or volunteer in an already existing program.
- Start programs to teach poor people job skills, about housing, reading and writing, and more.
   Immigrants are not the only people who are poor and need help.
  - Help prepare our young people to deal with different cultures:

Encourage local merchants to carry toys and books that reflect and respect differences among people.

Teach young people not to stereotype people, but to care about the "content of a person's character" (Dr. King).

When groups mark special occasions or celebrate holidays, find out what the celebration is about. What do Yom Kippur, Kwanzaa, Easter, and Ramadan mean to the people who observe them? Talk with your children about the meanings of holidays

Work with a number of racial groups and cultures to take on a common community problem.

In Los Angeles, California, All Peoples Christian Center worked with the Newton Street police station to start a neighborhood watch group. It was made up mostly of immigrants who set out to stop crime and reduce the power of gangs.

In Eau Claire, Wisconsin, a city-sponsored youth group formed a Teen Advisory Group (TAG) to recruit Hmong and white students to work together on community projects which the students selected.

In Hartford, Connecticut, a youth leadership program called Common Ground, brings together area high school students for leadership training and community service. The program gives youth a chance to learn how people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds can work together.

#### What can we do in our community?

 If there are ongoing tensions between groups in a community, leaders could form an alliance to talk about what to do.

In New York City, African American and Korean American leaders worked together to create the "Black/Korean Mediation Project."

In Miami, Florida, the Hispanic Affairs Advisory Board holds discussions between the Cuban and Puerto Rican communities.

- · People from different faiths could hold joint services, or work together on a common problem.
- · Work with local city or county officials to pass resolutions calling for less immigration.
- Start a community art project. Use the arts and the media for groups to express their cultures and beliefs. Some examples are: a cultural festival; a photo show; painting a mural; or holding a "speak out" on TV or radio.

In Springfield, Ohio, they held a cultural festival to show off and celebrate local ethnic cultures. At the event, there were bands, local artists, various acts, and food.

In Lima, Ohio, three different churches got together to do a stage production of "Godspell."

- Insist that public officials, agencies, and the Chamber of Commerce make businesses hire only legal immigrants.
  - Help new immigrant parents talk to their children's teachers and school officials.

In Fairfax County, Virginia, Annandale High School hired three parents who speak Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese, in addition to their ESL staff. These parents act as translators and help explain about school life to non-English speaking parents. A school counselor is also there to help with problems.

In response to concerns by Hmong parents in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, a youth coalition started a parent support network to give counseling and help on parenting skills to immigrant parents.

The Washington, D.C. public school district started a special "newcomer school," Bell MultiCultural High School, that helps ease the transition of immigrant youth into their new life in the U.S.

Join your local PTA or PTO (Parent-Teacher group).

In San Antonio, Texas, a first grade teacher worked with neighborhood mothers in immigrant communities to form Avancé, a community-based early childhood program. Now there are workshops on parenting, a family support center with on-site nurseries, and skills classes for adults. Today the program is used throughout Texas. Avancé kids are proud of a 90% high school graduation rate, with half of the graduates going to college.

- Create homeless shelters for workers who are newcomers but are not here legally. They face poverty
  and the fear of being deported and abused.
- Hold a big citizenship drive to help those who want to become citizens. Teach them where to get help.
  - \* Expand community service programs

- \* Establish volunteer clearinghouses to publicize opportunities
- \* Set up programs to help indigent refugees and immigrants
- \* Create a living display or museum or festival that demonstrates the different traditions and cultures in the community
- \* Create new rituals for young people, that focus on a substantial contribution to the community or the society as part of a "civic rite of passage."
- \* Organize a campaign to create new citizenship procedures for immigrants that recognize productive contribution
- Create services for everyone (not just newcomers) that provide job training, job placement, and housing advice.

In Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the city worked with a local community college and local businesses to start an internship program for people of color. The program found and trained people of color to intern for jobs in local businesses and in city government.

In Massachusetts, The United Electric Control Corporation launched an in-house training program for its non-English-speaking workforce. Workers in the program were given time off work to attend ESL classes.

- Start a "sister city" program with a city in a poorer country to share ideas about how they can improve
  their economy.
  - · Create programs that give small loans to people in poorer countries who want to start a small business.
  - · Offer workshops to local officials and other public servants on cultural diversity.

The Hmong Mutual Assistance Association and the Eau Claire, Wisconsin Coalition for Youth have offered community workshops for teachers, police, and service providers on Hmong culture and history. Local Hmong citizens led the workshops. Over 200 members of the police department in Lansing, Michigan have been in study circles run by the Lansing Coalition for Community Concerns. The program has been a critical step in dealing with race relations within the police department and between the police and the community.

 Find ways to get young people into study circles. Including youth in talks about these important issues is very good for the community and our nation.

In Tallahassee, Florida, The Public Agenda project started "Teen Speak-Out Forums" for teens to speak about difficult issues including race, affirmative action, cultural differences, myths and lies about race.

- Run for local public office.
- \* Form a cultural association for social and political purposes.
- \* Encourage projects that teach the Bill of Rights
- \* Promote the extension of rights to disadvantaged groups
- \* Find ways to make it easier to vote
- \* Make efforts to protect of the rights of immigrants, or due process for anyone residing in the community, regardless of legal status
- \* Make study circles an ongoing part of the community, on all sorts of issues. Include community groups of all kinds as study circle sponsors, so that all community members will know that they are

welcome to take part. Media participation can also promote widespread involvement: in some places, radio and TV stations run public service announcements to encourage participation in the study circles, and newspapers print supportive editorials.

- \* Encourage the newspaper to write a series of stories that documents the history of the community. Who has settled in the community, and why? How have groups related to each other? Some newspapers have done extensive series on current-day relations between racial and ethnic groups.
- \* Start a community arts project. Use the arts and media as ways for people to express themselves and their own cultural identities. Community arts projects can take many forms: photo-text exhibits; video and audio "speak outs"; murals and other pieces of public art. In some communities, short plays have been "discussion starters" for community conversations.
- \* Sponsor cultural outings for multicultural groups of students, where the groups can visit sites that help them learn about each other's backgrounds.
- \* Sponsor projects where community members from all backgrounds will have opportunities to work together and break down patterns of segregation. For example, organize park clean-ups in areas that are usually segregated.
- \* Hold a film festival that highlights diversity issues. One example of this took place in Glen Ridge, NJ, as a result of a study circle program on race relations.
- \* Congregations from different faiths and backgrounds can hold joint services, or work together on community problems.

## Tips on how to make the most of your study circle

In the study circle, the way people talk with one another is as important as what they are talking about. People talk to each other with respect, listen carefully, and treat each other fairly.

Each study circle belongs to those who take part. Here are some things you can do to get the most out of your study circle:

- · Come to all the meetings. It takes time to build trust.
- · Help keep the discussion focused. Make sure what you say is to the point.
- · Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- · Help develop one another's ideas. Listen well, and ask good questions.
- · Be open to changing your mind. This will help you listen to others' views.
- If people argue, don't take it personally. Look to see what ideas are in conflict. Look closely
  at these ideas to see what the common concerns are.
- Think about how you might work together to act on your common concerns.

#### Setting clear ground rules

Setting ground rules is a very important step for the group. Ground rules help everyone manage the discussions even if they become difficult. At the beginning of the study circle, the facilitator will help the group establish its own ground rules for how they want their group to behave together. The facilitator might begin by offering one or two suggestions to get the group started, and then ask members to add their own. Be sure to talk about how the group will handle conflict and disagreement, as well as confidentiality. And post the ground rules where everyone can see them. Your group can always add to the list as the weeks go on.

Here is a list of sample ground rules that are tried and true:

- · Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- · Share "air time."
- · One person speaks at a time.
- · Speak for yourself, not for others.
- · If you are offended, say so.
- You can disagree, but don't personalize it. Stick to the issue. No name-calling or stereotyping.
- What is said in this group stays here, unless everyone agrees to change that.

#### A comparison of dialogue and debate

Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call the national ESR office at (617) 492-1764.

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.

In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.

Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.

Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.

Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.

Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.

In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.

In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.

Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.

Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.

Dialogue remains open-ended.

Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.

In debate, winning is the goal.

In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.

Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.

Debate defends assumptions as truth.

Debate causes critique of the other position.

Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.

Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.

In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

In debate, one searches for glaring differences.

In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.

Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.

Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.

Debate implies a conclusion.

#### **EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

Wednesday, August 11, 12 noon to 1p.m.

#### **EVALUATION:**

- □ Is collecting information
- Is using the information collected
- ☐ Is learning what is working and what isn't working so efforts can continue or changes can be made

#### EVALUSTION:

- □ Must be useful
- ☐ Must be collected about what is working and what is not working
- ☐ The evaluation process encourages people to think about goals, activities and potential outcomes and can guide the project

#### **AGENDA**

GOALS OF STUDY CIRCLE PROJECTS

GOALS OF THIS STUDY CIRCLE PROJECT

WHAT DO WE WANT TO EVALUATE? Site Statistics - #'s participation

WHY?

AVAILABLE METHODOLOGY

## SITE STATISTICS

|   | League of Women Voters of  | ARABINO ERONOUS INTO PROCESSOR AND PROCESSOR |
|---|--|--|
|   | Other Site   |  |
|   | Number of Study Circles  |  |
|   | Attendance   |  |
|   | Session 1  |  |
|   | □ First Week □ Second Week □ Third Week □ Fourth Week □ Firth Week or Action Forum |  |
|   | Session 2  |  |
|   |  |  |
|   | Session 3  |  |
|   | Outcomes:  |  |
| J | Action Plans   |  |

#### Demographics (optional) 1. Are you.... □ Male female What is the last year of school you completed ☐ Less than high school □ some college ☐ Some high school □ college graduate ☐ High school graduate postgraduate 3. Do you work full time, part time, □ go to school, □ keep house □ other 4. Would you describe yourself as ☐ Upper middle class Middle class □ Working class 5. How old are you? 12 - 1718-29 30-50 51-64 65 and over 6. Do you rent or own your home? □ Rent

How would you describe your political views? □ Conservative

□ Other (Specify)

Moderate

Liberal

□ Own

indifferent

Do you have school-age children?

☐ In public school

In private school

In homes school

| 9.  | Ar   | e you  |
|-----|------|--|
|     |      | White European-am  |
|     |      | African – American   |
|     |      | Asian -American/Pacific Islander                                       |
|     |      | Mixed Origin   |
|     |      | Native American  |
|     |      | Arab American Ligganic Latt  |
|     |      | Native American Arab American ZHispanic Latin D Other (please specify) |
| 10. | WI   | nich of the following best describes your total 1996 household income? |
|     |      | \$7,500 or less  |
|     |      | Over \$7,500 to \$15,000   |
|     |      | Over \$15,000 to \$25,000  |
|     |      | Over \$25,000 to \$35,000  |
|     |      | Over \$35,000 to \$50,000  |
|     |      | Over \$50,000 to \$100,000   |
|     |      | Over \$100,000   |
|     |      |  |
| 11. | Wł   | nat is your religious preference?                                      |
|     |      | Protestant   |
|     |      | Catholic   |
|     |      | Jewish   |
|     |      | Muslim   |
|     |      | None   |
|     |      | Other  |
|     |      |  |
|     |      |  |
| 12. | What | is your zip code   |

## Pre Questionnaire

| 1. | How long hav   | ve you or your family lived in this country?  |
|----|--|---|
|    | 0<br>0<br>0  | arrived in the last 5 years my parents came here before I was born my grandparents came here my family has lived in America for more than 3 generations my ancestors have always lived in America   |
| 2. | If any of your did they described they described they described the did not be a second to the did not | rancestors are alive to tell of their immigration experience - how ribe it?  Thrilled to be in a free country  Difficult struggle with language and economics  Feeling of displacement for many years   |
| 3. | How do you f   | feel about the number of immigrants coming to the US  |
|    | 0  | Happy that the US still provides a new home for those in need<br>Angry that our limited resources are being shared with people<br>not born to this country<br>Indifferent   |
| 4. | How does the   | Provides me with the freedom to pursue my destiny Takes away job opportunities from people already here Uses up welfare and other social resources that should go to people that were born here. Enhances our community by bringing new people, culture, talents, food. Uses up public school resources |
| 5. |  | mean to be an American? What does it mean to have common values Are people thinking differently about what it means to be an American? How? Is there new evidence or more evidence that people are working together to create a public life?  |
| 6. | What does it i   | mean to be a citizen?   |
|    | _<br>_<br>_  | freedom to be who I am I can vote I have rights that I have to defend by public involvement I have no idea  |

7. Is America becoming a better place to live or a worse place to live? And Why?

#### Better

- □ New people bring new ideas, talents, foods. They bring new energy to a community
- Economics are better, everyone has a job
- People are actually working for what they believe in, they are working to make the world a better place.

