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The Need For Affordable Housing In The Twin Cities



THE TWIN CITIES AREA FACES A SEVERE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SHORTAGE

Few human needs are more fundamental than the need for a home. We speak of shelter, along with food and clothing, as one of the elements for human survival. The significance of a home runs deeper than the immediate need for four walls and a roof; homeownership is often referred to as the fulfillment of the American Dream.

Unfortunately, the dream of finding any type of decent, affordable housing, whether rented or owned, has become increasingly elusive for many people in the Twin Cities. Much of the problem stems from a shortage of lower-priced housing combined with the failure of incomes to keep pace with rising housing costs:

- ▶ There are 68,900 renter households with annual incomes below \$10,000 in the metropolitan area, but only 31,200 housing units with rents affordable at this income level.
- ▶ Only 36% of families living in poverty in the Twin Cities area receive housing assistance from government. Cutbacks in federal housing programs threaten to make this situation even more severe.
- ▶ Since 1990, vacancy rates for apartments in the Twin Cities have fallen from over six percent to just two percent, further reducing the supply of affordable housing.

SHORTAGE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS



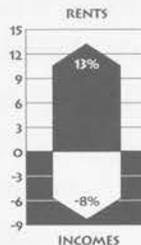
68,900 HOUSEHOLDS IN NEED

There are 68,900 renter households with annual incomes below \$10,000 in the metropolitan area, but only 31,200 housing units with rents affordable at this income level.



31,200 RENTAL HOUSING UNITS AVAILABLE

- ▶ Between 1974 and 1993, rents climbed 13% in real dollars, but renters' real incomes actually declined by eight percent.



Housing is usually considered to be affordable if it costs no more than 30% of income. In the Twin Cities area, however, 185,000 households with annual incomes below \$30,000 pay more than this amount for their housing.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY THE LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

Median wages for these jobs are too low to allow workers to afford a typical two-bedroom apartment.

- *Preschool Teacher*
 - *Teacher Aide*
 - *Medical Records Technician*
 - *Retail Salesperson*
 - *Cashier*
 - *Teller*
 - *Receptionist*
 - *File Clerk*
 - *Host/Hostess*
 - *Cafeteria Attendant*
 - *Restaurant Cook*
 - *Medical Assistant*
 - *Nursing Aide*
 - *Home Health Aide*
 - *Maid*
 - *Janitor*
 - *Child Care Worker*
 - *School Bus Driver*
-

HIGH HOUSING COSTS CAN LEAD TO FINANCIAL STRAIN, SUBSTANDARD HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS

As housing costs consume a growing portion of household income, families have less money left over to pay for other needs. Because families risk losing their homes if they do not meet their rent or mortgage costs each month, they often must skimp on other necessities such as food, child care, or health care. Also, with so few affordable units available, many families are forced to accept any housing they can find, even if it is in unsafe or substandard condition.

In the worst cases, individuals and families who cannot afford housing face eviction from apartments or foreclosure on their homes and may become homeless. In one night, the Minnesota Department of Economic Security found over 3,900 people who were living in emergency temporary housing in the metropolitan area. Others without homes of their own double up with family and friends or are forced to live on the streets.

ENTRY-LEVEL WORKERS AND FAMILIES IN POVERTY HURT BY AFFORDABLE HOUSING SHORTAGE

People working in entry-level or lower-wage jobs are hard hit by the affordable housing shortage. A typical two-bedroom apartment in the Twin Cities metropolitan area costs \$621 per month, although rents are much higher in some communities. In order to afford \$621 in rent, a family must earn \$24,840 per year — well above the wage level of many service sector jobs (see list at left).

The dream of homeownership for these working families is even farther out of reach. A modest three-bedroom house costs an average of \$93,000 in the metro area. A family would need to earn \$33,000 per year to order to afford such a home.

Even in a household where two family members work full-time earning wages at or near the minimum, annual earnings are too low to afford the rent or mortgage costs for a three-bedroom home. For single-parent families or other families without two full-time wage earners, finding an affordable home becomes extremely difficult.

The shortage of affordable housing is even more severe for individuals and families receiving public assistance. At current benefit levels, a single adult receiving General Assistance cannot afford a typical studio apartment and a parent and two children receiving public assistance cannot afford a typical two-bedroom apartment without subsidies — even if they spend their entire grants on rent. Changes in benefits because of the federal welfare reform law will make it even more difficult for some public aid recipients to maintain stable housing.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IS NOT JUST A CITY PROBLEM

The affordable housing shortage affects communities throughout the region, not just the center cities. According to the Metropolitan Council, 50,000 suburban households earning less than \$20,000 per year pay more than 30% of their income for housing. The problem of housing affordability is compounded by the mismatch between the location of affordable housing and the location of new jobs in the metropolitan area. While much of the new job growth in the metropolitan area is taking place in

outlying suburban communities, most affordable housing is concentrated in Minneapolis and Saint Paul and in nearby suburbs. As a result, people living in the center cities and first-ring suburbs become isolated from job opportunities, and people working in lower-wage jobs in the suburbs face either long commutes or excessive housing costs.

Without affordable rental and homeownership opportunities located throughout the region, young adults and families may find it difficult to stay in the communities where they grew up, and senior citizens may have a hard time staying in their communities after retirement.

NEW AND DIVERSE HOUSING CAN ADDRESS AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS

In response to the need for affordable housing in the Twin Cities, communities have worked with the public and private sectors to create innovative solutions to the affordable housing problem. These initiatives operate in two basic ways: through planning for a diverse housing stock and through providing additional affordable

COMPARE INCOME AND THE COST OF HOUSING



rental housing and homeownership opportunities using government assistance and private funds.

First, cities and towns can plan for the private development of a variety of housing types, such as apartments, townhomes, and starter homes, that will provide affordable housing opportunities for young families and the elderly. Local governments can examine planning, zoning, and building requirements to find ways to diversify the housing stock while meeting community standards for high-quality, well-managed housing.

Second, communities can work with private and non-profit housing providers to build new affordable apartments and homes, to preserve and renovate older buildings occupied by low-income households, and to provide counseling and financial assistance to promote homeownership among low and moderate-income families. These

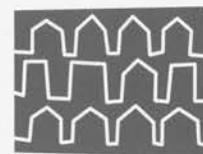
initiatives can be funded through a combination of public subsidies and private grants and loans.

The philanthropic and business communities also can be part of the affordable housing solution. Foundations can contribute funds to non-profit groups that provide affordable housing. Corporations can provide funding and volunteer leadership for affordable housing initiatives, assist employees with housing costs, and invest in the development of new affordable housing.

With the growing need for affordable housing, these strategies will need to be pursued with increased commitment in order to close the affordable housing gap. Working together, government agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations, and businesses can ensure that the dream of decent, safe, affordable housing for all members of the community becomes a reality.

This publication is part of a Public Education Initiative on affordable housing sponsored by the Family Housing Fund. The Family Housing Fund is a private, nonprofit corporation created in 1980 to help bridge the gap between the housing that people need and the housing they can afford. The Public Education Initiative is designed to provide informational materials on a variety of issues related to affordable housing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

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TWO WAYS TO CLOSE THE AFFORDABILITY GAP

**PLAN FOR DIVERSE
HOUSING STOCK**

**ADD HOUSING WITH
GOVERNMENT
+ PRIVATE FUNDS**



Working Doesn't Always Pay For A Home



The Twin Cities area enjoys a strong economy and an enviably low unemployment rate. Unfortunately, with housing costs rising faster than wages, even working full-time does not guarantee access to affordable housing. The Twin Cities metropolitan area faces a severe shortage of decent, safe housing at prices that working families can afford.

A typical two-bedroom apartment in the metro area rents for \$621 per month, and a modest three-bedroom house sells for an average of \$93,000. A home is usually considered to be affordable if a family pays no more than 30 percent of its income in housing costs. Any more than this, and families often must cut back on other necessities such as food and clothing. By the 30 percent measure, a family would have to earn \$24,840 per year (\$12 per hour) to afford to rent a two-bedroom apartment or \$33,000 per year (\$16 per hour) to afford to buy a three-bedroom house. Many jobs pay far lower salaries.

Households with only one full-time wage earner, such as single-parent families or families in which

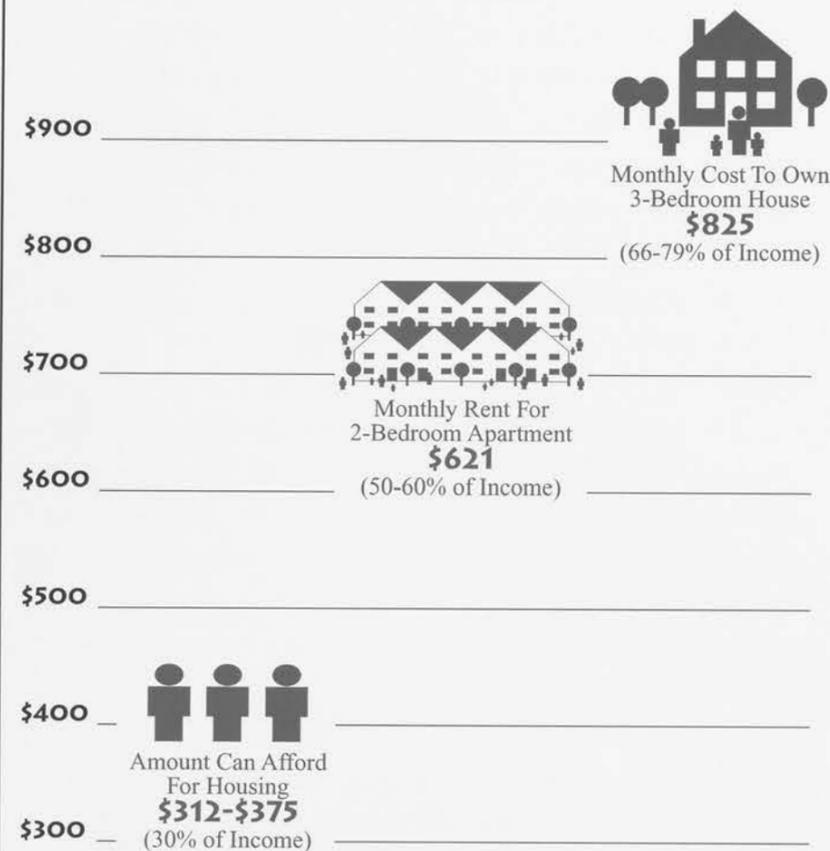
one parent doesn't work outside the home, face particular difficulty finding an affordable home. Even with two family members working full-time in jobs that pay close to minimum wage (\$5.15/hour or \$10,700/year), however, a family cannot afford the typical two-bedroom apartment or three-bedroom house.

The need for affordable housing for working families is especially acute in communities with high levels of employment growth but few lower-priced apartments and houses. Many developing suburbs are experiencing significant job growth, but most affordable housing is concentrated in the center cities and first-ring suburbs. As a result, while many workers earning low wages are providing essential services for residents of local communities—child care, food service, or health care, for example—they often are priced out of housing in the communities in which they work.

The following graphs and table show what people in different professions can afford to pay for housing and what homes for families actually cost.

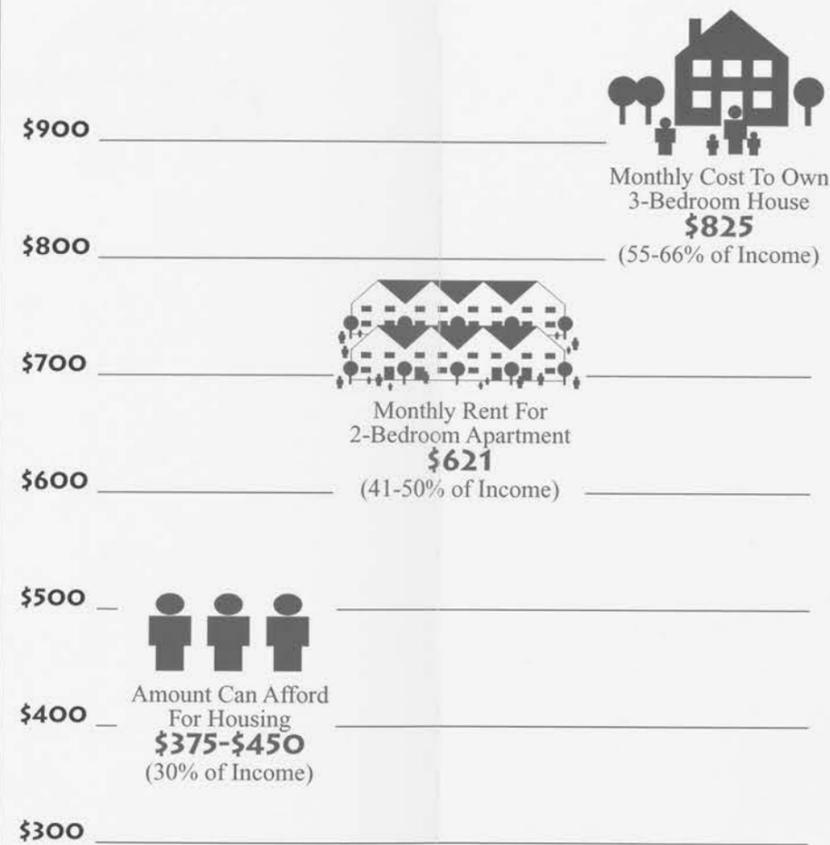
HOUSING COSTS ARE OUT OF REACH FOR FAMILIES WITH THESE INCOMES

\$15,000 PER YEAR OR LESS
(ONE FULL-TIME WORKER AT \$6.00 - \$7.20 PER HOUR)