#### Worse

- People are no longer engaged in civic life, they feel they don't have a voice, and that there vote doesn't count.
- There are too many newcomers coming to America. We can't take care of the people we have let alone new people
- People are apathetic. They only want to earn a buck. They don't care about what made America great. They are not willing to work to protect their freedom and civic rights.
- 8. How can we make America a better place to live?
  - □ Welcome new immigrants. Most of us or are families were immigrants at one time
  - Become engaged in public life. More study circles. Make it easier for people to vote
  - □ Take a greater interest in the youth of America

# ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

|         | What caught your interest and motivated you to participate in the Study Circle? |
|---------|---|
|         | What are the biggest problems facing new immigrants coming to our community?    |
| into an | What is the biggest challenge communities face when many new people move area?  |
|         | What is the most important contribution newcomers make to a community?          |
|         | What does it mean to be an American?  |
|         | What does it mean to be a citizen?  |
|         | What can you do to make Rochester a better community?                           |
|         |   |

# POST QUESTIONNAIRE

| 1. Where have you been attending st  | minumity and circles?      |             |                      |                  |
|--|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 2. Your age is:20 & under,40-50,90 & above   | 20 – 30,<br>50-60,         | 30-70       | 40,                  | 70-80,           |
| 3. Your ethnic background is:African American, _   | _Native Ameri<br>Hispa<br> | can,        | Caucasia<br>Asian, _ | oean<br>m, other |
| 4. Your sex isMale,  | Female                     |             |                      |                  |
| ATTITUDES:   | Increased                  | Not Changed | i                    | Decreased        |
| My understanding of my own attitudes about increased immigration has:  |                            |             |                      |                  |
| My understanding of others attitudes about Increased immigration has:  |                            |             |                      |                  |
| My ability to think about and discuss the issues facing immigrants and facing my changing community has:     |                            |             |                      |                  |
| My ability to think about and discuss what it means to be an American and what it means to be a citizen has: |                            |             |                      |                  |
| My ability to communicate with people who hold different Beliefs has:  |                            |             |                      |                  |

### DISSCUSSION GUIDE

disagree

agree

unsure

The guide includes a lot of different Points of view, without advocating Any one point of view.

This guide could be used by all kinds of people, across all walks of life.

This guide stimulated meaningful discussion

This guide presented too much material

This guide could have provided more material

#### **FACILITATORS**

The facilitators made everyone feel welcome regardless of age, political or religious opinion or ethnic background

The facilitators tried to influence the group with his or her own views

The facilitators intervened when someone Monopolized the conversation

The facilitators explained the study circle Principles and the difference between Dialogue and debate

#### OVERALL EVALUATION

| The length of each meeting was:                    |      |  |   |
|--|------|--|---|
| The number of meetings was:                        |      |  |   |
| The number of people in my study circle was:       |      |  |   |
| Overall I would rate the Study Circles Program as: |      |  |   |
| What did you like most about theprogram?           | 41/2 |  | - |
| What did you like least about the program?         |      |  |   |

## Additional Comments \_\_\_\_

# Evaluating your study circle program Deciding where to begin

By Catherine Flavin, SCRC Coordinator of Writing and Research

There are so many things to consider when you are planning a study circle program that evaluating the effort can easily become an afterthought. Evaluation, however, is not something you can accomplish adequately after your study circles have ended. To get the information you need and ensure that your findings have an impact, you have to start thinking about evaluation early on in your planning process.

Conducting a formal evaluation of your program is one of the most critical steps you can take to firmly establish study circles in your community. First and foremost, evaluation allows you to learn and gain information that will help you improve your program. Secondly, the people taking part in your program – from participants to facilitators to coalition members – will want to know about the scope of the program, about its implementation, and about the results. Finally, the community foundations, public officials, the press, and other people who can help you expand, strengthen, and institutionalize study circles in your community will all want to know about your efforts and their impact.

When planning your evaluation effort, it pays to start early. Building an evaluation component into the organizing process will make it easier to accomplish; it will also help others involved in the program understand why evaluation is important and valuable. Soon after your study circle coalition begins to form, create an evaluation committee or planning group. Tap people in your coalition who have some expertise in evaluation, or who represent an organization which has recently been involved in some kind of formal evaluation.

The first task for the committee will be to consider some basic questions: What are you hoping to accomplish through the study circle program? (be as specific as you can). How will you know if you've accomplished those objectives? How well are the various components of your program working? Which of the different groups of people involved in the program – participants, facilitators, coalition members, public officials – should you gather information from? The answers to these questions will help you a great deal in deciding what kind of evaluation process you need, and in finding the assistance you need to design and implement it.

There are many kinds of information you may want to gather; a few suggestions are listed below. When deciding what you want to measure, remember to think about unintended consequences of the program – results that

were not part of your goals for the program but which may be important just the same.

#### The basics

- · The number of study circles going on
- The number of people involved, and the rate of attendance
- Demographic information about the study circle participants and facilitators (age, race, income, education, political affiliation, etc.)
- The locations of the study circles

#### Process and implementation

- The effectiveness of the facilitators
- The effectiveness of the discussion materials
- The level of support provided to the facilitators
- The level of communication and collaboration within the coalition

#### Individual changes

- The ways in which participants may have learned more about the issue being discussed
- The ways in which participants may have changed their attitudes or behavior regarding the issue being discussed
- The ways in which participants may have changed their thinking about the community and their role in it

#### Community changes

- New projects or programs that may have resulted from the study circles
- Changes within organizations that may have resulted
- New collaborations among organizations that may have resulted
- Changes in the thinking of public officials about the community and the issue
- Changes in government policy that may have been effected by the study circles

For a serious evaluation effort, you will probably need help. The next step for the committee is to find a person or organization in the community to serve as a partner for the evaluation effort. You may be able to find evaluation partners in one of the social science departments of a local university, or within local government. There may also be research firms in the community which will work with you. (Remember that there are financial implications to good research; build evaluation costs into any budgets or grant proposals you develop.)

Good evaluations require forethought, collaboration, and careful planning. They're worth it. The ability to describe in detail the scope of your program, the effects of the study circles, and the impact you have had on the community will help you immeasurably.

#### Evaluation: What's It All About?

## 'Real World' Perspectives on Evaluating Outcomes

#### Part One of Three Parts

The Center commissioned Terry Hoffman, a consultant with expertise in the government and nonprofit sectors, to gather a "real world" perspective of program evaluation by interviewing people involved in this work. Part One covers the why and when of conducting evaluations. Future parts will address how to produce meaningful information and use that information to improve programs.

Funders, boards of directors and governmental units contracting with nonprofits for the delivery of services increasingly demand that agencies evaluate how well they're doing what they're given money to do. The push is to provide evidence of specific outcomes achieved.

Also, many nonprofit executives are looking for ways to measure their programs' effectiveness so they can identify what could be improved.

We searched for a universal definition of program evaluation. Executives of nonprofit organizations gave us a variety of answers:

- It's the process by which you determine if the program you run is successful or not.
- ◆ It's evaluating the people you serve and seeing if they met their goals.
- It's a systematic assessment of the impact of an intervention on some established set of outcomes.
- It's measuring whether you have been successful regarding specific actions.
- It's measuring the impact of what you do.
- It's one of a number of tools used to improve one's work.

Apparently the definition of program evaluation depends on how it's being used and the characteristics of the program evaluated.

Generally, there's recognition that there is no one right way to evaluate a program. "Hard" numbers of results can be generated for some programs but others can only be assessed by close observation.

United Way chapters are leaders in program evaluation. Their initiatives appear to be having a major impact on how success is defined and outcomes measured.

Some foundations and corporate funders are also affecting evaluations, sometimes including money in a grant for evaluation of the outcome or providing funds for management training in evaluation skills.

#### Why Conduct Evaluations?

There are numerous reasons to conduct evaluations, including 1) demonstrate accountability by providing data on the outcomes of programs, 2) improve existing programs, 3) develop new services, 4) assess how well programs are aligned with the agency's mission and strategic goals, 5) develop information on the cost of programs, 6) generate new funding, 7) market programs more effectively and 8) provide input into public policy decisions.

"In our research, we found real world examples of benefits to nonprofit organizations."

#### **Evaluating Outcomes**

Continued from page 4

In our research, we found real world examples of the benefits to nonprofit organizations.

- ♦ A program manager in a residential day care facility uses evaluations to learn what she must do to attract additional clients.
- ♦ A health care organization's evaluations influence decisions in the treatment of patients. If data shows some procedures are making no difference, the procedures are ruled out and new practices are introduced.
- An arts organization uses evaluations to track the progress of its long range plan and to motivate staff buy-in to long range strategies.
- ◆ A government agency found that program problems can be solved through "getting the facts on the table and clearing the air."

We also found that some agencies are using outside, professional evaluators as a way to enhance organizational learning or to determine if allied services should be developed.

#### The Question of When to Evaluate

When an evaluation should be conducted is related to the question of whether you should do one in the first place.

Should an evaluation be a singular occurrence, measuring work at one particular point, or should it be an on-going component, built into the total program?

A funder of a multiple year project may want an evaluation conducted at the end of each year or the project may lend itself only to evaluation after its completion.

Some kinds of evaluations are on-going, based on daily or monthly collections of data as part of the regular process of the program, with the data analyzed periodically.

Funders, professional evaluators and program practitioners generally believe that ongoing evaluations are preferable to one time occurrences. One evaluator said, "A one-time evaluation is like a day-old newspaper."

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"We also found that some agencies are using outside, professional evaluators as a way to enhance organizational learning or to determine if allied services should be developed."

From the perspective of nonprofit leaders, funders, and evaluation professionals, the benefits of an evaluation could include:

- shifting the perspective of program staff from providing services to producing outcomes and constantly striving to improve those outcomes;
- providing an organizational exercise that motivates staff to think deeply about the programs they manage and adapt to changing conditions;
- understanding customers and what influences them;
- 4) helping to establish realistic expectations of outcomes;
- 5) focusing resources on the most effective services;
- enabling the organization to tell a more credible story to funders, the board; and, other stakeholders and
- 7) identifying opportunities for collaborations.

The Center for Nonprofit Management commissioned Terry Hoffman, a consultant with expertise in the government and nonprofit sectors, to gather a "real world" perspective of program evaluation by interviewing people involved in this work. Part One (summer 1998) covered the why and when of conducting evaluations. Part Two addresses the critical questions of whoever is driving the evaluation, their reasons for wanting one and the importance of establishing the expected benefits of the evaluation. Part Three, in the next issue, will show how to produce meaningful information.

Program Evaluation: What's it all about? Part Two

# Consider Who is Driving the Evaluation, Their Motivation, Expected Benefits

The first step in designing a program evaluation process is to consider who is driving the decision to conduct an evaluation and their reasons for wanting one. Among the forces that may drive (or should drive) an evaluation and what may be motivating them, are these:

- Management, and by extension, program managers and perhaps other staff, may
  be concerned about quality, comfortable that a satisfactory level of quality exists
  but believe opportunities for continuous improvement exist. They may be
  interested in achieving a higher level of efficiency, or want to demonstrate the
  program's impact on clientele.
- · The board of directors may have perspectives similar to the above.
- •• Funders may seek assurance that the goals of the program they're funding are being met. Or one or more major funders may be questioning the continued relevancy of the program. Funders are relying more on solid demonstrations of results. While some may say that program evaluation is not the sole basis for a funding decision, they generally agree that evaluation is a major factor in their decisions.
  - A governmental unit, which has contracted with an agency to deliver certain services, may require an evaluation because of laws, regulations, or normal practice
  - Clients may be complaining about the quality of the services provided, asking for changes in those services, or providing other feedback that should be heeded.
  - Your competition may indirectly drive the need for an evaluation. In the Twin
    Cities and some other cities, United Ways view operators of human service
    programs as quasi-vendors to whom contracts are issued and funded for a set
    period. This may increase competition for funds and claims for offering superior
    outcomes.
- Public policymakers may drive demands for more accountability or suggest new strategic directions for your organization (such as the recent changes in the welfare system). Legislatures, appointed public officials and others who set policy base some decisions on evaluation results.
  - · "All of the above" may be your driving force.

The second step is to identify the expected benefits of the evaluation itself.

Obviously, satisfying the interests of whoever is driving the evaluation is one benefit, but dig deeper. How else might the results be used to further the mission of the organization? What decisions should be enhanced by the evaluation? [See sidebar.]

The next step is to establish the specific objectives of the evaluation and the criteria within which it must be conducted. An objective should state what must be learned from the evaluation, when the evaluation must be completed, and within what budget or staff resources it must be conducted.

Related to the objective are the criteria or conditions under which the evaluation process must operate. For example, are there any ethical or legal issues to be considered, such as safeguarding the privacy of clients? Don't think of the objective as a search for fault. Think of it as a search for success!

CNM commissioned Terry Hoffman, a consultant with expertise in the government and nonprofit sectors, to gather a "real world" perspective of program evaluation by interviewing people involved in this work. Part One (Summer 1998) covered the why and when of conducting evaluations. Part Two (Winter 1998-99) addressed the critical questions of who is driving the evaluation, their reasons for wanting one and the importance of establishing the expected benefits of the evaluation. This, the final part, explains how to produce meaningful information.

# What you may want to evaluate:

- · Why the program exists
- What needs the program serves
- · The goals of the program
- Whom the program is intended to serve
- Components of the program (activities, administrative management, etc.)
- The physical setting of the program
- Who participates in the program; who are other stakeholders
- · History of the program
- Events or circumstances around the program that could distort the evaluation
- Resources consumed by the program (staff, time, materials)
- Previous evaluations of the program and their outcomes

# How to Produce Meaningful Information

Producing meaningful evaluation information requires that you: consult your program staff; decide what to measure to meet stated objectives; consider what variable factors could affect results of evaluation; determine if you have the resources to produce meaningful information; and, decide what measuring methodologies to use.

#### Consult Your Program Staff

Whether program evaluation is conducted by the staff or by using an outside specialist, the program staff should be consulted in designing the process. They understand the nuances of the program and should want a report that will be accurate and useful. A program may be suitable for involving both an outside evaluator and internal staff. For example, agency personnel may collect data and monitor activities under the direction and analysis of an outside professional.

But first you must decide what to measure to meet the stated objectives of the evaluation.

The range of activities that can be "counted," "judged," or "analyzed" is broad in many nonprofit organizations. Generally the decision on what to evaluate is directly related to who wants the information and what kinds of decisions are expected to be made. The key is to concentrate on measures that (1) determine a program's success and (2) can be used to meet the objectives of the evaluation.

#### **Deciding What to Evaluate**

In deciding what to evaluate, Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzgerald in their book, Program Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines, suggest looking at several factors, listed in the side-bar at left.

Avoid counting the number of services provided. Instead, measure what differences those services have made in people's lives. This requires a discussion with the program staff of what kind of data can be secured versus what is impossible to collect. If the desired eventual outcomes will occur too far into the future to be measured now, are there credible substitutes—indicators of probable positive outcomes some years hence?

#### Variable Factors and Resources

Also, consider whether there are any variable factors that could skew the outcomes. For example, could other conditions besides job training impact the ability of a person to secure and hold a job? The presence of variable factors will not necessarily invalidate your measure, but you should take them into account.

Next, consider whether you have the resources to do an adequate job of measuring what you ideally should measure. Are there aspects of the evaluation that could be trimmed without diminishing the value of the whole?

#### Methodologies

The methodologies that can be used generally fall into two categories: scientifically objective and subjective.

Scientifically objective methods use data collection and analysis techniques that do not involve any judgmental intervention by the evaluator. Subjective approaches rely on individual experiences rather than scientific objectivism. The experiences, perceptions and background of the individual evaluator are given strong weight in the evaluation results.

A "summative" evaluation looks at a program to assess its overall effectiveness. Data is collected which "sums up" the total program. A "formative" evaluation is a subjectivist approach that assesses how the components of a program work and how they relate to each other. It relies on the judgments and perceptions of the people involved in the program. Data collection methods obviously will differ depending on whether an

#### Continued from page 2

objective or subjective approach is used.

"Quantitative" data collection secures information and analyzes data statistically. "Qualitative" analysis measures something that goes beyond pure numbers. It delves into perceptions, descriptions, detail, and reactions that don't fit into standardized categories of measurement.

Some evaluations consist of filling out forms on a monthly basis, compiling data on numbers, services, and results. The information required and the reporting format may be mandated by a government agency providing funds, or required for compliance with laws and regulations.

An evaluation also can consist of self-monitoring, done by keeping general records on program activities. The reporting format may be developed by the agency, however the data collection is not focused on specific questions or collected for the purpose of program analysis.

#### Getting to the Nitty-Gritty: Ways in Which Information Can Be Collected

Surveys can measures people's attitudes, opinions, and thoughts. They are economical to administer and can be used in group settings or with individuals. Surveys can be mailed, conducted by telephone, or through face-to-face interviews. They can provide a quick way to secure information on an issue. They can help gauge public opinion or get reactions from a program's clients on changes in focus and direction.

Interviews are used when the information sought does not lend itself to a structured set of questions or when the subject matter is more complex and requires probing to secure the needed information. Interviewing requires more time and expense than surveys.

Focus groups provide opinions and attitudes in a group setting. They can provide valuable information on the quality of a program and how a particular program has affected clients personally. Focus groups should be led by a facilitator skilled in group dynamics.

Role playing can assess the quality of services delivered by a program. In role playing, the evaluator might arrange for someone to pose as a client of a particular agency to gain direct experience on the quality of treatment of clients. Role playing is best used in organizations where there is a good deal of one-on-one interaction between staff and individual clients.

Cost-Benefit Analysis translates all evaluation into monetary terms and then compares benefits to costs. This is not an exact science. In nonprofit organizations, the costs of a program may be possible to compute, but the benefits of a program more difficult to quantify.

Records Analysis from agency records is frequently used in evaluations. Almost every nonprofit should keep records which include demographic information, services provided, and outcomes. Agency records provide a cost effective way to evaluate programs, and, if organized properly, will produce extensive information. The risk is that agency records may not be sufficiently accurate or complete to provide adequate data for analysis.

Outcomes Monitoring is a version of records analysis. When outcomes are monitored, make sure that the measurements are related to program expectations.

Case Studies are usually qualitative examinations of a particular program or part of a program. The information gathered is very extensive and looks at unique program characteristics.

Program evaluation requires a lot of planning and thoughtful execution, but it will pay off for your organization in better measurements for stakeholders and information you can use to improve your programs.

#### Ways to Collect Information:

- Surveys
- Interviews
- · Focus groups
- · Role playing
- · Cost benefit analysis
- · Records analysis
- · Outcomes monitoring
- · Case studies

8/16/99

## SITE STATISTICS

|   | Leagu  | e of Women Voters of   |
|---|--------|--|
|   | Other  | Site   |
|   |        | er of Study Circles  |
|   | Attend | dance  |
|   | Comn   | nunity Circle 1  |
|   | 0      | First Week Second Week Third Week Fourth Week Fifth Week or Action Forum         |
|   | Comm   | nunity Circle 2  |
|   | Comm   | nunity Circle 3  |
| ב | Outco  | mes:  New projects or programs that may have resulted from the community circles |
|   |        | Changes that may have resulted within organizations                              |
|   |        | New collaborations or contacts made between organizations                        |
|   |        | Changes in the thinking of public officials about the community and the issues   |
|   | 0      | Changes in government policy that may have been effected by the study circles    |

## **Community Circles Report form**

Session 1

| Location   |       |  |  |
|--|-------|--|--|
| Facilitators Name Address Phone number                 | Email |  |  |
| Name<br>Address<br>Phone Number                        | Email |  |  |
| Attendance: Participants invited Participants attended |       |  |  |
| <b>Diversity</b> Ethnicity                             |       |  |  |
| Age  |       |  |  |
| Gender   |       |  |  |
| Political  |       |  |  |
| Disability   |       |  |  |
| Economic   |       |  |  |
| Religious  |       |  |  |
| The most important thing that have                     |       |  |  |

The most important thing that happened was:

One thing that could be changed for next week is:

If someone asked you about tonight, What would you tell them?

Is there a story or anecdote that illustrates how someone took study circle feelings or information home and used it - did something change for them? Was something learned?

- the last four questions should be filled out by the group at the end of the discussion
- The facilitator will need to carefully prompt to elicit a response to these questions
- ' Please document the quality of the conversation was it even, did people monopolize the discussion or exclude others

# Demographics

| 1.  | Are you  Male female |                      |                    |                      |   |
|-----|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---|
| 2.  |                      | ear of school you c  |                    |                      |   |
|     | 1-2-3-4-5-6-7        | 7-8-9-10-11-12-13-   | 14-15-16-17-18-    | 19-20                |   |
|     |                      | HS                   | CD                 | GD                   |   |
|     |                      |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     |                      |                      |                    |                      |   |
| 3.  | How old are you?     |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     | □ 12 −17<br>□ 18-29  |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     | 30-50                |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     | □ 51-64              |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     | □ 65 and c           | ver                  |                    |                      |   |
|     | os and c             | , , , ,              |                    |                      |   |
|     | A                    |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     |                      |                      |                    |                      |   |
| 7.  | How would you        | describe your poli   | tical views?       |                      |   |
|     | Conservative         | Moderate             | Liberal            | Indifferent          |   |
|     |                      |                      |                    |                      |   |
| 9.  | Are you              |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     | □ White              |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     | □ African –          | American             |                    |                      |   |
|     |                      | nerican/Pacific Isla | ander              |                      |   |
|     | □ Mixed Or           |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     | □ American           |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     | ☐ Arab Ame           | erican               |                    |                      |   |
|     | ☐ Other (ple         | ase specify)         |                    |                      |   |
| 10  | . What is your f     | irst language        |                    |                      |   |
|     |                      |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     |                      |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     |                      |                      |                    |                      |   |
| 10. | Which of the f       | ollowing best desc   | ribes your total 1 | 998 household income | ? |
|     |                      |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     | □ Under \$1          |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     | □ \$15,000 to        |                      |                    |                      |   |
|     |                      | o \$50,000           |                    |                      |   |
|     |                      | \$100,000            |                    |                      |   |
|     | □ Over \$100         | ),000                |                    |                      |   |

| Catholic   |  |
|------------|--|
| Jewish     |  |
| Muslim     |  |
| Protestant |  |
| None       |  |
| Other      |  |

One of the goals of our project is diversity
. It is your choice to fill out the questionnaire completely, partially or not at all.