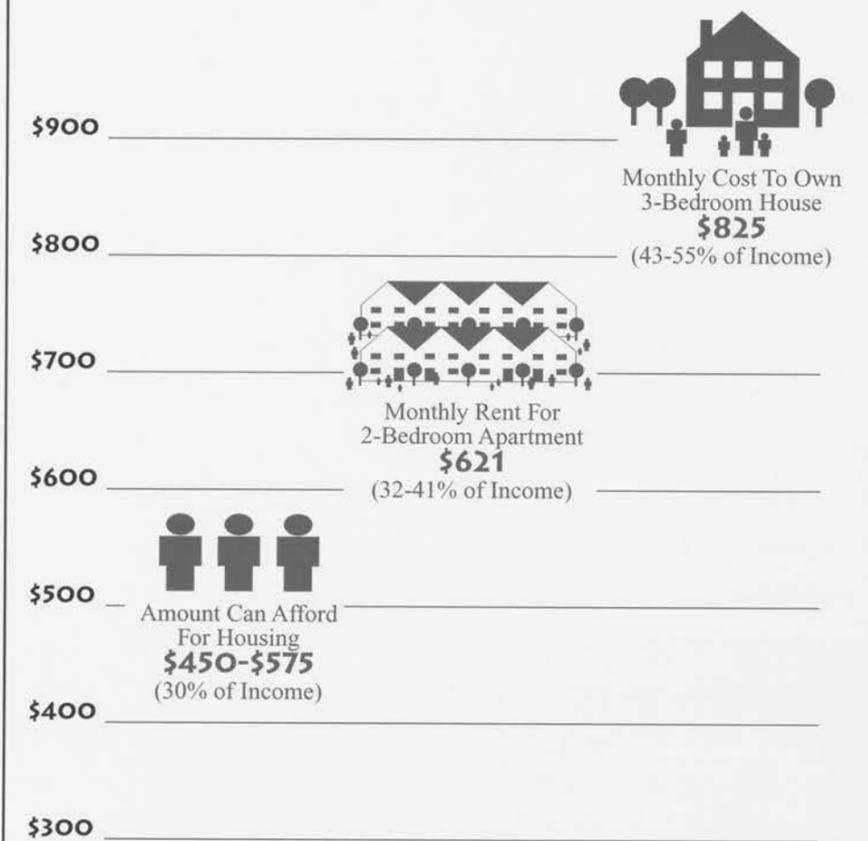
Jobs in this wage range include **host/hostess, counter/rental clerk, cashier, retail sales, dining room/cafeteria attendant, and child care worker.** Housing costs take up a majority of income for families with one wage earner at this level. A typical two-bedroom apartment (\$621 per month) costs more than half of income. The average cost of a modest three-bedroom house (\$825 per month) is far out of reach, at up to four-fifths of the family's income.

\$15,000 - \$18,000 PER YEAR
(ONE FULL-TIME WORKER AT \$7.20 - \$8.65 PER HOUR
OR ONE FULL-TIME WORKER AND ONE PART-TIME WORKER AT
LESS THAN \$5.75 PER HOUR EACH)



Jobs in this wage range include **food preparation worker, housekeeping cleaner, home health aide, teacher aide, restaurant cook, janitor, file clerk, and bank teller.** Households with one full-time and one part-time worker, each earning close to minimum wage, also would fall within this income category. A two-bedroom apartment costs up to half of income for households in this group, and owning a three-bedroom house costs up to two-thirds of income.

\$18,000 - \$23,000 PER YEAR
(ONE FULL-TIME WORKER AT \$8.65 - \$11.00 PER HOUR
OR TWO FULL-TIME WORKERS AT LESS THAN
\$5.50 PER HOUR EACH)



Jobs in this wage range include **school bus driver, receptionist, nursing aide, orderly, medical assistant, and medical records technician.** A household with two persons working full time for minimum wage also would fall within this income category. For these households, rent for a two-bedroom apartment still exceeds 30 percent of income. Home ownership remains out of reach, with costs for a three-bedroom house taking up 43-55 percent of income.

**PERCENTAGE OF INCOME NEEDED FOR HOUSING
IN THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA**

Position	Median Yearly Salary For Full-Time Worker ¹	Monthly Amount Can Afford For Housing ²	Percentage of Income Required To Rent 2-Bedroom Apt. ³	Percentage of Income Required To Own 3-Bedroom House ⁴
Cashier	\$13,187	\$330	57%	75%
Child Care Worker	\$14,560	\$364	51%	68%
Counter and Rental Clerk	\$12,792	\$320	58%	77%
Dining Room/Cafeteria Attendant	\$13,312	\$333	56%	74%
File Clerk	\$16,931	\$423	44%	58%
Food Preparation Worker	\$15,600	\$390	48%	63%
Home Health Aide	\$15,912	\$398	47%	62%
Host/Hostess	\$12,480	\$312	60%	79%
Janitor, Cleaner	\$16,640	\$416	45%	59%
Maid, Housekeeping Cleaner	\$15,600	\$390	48%	63%
Medical Assistant	\$21,403	\$535	35%	46%
Medical Records Technician	\$22,277	\$557	33%	44%
Nursing Aide, Orderly, Attendant	\$19,656	\$491	38%	50%
Receptionist	\$18,720	\$468	40%	53%
Restaurant Cook	\$16,640	\$416	45%	59%
Salesperson, Retail	\$13,208	\$330	56%	75%
School Bus Driver	\$18,408	\$460	40%	54%
Teacher Aide	\$15,928	\$398	47%	62%
Teller	\$17,098	\$427	44%	58%

¹ Source: Minnesota Department of Economic Security, 1996 Minnesota Salary Survey.

² Based on 30% of income.

³ Based on 1997 HUD Fair Market Rent of \$621 for a two-bedroom apartment in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

⁴ Based on Regional Multiple Listing Service average cost of \$93,000 (\$825 per month) for a three-bedroom, 1,000-1,500 square foot single-family home sold in the Twin Cities metropolitan area in 1996.

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July 1998

—Special Issue Highlighting Inclusionary Housing—



COMMON GROUND

TOWARDS A
STABLE, UNIFIED
METROPOLITAN
REGION

WINTER,
1999

Inclusionary Housing

A New Tool to Expand Housing Opportunities

This newsletter is devoted to a new policy initiative of the Alliance: **Inclusionary Housing**. The concept is fairly simple: let's use voluntary "regulatory relief" to encourage the private sector to provide more affordable housing throughout the region. The proposal would offer a bundle of incentives (existing state and regional funding programs) to encourage local communities to lower barriers that drive up the development costs of housing. The ultimate goal is to create public/private partnerships that generate a reasonable mix of incomes in new housing developments.

Builders will be rewarded for making at least 10-15 per cent of their developments affordable to lower income renters and home buyers. Developers who agree to modest affordability goals could receive a **Density Bonus**, providing more flexibility in zoning regulations, or have certain fees and charges waived, or benefit from a speed-up in the permit process.



Can the Twin Cities region build more inclusive communities? Suburban developments in places like Montgomery County, Maryland are proving that market rate townhomes (in foreground) can share the streets with more affordable townhomes (background).

Local communities will receive priority status (significant bonus points in a particular program's funding criteria) for lowering the costs of housing development.

Going Beyond the Livable Communities Act

The trick is to create a substantial "carrot effect:" the larger the bundle of incentives, the greater the economic pull for home builders and cities to cooperate with each other. A large variety of incentive funds and existing spending programs are being considered, many of which have traditionally subsidized growth and development activities in

our region.

Affordability targets will be set at levels that go further than the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act. The goal is to build home ownership opportunities for the family that makes around \$22,000-\$30,000 per year and to create rental units affordable for families making less than \$22,000 per year.

As the accompanying articles on Inclusionary Housing demonstrate, this kind of innovative policy has helped to generate thousands of new, affordable housing units around the country. It's time we try this tool in the Twin Cities region.

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

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The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is a coalition that links the religious, social justice and environmental communities to address the issues of economic development, fair and affordable housing, transit, and the environmental consequences of sprawling growth. We work to involve citizens in regional policy decisions.

Members

Citizens for a Better Environment
Community Stabilization Project
Education & Housing Equity Project
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)
Jewish Community Action
League of Women Voters of Minnesota
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH)
Family & Children's Service, Jobs and Affordable Housing Campaign
Minneapolis Urban League
Minnesota Fair Housing Center
Minnesotans for an Energy Efficient Economy (ME3)
NAACP, Minneapolis Branch
National Organization for Women, Minnesota
Neighborhood Transportation Network
Office for Social Justice, Archdiocese of Mpls. & St. Paul
The Progressive Network
Saint Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Congregations (SPEAC)
The Sierra Club, North Star Chapter
The South Minneapolis Livability Project
Transit for Livable Communities (TLC)
Twin Cities Unitarian Universalists, Metro Stability Task Force
University UNITED
Urban Coalition
Urban Ecology Coalition
Director
Russ Adams
Common Ground Desktop Publishing
Steve Share/Community Media Services

From the Director's Desk

Facing Criticism, Met Council Considers Placing Affordable Housing on 1999 Legislative Agenda

By Russ Adams

As this issue of *Common Ground* goes to press, the Metropolitan Council is considering whether to promote a sweeping affordable housing proposal that would significantly increase the level of investment in the preservation and production of low and moderate cost housing. The proposal would effectively double the budget of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, targeting an additional \$80 million into proven programs that have created or rehabilitated thousands of single and multifamily housing units over the years.

This bold proposal, crafted by the Council's

housing staff, represents the fruition of over a year's worth of focus groups, public forums, and several economic summits. Less than a month ago, a key sub-committee of the Met Council intended to omit "affordable housing" from its recommendations for the Council's 1999 Legislative Agenda. This did not sit well with a number of private civic groups, faith-based organizations, advocates, and public officials.

I don't think the Council members themselves felt particularly good about leaving affordable housing off the legislative agenda. They saw the overwhelming evi-

From the Director/continued on page 10

Double Your Donation

Take Advantage of a Dollar-For-Dollar Matching Grant
from the McKnight Foundation and
Help the Alliance Tackle the Tough Issues

—Affordable Housing—Light Rail Transit—

—Polluted Land Clean-up—

—Urban Revitalization—Sustainable Growth Policies—

—Inclusionary Communities—

Your contribution to the **Alliance for Metropolitan Stability** now goes further to promote vital, sustainable communities!

Thanks to the generous support of the McKnight Foundation, you can now leverage your financial gift to the Alliance with a one-for-one matching grant. For every dollar you contribute to the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, the McKnight Foundation gives another dollar. Our 26-member coalition of environmental, faith-based, social justice, housing and community advocacy groups keeps growing. And you can help us continue to serve as a catalyst for regional stability by making a donation of \$25, \$50, \$100 or more.

Clip out the donation form on the back of this issue of *Common Ground* and send in your contribution today!

Alliance Readies Inclusionary Housing Proposal for the State Legislature

The region's affordable housing crisis raises some critical questions: At a time when the federal role is diminishing, and state funds are limited, can we find new ways to "partner up" with the private sector? Can we create some innovative policies that serve the interests of both home builders and cities? How can we promote the creation of more mixed-income, mixed-type housing developments?

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability has been involved in discussions with developers, the Met Council, local communities, and other housing industry leaders concerning the barriers to creating more affordable housing and the opportunities for boosting new construction, both in the suburbs and within the inner cities. These conversations are intended to find the common interests of each group and to reveal a common purpose.

The Alliance also has played a lead role in forming an "Inclusionary Housing" task force of housing advocates to explore innovative housing development strategies utilized around the country.

Specifically, we have been exploring Inclusionary Housing policies that would encourage private housing developers to play a more active role in the provision of affordable housing in exchange for a package of incentives that would help lower their development costs and streamline their permitting process.

Can a similar approach work in Minnesota? Yes, especially if it contains meaningful economic incentives to home builders and local cities. It's about letting the markets work and rewarding communities for lowering the cost of development.

Housing advocacy groups have drafted an inclusionary housing approach which would fit the particular (some might say "peculiar") market situation in the Twin Cities region. Several nonprofit developers have analyzed the proposal. They believe the "numbers" can work, depending on the size of the development, the scope of the density bonus, and the quality of the overall incentives package.

Inside:

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Page 6 / Inclusionary Housing in Other Communities

Inclusionary Housing

Primary Objectives

Housing

- Increase the Regional Supply of Affordable Housing
- Create Higher Density, Mixed Income Developments
- Help Preserve or Replace Affordable Housing Stock in Older Communities

Regional Policy

- Strengthen Livable Communities Act
- Promote Private Market Role for Solving the Regional Housing Crisis
- Promote Equal Access to Educational Opportunities

Economic Opportunity

- Connect Low-Income Workers to Job Growth Areas
- Create More Locational Housing Choice In Suburban Communities
- Reverse Racially Segregated Settlement Patterns

Environmental Conservation

- Conserve Natural Areas by Modestly Boosting Housing Densities
- Integrate Land-Use Planning and Transit Strategies
- Promote Better Housing Design, Smaller Lots, Narrower Streets
- Fully Utilize Existing Infrastructure
- Shorten Commuting Distances

1999 Legislature: Inclusionary Housing can Help Reform and Strengthen the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act

The bill introducing the Alliance's Inclusionary Housing proposal likely will be linked to the idea of strengthening the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act (LCA). Since the LCA is having trouble meeting its own goals and since it relies almost exclusively on the private sector to deliver the housing, we need to find a way to improve it. Inclusionary Housing seeks to do this in a manner consistent with the LCA approach: voluntary, incentives-based, public/private partnerships, cooperation, money. The focus is to fine-tune the driving engine of housing development in the region—private sector housing accounts for the vast majority of production in the metro area.

The proposal seeks to employ some creative strategies to help the developers

The focus is to fine-tune the driving engine of housing development in the region—the private sector.

Private sector housing accounts for the vast majority of housing produced in the metro area.

deliver a more affordable product. This will increase the supply of low to moderate cost housing, especially in suburban areas where job growth has outpaced the local labor supply.

No one knows for sure how "affordable" we can make a home or apartment under this approach, but our intent is to set a target for housing that costs

around \$70,000—affordable at 50-55 per cent of the Median Family Income for home ownership. This target would be the result of a combination of relaxing zoning restrictions, achieving better density, and some public subsidization (to buy down the price of the home). We're looking at townhome style housing at that level.

Rental inclusionary housing will be more complicated (partly because of the bias against rental and also because the private sector doesn't really build very affordable rental housing anymore). We need to get closer to 30 per cent of the Median Family Income (that's affordable to households making less than \$20,000 per year). Affordable rental housing is the most urgent need in the region and therefore it must be made a top priority.

The Principles of Inclusionary Housing Promote Inclusive, Sustainable Communities

Principle #1: *The Twin Cities metropolitan area is experiencing a dramatic shortage of affordable housing units as well as intense racial segregation and nationally recognized rates of urban sprawl.*

Principle #2: *The Inclusionary Housing task force is committed to developing solutions that address the needs of all metro-area communities: central cities, inner-ring suburbs, and developing outer-ring suburbs.*

Principle #3: *Inclusionary Housing will provide a mechanism to speed*

the development of new affordable units in the Twin Cities metro area, particularly in suburban communities where much of the region's new job growth continues to occur.

Principle #4: *Inclusionary Housing programs can create greater access for lower-income and minority households to better employment and educational opportunities. It can be used as a tool for breaking the cycle of poverty.*

Principle #5: *Inclusionary Housing can provide housing choice and opportunity in all metropolitan*

communities, and can serve as a tool to further affirmative housing goals: allowing the elderly, low-income families and communities of color to access suburban housing.

Principle #6: *Inclusionary Housing programs provide a wide range of incentives to cities and housing developers to encourage greater overall densities and expedite the development process. Higher housing densities and more affordable housing options support the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Growth Plan and are consistent with the goals of the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act.*

Incentives Must be Developed to Encourage All Players to Support Affordable Housing

Developing an Inclusionary Housing proposal that will win legislative support and acceptance by the housing industry and local communities will require crafting a mix of incentives for homebuilders, private developers, and local municipalities. Here's an overview of the types of incentives that will need consideration.

Incenting Home Builders

Home builders and developers represent a powerful potential agent of change. Approximately 90 per cent of the housing created in the region is produced by the private sector. The industry employs tens of thousands of workers and contributes more than a billion dollars in wage earnings to the local economy.

The 1995 Metropolitan Livable Communities Act (LCA) relies heavily on this sector to meet its "affordable" housing production goals. By the year 2010, the LCA pledges to create more than 80,000 units of affordable housing.

And yet, most observers concede that the LCA will not meet its 15-year production goals. Furthermore, the LCA seems almost incapable of delivering housing for incomes of less than \$25,000 per year. A recent report by the Griffin Companies (1999 Apartment Rental Report) confirms that the private sector affordable rental market has been essentially stagnant. Due to a variety of cost and bureaucracy issues, virtually no private developer is able to generate affordable rental units.

Incenting Cities

Another key player in this effort will be local municipalities. More than 100 fully urbanized and developing cities in our region are beginning to experience the hidden costs of suburban growth, housing shortages, and worsening traffic congestion pressures. In the next 21 years, our region is expected to absorb more than 300,000 additional households. Roughly one-half of our new citizens in the next decade will earn



The Milestone development in Montgomery County, Maryland: a market-rate, single family home priced at \$250,000 (left) and, across the street, moderately affordable homes priced at \$110,000.

Home builders and developers represent a powerful potential agent of change... The Inclusionary Housing proposal offers a simple trade-off: regulatory relief for real commitments to build affordable housing.

\$22,000 per year or less, according to the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. The Family Housing Fund has noted that low-income households (individuals or families making less than \$10,000 per year) outnumber affordable rental apartments by a margin of greater than two-to-one.

The draft Inclusionary Housing policy that we have developed calls on cities to pass a local inclusionary housing ordinance that would assist participating developers by offering density bonuses and/or other incentives as a reward for the creation of affordable units. Local communities would still retain local control over zoning and subdivision codes, but they would be encouraged to provide more flexibility in their application of these regulations.

Cities that pass these ordinances would be

eligible for a bundle of state and regional funding programs, or would receive priority status in the competition for other spending programs. Government would now be investing public resources to encourage more innovation and less regulation.

Incentives should be designed to give "credit" to cities for having a local Inclusionary Housing ordinance. This would allow cities to "score" higher on "Request For Proposals" for state or regional funds (think housing financing programs, LCA, brownfields money, park funds, etc.), receive preference on new sewer line requests or MUSA extensions, or give participating cities priority status for major transportation investments (in-

Incentives/continued on page 8

Inclusionary Housing: How the Model Has Worked in Other States

Developments in Maryland, Pennsylvania, California Show How to Blend Market Rate and Affordable Housing

Around the country, many communities are utilizing innovative strategies to increase affordable housing opportunities. One of the most highly regarded tools for promoting affordability in new, fast-growing communities is called **Inclusionary Housing**.

Inclusionary Housing policies encourage the production of a reasonable percentage of affordable units in new housing developments. The private sector—home builders and developers—is asked to make a portion of a new development affordable for low and moderate income families (typically 15 per cent of all the units).

The developer receives a **density bonus** and other zoning incentives as a reward for building an inclusive community. The **density bonus**, which may range from 20-25 per cent, is designed to preclude developers from losing opportunities to build market rate units and to help offset some of the production costs of creating the affordable units.

Since the **density bonus** is added to an existing parcel of land, there are no additional land costs to the bonus units. This encourages more compact development, at densities that could be served by mass transit systems.



At the Clagett Farm development in Montgomery County, Maryland, affordable duplexes are located in the same neighborhood as single family homes costing nearly three times as much. But which is which? Can you guess? Architectural guidelines help the affordable housing blend in with the market rate housing. Above: a market rate single family home sells for \$300,000-plus. Below: a duplex in the same subdivision sells for \$110,000, affordable to families at 65 per cent of the Median Family Income.



Photo credits throughout this newsletter: Montgomery County, Maryland photos courtesy of the Montgomery County Moderately Priced Housing Office; Pittsburgh photos courtesy of Urban Design Associates, Paul Rocheleau, photographer; Minnetonka photos by Alliance intern Aaron Stelson.

Montgomery County, Maryland

Other programs around the country have achieved impressive results: Montgomery County, Maryland is achieving up to 15 per cent overall affordability in their developments and has created more than 10,000 housing units under its Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program. The average purchaser of an MPDU earns 40 per cent of the median family income for the county, or approximately \$28,000 per year.

Montgomery County's housing authority purchases up to a third of each development's affordable units to set them aside as rental opportunities for low-income and working class families.

California

California's Inclusionary Housing law achieves between 10-35 per cent overall affordability and has produced more than 20,000 units in just 10 years. Beyond offering a 25 per cent density bonus to any developer willing to meet specific affordability benchmarks, California offers the following "bundle" of incentives: the reduction of site development standards or zoning code requirements, direct financial assistance, approval of mixed-use zoning, or any other regulatory incentive which would result in identifiable cost avoidance or reductions. This could include the reduction of on-site parking standards; reduced lot size and set back requirements; waiver of permit fees; waiver of street or architectural standards; "fast track" permitting process; etc.

Portland Metro Area

Portland's Metro government just adopted a voluntary inclusionary zoning law last year and retains the option of making it a mandatory policy beginning in November of 1998. The Metropolitan government serving the Portland, Oregon region adopted an Inclusionary Zoning policy, in part, to address severe shortages of low and



Crawford Square, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: more than 60 per cent of the units are subsidized but no distinction is apparent in either the architecture or the character of the neighborhood. By using a mix of subsidized and non-subsidized housing to build a neighborhood, it is possible to create a mixed income community that returns to the great traditions of American cities.

moderately priced housing.

Portland's program envisions offering a wide variety of incentives to encourage the production of affordable housing, including: removal of procedural barriers; donation of foreclosed properties to nonprofit

or government agencies for development as "mixed market affordable housing;" transfer of development rights (TDR); permit process incentives; fee waivers; property tax exemptions; land banking; linkage programs; expedited review process; and other affordable housing funding programs.



Crown Ridge Apartments, Minnetonka, received funding in part from Minnesota's Livable Communities Act: these very affordable rental apartments serve families below 30 per cent of Median Family Income (less than \$18,000 annual income). One block away, condominiums sell for more than \$400,000.

Incentives: Bringing Cities and Private Sector Aboard

The top four factors affecting the cost of new housing construction in the region identified in 1998 were building codes; fees and assessments; land use ordinances—lot size, street width, setbacks, density; and engineering requirements and standards.

Construction of a new, two-bedroom, 1,200 square foot townhome in the Twin Cities suburbs increased in price from \$52,900 in 1988 (\$69,800 adjusted for inflation to 1998 dollars) to \$103,900 in 1998. The cost components that increased the fastest were land and local assessments.

A local HRA active in developing affordable rental housing estimates that \$10,000 to \$15,000 per unit is added to the cost of housing by state and local development requirements that could be lessened.

—Metropolitan Council,
December, 1998

continued from page 5

cluding T-21 funds). The bottom line, give participating local municipalities better access to the bundle of "goodies" that state and regional agencies provide.

Private Sector Developers

In the 1990s, many political "independents," conservative commentators, and public policy makers have come to believe in the free market system as the primary way to create housing that is affordable to metro citizens. The builders view public regulation as the primary barrier to producing a more affordable product. Many moderate Republican leaders are interested in "deregulating" the housing industry and letting loose the creative forces of capitalism to meet the growing demand for affordable housing. Republicans, and perhaps Governor Ventura, will be sympathetic to home builders' complaints of excessive fees and restrictive zoning.

The Inclusionary Housing proposal offers a simple trade-off: regulatory relief for real commitments to build affordable housing. In exchange for rewarding developers with higher density, more flexible zoning, reduced permit fees, SAC (sewer service access charge) waivers, and an accelerated permitting process, our proposal would ask for a meaningful commitment from the builders for an increase in the number of affordable housing in a particular development. Right now we're looking for at least



At the Fallstone development in Montgomery County, Maryland, the \$80,000 townhomes on the right are affordable at 50 per cent of Median Family Income. The market rate townhomes on the left sell for more than \$200,000.

10-15 per cent overall affordability in any participating new construction development. Developers who achieve higher affordability percentages should be rewarded.

Local Municipalities

Asking cities to offer density bonuses and to offer more flexible subdivision codes and zoning regulations will not be easy. City staffers are wary of how even a modestly affordable, development proposal can trigger a severe "Not in my backyard" reaction among local citizens. Cities are also cautious in approving developments that mix housing types and incomes, that aspire to higher densities, that "break the mold" of established codes and standards. Understandably, local municipalities demand high standards of design and management.

This will have to be balanced with the need to deliver more housing choice (in price, in style, in size) to our citizens. Almost every major city in our region has signed on with the Metropolitan Council to provide a greater variety of housing to its citizens. Communities currently are submitting comprehensive plans that are supposed to be consistent with the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act and the Met Council's 2040 Regional Growth Plan. Under these regional commitments, they have pledged to develop at higher densities, at more affordable levels, and within prescribed geographic boundaries. It's in everyone's interest to follow through with stronger commitments to affordable housing.

Shortfalls of the Livable Communities Act

Current Incentives are Insufficient to Meet Housing Needs



Townhomes at Fallsbury, a 15-year-old development in Montgomery County, Maryland, sell in the mid to high \$80,000 range. Created by the County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit Program, they're affordable at 50-60 per cent of Median Family Income.

The Twin Cities' three-year-old Metropolitan Livable Communities Act (LCA) relies entirely upon a limited set of voluntary incentives to cities. The LCA is based on the principle that each municipality should be expected to house a negotiated percentage of low and moderate income households. This is the same principle that has guided inclusionary housing programs in other areas of the country.

The difficulty with the Livable Communities Act is that it provides incentives for only one key player in the process of building affordable housing, the local municipality. Funds for urban transportation or economic development demonstration projects, brownfields cleanup, and housing are available to cities that develop affordable housing goals and submit those goals to the Metropolitan Council.

While these incentives have induced a number of cities to develop affordable housing goals, they have not been sufficient to spur many municipalities to the action of actually creating affordable housing. In fact, some communities with high percentages of affordable housing have used the "fair share" benchmarks as an excuse to tear down affordable units. The scale of incentives under the Livable Communities funding accounts, approximately \$12 million per year, are too small to have a substantial region-wide impact.

The LCA relies upon the idea that city councils have the power and political base to move forward with affordable housing initiatives. It is more often the case that city officials (even those sympathetic to the idea of building affordable housing) must fight local opposition to low-cost units and low-income residents. A city council is not likely to reduce fees and local controls to attract low-cost developers if constituents are opposed to such development.