#### Post Questionnaire

To what extent have you been able to share your views about what it means to be an American? Great Moderate Slight Not at all To what extent have you been able to share your views about the issues facing immigrants? Moderate Great Slight Not at all To what extent have you been able to discuss issues facing your community with the new wave of immigrants? Great Moderate Slight Not at all To what extent have you been able to hear other peoples views? Moderate Not at all Rate yourself now and before the study circle experience; I value differences in people NOW: 3 7 10 1 2 3 4 5 7 BEFORE 10

#### **DISSCUSSION GUIDE**

strongly agree agree neutral disagree

strongly disagree

The guide includes different Points of view, without advocating Any one point of view.

This guide could be used by all kinds of people, across all walks of life.

This guide stimulated meaningful discussion

This guide presented too much material

This guide could have provided more material

#### **FACILITATORS**

The facilitators made everyone feel welcome

The facilitators tried to influence the group with his or her own views

The facilitators intervened when someone monopolized the conversation

The facilitators explained the study circle principles and the difference between dialogue and debate

#### OVERALL EVALUATION

| The length of each meeting was:            | excellent   | good        | fair | poor            |
|--|-------------|-------------|------|-----------------|
| The number of meetings was:                |             |             |      |                 |
| The number of people in my study circ      | ele was:    |             |      |                 |
| Overall I would rate the Study Circles     | Program as: |             |      |                 |
| What did you like most about theprogram?   |             | <del></del> |      |                 |
| What did you like least about the program? |             |             |      |                 |
| Additional Comments                        |             |             |      | <del>3-11</del> |

#### **DICK KRUEGER NOTES**

Video Cam last part of last night – sensitive – low key prepare them by suggesting you might tape some of their stories – have them think about meaningful ones

Insure diversity – issue very cordial invitations – follow up with a phone call

2 somalis – 2 kids – 2 caucasions – 2 community leaders

Under 10

Capture some of the magic that happens to people

Tip sheets for facillitators

Press

**Politicals** 

Community leaders that are used to being charge

Each person brings much to the table If everyone is not heard from there is a real loss

# ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

|         | What caught your interest and motivated you to participate in the Study Circle? |
|---------|---|
|         |   |
|         | What are the biggest problems facing new immigrants coming to our community     |
|         |   |
| into an | What is the biggest challenge communities face when many new people move area?  |
|         | What is the most important contribution newcomers make to a community?          |
|         | What does it mean to be an American?  |
|         | What does it mean to be a citizen?  |
|         | What can you do to make Rochester a better community?                           |
|         |   |

\$31/99

#### **EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

Wednesday, August 11, 12 noon to 1p.m.

#### EVALUATION:

☐ Is collecting information

Is using the information collected

☐ Is learning what is working and what isn't working so efforts can continue or changes can be made

#### **EVALUATION:**

☐ Must be useful

Must be collected about what is working and what is not working

The evaluation process encourages people to think about goals, activities and potential outcomes and can guide the project

#### **AGENDA**

#### GOALS OF STUDY CIRCLE PROJECTS

Engage a diverse group of Minnesotans

Reach consensus about the issues that need to be addressed

Dialogue or interaction is an important part of study circles

Civic engagement

Empowerment of people that are involved in the study circle process – you have a stake and you can act

Learning or educational process (not a process of delivering facts but of learning from other peoples' ideas and learning to articulate your own ideas).

#### GOALS OF THIS STUDY CIRCLE PROJECT

To gather a Large number of Minnesota people of

Great diversity together to

Discuss the American identity, the impact of immigration on their community and on their lives.

And to discuss what it means to be an American and what it means to be a citizen

And to explore attitudes and broaden understanding of immigration
And to form action plans and realize results such as heightened awareness of
the above issues via the media; art projects, etc.

#### WHAT DO WE WANT TO EVALUATE?

- 1.Demographics
- 2. Attitude change
- 3. Quality of conversation is it balanced, monopolized, anyone being left out?

#### WHY?

- 1. Goal of diversity
- 2. Goal of explore attitudes and broaden understanding
- 3. Goal of empowerment and inclusion

#### AVAILABLE METHODOLOGY

- 1. Demographics questionnaire
- 2 Post questionnaire.

#### **Additional Meeting Notes**

Disclaimer at the bottom of the demographics questionnaire that says: One of the goals is to insure diversity. It is your choice whether you want to fill this out completely, partially or not at all.

Add an 800 number at the bottom of the materials so that people feel free to make comments about their experience at any time

Is there a reason to include the zip code? Any value in determining location of residence to meet goal of diversity?

Restructure the ethnicity question:

Are you a recent immigrant?
If so, were are you from
What is your ethnic background?

Add a question that gets at whether we are attracting the person who usually does not participate

How would you rate your community participation?
Politically active

Participate in neighborhood discussions or church activities or school

meetings

Usually do not participate in civic affairs

Fewer income levels

Scribe or cofacillitator could ask for feedback at the end of each session.

What worked

What should we change

Leagues should report not only action plans but outcomes such as collaborations that were formed, contacts made, city wide fairs, multicultural events, new murals, changes in the organization that may have resulted from this approach, changes in the thinking of city, or county or state officials; changes in government policy

# Community Circle Report Form Session #1: Getting Started

| Sponsoring Organization:   | Date:  |
|--|--|
| Meeting Location:  | Number of Participants:  |
| Facilitator:   | Scribe:  |
| *********  | *************  |
| Please describe two or three main then<br>egregation which your group discusse   | nes or ideas about experiences with racism or ed today: (1-2 sentences each) |
| V  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| •  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| . Please use this space to note action discussion:   | ideas, if any, that were mentioned in today's                                |
|  |  |
| 9  |  |
| A STATE OF THE STA | *  |

# 1999 Cities at Work Community Circle Dialogues Evaluation Form

| A PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF THE | State Park | 1100000 | 100500 State |
|---|------------|---------|--------------|
| <b>Partici</b>  | nant       | Feed    | back         |
|   |            |         |              |

| This circle dialogue is part of a pilot project shaping future community circles. Please          | ct Your the   | oughtful<br>me to giv | comments a   | and critic<br>uggestion | rism will be<br>ns and idea | valuable i<br>s. |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. How would you rate your overall experience as a participant in this community circle dialogue: | Terrible<br>1 | Poor<br>2             | O.K. ,       | Good 1                  | Very Good<br>5              | Fantastic<br>6   |
| 2. Please identify one or two things y  | 70u gaine     | d from p              | oarticipatii | ng in thi               | s commur                    | nity circle.     |
| 3. What would have made this experi   | ence betti    | er?                   |              |                         |                             |                  |
| 4. Do you think that your participation thoughts or actions in the future?                        | on in this    | dialogu               | e will have  | any eff                 | ect on you                  | ur .             |
| Yes Please describe:  |               |                       |              |                         | * 10                        |                  |
| 5. What issues would you suggest cor  | mmunity       | circle di             | alogues ac   | ldress ir               | ı the futur                 | e?               |
|   |               |                       |              |                         |                             |                  |

| mpro                                    | Poor 2  | O.K.<br>3  | Good<br>4 | Very Good<br>5  | Fantastic<br>6  |
|---|---------|--|-----------|-----------------|---|
|   |         | THE RESERVE OF THE PARTY OF THE |           |                 |   |
|   |         | THE RESERVE OF THE PARTY OF THE |           |                 | Mary and the same of the same |
| vell?                                   |         |  |           |                 |   |
| 110000000000000000000000000000000000000 |         |  |           |                 |   |
| 7                                       | Autoria |  |           |                 |   |
| ctive                                   | in the  | future?  |           |                 |   |
|   |         |  |           |                 |   |
| othe                                    | ers?    |  |           |                 |   |
|   |         | VA W   |           |                 |   |
|   |         |  |           | F 18 (#15#4 ; # |   |
|   |         |  |           |                 |   |
|   | othe    | others?  |           | others?         | others?   |

Case I.D. \_\_\_\_\_



#### CITIES AT WORK COMMUNITY FORUMS AND COMMUNITY CIRCLE DIALOGUES PARTICIPANT FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION

Organization Code: 2938-3 Cost Center: 44002

# Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling from Wilder Research Center. We are contacting people who have recently participated in a Cities at Work Community Forum or Community Circle Dialogue. We are interested in finding out about your experience and any benefits you may have gained from it. The interview will take about ten minutes. Would right now be a good time? The interview is confidential and your name will not appear with any of your comments. IF YES, PROCEED. IF NOT A GOOD TIME, NOTE BETTER TIME TO CALL ON THE FACE SHEET.

| Orga      | nization Code: 2938-3                             |                  |   | Case I.I        | )     |  |      |
|-----------|---|------------------|---|-----------------|-------|--|------|
| Cost      | Center: 44002                                     |                  |   | Time:           |       |  |      |
|           |   | 5-               |   |                 | (2    | 4 hour cl                              | ock) |
|           | C   | COMMU            | ORK COMMUNITY FORUMS INITY CIRCLE DIALOGUES NT FOLLOW-UP EVALUATI |                 |       |  |      |
| 1A.       | Did you attend a Cities a                         | at Work Comm     | nunity Forum this year?   |                 |       |  |      |
|           | ×   | Yes              | (GC   | TO Q. 1B)       | ••••• |  | 1    |
|           |   |                  | (G  |                 |       |  |      |
|           | 2   |                  |   |                 |       | ************************************** |      |
| 1B.       | Did you attend?                                   |                  |   |                 |       |  |      |
| research) |   |                  |   |                 | es    | No                                     | DK   |
|           |   | 741 C : 4 D - 1  | X   |                 | 0 1   |  | 1000 |
|           | A. Stop Talking, Just Do<br>Differences, April 19 |                  | Youth's Perspectives on Bridging<br>High School                   |                 | 1     | 2                                      | 8    |
|           | B. Face-to-Face: How V                            | Ve Interact, May | y 1999 at Bandana Square  |                 | 1     | 2                                      | 8    |
|           | 83.   | ×                |   |                 |       |  |      |
| 2.        | Did you participate in a                          | ny of the Cities | at Work Forums help in previou                                    | s years?        |       |  |      |
|           |   | Yes              |   |                 |       |  | 1    |
|           | ¥2  | No               |   |                 |       |  | 2    |
|           |   |                  |   |                 |       |  |      |
| 34        | Have you discussed any                            | of this year's   | Forum topics with anyone since a                                  | ttending the se | ssior | n(s)?                                  |      |
| J11.      | They of the discussion and                        |                  | (GG   |                 |       |  | 1    |
|           | *   |                  |   |                 |       |  |      |
|           | 847   | 140              |   |                 |       |  |      |
| •         |   |                  |   |                 |       |  |      |
| 3B.       | Please describe.                                  |                  | · ·   |                 |       |  |      |
|           |   |                  |   |                 |       |  |      |
|           |   |                  |   | *1              |       |  |      |

| Did you gain any new i   | nformation or awareness from pa         | rticipating in the Community Forum?        |
|--------------------------|---|--|
|                          | Yes                                     | (GO TO Q. 5B)                              |
|                          | No                                      |  |
| Please describe.         |   |  |
|                          |   |  |
| . *                      |   | 1-17                                       |
|                          |   |  |
|                          |   |  |
| g **                     |   |  |
| Do you feel that the Cit |   | as affected you in a personal way?         |
|                          | Yes                                     | (GO TO Q. 6B)                              |
|                          | No                                      |  |
|                          |   |  |
| Please describe.         | A.                                      |  |
|                          |   |  |
|                          |   |  |
| *                        |   | 4 15 16                                    |
| 4                        |   |  |
|                          |   |  |
|                          | 2000 21 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 | s in any kind of action in your community? |
| Since attending the For  | Yes                                     | (GO TO Q. 7B)                              |
| Since attending the For  |   |  |
| Since attending the For  |   |  |

| 8A. | Could you think of any other benefits you have gotten from your participation in the forum(s)? |
|-----|--|
|     | Yes(GO TO Q. 8B)1  |
|     | No   |
| 8B. | Please describe.   |
|     |  |
|     |  |
| 9A. | Would you recommend these forum(s) to others? Would you say:                                   |
|     | Definitely yes,  |
|     | Probably yes,2   |
|     | Probably no, or  |
|     | Definitely no?4  |
| 9B. | Why or why not?  |
|     |  |
| 10. | Have you attended a Community Circle Dialogue?   |
|     | Yes(GO TO Q. 11)   |
|     | No(GO TO Q.?)  |
| 11. | Why did you decide to participate in a Community Circle Dialogue?                              |
|     |  |
|     |  |

| 12A. | Have you discussed any of                             | the Dialogue topics with anyone since you participated in a Dialogue yourself?  |
|------|---|---|
|      |   | Yes(GO TO Q. 12B)   |
|      |   | No2   |
|      |   |   |
| 12B. | Please describe.                                      |   |
|      |   |   |
|      | y   |   |
|      |   |   |
| 13.  | Do you know which organ                               | ization sponsored your Dialogue? (IF NO, READ CHOICES.)   |
|      |   | District Five Teen Council at Arlington Hills Library (Julius Erolin and Kate Peppler)  |
|      |   | Frogtown Pluralism Circle at Frogtown Family Center (Mariann Johnson and Chente Vue)  |
|      |   | Hamline-Midway Coalition for a Prejudice Free Community (Chia Vang and Willie Nesbitt)  |
|      |   | J.J. Hill Montessori Magnet School (Lee Woolery and Cathy Peterson  |
| •    |   | Merriam Park Community Center & Goodwill/EasterSeal  (Addie Batica and Harry Greenberg)   |
| *    |   | Merriam Park Community Center at Merriam Park Library (Mary Winnett and Marilyn McKnight)   |
|      |   | Ramsey Action Program (Kathy McGrane)   |
|      |   | St. Paul Area Council of Churches (Sarah Lagos)   |
|      |   | The St. Paul Companies at Black Bear Crossing Coffee House (Elsa Batica)  |
|      |   | St. Paul Neighborhood Network (Elsa Batica)1  |
|      |   | University of St. Thomas, (Mitchell Davis and Katherine Krueger1  |
|      |   | University of Saint Thomas, (Kate Peppler and Darcy Miner)1   |
| 14.  | to become acquainted, the challenges, the fourth addi | ues were made up of five sessions. The first session gave participants a chance second addressed segregation in the twin cities, the third focused on housing ressed school achievement gaps, and the fifth focused on how people can make these sessions did you attend? |
|      |   | SESSIONS ATTENDED   |

| al and a second and a second as a second a |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Have you discussed any that setting?   | of the topics addressed in the Com              | munity Circle Dialogues with people outsid |
|  | Yes   | (GO TO Q. 14B)                             |
|  | No  |  |
| <b></b>  | 280   |  |
| Please describe.   |   |  |
|  |   |  |
|  |   |  |
|  |   |  |
|  |   |  |
|  |   |  |
| Did you gain any new is  | nformation or awareness from partic             | cipating in the Community Circle Dialogue  |
| Did you gain any new i   |   |  |
| Did you gain any new i   | Yes   | (GO TO Q. 15B)                             |
| Did you gain any new i   | Yes   |  |
|  | Yes   | (GO TO Q. 15B)                             |
|  | Yes   | (GO TO Q. 15B)                             |
|  | Yes   | (GO TO Q. 15B)                             |
|  | Yes   | (GO TO Q. 15B)                             |
|  | Yes   | (GO TO Q. 15B)                             |
|  | Yes   | (GO TO Q. 15B)                             |
| Please describe.   | Yes   | (GO TO Q. 15B)                             |
| Please describe.   | Yes  No  pating in a Circle Dialogue has affect | (GO TO Q. 15B)                             |

| Please describe.                    |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
|                                     |  |  |  |
| Since attending the Circ community? | cle Dialogue, have you joined with   | others in any kind of action in your   |  |
| V                                   | Yes  | (GO TO Q. 17B)   |  |
|                                     |  |  |  |
|                                     |  |  |  |
| Please describe.                    | and the state of t |  |  |
|                                     |  | The state of the s |  |
|                                     |  |  |  |
| Million District                    |  |  |  |
| Can you think of any of             | Yes  | (GO TO Q. 18B)   |  |
|                                     |  |  |  |
| Please describe.                    |  |  |  |
| <del></del>                         |  |  |  |
| - 2-                                |  |  |  |
|                                     | *  |  |  |
| Would you recommend                 | Circle Dialogue participation to o   | others? Would you say  |  |
| , would jou recommend               |  |  |  |
|                                     | T (T) (10)   |  |  |
|                                     | 1  |  |  |
|                                     | CCCHCCHCHCACA COOCCUSCOS SOCIETA AND AND AND AND AND AND AND AND AND AN  |  |  |
|                                     | Since attending the Circ community?  Please describe.  Can you think of any of Please describe.  | Since attending the Circle Dialogue, have you joined with community?  Yes  | Since attending the Circle Dialogue, have you joined with others in any kind of action in your community?  Yes |

| 19B. Why or why not?            |   |                           |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|                                 |   |                           |
| I have a few last questions.    |   |                           |
| 20. ASK ONLY IF NECESSA         | ARY: What is your gender?               |                           |
|                                 | Male                                    |                           |
|                                 | Female                                  | 7                         |
|                                 |   |                           |
| 21. What is your racial or ethi | ic background? (DO NOT READ CH          | IOICES.)                  |
|                                 | African American                        |                           |
|                                 | Native American                         |                           |
|                                 | Asian American                          |                           |
|                                 | European American                       |                           |
|                                 | Other (SPECIFY:                         | )                         |
| 22. Could you tell me which     | of the following age categories you are | in? Would you say         |
| 25                              | AE 175 W                                |                           |
|                                 |   |                           |
|                                 |   | ,                         |
|                                 |   |                           |
|                                 | Over 60?                                | K 17                      |
| Thank you for taking the time t | o be interviewed today. Have a nice d   | ay.                       |
| Interviewer Name:               |   | Date:                     |
|                                 |   |                           |
| more rewer Employee #.          |   | End Time: (24 hour clock) |

#### INTERVIEWER OBSERVATIONS

| obs1. Did the respondent have any diffi | culty HEARING the questions?          |
|---|---------------------------------------|
|   | Yes, great difficulty1                |
|   | Yes, some difficulty2                 |
|   | No, none at all3                      |
| obs2. Did the respondent have any diffi | iculty UNDERSTANDING the questions?   |
|   | Yes, great difficulty1                |
|   | Yes, some difficulty2                 |
|   | No, none at all (SKIP TO obs3)3       |
| THE PROBLEM:                            | UAGE BARRIER OR HEARING PROBLEM, NOTE |
| WHICH ITEMS?                            | •                                     |
|   |                                       |
| obs3. How confident do you feel abo     | ut the validity of R's answers?       |
|   | Completely confident1                 |
|   | Some doubts2                          |
|   | No confidence3                        |

-8- STO/Community Forum/Cities at Work Community/ Community Circle Dialogues/Participant Follow-Up: 08/12/99

|       | If ANY DOUBTS: Please note which data you have doubts about and why you feel this way.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| obs4. | Do you have other comments about this case? Please include anything that you think the supervisor or coder should know about this case. If you are unsure how to code a particular response, note the item name and the problem here. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|       |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|       |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|       |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *     |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |

#### **Changing Faces, Changing Communities**

#### **Community Circles on Immigration in Minnesota**

#### Questionnaire

The League of Women Voters wishes to thank you for participating in the statewide community circles on immigration. The purpose of this questionnaire is to help us learn how community circles affected attitudes about immigration. Once again, thank you for your time and service to the community.

Please circle your answer below:

| 1. | In your circle were | you able to share vi | iews about what it i | means to be an American? |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|----|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|

Most of the time

Some of the time

Hardly ever

Not at all

2. In your circle were you able to share your views about the issues facing immigrants?

Most of the time

Some of the time

Hardly ever

Not at all

3. In your circle were you able to talk about how the new wave of immigrants affects your community?

Most of the time

Some of the time

Hardly ever

Not at all

4. In your circle did people feel free to express their views?

Most of the time

Some of the time

Hardly ever

Not at all

#### Rate yourself before and after given the community circle experience:

I value differences in people...

5. BEFORE THE CIRCLE:

AlwaysMost of the time

Some of the time

Hardly ever

Not at all

6. AFTER THE CIRCLE:

AlwaysMost of the time

Some of the time

Hardly ever

Not at all

She Chart - byon fatter

Impact of time or your community? ? what it means & he on american? ?

|                                  |  |                    | and anony                |                   |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
|                                  | , Racial, Cultural B                                 | U                  |                          |                   |
| 8. Which of the                  | e following best des                                 | scribes your level | of education?            |                   |
| Some High Sch                    | ool High Scho  | ool Some C         | College College          | Graduate          |
| 9. Age:                          |  |                    |                          |                   |
| 10. Gender:  □ Female  □ Male    |  |                    |                          |                   |
| 11. How would                    | you describe your                                    | political views?   |                          |                   |
| Conservative                     | Mod  | erate              | Liberal                  | Indifferent       |
| 12. What is you                  | r first language?                                    |                    |                          |                   |
| □ Under \$ □ \$15,001 □ \$25,001 | 15,000<br>to \$25,000<br>to \$50,000<br>to \$100,000 |                    | household incom          | e?                |
| 14. What is you                  | r religion?  |                    |                          |                   |
| 15. What is you                  | r zip code?  |                    |                          |                   |
| DISCUSSION                       | GUIDE  |                    |                          |                   |
| 16. The guide in                 | ncludes different po                                 | ints of view, with | out advocating any one   | e point of view.  |
| Strongly agree                   | Agree  | Neutral            | Disagree                 | Strongly disagree |
| 17. The guide c                  | ould be used by all                                  | kinds of people, a | cross all walks of life. |                   |
| Strongly agree                   | Agree  | Neutral            | Disagree                 | Strongly disagree |

| 18. This guide stim          | ulated meanings    | ful discussion.       |                        |                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Strongly agree               | Agree              | Neutral               | Disagree               | Strongly disagree    |
| 19. This guide pres          | ented too much     | material.             |                        |                      |
| Strongly agree               | Agree              | Neutral               | Disagree               | Strongly disagree    |
| Rold                         | stional Co         | minents -             |                        |                      |
| <b>FACILITATORS</b>          |                    |                       |                        |                      |
| 20. The facilitators         | made everyone      | feel welcome.         |                        |                      |
| Strongly agree               | Agree              | Neutral               | Disagree               | Strongly disagree    |
| 21. The facilitators         | tiged to influence | ce the group with hi  | is or her own views.   |                      |
| Strongly agree               | Agree              | Neutral               | Disagree               | Strongly disagree    |
| 22. The facilitators         | intervened whe     | n someone monopo      | lized the conversatio  | n.                   |
| Strongly agree               | Agree              | Neutral               | Disagree               | Strongly disagree    |
| 23. The facilitators debate. | explained the s    | tudy circle principle | s and the difference b | petween dialogue and |
| Strongly agree               | Agree              | Neutral               | Disagree               | Strongly disagree    |
| additional                   | Commen             | Is_                   |                        |                      |
| OVERALL EVAL                 | LUATION            |                       |                        |                      |
| 24. The length of e          | ach meeting wa     | s                     |                        | to Short             |
| Excellent 8                  | Goo                | d                     | Fair                   | Poor                 |
| 25. The number of            | meetings was       |                       |                        | to dou)              |
| Excellent                    | Goo                | d                     | Fair                   | Poor                 |
| 26. The number of            | people in my ci    | rcle was              |                        | too few              |
| Excellent                    | Goo                | d                     | Fair                   | Poor                 |

| Excellent            | Good                        | Fair                        | Poor        |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 28. What did you lil | ke most about the program?  |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
| 29. What did you li  | ke least about the program? |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
|                      |                             |                             |             |
| 1122 1               |                             |                             | Anticia ntu |
| Any additional com   | ments please make below. C  | Once again, thank you for y | in guinger. |