Second, by providing incentives *only* to the cities, the law does nothing to mobilize market-rate developers to build affordable units. Market forces—including municipal requirements and state tax policies—control the housing production system and currently dictate a freeze on new multi-family units that rent for less than \$1,200 per month. Inclusionary housing programs must address the bottom line of developers.

Finally, the LCA provides *no* mechanism for oversight or monitoring. Municipalities that make no progress toward their housing goals receive no punishment and continue to have equal access to incentive pools. Region-wide housing programs should serve to guide communities towards stronger performance in providing a variety of housing choices, should set measurable goals, and should utilize proactive policies that provide a disincentive to cities that fail to meet their goals.

Affordable housing goals adopted by communities participating in the voluntary Livable Communities Act program would result in the production of 69,000 affordable owner and 13,000 affordable rental units by 2010.

In the first the first two years of the Livable Communities Act program (1996-97), participating suburban communities added 6,377 affordable owner and 823 affordable rental units.

Unless production is increased, annual shortfalls of 1,380 affordable owner and 447 affordable rental units can be expected. If this continued, there would be a deficit of 20,700 affordable owner units and 6,700 affordable rental units (half of the production goal) by 2010.

—Metropolitan Council,
December, 1998

From the Director

Met Council Revisits Affordable Housing

continued from page 2

dence that the region was going through an unprecedented period of affordable housing shortages, staggering gaps between wages and housing, and historically low rental apartment vacancies.

In considering this proposal, the Council is doing the right thing at the right time for the right reasons. And, if they approve a comprehensive package, they should be applauded.

Affordable rental housing is the most urgent need in the region and therefore it must be made a top priority.



Pittsburgh's Crawford Square includes a total of 500 units of mixed income housing, both ownership and rental, with a wide range of prices.

Metropolitan Council Considers Housing Deregulation, Greater Public Investments

The Met Council's Community Development Committee is considering a new proposal by the Council's Community Development Division staff. The proposal is called the "Housing Reform Initiative" and contains several recommendations to address the affordable housing needs of the metropolitan region. The proposal focuses on two primary strategies:

1) Encourage the lowering of regulatory barriers that add cost to the development of affordable housing.

This would take the form of funding incentives and funding criteria that favor communities that cut housing costs through changes to local development regulations, controls, and standards. The goal of the Met

Council is to "maximize public investments and reduce the per unit dollar cost required to produce affordable rental and ownership housing."

This strategy, lowering regulatory barriers, bears a striking resemblance to the Alliance's inclusionary housing concepts. However, a key affordability ingredient still needs to be "fleshed out." The Met Council must specifically tie any regulatory relief to meaningful commitments to create truly affordable housing.

2) Increase funding to preserve existing affordable housing (especially rental) and to produce more affordable housing.

The full request would effectively double

the state's commitment to affordable housing, increasing state investments by approximately \$85 million. This still would represent less than one per cent of the state's budget.

The funding request would go towards existing Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) programs such as the Affordable Rental Investment Fund (ARIF), the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program, and the Community Revitalization Fund (for homeownership rehabilitation). ARIF is used for the construction, acquisition or rehabilitation of permanent low-income housing with four or more units. Several other agencies and advocacy groups are contemplating similar legislative requests.

MICAH Continues Performances of 'Like Waters Rolling Down'

Three performances remain of "Like Waters Rolling Down," a musical play about fair housing and affordable housing issues produced by the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH) in collaboration with Illusion Theater.

"We've discovered that the medium—using a theater piece—really does work well," says Jaime Meyer, MICAH's theater project manager. "It fulfills our expectations of being able to educate and advocate."

The model for the theater project includes organizing a group of sponsoring congregations to present a performance of the play at a host congregation. A facilitated discussion follows each performance.

The first three performances drew 1,700 in total attendance to Adath Jeshurun in Minnetonka, Church of the Risen Savior in Burnsville, and to Guardian Angels Catholic Church in Oakdale.

The next performance will be Sunday, February 7, at 6:00 p.m. at Central Presbyterian Church, 500 Cedar St., in St. Paul. Two additional performances (details to be announced) will be in the northern suburbs (March) and in Minneapolis (April).

"There probably will be some significant rewrites for the Minneapolis and St. Paul shows," Meyer notes, because "the first three shows were aimed at a suburban audience." For example, while lack of housing choices is the biggest issue in the suburbs, increasing rents and the demolition of existing housing are the big issues in the city.

MICAH hopes that bringing local communities together for the play will lead to new alliances for local action and advocacy on housing issues.

For more information, contact MICAH at 612-871-8980 or www.micah.org

JOIN US FOR A KICK-OFF FORUM TO INTRODUCE

CONVERSATIONS AT THE CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CIRCLE DIALOGUES ON EDUCATION, HOUSING AND RACE IN THE TWIN CITIES

To begin an informed and civil dialogue on some of the most critical issues facing the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

West Metro

January 21, Thursday, 7:00–9:00 p.m.

St. Louis Park City Council Chambers
5005 Minnetonka Boulevard

Mayor Gail Dorfman will welcome
the following Community Leaders:

Dr. Barbara Pulliam, Superintendent, St. Louis Park School District
Rep. Carlos Mariani-Rosa, Executive Director,
Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc.
Russ Adams, Director, Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

Seating is limited

Call by Tuesday, January 19 to reserve your space
Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP)
(612) 330-1505 (1507 fax) Attention: Pam Jewson

East Metro

February 4, Thursday, 10:00-12:00 noon

Metropolitan State University (Great Hall)
700 East 7th St., Saint Paul

President Dennis Nielsen will welcome
the following Community Leaders:

Rev. Oliver White, Pastor, Grace Community Church
Becky Montgomery, St. Paul School Board Member
Dr. Samuel L. Myers, Jr., Roy Wilkins Professor of Human Relations and
Social Justice, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

Call by Friday, January 29 to reserve your space
St. Paul residents: call Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
(651) 642-2083 Attention: Kate Murphy
East Metro residents outside of St. Paul:
call EHEP (612) 330-1505

Your Gift will be Matched, Dollar-for-Dollar, by a Matching Grant from the McKnight Foundation

Yes!!! I support the work of the *Alliance for Metropolitan Stability* to promote a viable future for the diverse communities which together contribute to the vitality of our metropolitan region.

Here is my contribution, to count towards the Alliance's matching grant from the McKnight Foundation:

_____ \$10 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ (Other \$ _____)

Please contact me so that I can become more involved:

_____ write letters to editor _____ attend public hearings _____ serve on a committee

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

*Make checks payable to the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and send completed form to:
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, 2105 First Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55404*

At the West Ridge Market development in Minnetonka, the moderately affordable Gables townhomes (above) share the streets with very affordable rental apartments and high-priced market rate condominiums.



Inclusionary Housing: Can Market Rate and Affordable Housing Get Along?

2105 First Ave. So.,
Minneapolis, MN 55404
Phone: (612) 870-3443
Fax: (612) 870-4846
E-mail Address:
radam03@ibm.net
Address Correction
Requested



Community Matters

A publication sponsored by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation for involved citizens and civic leaders working together to strengthen Saint Paul and its neighborhoods.
Summer 1999 • Vol. 6, No. 3

FACE TO FACE

*Public Dialogue on Race,
Connections and Commitment*



Do we avoid talking about the experience of race and racism in our community?

This spring, *Community Matters* set out to find out who is talking and thinking about race and racism and which individuals and organizations are contributing to this personal and public conversation.

Throughout our community, people are struggling to overcome prejudices and biases, taking risks to speak out against injustice, and organizing with others to combat racism and promote cultural pluralism. In this issue of *Community Matters*, stories of innovative community initiatives and personal commitments from across the metropolitan region are shared. Yes, much work is yet to be done to dismantle racism imbedded in our public policies and institutions. But the commitment behind this ongoing work deserves to be recognized and acknowledged. Through these efforts, we will become a stronger and healthier community that values and utilizes the assets of all our residents.

Community Matters

is published by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation with contributions from F.R. Bigelow Foundation, Otto Bremer Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Saint Paul Foundation, and The St. Paul Companies, Inc. *Community Matters* is produced with the assistance of the *Community Matters* Advisory Committee composed of representatives from Saint Paul neighborhood and community-based organizations.

Our aim is to increase understanding about issues affecting the vitality of Saint Paul, to report on resources available to formal and informal leaders throughout the city, and to build connections among those working to strengthen our communities.

Editor: Barbara Rose

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To submit information for publication, be added to our mailing list, or request additional copies of *Community Matters*, please call Barb Rose at (651) 659-6031, fax at (651) 642-2088 or email to bar@wilder.org.

With special thanks to Saint Paul Public Schools, Guadalupe Area Project, Galaxy Youth Center, Wilder Forest, the Hungry Mind Review, the participants in the Spring 1999 Cities at Work forums and all who shared their time and stories for this issue.

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FACE TO FACE: *Public Dialogue on Race, Connections, and Commitment*

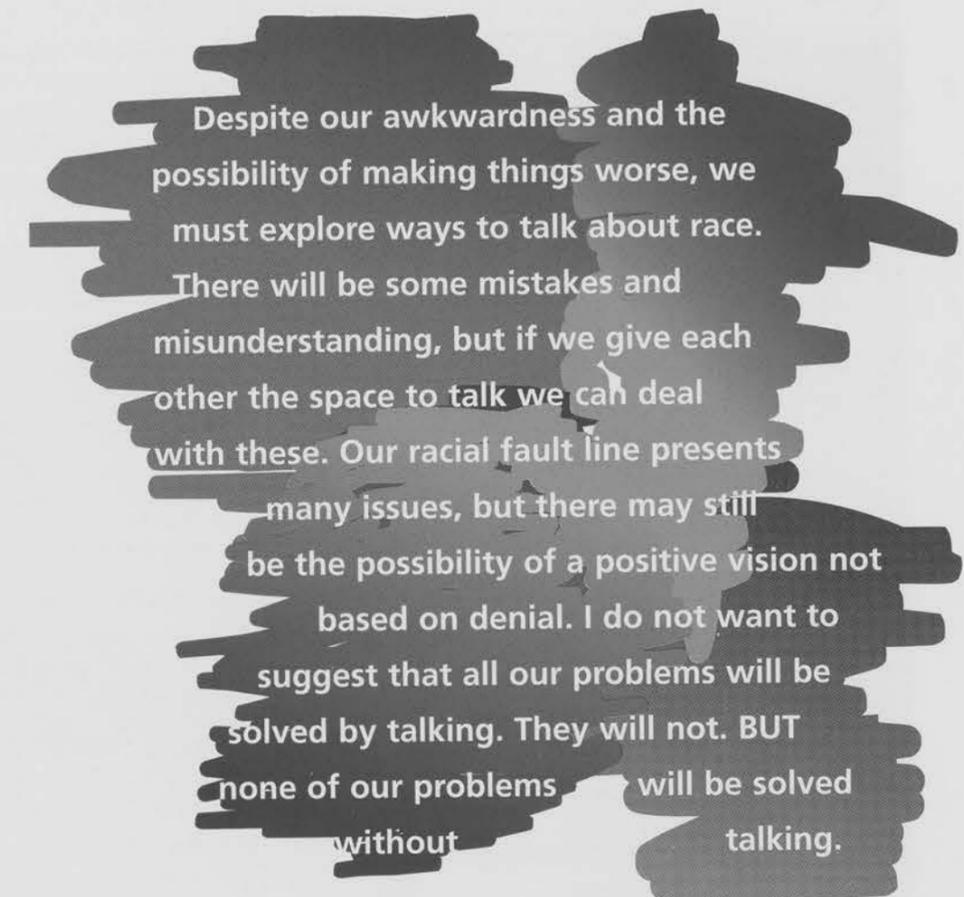
by David Hennessey

The 1999 *Cities at Work* public forum series entitled *Unleashing the Power of Our Community: A Public Dialogue on Race, Connections, and Commitment*, is taking steps to engage Saint Paul citizens in understanding and tackling the complex impacts of racism both in our city and the Twin Cities metropolitan region. Small groups of residents are meeting all over the city this spring, summer, and fall in community circle dialogues and public forums to talk about the impacts of racial and economic segregation on housing, education, and race. Over 700 people have been involved in the forums and community circle dialogues since March.

What's the relevance of all this talk?

Why do we need to continue dialogue about racism in both its personal and institutional forms? Why is it important to tap into and celebrate the cultural diversity of our community?

continued on next page



Excerpted from *Talking Race*, an essay by John Powell, Executive Director of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota Law School. Reprinted with permission from *Hungry Mind Review*, Number Forty-Five, Spring 1998.

"America has had a dialogue about race for some time," says Melvin Giles, Facilitator at Catholic Charities in Frogtown. "That's good, but we need a dialogue on racism too. Race is still in the head, but racism goes to the heart. People need to know the burden of pain I (as a Black American) and other people of color carry living in this society. Once people acknowledge that pain, the burden can begin to transform from a heavy and paralyzing struggle to a lighter and healing

journey of more understanding and more trust, more peace and less stress. It becomes a shared journey. I can feel light as a feather, as if I'm being carried by the wisdom and knowledge of my mentors and ancestors. If I have less stress and worry, I can hear their voices. But many people have so much pain and feel so belittled that they can't even hear the voice of the person next to them."

Sonia Alvarez – President of Alvarez Communications, a management consulting firm – says we must continue to address racism because it remains with us in ways that many people

don't even see. "Most white people think of racism as deliberate acts against people on the basis of their race," she says. "However, if you ask people of color to define racism, their definition is far more inclusive. Examples include being asked for three forms of ID after the white person in line ahead of you is not asked for them or steering people of color into fields requiring less aptitude in math or science."