### SITE STATISTICS

|   | Leagu  | e of Women Voters of   |
|---|--------|--|
|   | Other  | Site   |
| 0 |        | er of Study Circles  |
|   | Attend | dance  |
|   | Comm   | nunity Circle 1  |
|   | 0      | First Week Second Week Third Week Fourth Week Fifth Week or Action Forum         |
|   | Comn   | nunity Circle 2  |
|   |        |  |
|   | Comn   | nunity Circle 3  |
| 0 | Outco  | mes:  New projects or programs that may have resulted from the community circles |
|   | ٥      | Changes that may have resulted within organizations                              |
|   | 0      | New collaborations or contacts made between organizations                        |
|   | 0      | Changes in the thinking of public officials about the community and the issues   |
|   |        | Changes in government policy that may have been effected by the study circles    |

#### **Community Circles Report form**

Session 1

| Location                              |           |  |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Facilitators                          |           |  |
| Name                                  |           |  |
| Address                               |           |  |
| Phone number                          | Email     |  |
| Name                                  |           |  |
| Address                               | 2019 2027 |  |
| Phone Number                          | Email     |  |
| Attendance:                           |           |  |
| Participants invited                  |           |  |
| Participants attended                 |           |  |
| Divarity                              |           |  |
| Diversity<br>Ethnicity                |           |  |
| Lumenty                               |           |  |
| Age                                   |           |  |
| Condon                                |           |  |
| Gender                                |           |  |
| Political                             |           |  |
| Disability                            |           |  |
| Economic                              |           |  |
| Religious                             |           |  |
| The most important thing that hannand |           |  |

The most important thing that happened was:

One thing that could be changed for next week is:

3 If someone asked you about tonight, What would you tell them?

4) what action ideas surpaced toright? What other resources are needed? Is there a story or anecdote that illustrates how someone took study circle feelings or information home and used it - did compathing above the study circle feelings or

information home and used it - did something change for them? Was something learned?

the last four questions should be filled out by the group at the end of the discussion

The facilitator will need to carefully prompt to elicit a response to these questions

Please document the quality of the conversation was it even, did people monopolize the discussion or exclude others

## Demographics

| 1.  | Are y         | ou                  |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|-----|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----|
|     |               | Male                |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | female              |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     | 2000247500000 | an with without the |                    | And at the second second second |                      |     |
| 2.  |               |                     | of school you co   |                                 | 200                  |     |
|     | 1-2           | 2-3-4-5-6-7-8       | -9-10-11-12-13-    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               |                     | HS                 | CD                              | GD                   |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
| ,   | TT            | ld                  |                    |                                 |                      |     |
| 3.  |               | ld are you?         |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     | 0             | 12 –17<br>18-29     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | 30-50               |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     | _             | 51-64               |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     | _             |                     | · ·                |                                 |                      |     |
|     | _             | os and ove          | a                  |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     | _             |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
| 7.  | How           | would you de        | escribe your polit | ical views?                     |                      |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     | Co            | onservative         | Moderate           | Liberal                         | Indifferent          |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
| 9.  |               | you                 |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | White               | *                  |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | African - A         |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               |                     | rican/Pacific Isla | inder                           |                      |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | American In         |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | Arab Americ         |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | Other (pleas        | e specify)         |                                 |                      |     |
| 10. | Wh            | at is your firs     | t language         |                                 |                      |     |
| 10. | **11          | at is your mis      | t language         |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
| 10. | Wh            | ich of the foll     | lowing best descri | ribes your total                | 1998 household incom | ne? |
|     |               |                     | ŭ                  |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               |                     |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | Under \$15,0        | 000                |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | \$15,000 to \$      |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | \$25,000 to         |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | \$50,000 to \$      |                    |                                 |                      |     |
|     |               | Over \$100,0        | 000                |                                 |                      |     |

| □ Catholic   |  |
|--------------|--|
| □ Jewish     |  |
| □ Muslim     |  |
| □ Protestant |  |
| □ None       |  |
| □ Other      |  |
|              |  |
|              |  |

One of the goals of our project is diversity
. It is your choice to fill out the questionnaire completely, partially or not at all.

### Post Questionnaire

| To what ex<br>American?  | tent hav | e you b | een able | e to sha  | re your   | views a  | bout wh  | nat it m | eans to | be an  |
|--------------------------|----------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|--------|
| Great                    |          | Mod     | lerate   |           |           | Slig     | ht       |          | Not     | at all |
| To what ex immigrants    |          | e you b | een able | e to sha  | re your   | views a  | bout the | e issues | facing  |        |
| Great                    |          | Mod     | lerate   |           |           | Slig     | ht       |          | Not     | at all |
| To what ex<br>wave of im |          | s?      |          | e to disc | cuss issi |          |          | commu    | 2000    |        |
| Great                    |          | Mod     | derate   |           |           | Slig     | ht       |          | Not     | at all |
| To what ex               | tent hav | e you b | een abl  | e to hea  | r other   | peoples  | views?   |          |         |        |
| Great                    |          | Mod     | derate   |           |           | Slig     | ht       |          | Not     | at all |
| Rate yourse              | elf now  | and bef | ore the  | study c   | ircle exp | perience | e;       |          |         |        |
| I value diff             | erences  | in peop | le       |           |           |          |          |          |         |        |
| NOW:                     | 1        | 2       | 3        | 4         | 5         | 6        | 7        | 8        | 9       | 10     |
| BEFORE                   | 1        | 2       | 3        | 4         | 5         | 6        | 7        | 8        | 9       | 10     |

#### DISSCUSSION GUIDE

strongly agree agree neutral disagree

strongly disagree

The guide includes different Points of view, without advocating Any one point of view.

This guide could be used by all kinds of people, across all walks of life.

This guide stimulated meaningful discussion

This guide presented too much material

This guide could have provided more material

#### **FACILITATORS**

The facilitators made everyone feel welcome

The facilitators tried to influence the group with his or her own views

The facilitators intervened when someone monopolized the conversation

The facilitators explained the study circle principles and the difference between dialogue and debate

#### OVERALL EVALUATION

| The length of each meeting was:            | excellent   | good | fair     | poor |
|--|-------------|------|----------|------|
| The number of meetings was:                |             |      |          |      |
| The number of people in my study circ      | le was:     |      |          |      |
| Overall I would rate the Study Circles     | Program as: |      |          |      |
| What did you like most about theprogram?   |             |      |          |      |
| What did you like least about the program? |             |      |          |      |
| Additional Comments                        |             |      | <b>-</b> |      |

#### DICK KRUEGER NOTES

Video Cam last part of last night – sensitive – low key prepare them by suggesting you might tape some of their stories – have them think about meaningful ones

Insure diversity – issue very cordial invitations – follow up with a phone call

2 somalis – 2 kids – 2 caucasions – 2 community leaders

Under 10

Capture some of the magic that happens to people

Tip sheets for facillitators

Press

**Politicals** 

Community leaders that are used to being charge

Each person brings much to the table If everyone is not heard from there is a real loss

### ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

|         | What caught your interest and motivated you to participate in the Study Circle? |
|---------|---|
|         | What are the biggest problems facing new immigrants coming to our community?    |
| into an | What is the biggest challenge communities face when many new people move area?  |
|         | What is the most important contribution newcomers make to a community?          |
|         | What does it mean to be an American?  |
|         | What does it mean to be a citizen?  |
|         | What can you do to make Rochester a better community?                           |
|         |   |

### IMMIGRATION BASICS A Brief Outline of U.S. Immigration Law

#### I. Two General Categories

When people talk about "immigrants," they are usually referring to all foreigners who live in the United States. Immigration law breaks this large group of foreigners into two general categories: (1) "immigrants," or people who come to the U.S. with the intent to stay here permanently, and (2) "nonimmigrants," or people who are visiting the U.S. temporarily.

Because people often have a variety of reasons for coming to the U.S., categorizing a particular individual's intention as "permanent" or "temporary" can be difficult. Still, keeping these categories in mind helps in understanding U.S. immigration law and procedures.

#### II. Basic Procedures for Entering the U.S.

The typical method by which a non-citizen gains permission to enter the United States is by applying for a visa at a United States embassy or consulate in their home country or some nearby country. A visa is permission from the United States Department of State for a non-citizen to enter the U.S. This may be either a temporary, nonimmigrant visa or a permanent immigrant visa.

After obtaining a visa, a non-citizen presents his or herself at the U.S. port of entry. There, the Immigration and Naturalization Service ("INS") inspects the individual's documents and may question the individual to determine whether they are really admissible to the U.S. and are carrying an appropriate visa.

Of course, some non-citizens enter the U.S. without obtaining a visa and without presenting themselves at the border. These individuals are often referred to as having "entered without inspection" (EWI). Some of these individuals can later obtain permission to stay in the United States.

#### III. Visa Categories (a list of the major visa categories)

- A. <u>Immigrant visas</u>--visas allowing an individual to be a "permanent resident" of the United States, and eventually to obtain U.S. citizenship.
  - Family-Based Visas: U.S. citizens may sponsor their "immediate relatives"
     (spouse/parent/unmarried minor children), their adult or married sons and daughters, and
     their siblings. Lawful permanent residents may sponsor their spouses, minor and unmarried
     children. Depending on the status of the petitioner and on the family relationship, visas
     may be immediately available or there may be a substantial wait for the visa.
  - Employment-Based Visas: Employers may sponsor professional, extraordinary and exceptional workers and certain other skilled workers.
  - Diversity Visas: The diversity visa lottery program allows 55,000 new immigrants to enter the U.S. each year.
- B <u>Non-immigrant visas</u>--visas allowing an individual to visit the U.S. temporarily. The major non-immigrant visa categories are <u>tourist visas</u>, <u>student visas</u>, and <u>temporary employment visas</u>. Some individuals who enter with non-immigrant visas may eventually become permanent residents of the U.S.

#### C. Refugees and Asylees

Another category of non-citizens seeking to live in the United States are refugees and asylees. Generally, these individuals are people seeking protection from persecution in their home countries. They must show that they face persecution based on their political opinion, their religion, their race, their nationality, or their social group.

- Refugees: Under U.S. immigration law, a "refugee" is someone who is outside the U.S. and seeks protection and a place to live in the U.S. These people are processed abroad and resettled with the help of agencies in the U.S.
- Asylees: An asylee is someone who is already in the U.S. and seeks protection and permission to stay in the U.S.

Refugees and asylees may apply for lawful permanent resident status after one year in the U.S.

#### IV. Basic Procedures for Becoming a Lawful Permanent Resident (the "green card"),

- A. LPR status allows a non-citizen to remain in the U.S. permanently and, under certain conditions, to eventually apply to become a U.S. citizen if he or she so chooses. LPR status is not the same as citizenship LPRs may be deported from the U.S. and may abandon their status if they remain outside the U.S. for an extended period of time.
- B. A person can obtain LPR status:
  - by applying for and receiving an immigrant visa at a U.S. consulate abroad and entering with that visa, or
  - by entering the U.S. as a nonimmigrant, as a refugee, or without permission to enter and later becoming eligible for permanent residency. Becoming a permanent resident while already in the U.S. is called "adjustment of status."