"Many of these acts are subconscious. Many well-meaning people offend, demean and oppress people of color without even knowing it. The only way to reveal the impact of these behaviors is to talk about it – candidly and mutually."

continued on page 6

**We need a dialogue on racism too.
Race is still in the head,
but racism goes to the heart.**

Editor's Note: On April 28, nearly 200 children, youth and adults gathered at Arlington High School for the first 1999 *Cities at Work* forum, examining youth perspectives on how to bridge cultural and racial differences.

We've assembled many of the comments made that night by both the youth panelists and audience members. They appear throughout this issue of *Community Matters*. We've identified these voices only by gender and approximate age to protect the privacy of the individuals.

A video of the entire forum, entitled *Stop Talking, Just Do It: Saint Paul Youth's Perspectives On Bridging Differences*, is available. Call Barb Rose at (651) 659-6031 for more details.

Pain shared, pain divided

Pain shared is pain divided. What I've learned from listening to children is that hurt people go out and hurt people. The pain we see in our communities is the grief nobody wants to talk about. It turns to anger. The anger turns to rage. The rage turns to violence, and violence can go in two directions: outward toward the community or inward toward ourselves. So there is no judging who has the most pain; there is just helping each other share the load.

— Adult man

Is "Race" a Valid Concept?

Editor's note: The following article first appeared in *Community Matters*, Fall 1997.

"The root and reality of racism grows out of the very false concept of 'race.' We do not seem to realize how recent this concept is. It has not been much more than three centuries that the term 'race' itself entered the English language. The error in 'race thinking' is that we are taught to believe that there is an intrinsic link between biology and what is essentially social."

Mahmoud El-Kati, Professor of History, Macalester College. From *The Myth of "Race"/The Reality of Racism: A Critical Essay*.

Is "race" a valid concept?

Michael Omi, Professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, has noted: "...most scientists feel that racial classifications are meaningless and unscientific. Professor Kenneth Kennedy of Cornell University is quoted as saying: 'In the social sense, race is a reality. In the scientific sense, it is not.'"^{*}

Omi discusses several problems with the notion of race, especially as it is codified in current census categories. Just two examples: the categories are based on the need of agencies to have objective data about the very subjective notion of one's identity; and categories, such as "Asian American," that lump together whole continents of cultures, languages and historic differences are of questionable use. Some people point out that dividing groups by "race" is a convenient way for the culture in power to control those groups.

"I tell funders that too many times we have to go after 'Indian money,' or 'Asian money,' or 'Hispanic money,'"

says Colin Wesaw, Education Specialist at Wilder Forest. "That just keeps us more segregated. We all have the same problems but have to chase after separate pots of money."

Shem Shakir, Executive Director of the Frogtown Action Alliance, also notes how much Americans segregate groups by perceived racial or ethnic differences. "Only in America do we do that," he says. "I believe we do it to keep the different ethnic tribes divided. We need to get away from the 'race issue' and simply address things as citizens."

Is "race" a valid concept? Perhaps the Metropolitan Council answers that best in introductory remarks to a publication on demographic trends in minority populations:

"...racial analysis is in itself a racist activity. It groups people by race and compares overall statistics that generalize characteristics for the group as a whole. The purposes may be worthwhile, but categorizing, generalizing and analyzing people perpetuates viewing them not as individuals, but as mem-

bers of a group, possessing characteristics one believes to apply to that group.

"What makes race a 'reality' is that people often act on what they believe are racial distinctions...Data by race would not merit much attention if it weren't for the legacy of racism..."^{**}

References:

- ^{*} "Racial Identity and the State: The Dilemmas of Classification," remarks delivered by Michael Omi at the forum, *Race and Poverty: Our Private Obsession, Our Public Sin*, October 13, 1995, sponsored by The Institute on Race and Poverty, University of Minnesota Law School.
- ^{**} "Minority Population Distribution Trends in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area." Metropolitan Council, October 1993. (651) 291-6359.

Continued from page 4

Some people add that we must discuss these issues because they also have broader implications – that racism is only one example of how systematic belittling can lead to serious problems. “I believe that we all feel oppression...and at different times, we all can become oppressors,” says Ed Irwin, Manager of Youth Development Programming at Wilder Forest, who helps run historical simulations for youth (See article, page 8). “We need to liberate ourselves by recognizing our common humanity and by empathizing with each other. In Littleton, Colorado, you had two young men who felt oppression in a certain way but did not have the ability to be empathetic with other people around them. So they lost their humanity.”

Many point out that dealing with racism is only one part of a broader need to embrace cultural differences. “We have significant differences in our population whether these differences are of socioeconomic, religious or ethnic origin,” says Pixie Martin, a communications consultant. “It’s those differences we need to talk about.”

Human Relations Consultant Jim McDonough is a member of the Frogtown Pluralism Circle, a multi-ethnic and multi-agency neighborhood group that has been meeting for over two years to counter racism and cultivate a pluralistic neighborhood. (See article, page 15.) “The demographics of Saint Paul are changing,” he says. “Frogtown, for instance, went from a neighborhood of European Americans to one with many African Americans and now many Hmong as well. The Pluralism Circle feels it’s important to welcome the new people rather than react fearfully to the changes.” The group looks for positive ways to bring different cultural groups in the neighborhood together.

Giles, who also meets with the Pluralism Circle, agrees that racism is one part of the discussion of cultural

diversity. “Undoing racism is about owning up to what has been done to Native Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans and others, and liberating us from the injustice of systematic racism,” he says. “But many of the newer immigrant groups come from countries where discrimination is based on class rather than race.” That means, he says, that discussions about cultural diversity focusing on new immigrants can sometimes divert

If we fail to tap into all of the rich resources we have available to us, through other human beings, we are not maximizing our potential as a society.

needed attention from discussions about racism. “It will only be a temporary diversion provided we keep dialoguing. The gift of dialoguing is that the newer folks get to see the similarities of their experience to others’ experiences and vice versa.” This brings greater understanding and true honoring of our diversities.

Martin emphasizes that promoting cultural diversity is simply following a strong American tradition. “That is one of the strengths of this country,” she says. “The immigrant experience is not something that has happened and is finished – it continues. We aren’t perfect at it, but compared to almost any other place in the world, we are the only country so open to immigrants.”

She also notes that many immigrant communities, along with the African American and Native American communities, “come from collectivist cultures” that can teach us about building community relationships. “Our traditional American individualism takes us only so far, and we now see how much know-how we lack in creating a sustained village. We can learn about interaction from these more collective-based communities.”

Alvarez agrees that promoting cultural diversity will tap into the experience of all peoples to help solve community-wide problems. “If we fail to tap into all of the rich resources we have available to us, through other human beings, we are not maximizing our potential as a society. The only way to solve the problems of the whole is to engage the whole in the solution...New insights to old problems are critical to avoid making the same mistakes over and over again.”

For McDonough, who has participated in a community circle dialogue in Frogtown, listening to new immigrants tell their stories reconnected him with his personal family history.

Read the book before you judge its cover

I used to live in Saint Paul and now I live in Woodbury. After we moved out there I found a job. When I told people [at work] where I was from, they automatically thought that I was a thug, was in a gang and might rob the place. Nobody has ever thought that way about me before. I thought it was weird.

— Teen woman

Racism plagues the hearts, minds and spirits not only of people of color but of the dominant culture as well.

“I felt that as a first generation product of immigrants, I was removed from the immigration and acculturation process my parents and grandparents went through. But being in a room with new immigrants from another country, I really had a sense I was experiencing my own family history.” Learning about other cultures, he says, can help us learn about our own.

“To do this work requires tremendous self understanding,” Martin says.

“You need to know what contributes to your view of the world and what in that view prevents and promotes your engagement with other cultures.” She refers to the presentation by the Illusion Theater at the second Cities at Work forum on

May 18th. “They laid out three words to guide our work that evening: roots, identity, and community,” she says. “All of those elements have to be part of the dialogue.”

Giles notes that different cultural communities may need to approach the racism/diversity dialogue in somewhat different ways. “People of color, especially African Americans, Hmong and Vietnamese in Frogtown and Summit University, have to start talking with each other more,” he says. “And

there will be times when we have to recognize that some cultural groups have to talk among themselves only. I think that’s a giant need especially for European-Americans right now. Whites need to be comfortable with – or at least accept being uncomfortable with – talking about being white. Because people of color talk or think about their color and racism all the time. Whites need to talk more about being white until it becomes natural.”

Racism, Alvarez points out, affects everyone, not just people of color. “To paraphrase the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,” she says, “what affects one directly, affects all of us indirectly. Racism plagues the hearts, minds and spirits not only of people of color but of the dominant culture as well.” ●

Mixed labels

I have a question for the adults in the audience because I really don’t get it. I know if you look at me you’d think I was African American. But if I told you I was half white and am only a quarter African American, you wouldn’t believe me. So my question is – how are we categorizing each other? I just don’t get how you do that. I’m confused and puzzled.

— Teen woman

My grandmother was the oldest living Ojibway in the state of Wisconsin...But it very often happens to me that I am considered ‘white.’ I’m more Native American than I am white. So I get very angry with people who make judgments about others based on what they see.

— Adult woman

I was in a class where we were watching a movie and a lady died in the movie. When her name came up on the screen, it was a Latin name. A guy in the class said, ‘Oh, she deserves to die.’ He didn’t realize that I was Puerto Rican. I guess he thought I was African American. Later, when he found out I was a Latina he said, ‘I’m sorry. I didn’t know you were Latin.’ I just wish we would stop categorizing and quit putting people into boxes and labeling them. I mean, he was a minority himself, and still he labeled me.

— Teen woman

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Discovering Common Ground

"This is an opportunity for youth from different neighborhoods – city and suburbs – to come together and learn about each other. Kids live together, and become friends. The skills of inquiry, learning and team building are emphasized."

A teacher involved in Project Common Ground

Since 1995, a unique educational experiment has quietly taught children multicultural communication at Wilder Forest in Marine-on-St. Croix. It brings urban and suburban children and teachers together in a neutral setting to learn about each other in a natural environment. Dubbed "Project Common Ground," the program helps students of different backgrounds discover what they have in common.

"We are experiencing the growth of ethnic populations, and we need to get along as a pluralistic society," says Anna Barker, Project Common Ground Coordinator. "We know employment in the future will require workers to get along in teams, to be efficient and creative. These kids are getting hands-on experience in team building."

A joint undertaking of the Wilder Foundation and the Stillwater and Saint Paul school districts, the project brings together upper elementary and junior high age youth and their teachers at Wilder Forest for three sessions each year. Each session lasts three days and two nights. Multiethnic educators from Wilder Forest work collaboratively with the teachers during the sessions, while outside groups, such as SteppingStone Theater for Youth Development, often assist.

Activities include canoeing and hiking, astronomy and storytelling, winter survival exercises, cultural art, plays and skits, interactive games and skills development, farm activities, journaling, and historical simulations such as the Underground Railroad and the Hmong Odyssey (See article, page 12).

Barker emphasizes that Project Common Ground is built on four principles, which she summarizes with the acronym, LACE: leadership, academic achievement, cultural empathy and experiential environmental education.

"We want to grow a new generation of leaders who will stand up against racism in all its forms," she says. "But you can't understand the myth of race and racism without a solid academic grounding in history, science and the humanities. Then, cultural empathy allows students to feel what it's like to walk in another person's shoes. Finally, experiential environmental education gives students a chance for hands-on, inquiry-based learning in addition to the academic instruction."

So far, the reaction of students, parents and teachers has been very positive. A program evaluation published in 1998 by the Wilder Research Center noted that 94 percent of all

parents surveyed felt that their child's response to Project Common Ground was favorable or very favorable. According to parents, the most valued aspect of the program is the opportunity for children to meet and work with children from other classes, cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

Evaluations during the first two years of the program show that Stillwater students primarily value the experience of working with people from other cultures. But for Saint Paul students "the program appears to have a greater impact on their inquisitiveness and overall interest in school," possibly because they are learning in an outdoor environment.

According to Barker, the outdoor setting is a very important part of the program. "We need a new way of being with our young people that involves hands-on experience using nature as a template," she says with enthusiasm. "The forest is a diverse multicultural ecosystem." She also believes the natural setting helps awaken inquiring minds to solve real-life problems.

"They're allowed to ask questions, to be scientists," she says. "And the teachers work side by side with the

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Project Common Ground participants frolic while boarding bus.

students and take these units back into the classroom – it all goes right back to the curriculum."

The project began four years ago with discussions between Wilder Foundation President Tom Kingston, former Saint Paul Schools Superintendent Curman Gaines and former Stillwater Schools Superintendent Dr. David Wettergren. The program is primarily supported by state desegregation funds.

"The idea grew out of questions about how to positively integrate schools in creative, innovative ways, looking back at the lessons we learned from the '60s," says Barker. "Busing in the '60s obviously didn't work very well, so the idea was to bring young people from both school districts together in a neutral setting to find out what they had in

Busing in the '60s obviously didn't work very well, so the idea was to bring young people from both school districts together in a neutral setting to find out what they had in common.

common. And as far as we know, there's no other program like this in the country."

Last year Project Common Ground received recognition in the President's Initiative on Race. It is now nationally recognized and highlighted on the White House web site.

The program is still developing and will soon expand its reach to high school students. Organizers have been pleased with the program's ability to extend children's horizons. As one teacher wrote in a 1998 evaluation: "This makes kids aware of the larger community. It helps kids understand that the community is bigger than just where they go to school." ●

— DH

The company we keep

It's easy to be with people who are like you. It's easy for whites to sit with whites and blacks with blacks. We see that in the [school] cafeteria. Maybe you don't think you have anything in common with people from another culture, but you should just talk to them. And another thing: maybe people look at me and think I'm racist just because I'm white. Or maybe someone who has one bad experience with a black person thinks they'll have the same experience with all black people. But you need to get to know the individual person. That's a big problem for adults – they pass those attitudes on.

— Teen woman

We all need to break away from our peer groups and meet new people.

— Teen man

Personal Reflection

Feeling Guilty for Being American

by Jodi Kiely

Editor's Note: This article was reprinted with permission of the author. It was initially published in *The Aquin*, the student newspaper of the University of St. Thomas, and later appeared in the *Rochester Post-Bulletin*.

Photo: Ron Germundson



to my boyfriend's hometown to meet his family, one of his relatives asked me if I was a foreign exchange student. That was a first.

It's frustrating because when people ask me questions like that I feel as if I have to explain my perfect English and my Irish last name by telling them I was adopted. The majority of people living in the United States don't have to explain their history, so why should I?

When I do explain myself, some people take the conversation further, not realizing what they are saying. After learning that I was adopted, some people tell me how friends of theirs adopted a child from Korea, or how a relative traveled to China to pick up their adopted child in person. Those are touching stories, but why are they telling me this?

It seems that wherever I go, so does my ethnicity. I don't want people judging me by the way I look. No one does. And I also don't want to have to tell my life story to people in order to explain why my last name is Kiely. I may not fit the old-fashioned definition of "American," but some people don't realize that Americans aren't just black or white. ●

I may not fit the old-fashioned definition of "American," but some people don't realize that Americans aren't just black or white.

I was standing at a bus stop in downtown Minneapolis when an old man with a scraggly gray beard, John Lennon sunglasses and clashing clothes decided to make me feel guilty for being an American.

"Kor-ee-an conflict," he said loudly, pointing at me. "I fought in that war. You should be grateful because if it wasn't for me, you wouldn't be living in this country!" Immediately, everyone turned to stare at me. The man didn't stop. He looked me up and down, nodding, and said, "I bet you're wondering how I know you're a Kor-ee-an," he said, drawing out the word again. "I fought in that war. I know what you people look like."

That wasn't the first time an incident like this has happened to me. It wasn't the first time I let someone insult me in front of strangers without defending myself. I said nothing and tried to ignore him. What I should have done was speak out against his remarks. Instead I let him board the bus as I stayed and waited another 20 minutes for the next bus to come by.

A similar situation occurred when I was at work in downtown Minneapolis. I was in the elevator when an older Caucasian man with a bad sunburn and a preppy tennis shirt stepped on. A younger man followed. The older man turned to me and said casually, "So where are you from?"

"St. Paul," I told him.

He looked at me, laughed and said, "No, where are you really from?"

This time I wasn't as timid as I had been with the Korean war veteran at the bus stop. "I am really from Rochester," I told him.

The man laughed again. "That's impossible," he said. "Even I have my European roots. Where are your ancestors from?" I told him how my dad came from an Irish family and how my mother's side was German.

The guy wouldn't give up.

"What are you talking about? Unless you're fresh off the boat or from California, you can't be from St. Paul. I mean, where in the Orient are you from?"

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to have the last word. He stepped off at his floor, and the other man also exited. The younger man had said nothing.

These things happen to me all the time. In fact, it's become so uncomfortable for me that I have stopped traveling alone with my father. When people see a young Asian woman with an older Caucasian man, the last thing that crosses their mind is the possibility that it could be a father with his daughter.

When I worked at the mall in Rochester, customers would talk to me slowly and enunciate their words, assuming my English wasn't good. I even had some people ask me if I knew May Thuy or Kim Sung or others from Korea, Japan, China and Vietnam. When I went

Guidelines for Multicultural Collaboration

by Marya Axner and Marcelle E. DuPrav

Reprinted with permission from the Topsfield Foundation.

- Learn from generalizations about other cultures, but don't use those generalizations to stereotype, "write-off," or oversimplify your ideas about another person. The best use of a generalization is to add it to your storehouse of knowledge so that you better understand and appreciate other interesting, multi-faceted human beings.

- Practice, practice, practice. That's that first rule, because it's in the doing that we actually get better at cross-cultural communication.

- Don't assume that there is one right way (yours!) to communicate. Keep questioning your assumptions about the "right way" to communicate. For example, think about your body language; postures that indicate receptivity in one culture might indicate aggressiveness in another.

- Don't assume that breakdowns in communication occur because other people are on the wrong track. Search for ways to make the communication work, rather than searching for who should receive the blame for the breakdown.

- Listen actively and empathetically. Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. Especially when another person's perceptions or ideas are very different from your own, you might need to operate at the edge of your own comfort zone.

- Respect others' choices about whether to engage in communi-

cation with you. Honor their opinions about what is going on.

- Stop, suspend judgment, and try to look at the situation as an outsider.

- Be prepared for a discussion of the past. Use this as an opportunity to develop an understanding from "the other's" point of view, rather than getting defensive or impatient. Acknowledge historical events that have taken place. Be open to learning more about them. Honest acknowledgement of the mistreatment and oppression that have taken place on the basis of cultural difference is vital for effective communication.

- Awareness of current power imbalances – and an openness to

hearing each other's perceptions of those imbalances – is also necessary for understanding each other and working together.

- Remember that cultural norms may not apply to the behavior of any particular individual. We are all shaped by many, many factors – our ethnic background, our family, our education, our personalities – and are more complicated than any cultural norm could suggest. Check your interpretations if you are uncertain what is meant. ●

For more information, check the Community Tool Box website at: www.toolbox.org

Moving beyond blame

We all have to learn about each other within our own cultures. Then we have to take what we've learned within our culture and educate other cultures about it. We can't just point our fingers at one culture and blame them. I know there's a long history of slavery [in this country] and of Native Americans being killed. I'm here because my ancestors were brought over here as slaves, but I'm not going to blame somebody for it. I'll create my own culture and teach other people about the culture of my ancestors.

— Teen woman

I'm African American, and there are different cultures within my own culture. But if we continue to blame other cultures for us being here for various reasons, we aren't going to get anywhere or educate anybody. So I can't blame my friend right here for what her people did to my people.

—Teen woman

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Reliving Cultural History

You're in a room with a small group of people. You are all asked to write down the four most important things in your life. Then you are told to let go of them one at a time. A whip cracks every time you must part with one of the things you cherish the most – such as a loved one's smile, a safe home, a religious practice. The process continues until everything you value is gone.

"Usually there are tears at this point," says Ed Irwin, Manager of Youth Development Programming at Wilder Forest. "People try to hold on to their family members and loved ones. And we talk of how slavery stripped you of your culture and everything you knew. It stripped you of your humanity."

This is a part of the Underground Railroad scenario, one of three historical simulations conducted by Wilder

Forest staff to help participants empathize with the history of a people – African American slaves running for freedom, Native Americans moving from home to home as their lands are carved up, or Hmong refugees fleeing soldiers ordered to kill them.

"The intention is to make the group empathetic with that piece of history," says Irwin. "We're talking here about real-life situations. We don't do this to play hide and seek in the woods or to scare people. We're doing it so we can empathize with our ancestors, better understand each other and then focus on reconciliation."

The simulations, which are conducted on request for groups of youth and/or adults, are just a part of Wilder Forest's programs in youth development and cultural awareness and part of its ongoing dialogues about diversity.

"We work in a multi-cultural setting where the dialogue is continuous," says Irwin. "We want to empower participants with a sense of history and with skills in communicating, conflict resolution, problem solving and facilitation." He notes that they often do the simulations in conjunction with multi-cultural and culturally specific camp programs.

We're doing it so we can empathize with our ancestors, better understand each other and then focus on reconciliation.

Located at Marine-on-St. Croix, Wilder Forest is a center for community building and youth development, offering groups the chance to run their own programs, retreats and conferences, or to create new experiences using Wilder's natural environment and staff resources. The historical simulations are usually offered for groups of about 15 people at a time. Each one is carefully structured to give people an historical frame of reference, a recreation of the oppressive system in question, a simulated field experience outside and a debriefing afterward.

A typical Underground Railroad simulation starts with the playing of drums and music, followed by historical lectures about pre-colonial Africa, slavery in America, and the underground railroad.

Then the group is taken through a series of exercises simulating the slave ship journey, being stripped of their pride, culture and will to resist, imagining what it's like to work as a slave and hearing stories of living under slavery.

Finally, the group prepares to escape to freedom. A "conductor" leads them out into the night woods, emphasizing that their goal is to make it to freedom together, and that freedom is more a state of mind than it is an actual location. Along the way, they will be pursued by slave catchers as well as helped by various friends.

Respecting differences

The anger and the hurt that people feel block productivity. It's important to recognize anger, to see and to hear it. But then it's time to move on...to accomplish the meshing of different cultural groups.

— Teen woman

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We want to empower participants with history and with skills in communicating, conflict resolution, problem solving and facilitation.

"Mahmoud El-Kati, a Macalester Professor of History, talks of history and humanity as being the same thing," Irwin says. "The ability to be empathetic is the ability to understand a people's story. If I know your story, it's hard for me to exploit you. But if I don't know your history, it's easy for me to exploit you." Slavery, he says, depended on slave owners remaining ignorant of the history of the people they enslaved.

The entire experience lasts two to three hours. A similar simulation shows how Native Americans in Minnesota viewed the conditions that

led to the 1862 uprising, as they were forced to move from their land. Another simulation traces the journey of Hmong refugees as they fled their homes at gunpoint to Thai refugee camps and finally to America. Plans are underway to add simulations of the Irish American and Swedish American immigrant experiences.

Irwin reemphasizes that the point of the simulations is to foster empathy and reconciliation.

"Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa talks of the need for wounds to be reopened sometimes so that they can heal right," he says. "Because sometimes the scab over the wound festers and rots.

That's how slavery has been in America. We've never really allowed the wounds to be opened up so that we can cry together, forgive each other, and move on. We do these simulations to get in touch with our own humanity." ●

— DH

Racism's legacy

It's so important for you to understand that this business of racism and the cover and the package that you are in is all garbage. Because your soul is what counts. Your soul is equal to anyone else's, and you can learn just as well as anyone else. But the white establishment has brought racism to you, so now you are wondering if you are not at fault. The fact of the matter is that until they learn to give, you will not be able to do anything.

— Adult man

Underground convert

Editor's Note: The following story is just one example of how the Underground Railroad simulation can affect people personally.

"A young man came here for the Underground Railroad. His teacher had required him to come. His father was an 'Enforcer' for Hell's Angels. The young man had seen a lot of violence and believed in white supremacy. He had a leather coat, spikes – he really lived the part.

"After the Underground Railroad experience he came up, reached out, and embraced me. And he said: 'To be honest, this is the first time I ever wanted to touch a Black man without intending to harm him.' He knew when he got home he would be beaten because his dad hadn't wanted him to take the journey.

"Since then he's actually started helping us do the Underground Railroad. But the most powerful part of the story came about a month ago: he told me his dad is changing because of his (the son's) lifestyle. Now his dad encourages him to be involved with us.

"You hear story after story like this. I think for some people, this experience is the first time someone's giving them permission to deal with their feelings about slavery and not just with their intellect." ●

— Ed Irwin, Manager of Youth Development Programming, Wilder Forest

For more information about all of the programs and facilities at Wilder Forest, call (651) 433-5198.

Personal Reflection

Taking a Stand: *Without struggle, There is No Progress*

by Venise N. Battle, Cretin-Derham Hall High School

I am a sixteen year old African American teenager who is well accustomed to the prejudices of American society. In my sophomore year of high school, I immersed myself in an unconventional education that broadened my horizons on the subject of diversity. It began when I joined my school's diversity group, 'P.R.I.D.E.' (People Realizing Individual Dreams Exist). Two morals that I have learned from this experience are: "Diversity is more than skin deep" and "Silence is a form of oppression." Since then, it has been a priority of mine to share this knowledge with my community. My name is Venise Battle. I am taking a stand.

Diversity is more than skin deep.

I first thought diversity only involved the racial origin of a community. I believed it was primarily a "black and white" issue. However, I have come to learn otherwise. Diversity does not only include your racial origin, but also your gender, culture, age and socio-

economic status. I have learned that there are prejudices beyond racism: sexism, ageism and classism, to name a few. With this knowledge, I realize that prejudice exists not only between communities, but within communities. Intercultural and cross cultural, both equally unjust.

Silence is a form of oppression.

It is said that silence sometimes is the best answer. Yet, with issues of diversity, it is the worst answer. I have learned that silence is a way to avoid discussion and leave an injustice unnamed. When used as an answer, prejudice is tolerated. When prejudice is tolerated, oppression is sustained.

Prejudice is a big problem. A classmate of mine once asked, "How can we make a difference? The problem is so big!" Well, my stance is that we make change by setting examples, e.g., not tolerating prejudiced comments or jokes in our homes, cars or while having fun with our friends. Ending prejudice also requires a conversion of the heart. A person must have an example of love before they can begin to love. Setting a no tolerance attitude is a start.

I refuse to tolerate prejudice. I have taken action by becoming involved in diversity projects. One such project is the Minnesota Independent School Forum Diversity Conference which was planned by a group of students from several independent schools. At the conference, over 200 people attended discussions about issues of race, gender, ageism, and several other subjects. I participated in the planning and organization of this event because I believe that by



I have learned that silence is a way to avoid discussion and leave an injustice unnamed.

creating an environment that stimulates conversation around issues of diversity, someone will walk away more aware and be able to teach others to take a stand against prejudice.