#### V. Removal of Non-Citizens from the United States ("Deportation")

- A. <u>Removal</u>: The agency that handles admission and removal of non-citizens in the U.S. is the INS. To remove (or "deport") someone, the INS initiates removal proceedings by filing charges against the non-citizen with the Executive Office for Immigration Review (the Immigration Court). Recent changes to immigration law have greatly expanded the grounds for removal of non-citizens.
- B. Expedited Removal: When the INS prevents someone from entering the U.S. at the port of entry, the person may be turned back or ordered removed by the immigration officer. The immigration law provides for "expedited removal" in many cases, which may mean that no court proceedings are available. Persons subject to expedited removal who express fear of return to their home country are detained while a determination is made as to whether they have "credible fear" of such return and therefore will be permitted to file for asylum in the U.S.
- C. <u>Detention:</u> Under the new law, the INS is detaining increasing numbers of non-citizens during their removal proceedings. Since there is no INS detention facility in Minnesota, non-citizens are detained in county jails throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas.

#### VI. Becoming a U.S. Citizen ("Naturalizing")

Once an individual has been a permanent resident for five years, he or she may "naturalize," or become a U.S. citizen, by (1) passing tests on English language and American history (unless some waiver applies), and (2) showing that he or she is of "good moral character."

Naturalized citizens are full U.S. citizens, enjoying the same rights and responsibilities as persons who were born in the U.S. or who derived citizenship through their parents.



### The B.I.A.S. Project

Building Immigrant Awareness and Support

a campaign to combat anti-immigrant sentiment

The **B.I.A.S. Project** (Building Immigrant Awareness and Support) is a campaign to combat antiimmigrant sentiment through providing accurate information about the numbers and impact of immigrants on the U.S. economy, labor market, and society. The Project confronts misinformation and stereotypes in an educational, media and public affairs campaign.

In a climate of economic and social concerns, immigrants often become scapegoats. This type of inaccurate rhetoric fueled public support for two harmful laws passed in 1996 that restrict the rights and benefits historically available to refugees and legal immigrants. Working closely with immigrant and non-immigrant communities, the Project confronts the dangerous misperceptions about immigration and addresses the legislative onslaught by providing workshops, training, informational resources, and strategies to equip organizations and individuals with effective tools with which to advocate and educate.

#### The B.I.A.S. Project offers:

☐Youth Education: Study guides and teacher training;

**Workshops:** Role-playing exercises, informational components, and immigrants' personal

testimonies address myths and facts of immigration and build

awareness of immigration's human dimension;

□Videos: Historical, factual, and personal perspectives on immigration:

Speakers Bureau: Experts discuss immigration facts and policy, immigrants tell their own

stories:

□ Poster Campaign: Compelling photographs and artwork on refugees and xenophobia;

□Myth/Fact Sheets: The impact of immigrants on the labor market, the economy, and the

welfare system:

□Personal Profiles: Immigrants and refugees share their stories of fleeing persecution, reuniting

with families, and contributing to American society;

**Library:** Comprehensive collection of studies on immigration facts, law and policy;

Media Projects: Provides communities and reporters with reliable information to ensure

objective, accurate coverage;

□Consulting: Focus groups, strategy development, and training.

For more information on **The B.I.A.S. Project**, or to volunteer, contact Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. Address: 310 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 1000, Minneapolis, MN 55415-1012; Telephone: 612-341-3302; Fax: 612-341-2971; E-mail:hrights@mnadvocates.org; Internet: http://www.mnadvocates.org



# The Energy of a Nation Immigrants in America VIDEO & CURRICULUM

The Energy of a Nation: Immigrants in America, an exciting new video and study guide, address one of the major issues of our era -- immigration. At a time when immigration debates make headlines daily, the public needs accurate and accessible information in order to develop an informed analysis of this complex topic. Who comes to the United States? How many? Why? What is the impact of immigration on the U.S. economy, labor market and culture? The video (which includes accompanying written materials) addresses:

- Economic impact
- History of immigration
- Current trends
- Global perspective
- Legal and illegal immigration
- Family and employment immigration
- Refugees
- Government policies

This video and study guide are appropriate for students in middle school or high school and adults. The materials can be adapted for classes on current events, civics, economics, geography, history, law and social studies.

Produced by award-winning Media Productions, Inc. and Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, August 1995. Telephone: (612) 341-3302; Fax: (612) 341-2971.

Purchase price \$25.00 for the video and fact sheets, \$35.00 for video, fact sheets and study guide.

| Study Guide)                 |  |                 |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Date:                        | Date Needed:   | A 生产运动 医性 基础 不能 |
| Name:                        | Institution:   |                 |
| Address:                     | Phone:   |                 |
| City/State:                  | Zip:   |                 |
| Quantity at \$25.00 each (in | cludes video and fact sheets) for a total cost of              | (Enclosed)      |
|                              | icludes video, fact sheets and study guide for a total cost of |                 |

Make checks payable to Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights; 310 Fourth Ave. S., #1000; Minneapolis, MN 55415-1012. Telephone: (612) 341-3302.

Founded in 1994, the B.I.A.S. Project (Building Immigrant Awareness and Support) is an educational campaign to address anti-immigrant sentiment. The Project works in communities and schools through youth and adult education, written and video curriculum materials, and training and technical assistance to provide accurate information on immigrant and refugee issues. The B.I.A.S. Project offers:

#### Written and Video Curriculum Materials:

- The Energy of a Nation: Immigrants in America video and curriculum guide highlighting immigrants' personal testimonies and, through role play and research, exploring immigration from historical, policy, economic, and demographic perspectives; features also suggested links to Minnesota Graduation Standards
- myth/fact sheets on immigration outlining impact of immigrants on the labor market, the economy, and the welfare system
- law summaries describing recent legislation affecting immigrants and refugees
- library containing comprehensive collection of curriculum guides and studies on immigration facts, law, and policy

#### Workshops and Speakers:

- speakers bureau—experts discuss immigration facts and policy; immigrants tell their own stories
- teacher training—strategies for teaching about immigration; links to new Minnesota Graduation Standards
- staff development for service providers educational/continuing education sessions for service providers, attorneys, and others wanting to learn more about immigrants, refugees, and immigration
- student workshops—interactive sessions address past and current immigration and highlight personal stories of immigrants
- workshops on immigration law—informational programs for immigrants and non-immigrants

#### **Technical Assistance:**

 consulting—conducting focus groups, developing strategies, and training

#### MINNESOTA ADVOCATES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Founded in 1983, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (Minnesota Advocates) is the largest Midwest-based non-governmental organization (NGO) engaged in international human rights work. Located in Minneapolis, Minnesota Advocates has 1,250 members, including more than 600 active volunteers who contribute an estimated \$1.4 million annually of in-kind services. Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights works locally, nationally, and internationally to promote and protect universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. Minnesota Advocates takes an integrated, comprehensive approach to preventing human rights abuses through:

- · documenting human rights abuses
- · advocating on behalf of individual victims
- · educating communities on human rights issues, and
- providing training and technical assistance to prevent human rights violations.

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# Minnesota's Immigrant Populations: Past and Present

The B.I.A.S. Project

Building
Immigrant
Awareness and
Support

a campaign to combat anti-immigrant sentiment

# MINNESOTA'S IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS: PAST AND PRESENT

The first peoples living in the region now known as Minnesota were members of diverse Native American tribes who settled in the area as long ago as 6000 B.C. The Ojibway and Dakota, the largest tribes living in Minnesota in the early and mid-nineteenth century, both had well-established societies based on hunting and gathering when the first French and French Canadian traders arrived to establish fur posts among them.

By 1850, many settlers from New England as well as immigrants from Norway, Sweden, Ireland, and Germany had settled in Minnesota. Drawn by the lure of inexpensive farmland and a growing industrial base, diverse groups continued to migrate to Minnesota, and by 1896, official election instructions were being issued in nine languages: English, German, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, French, Czech, Italian, and Polish.

Minnesota became a significant immigration state as a result of the wave of immigration to the United States at the turn of the century. While the foreign-born population in the United States was only 15% in the 1890s, 40% of Minnesota's population was foreign born. This first major wave of immigration to Minnesota peaked around 1910, when more than 60% of the immigrants came from Sweden, Norway, and Germany.

#### Today's Immigrants to Minnesota.

Another wave of immigration to Minnesota, which began after the Vietnam War, marked a change in the ethnic makeup of Minnesota's immigrant populations. This wave peaked in the 1980s when hundreds of refugees from Southeast Asia, aided by local churches, were resettled in Minnesota communities. Minnesota's ethnic mix—originally comprised of Native Americans, African Americans, and immigrants from diverse Western European countries—was now further enriched by new populations primarily from Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

Today, even though only 6% of Minnesota's population is foreign born (well below the national average), the state remains a destination for immigrants and refugees. The current immigrant populations in Minnesota are growing in number and diversity. Consider the following statistics:

 In 1996, 42.2% of all Minnesota immigrants came as refugees. Most refugees are coming from the former Soviet Union, Bosnia, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Listed below are the largest refugee populations\* living in Minnesota as of January 1999:

Hmong 60,000

Vietnamese 22,000

Somali 15,000

Cambodian 8,500

Laotian 8,500

Former Soviet Republics 6,000

 Approximately 125,000 members of the Chicano/ Latino population lived in Minnesota in 1999.

- INS estimates from 1996 show that Minnesota has fewer undocumented immigrants than almost any other state: just two-tenths of one percent.
- According to reports from the Hmong and Somali communities, Minnesota is home to the largest Hmong and the largest Somali population in the United States.
- More than 80 languages were spoken by students in Minneapolis Public Schools during the 1998-99 academic year.
- A record number of 1,300 immigrants from about 100 countries became U.S. citizens in Minnesota on June 30, 1999.
   Part of a nationwide increase in naturalization, immigrants are increasingly settling in and enriching Minnesota communities with their economic and cultural contributions.

#### Sources:

Holmquist, June Drenning. <u>They Chose Minnesota</u>. Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981

Peterson, David. "Influx of Immigrants Wanes in the Twin Cities," Star Tribune, March 9,1999

Webb, Tom. "Enterprising Employers Speaking New Languages," Saint Paul Pioneer Press, July 11, 1999

Minneapolis Public Schools, 1999

MN Planning/Office of the State Demographer, 1999

Refugee Services of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, 1999

<sup>\*</sup>Estimates include U.S.-born children and refugees resettled in other states who subsequently moved to Minnesota.

Founded in 1994, the B.I.A.S. Project (Building Immigrant Awareness and Support) is an educational campaign to address anti-immigrant sentiment. The Project works in communities and schools through youth and adult education, written and video curriculum materials, and training and technical assistance to provide accurate information on immigrant and refugee issues. The B.I.A.S. Project offers:

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# Dispelling the Myths About Immigrants

The B.I.A.S. Project

Building
Immigrant
Awareness and
Support

a campaign to combat anti-immigrant sentiment

# DISPELLING THE MYTHS ABOUT IMMIGRANTS

### MYTH: Immigrants take jobs away from Americans.

FACT: Consensus exists on the fact that immigrants do not increase unemployment for native-born Americans. In fact, one recent study showed that the ten states with the lowest annual unemployment rates had a greater proportion of immigrants in their total population than the ten states with the highest annual unemployment rates. While temporary displacements in given localities may occur, there is no trend toward Americans becoming unemployed due to immigrant labor.

# MYTH: Immigration is a drain on the U.S. economy.

FACT: The net economic effect of all immigration - both legal and illegal - is to add wealth to the country. An estimated 11 million immigrants are working, earning at least \$240 billion a year and paying \$90 billion in taxes. The average immigrant family pays about \$2,500 more in taxes than the average native family. Immigrants expand total output and demand for labor. As immigrant workers enter the labor force, they create jobs by spending their earnings on the output of other workers. That generates employment. Many jobs are also created by immigrant entrepreneurs. Immigrants are generally highly productive because they are willing to put in long hours of hard work to make a business succeed. Immigrants also promote capital formation because they save a greater proportion of their

earnings than do native-born Americans. In the 1980s, 1.5 million college-educated immigrants joined the U.S. work force, mainly as scientists and engineers. These skilled immigrants are helping to keep America internationally competitive in high-technology industries. Immigrants also benefit the U.S. economy by using connections to their former countries to boost exports, especially exports to the fast-growing regions of Asia and Latin America. In addition, immigrants contribute a global perspective to American businesses.