My inner strength has been tested. What has brought me through and has allowed me to continue learning is God. I now see diversity as something we humans have lost sight of. I feel that the unity of nations and love between all people is a goal that God has for us. We were not born to hate. We were created to love. When I stand against prejudice, I stand against hate. When I stand against hate, I stand for the love of all mankind.

This September, I will embark upon my senior year of high school. Even though I will be leaving my school, I hope to pass on the torch to another student, so that the progress in standing against prejudice will continue. The road ahead is a long and difficult one. Nevertheless, in the words of Frederick Douglass, "Without struggle, there is no progress." ●

Teen watch

Just because we're teens, people seem to think we commit crimes. You go alone to shop at stores, and if you watch carefully you see people following you around...I don't like that - they have no business following me when I'm just trying to shop...It hurts even thinking about it.

— Teen man

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Frogtown Pluralism Circle: Our Diversity is our Greatest Asset

by Anna Lucas, Frogtown Catholic Charities

In December 1996, a group of neighborhood residents and service providers from Model Cities, Saint Paul Rehabilitation Center, Catholic Charities, Hmong American Partnership, Saint Paul United Way and the Wilder Foundation formed a collaboration to address racism in the communities where we live and serve. The Frogtown Family Center joined the Circle in 1998.

Our first initiative was to hold an Undoing Racism retreat with the Peoples Institute for Survival and Beyond. That retreat set the stage for the Pluralism Circle's commitment to combating racism, not only as individuals but within our organizations and throughout the Frogtown community.

Over the past two years, the Pluralism Circle has sponsored several community healing ceremonies and peace

pole plantings in Frogtown. Several organizations in the Circle have sponsored anti-racism training for their staff and volunteers. The Pluralism Circle works to help people in our neighborhood learn more about each other and to treat each other with respect. We are working to get rid of racism and to combat unfair, racist systems and institutions in our community.

The Pluralism Circle actively engages all individuals and organizations interested in our vision and mission. The challenge, as we grow, is to sustain the meaningfulness and the relationships of our work and to continue to find ways to share our learning with the Frogtown neighborhood. Getting past the surface exploration of racism to making real, lasting change is a process that requires a safe space where trust is built and can be counted on. The members of the Frogtown Pluralism Circle continue to build a foundation for true lasting social change within ourselves, our organizations and our communities. We want the Frogtown neighborhood to be known across the Twin Cities as a place that welcomes and respects all people. We want to fulfill our responsibility for making this dream a reality. ●

The Frogtown Pluralism Circle meets at 633 University Avenue on the third Thursday of every month at 9:00 a.m. You are welcome to join us. For more information, call Melvin Giles at (651) 265-5712.

The Pluralism Circle

Vision/Mission Statement

The Frogtown Pluralism Circle actively seeks to engage and support individuals, organizations, and communities in:

- Undoing the insidious web of individual bigotry, prejudice and institutional racism;
- Countering racism on all levels;
- Healing the wounds of the past; and
- Cultivating a dynamic pluralistic neighborhood where diversity is welcomed, respected, and seen as an opportunity for growth.

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Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Breakfast Club

How to address the realities of racial tension and division has been a struggle for religious institutions across the nation for years. The Breakfast Club, a concept developed by the Chicago Urban Reconciliation Enterprise or C.U.R.E., is a unique opportunity that provides a model for individuals and communities to deliberately bridge racial and cultural barriers.

The Breakfast Club program participants include racially diverse church leaders from different congregations who meet in pairs every month for a year. The church leaders are assigned

a partner from a different race and ethnicity. Over a shared meal, the pairs intentionally discuss issues of race in order to gain an understanding of how someone from a different cultural and racial background thinks and feels. By breaking down racial barriers, personal relationships, understanding, and respect are explored and experienced. These relationships can then potentially lead to working further together on community initiatives to combat and dismantle institutional and personal racism. "We think these informal gatherings can have educational, institutional and neighborhood

impact as well as build some deep personal and private relationships," said Reverend Roger Quant of First Covenant Church on Saint Paul's East Side.

Members of Pastor Quant's congregation are participating in the Breakfast Club along with an East Side African American church, Word of Life Christian Fellowship and Unity Baptist Church in the Summit University neighborhood. So far almost 70 individuals (or 35 pairs) from these congregations have made a commitment to meet once a month for 12 months.

A Personal Experience with the Breakfast Club

by Deborah Mitchell

As I was thinking about being asked to write about the Breakfast Club, many thoughts raced through my head. How should I describe this event in my life? I decided to describe the Breakfast Club as part of a journey that I am on. It is a journey that people of color begin when they are born and only ends when they die.

The Breakfast Club idea begins with the horrible term, "racism." Each of us who volunteers to be a part of the "Breakfast Club" is assigned a partner. The partner is a person with whom you have no previous relationship, who is of the same sex but is a member of a different race. My partner is white. We meet monthly to discuss the deeply painful issues regarding race and racism. We meet during breakfast and have made a commitment to continue our discussions with each other for a year. At our first meeting, we cried many tears, but we found out that we have many things in common that have affected us greatly.

The Breakfast Club is a journey, and on any journey you learn not only about others but about yourself, too. My partner and I have decided that we are on this journey together. We hope that the relationship we are building will help her make changes in her life and help me make changes in mine. My partner and I agree that we can't change the world, but together, we can change ourselves. The greatest thing we both hope to gain is that we can be positive role models to our children. We hope our children will be watching, listening, and learning from us. ●



Photo: Ron Germundson

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We think these informal gatherings can have educational, institutional and neighborhood impact as well as build some deep personal and private relationships.

Breakfast Club Discussion Topics

Month	Topics
Month 1	Introductions, definitions & expectations
Month 2	First experiences with race When I was the "only" one
Month 3	Family & community views, stereotypes
Month 4	The historic & contemporary role of Scripture
Month 5	You, your friends, & your response to racism
Month 6	Is there a reason to review history? Slavery?
Month 7	White privileges; Have you benefited or suffered?
Month 8	Affirmative action, reverse discrimination
Month 9	Ethnocentric, ethnic pride
Month 10	Interracial dating & marriage, the raw nerve
Month 11	Multiracial worship & community, is it worth it?
Month 12	How I hope to make a difference. I have a dream.

Source: © C.U.R.E., (Chicago Urban Reconciliation Enterprise)

According to some of the materials provided by C.U.R.E., "the one-year commitment provides the framework that will encourage accountability and incentive to meet when the discussions get heated or challenging."

The Breakfast Club program emphasizes that, through the Church, a common bond can help address racial tensions and differences. However, the gulf between racial groups persists. The Breakfast Club is based on racial righteousness versus racial reconciliation. Whereas reconciliation implies that there is a need to restore something that has been broken, racial righteousness implies that there is something new to be forged spiritually.

Each Breakfast Club participant receives a monthly mailing that includes resources to help guide the discussions. The 12 topic areas are listed in the table. Monthly phone calls from the Breakfast Club coordinators evaluate the progress of the groups and provide additional support as needed. Every quarter, a large group meeting brings all the pairs together to share their experiences and learn from others. At the end of the year, participants will be surveyed and asked to support the materials and meeting costs for a new Breakfast Club member. ●

To find out more about the Breakfast Club, contact Reverend Roger Quant at the First Covenant Church, 1280 Arcade Street, Saint Paul, MN 55106 or (651) 774-0344.

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Jewish Community Action

by Amanda Seigel, Jewish Community Action

Jewish Community Action (JCA) was founded in 1995 with the mission to bring together Jewish people from diverse traditions and perspectives to promote understanding and action about social and economic justice issues in Minnesota. JCA unites individuals and congregations to bring a distinct Jewish voice to broader community efforts to address social and economic problems. The organization provides leadership and training to increase Jewish advocacy and activism on social justice issues and seeks to develop coalitions with communities of color and religious communities.

In 1998, Jewish Community Action conducted a congregational inreach program, in which JCA members surveyed members of their congregations on current social issues. The three main issues identified during the

inreach were racial justice, affordable housing, and community reinvestment. This discovery led to the formation of working groups for each issue.

JCA's Racial Justice Working Group seeks to build anti-racist leadership and action in the Jewish community. The group's objectives include developing anti-racism training that can be provided in the Jewish community and working with communities of color on local issues. As part of this work, JCA serves as a member of the Governor's Commission on the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday events, and has worked for the past two years to help coordinate events. JCA also sponsored "Intersecting Rhythms," a series of cultural programs exploring African American and Jewish American identity, expression, and cross-cultural dialogue.

JCA's Affordable Housing Working Group contributes to JCA's ongoing involvement in affordable housing issues. The group's objectives include preserving subsidized housing and other affordable housing, increasing affordable housing in urban and suburban areas, and promoting training and advocacy for Russian and English speaking members of the Jewish community around affordable housing issues. JCA is active at the legislative level in mobilizing members of the Jewish community to influence affordable housing policy and work with other local affordable housing advocacy groups.

Role models

One form of racism is pressure from the grown-ups around us. For instance, my stepfather is really racist. I try not to let that affect me because right now one of my greatest role models is a white man, Chris Vandel. He's one of my greatest role models. When I see somebody like him being a leader, I think that maybe I can take his position one day and follow in his footsteps.

— Teen man

JCA's Community Reinvestment Working Group seeks to explore and increase Jewish investment in core urban areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The group's objectives include promoting Jewish institutional investment in community development institutions such as credit unions, and establishing specific financial goals related to Jewish investment in low-income communities. This work is part of national initiative sponsored by the Philadelphia-based Shefa Fund to stimulate stronger and more visible American Jewish Institutional investment in low-income community development projects. ●

For more information about Jewish Community Action, please contact us at 612-822-1442.



Personal Reflection

Overcoming Fears

by Angelique Beards, Guadalupe Area Project



Source: Guadalupe Area Project

I think there is a fear about things that are different from what we know. So because of this fear, we avoid it. We avoid it by mocking it or ignoring it. People do these things because they are ignorant. We only know ourselves and beyond that, there are some things we choose not to explore. In order to overcome this fear, I believe we must become more

knowledgeable. I can't think of a better place to do that than at school. At school, there is a common ground, a neutral territory where the opportunity for us to face and overcome our fears is waiting around every corner. School has a very diverse atmosphere, but more times than not, you will see segregation. People cling to what they know and to people like themselves.

To break this bad habit, I think information needs to be available for

I am

*I am from God, Creator of all,
I am from the garden, where the apple was ate.
The place where the world was at one time harmonious,
but now is just the complete opposite.*

*I am from a place. A place I have never been. Another place
where I was happy.*

*I am from the ship that brought me to where I am now. The
place where many of my greats jumped and then drowned to
their death.*

*I am from the beatings we received only because we tried to leave.
I am from the struggles we endured to be free by law, not knowing
that once free we would always in some small way still be imprisoned
by hate.*

I am from confusion. Confusion because I am also the counter.

*I am from a place where we decided we wanted more. We weren't
happy. We had to bring misery to others also. I am from the ship that
brought them here. I was the captain. I am from the hand that
chained and enslaved those people and then raped them. I am the one
who took the children, screaming, from their parents arms.*

*I am from all this. All this I have done never knowing that one day
it would become one. From all of that it has transformed me to
become who I am now: I am irony. I am love and hate. I am greed.
I am power. I am man. I am woman and child. I am up. I am
down. I am Black. I am White. I am respect. I am looked up to and
also looked down upon on.*

*I am all these things. All these things are me. I am everything...
I am the future...I am the past. And I am now. I AM ME!*

— Angelique Beards

**People do these things
because they are ignorant...I
believe we must become more
knowledgeable.**

everyone. I feel that the schools should have more discussions about diversity, and there needs to be more productive activities during celebrations of Black History month, Hmong New Year, Day of the Day, etc. There also needs to be more multicultural and diverse staff on board who can help us initiate the process of learning about our own heritage and other cultures. By doing this, there will be less looking down and more looking up at a person because they are different than you.

From this learning process an understanding will develop, and from this understanding some walls can get knocked down and bridges built in their places. ●

Macalester College Dismantling Racism Group Opens Minds and Hearts

by Mathew Abts, Macalester College Dismantling Racism Group

The Dismantling Racism Group (DRG) is a multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural learning community struggling to unlearn racism. Composed of local community members, Macalester students, staff, faculty and alumni, DRG is creating an anti-racist institutional philosophy for Macalester College and its surrounding community. Recently, DRG joined other student groups to initiate an internal review of multiculturalism at Macalester. This effort has heightened awareness of the ongoing problem of institutional racism on campus and in the community.

DRG has offered introductory anti-racism training conducted by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (New Orleans) and Crossroads Ministry (Chicago). Almost 100 individuals have attended, and 40 have completed advanced anti-racism training with the People's Institute.

The experience with this training has been tremendously valuable. Upcoming training opportunities are available August 11-13, and DRG invites anybody interested to attend. At a recent DRG meeting, several DRG members shared with *Community Matters*.

Matt

Before my involvement in DRG I focused my time on proving that I was not a racist. Until I was nine years old, I lived in a mainly African American neighborhood. I went to the local

school and played with the local kids – African Americans, Laotians and Mexicans. Since I was nice to people of color – and I didn't tell racist jokes – I thought I couldn't be a racist.