#### MYTH: Immigrants abuse the welfare system.

**FACT:** Only 9% of immigrant households received welfare payments, according to the 1990 census.

#### MYTH: Immigrants cause urban problems.

FACT: Immigrant communities are revitalizing dying neighborhoods in cities and older suburbs that would otherwise be suffering from middle class flight and a shrinking tax base. Immigrants start businesses, buy homes, pay local taxes, and shop in the cities. In the 1980s, population in the nation's 10 largest cities grew by 4.7%; without new immigrants it would have shrunk by 6.8%.

# MYTH: There is a higher percentage of immigrants in the U.S. now than ever before in U.S. history.

FACT: The percentage of immigrants is lower than in the past. Although the number of immigrants arriving today is comparable to previous peak periods, the percentage of the U.S. population that is foreign-born (8-9%) is lower than it was throughout the 1870 - 1920 peak immigration period, when close to 15% of the total population was foreign-born. From 1986-1995 the annual number of immigrants was 3.9 immigrants per every 1000 Americans, while from 1905-1914, this

rate was 11.1. The composition of the newcomer population has changed. Historically, Europe was the source of most immigration to the U.S., but today, new arrivals come mostly from Latin America, the Carribean and Asia. Today, over 75% of the newcomers settle in six states—California,

New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey and Illinois. The top ten countries of immigration to the U.S. are Mexico, China, the Phillipines, Vietnam, former Soviet Union, Dominican Republic, India, Poland, El Salvador, United Kingdom.

# MYTH: The United States is being overun with illegal immigrants.

**<u>FACT:</u>** Annual entry of illegal aliens amounts to only 1/10th of 1% of the total U.S. population.

# MYTH: Most migrants to the United States are illegal, undocumented aliens who come only for economic reasons.

FACT: The vast majority of immigrants come legally for the same reasons as did our ancestors: family, work and freedom. During 1993, 2/3 of the 800,000 legal immigrants came to the U.S. to be reunited with close family members. An additional 15% came as refugees escaping persecution, while another 15% came at the invitation of the U.S. employers to fill highly skilled positions for which U.S. workers were not available. Immigrants who arrived before 1980, have average incomes that exceed those of natives.

Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Interpreter Releases, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, The B.I.A.S. Project

#### "What can you do to make a difference?"

Listed below are some projects you can do to increase awareness of refugee and immigrant issues. The B.I.A.S. Project (Building Immigrant Awareness and Support) of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights has many resources to help you put some of these ideas into action--for more information, please call (612) 341-3302.

#### I. Write articles for your school or community paper. Article ideas include the following:

- -profiling a local refugee or immigrant
- -featuring a specific refugee or immigrant crisis
- -writing a "letter to the editor" stating your opinion on current immigration issues

#### 2. Advocacy work

-send letters to or call your legislators regarding current immigration issues

#### 3. Reach out to refugees or immigrants in your local area

- -volunteer at a local agency that works with refugee and immigrant populations
- -invite immigrants and refugees to teach about their country of origin and culture
- -tutor local refugees and immigrants
- -host a community-wide multicultural event, featuring international foods and music
- -host an "English conversation group" to assist new refugees and immigrants with their developing English language skills
- -ask a local immigrant or refugee to teach you his or her native language
- -be a mentor to a person who is attempting to gain citizenship
- -prepare "welcome baskets" for new families of refugees and immigrants

#### 4. Increase awareness of refugee and immigrant issues. Ideas include:

- -hosting a "multicultural day" featuring international foods and music from around the world inviting a speaker to speak to your local school, community, or church group on refugee and immigrant issues. Speakers could include:
  - -a local immigrant or refugee--possibly a panel featuring several newcomers
  - -someone who works with refugees and immigrants locally
  - -someone who has done refugee work in another country

# 5. Form a refugee/immigrant club within your school or neighborhood with others interested in these issues. Club activities could include:

- -discussing current refugee and immigrant issues
- -discussing films and books that deal with refugee and immigrant issues
- -hosting various events to raise awareness of refugee and immigrant issues
- -hosting a fundraiser (for example, a benefit concert) to raise money for local groups sponsoring refugee families

#### 6. "The international connection:" helping refugees and immigrants around the world

- -begin a pen pal program with refugees in a refugee camp overseas
- -initiate international contacts to develop "classroom to classroom" communication with immigrants and refugees via the Internet
- -raise money for humanitarian organizations (like UNHCR or UNICEF) that work with refugee and immigrant populations



Prepared by:

The B.I.A.S. Project (Building Immigrant Awareness and Support) of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

tel (612) 341-3302

For Immediate Release April 13, 2000 For more information: Susan Anderson, Project Director 612-331-1117 Andrea Lex, Communications Director 651-224-5445

#### Communities Take Action on Immigration at the League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund Action Forum

St. Paul, Minn. – Seventeen participating communities in the League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund's (LWVMNEF), Changing Faces Changing Communities – What It Means to Be an American in this Age of Immigration – And Creating a Better Minnesota through Citizen Involvement, will bring their action ideas to the statewide Action Forum on Saturday, April 29, from 1 to 4:30 p.m., at the Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd., W., St. Paul.

This spring, at least 1,000 people with a diversity of backgrounds and opinions, in 17 communities throughout Minnesota, met over five weeks to explore the impact of immigration on their communities and what it means to be an American. Participating communities included Armstrong High School in Robbinsdale, Austin, the College of St. Catherine, Detroit Lakes/Pelican Rapids, Eden Prairie/Minnetonka/Hopkins, Edina, Mankato, Marshall, Minneapolis, Northfield, Plymouth/Wayzata, St. Cloud, St. Paul, St. Peter, Rochester, Willmar, and Winona.

The youth Community Circle in Willmar was very successful, according to two sisters who participated. "These circles are helpful to look at our community and unite the different cultures. The youth are the ones who will be here in the future. Some junior high students have been afraid to go to school, because they are afraid of being beat up. Students can help to reduce the physical fights in schools and get the communities to work together," said 16-year-old Iris Martinez. "People will get along better," said 14-year-old Marlen Martinez, "because we shared our honest opinions about how to treat Hispanics and how we treat others."

Another participant from the Community Circle Pilot Event held in Willmar last October summarized his experience, and how he thinks the project will continue to impact Willmar. "Everybody was speaking from their heart, not from their mind, so we could be ourselves. I have never been to a meeting with such magnitude, such power. Why would we need to quit meeting after these five sessions! If we could continue meeting, we would be able to address so many community concerns and issues of our multicultural community," said Jose Villareal.

The Action Forum will focus on participants' presentations of community, state and federal action items. Participants will also meet in small groups according to topics. Topics may include employment, health care, education, affordable housing, youth and assisting them in future job skills as well as providing after-school programs so their parents can work, community programs to increase awareness and understanding, and neighborhood-based human rights task forces/hate crimes response teams.

Along with framing their action items, the small groups will strategize action implementation tasks. In addition, there will be an action bazaar during which organizations already involved in these issues will be available to discuss initiatives currently in place. The conversations that have been taking place across the state have been very meaningful to the participants as an indepth, honest dialogue on the issues. The Action Forum is the link between talk and action, and a catalyst for strengthening and expanding citizen coalitions. The Education Fund sees this as democracy in action.

Communities have already begun action strategies including plans for continuing youth-only Community Circles in St. Cloud and Detroit Lakes/Pelican Rapids, as well as forming a task force in Willmar designed to increase student recognition within the greater community.

For more information about participation in the Action Forum or the bazaar, call the League of Women Voters of Minnesota at 651-224-5445.

Sally - FY/ Or Caral good reply.

Subj: immigration conference

Date: 5/7/2000 8:35:29 PM Central Daylight Time

From: Gandjduffy

To: rep.peggy.leppik@house.leg.state.mn.us

To: WOODHILL60

#### Peggy

Thanks for the message. The conference referred to in the message was the Action Forum held last Saturday, April 29, I believe. The Action Forum was the culmination of a League sponsored project called "Changing Faces, Changing Communities, What it Means to be an American in this age of immigration." This was a project in which community discussion circles were organized to talk about immigration in Minnesota communities. The discussions took place over 5 weeks in February and March of this year. The purpose of the discussion circlescipte was to bring together individuals thoughout our state who are affected by immigration—either new immigrants, those who have been here a while and those in communities where immigration has had an impact on the community. The discussions were open ended, there was no agenda. The participants set their own agenda and discussed problems and possible solutions. Wherever possible, policy makers were involved in the discussions. the attempt was to have as diverse a group as possible involved in discussions and to bring together those who do not normally talk to each other.

In Minnesota, 17 different communities took part—about 2,000 people were involved from the steering committee, to organizers, facilitators and discussants. Large cities, metropolitan area, small towns and rural areas from Pelican Rapids in the north to Austin in the south. The 5th session of the discussions were to be the session in which the participants were to identify the kinds of things that would make their communities a better place to live and work for both new immigrants and those already there who need to be able to accommodate new residents-the so-called action session.

Overwhelmingly, language was identified as the largest barrier for new immigrants to fit into their new surroundings. This is no surprise since language is basic to everything else. Many other things were identified as needs for both the new residents and the communities themselves. The participants in the Action Forum of April 29 brought their suggestions forward and were given resources to enable them to go forward in seeking their own solutions to identified issues. The participants were given the opportunity to speak and hear from the other participants and form their own networks. The League is proud to have served to provide the forum for these people to connect.

This was an Education Fund project. We received support from a wide spectrum of corporate and foundation entities. The end product of the forums was consciously not an agenda for the League. We have no position on these issues. The discussions were based on open ended questions and facilitators were trained to engage all participants and let them find their own way. In fact the only criticism I heard about the facilitators was that they thought they should have been more engaged. The League sought to involve as a diverse group of individuals as possible, especially those most affected by the new wave of immigrants to Minnesota.

The St. Paul Pioneer Press ran a 7 week series that coincided with this project—making Minnesotans aware of the changing face of Minnesota. As many as 24 languages are spoken in the schools of Pelican Rapids, for example.

To be sure, the view expressed in the letter to you was not the predominant view but that was the function of who did participate. The project was advertised widely and people of many perspectives were invited to participate. Unfortunately, we cannot be responsible for who ultimately shows up.

The League is not taking any action on any of the items that came up at the Forum. Any action that takes place will be by the participants themselves and the organizations or individuals with whom they connected at the forum. The INS had their own representatives there as well and were well aware of this project-not to participate but to listen.

There are many communities in Minnesota who are struggling with the influx of new immigrants. It is straining the schools, social service agencies, hospitals, and workplaces. The realization is there that everyone needs to be talking to each other to figure out how to handle the situations they have been handed. While many have ideas about how immigration law might be changed, that is not anything the League is in any position to advocate.

What may come of this will be a recommendation that the League study these issues and then be in a position to act. That is not the case now. I'm sorry if the impression was left that the League would be taking action on any of these items at this time. We are not. We are providing the forum and feel that we have provided a real service to those communities who participated. This was a very successful project and we hope that cities like Rochester who did participate and have a number of issues to confront based on their changing faces-changing community, will have identified means to go forward with more understanding and a goal toward problem solving.

I hope I have answered your questions and I would be happy to talk with you further, if you would like.

Judy Duffy, President,

LWVMNEF

#### MINNESOTA DIVERSITY

# Group begins immigration public forums

ASSOCIATED PRESS

minnesota's image as a haven for blondhaired, blueeyed Scandinavians and

#### TO ATTEND

Meeting times and locations can be obtained by calling (651) 224-5445.

Germans has changed with the recent influx of immigrants, and the League of Woman Voters wants residents to talk about it.



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