The training provided a few definitions

I think white privilege is obvious to people of color, and I felt a little foolish that it had to be pointed out to me.

that transformed my thinking. One was white privilege, which is defined as the advantages white people have because people give us the benefit of the doubt when we apply for a job, or a mortgage, or try to get an apartment or an education. People of color are discriminated against in subtle and blatant ways on a daily basis. I think white privilege is obvious to people of color, and I felt a little foolish that it had to be pointed out to me. Now that I see white privilege, the real challenge is acting on this knowledge.

Chris

As I became aware of white privilege and institutional prejudice, I began to see power in every interaction. I came to understand that untamed power is one of the main dangers of an institution. Everyone thinks they are doing what is in others' best interest, but without accountability, there is no way to be sure. Accountability is one of the most important aspects of the Dismantling Racism Group.

Nathan

Being a native of South Africa, I have experienced the brutal injustices of racism almost my entire life. I did not expect to receive any new information or insights on the matter. However, the first day of training proved to be a real shock to my sensibilities. I was confronted with the radical notion that all white people were racists by virtue of their white privilege and their participation, whether conscious or unconscious, in a racist system. It dawned upon me that it was precisely because white people refused to acknowledge their own racism that it (racism) was able to propagate and fester in this society and my own. In my country white people consider their racism to be a desirable and beneficial state of affairs for everyone involved, whereas in this country, white people believe that racism is a relic of the past, or the burden of minorities.

My experience with DRG hasn't been confined to the culpability of white people. I have also realized my own

continued on back page

In my country white people consider their racism to be a desirable and beneficial state of affairs for everyone involved, whereas in this country, white people believe that racism is a relic of the past, or the burden of minorities.

Twin Cities Healing the Heart of America 2000 Offers Hope

by Hector Garcia, National Conference for Community and Justice

In January, the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), invited concerned individuals and organizations to attend the St. Paul and Minneapolis showings of the National Conversation on Race, Ethnicity and Culture broadcast from Hartford, Connecticut. Since February, this group has been meeting monthly at the Minneapolis Community Development Agency to build better connections between local anti-racism efforts and to create a stronger voice for these efforts throughout the Twin Cities community.

In the year 2000, the group plans to sponsor a Twin Cities enactment of a project known as *Healing the Heart of America*. Originated in Richmond Virginia in 1993 with the work of a nonprofit organization, *Hope in the Cities*, the project is now spreading to other cities to help heal the wounds of racism and bring about racial reconciliation and cooperation. The former capital of the Confederacy and a port of entry for African slaves, Richmond recently has become an example of how honest conversation can break down stubborn and old barriers between races.

The newly elected Tim Kaine recently became the first white mayor of the city to publicly express regret for the history of slavery. This was a gesture toward reconciliation that is still unique in the nation and a strong indication of a move away from traditional race-based politics. In 1998,

other community leaders in Richmond convened teams of elected officials, community activists, and business people from around the country to offer testimonies about the positive impact of the *Hope in the Cities'* work on Richmond's business sector and the community as a whole.

We can bring communities together through shared history.

The *Twin Cities Healing the Heart of America 2000* will be based on the Richmond model. It will include a conference and a Unity Walk through history and will be preceded and followed by a series of community dialogues about personal experiences and perspectives with race. The dialogues in the Twin Cities will be facilitated by *Hope in the Cities* and NCCJ. In an interview by *Nation's Cities' Weekly*, published by the National League of Cities, Rob Corcoran, the national coordinator for *Hope in the Cities*, said, "If talk is done well, that is action. If people truly go through the dialogue experience, they are going to be different people, behave differently, relate to other people differently. ...We can bring communities together through shared history."

The Unity Walk through history will need to be quite different in the Twin Cities than it was in Richmond. Whereas Richmond's historical sites of racism on the Unity Walk were primarily related to relations between blacks and whites, the history of the Twin Cities will be told through a series of multiracial and multicultural stories.

These stories can help break down barriers, identify cultural blind spots and help to create further progress in racial harmony and cooperation.

The rich heritage of the United States provides an inspirational precedent to all planners and participants of the *Twin Cities Healing the Heart of America 2000*. The excellence and

strength in the country's economy and government is due largely to the rich resources provided by the native and immigrant groups which formed it. This precedent presents a challenge throughout the next millennium to Minnesotans. We can promote and implement a commitment of resources to create and strengthen our communities based on racial equality and justice. ●

If you are interested in learning more about this project, call Hector Garcia, Executive Director of the National Conference at (651) 659-0401.

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Moving Beyond Dialogue:

What are the Most Powerful Steps That Could Help Our Community Work Together Across Cultural and Racial Differences?

On May 18, participants at the *Cities at Work* forum, **Face-to-Face: How we Interact** met in small groups to discuss this question. The following list summarizes the responses recorded by each of the groups that evening.

- ✎ Create more time and space for engaging in cross-cultural dialogue and public discussion with neighbors and others
- ✎ Continually challenge our own racial and cultural prejudices, biases, and assumptions and those of others
- ✎ Insure that the public schools offer a multicultural curriculum that is affirming and inclusive of the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the student population
- ✎ Insure that the composition of the public school administration, teachers, and staff reflect the racial and cultural diversity of our school population and have adequate training and resources to be supportive and responsive to these diverse groups
- ✎ Nurture and celebrate the pluralism of our community to preserve the rich cultures and ethnic heritages found in our community
- ✎ Explore more ways for people of all cultural and racial backgrounds to tell and share their stories
- ✎ Find more opportunities to learn from and with youth
- ✎ Initiate and promote more community-based multicultural collaborative efforts ●

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Saint Paul New Americans Advisory Committee: A Forum for Immigrant Issues

by Bob Webber, New American Advisory Committee

The Saint Paul New Americans Advisory Committee (NAAC) is a volunteer committee established by Mayor Norm Coleman. NAAC promotes relations and connections between Saint Paul's growing immigrant community and the Mayor's Office. NAAC members are appointed by the Mayor, but NAAC meetings are open to the public. In fact, the advisory committee encourages anyone interested in discussing social and/or political issues that affect immigrants to attend the meetings.

Over the past year, exploring how to engage the immigrant communities' active citizenship has been one of NAAC's major concerns. Minnesota Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer and Bert Black guided committee members on a tour of the Secretary of State's office in May. The committee also recently met with the Saint Paul Police Department and hopes to collaborate soon on some materials that will facilitate relations between the police and new immigrant communities.

Last year, the NAAC focused its work on welfare reform and studying the fast-growing Somali community. A panel of Somali leaders and activists helped to design and organize a public forum. A brochure about the Somali community was also developed for community-wide distribution. Sirad Osman, a Somali job counselor recently joined the committee.

The Mayor's Office sends a representative to every meeting. Cha Vang currently represents the Mayor. Bob Webber is the Chair and Interim Secretary. NAAC meetings are held bi-monthly at the Hubbs Center, 1030 University Avenue West. The next

meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 26 from 4:00-5:30 p.m. If you would like to attend a NAAC meeting or would like more information about the committee, please contact the Mayor's Office at (651) 266-8510. ●

Root causes of pain

I think we are only dealing with the surface issue. We talk about all the pain people feel [from racial stereotyping], but we are not talking of the sources that cause the pain...I can try to have good personal relations with people, but if I am systematically advantaged as a white person, that will undercut my personal efforts day in and day out. So when I hear you asking how discrimination feels I'm not sure that's the critical question. I already know how everyone feels to be discriminated against.

I agree that the pain of discrimination is 100 percent valid. I'm just saying we need to look at the root causes of that pain and not just talk about interpersonal relations...I would suggest we take a critical look at how we divide our resources. Look at a map of the Twin Cities: most of the African American people are living right in the center and most of the whites are in the suburbs. Then look at the way money goes to the schools - the suburbs put money in their schools and the inner city schools get less funding. That problem goes much deeper than interpersonal relationships.

— Adult man

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Community Circle Dialogues: *Reflection and Action on Education, Housing and Race in the Twin Cities*

by Dick Little, Education and Housing Equity Project

There is growing ethnic and racial diversity within Saint Paul and the entire Twin Cities region. We are becoming increasingly polarized along the lines of race and class. Demographic changes in the central cities, suburban communities, and school districts point to serious issues of equity and access to opportunity in both housing and public education.

Community-wide study circle programs have taken place in many communities across the country (See sidebar, next page), but the Twin Cities community circle dialogue project is the first attempt at a region-wide program. With the growing national attention to regional policy issues such as urban sprawl, segregation, social equity, and transportation, the regional approach to community circle dialogues is an innovative model. Recently, the community circles on education, housing and race in the Twin Cities were selected by the President's Initiative on Race as a model of a "Promising Practice for Racial Reconciliation" and as an innovative approach to our nation's racial problems.

Metro-wide Community Circle Dialogues

The community circle dialogues on education, housing and race, initially launched by the Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP), encourage civic engagement and multi-

cultural conversations to help build more inclusive communities in the Twin Cities. In 1997, EHEP and partnering organizations, including the Minnesota Minority Education Project and the Metropolitan Interfaith Council, sponsored the first "community conversations" or community circle dialogues on the challenges of segregation in education and housing. In the fall of 1998, a new round of community circles was launched in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

The community circle dialogue project has brought together hundreds of people in dozens of communities throughout the Twin Cities region, who met in "community circles." Suburban moms, city dwellers, recent immigrants, small business people, the

underemployed, people of color, pastors, police officers, teachers and many others have met in small groups to explore the related issues of housing and school segregation. Dialogue participants share personal experiences with prejudice and racism and develop their ideas for building integrated and inclusive communities that work.

In 1999, several major community activities had their genesis in the circle dialogues of 1997 and 1998. The innovative and inclusionary housing legislation sponsored by the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability was recently passed into law by the 1999 State Legislature. MICAH (Minnesota Interfaith Coalition for Affordable Housing) and the Illusion Theater



Community circle dialogue participants share experiences at June gathering.

Source: Education and Housing Equity Project

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

produced and performed the fair housing theater event "Like Waters Rolling Down" in churches and synagogues around the metro area this past year. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and MICAH were both partners and sponsors of the 1997 community circle dialogues on housing, education, and race. Another idea that grew out of the community circle dialogues, still in the development stage, is the creation of a property tax check-off as part of mortgage and utility payments. The funds donated will contribute to a metropolitan affordable housing fund. The small monthly donations will support fair housing initiatives and reduce up front expenses for households attempting to access better housing.

The community circle dialogues can also lead to new relationships and partnerships that contribute to overcoming racial stereotyping and discriminatory attitudes. A circle convened by Saint Paul's Commonbond Communities, Inc., brought together residents of one of their developments in Oakdale with nearby residents who had initially opposed the introduction of affordable housing in their neighborhood. New understandings, new connections and new commitments by residents are building a shared community.

Community Circle Dialogues in Saint Paul

In the spring of 1999, the *Cities at Work* public forum series kicked off their fourth season with "Unleashing the Power of Our Community: A Public Dialogue on Race, Connections and Commitments." *Cities at Work* community circle dialogues were convened to complement the citywide forums by engaging Saint Paul residents in dialogue at the grass-roots level.

A new discussion guide was developed. Experienced facilitators were recruited and trained by the Minnesota Facilitators Network and Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution. A training workshop on "Understanding Community and Institutional Racism" was offered by Minnesota Churches Against Racism. In Saint Paul, twelve community circles have met this spring; more are planning to convene in the fall. Each circle is ethnically and racially diverse, consists of 8 to 15 participants, and meets for approximately 10 hours spread over five sessions. Examples of circles meeting this spring are the Frogtown Pluralism Circle, and the SPNN (Saint Paul Neighborhood Network) Circle.

In all, more than 50 community circles have or will be convened in both Saint Paul and the Twin Cities area. *Cities at Work* and EHEP co-sponsored a gathering of the community circle participants in June. In November, *Cities at Work* will hold its final forum, "Beyond Tolerance: A Call to Action." The forum will capture the results of the community circle conversations, generate ideas for community action and

continued on back page

Community Circle Dialogues Engage Citizens Across the Country

The *Cities at Work* and EHEP community circle dialogues are modeled after a highly successful study circle program developed by the national Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC), headquartered in Pomfret, Connecticut. Study circles have been used throughout the country to generate reasoned citizen dialogue, decisive policy input, and grass-roots problem solving. SCRC is a national partner in the Twin Cities circle dialogue project.

The community circle or study circle process is one important way to achieve new levels of citizenship, interaction and civic action on difficult issues affecting the community. Large scale, community-wide and metro-wide community circle programs can have a significant, cumulative impact. These impacts range from new friendships, to neighborhood projects, to city-wide action plans, to new legislation. Citizens who participate in community circles often become more involved in the civic life of their community.

Examples of other community study circle programs that SCRC has assisted include suburban Cleveland (race relations), Maine (community violence), Oklahoma League of Women Voters (criminal justice) and Lima, Ohio. In Lima, communities of faith joined forces with the state university, labor unions, the chamber of commerce, and the mayor and city council to initiate the first city-wide study circle program on race relations. Study circle participants in Lima have done everything from building a new playground to changing the makeup of a regional board. A statewide study circle program in Oklahoma helped the state legislature enact sweeping changes in the criminal system. ●

Macalester College...

continued from page 20

I realized that as someone who could probably become a gatekeeper, I had the responsibility to choose to either perpetuate the status quo or to agitate for change.

responsibility and duty with this issue. Many black people rise to positions in institutions where they serve as "gatekeepers" of these institutions. I realized that as someone who could probably become a gatekeeper, I had the responsibility to choose to either perpetuate the status quo or to agitate for change.

Art

As an aged (50 years old) community member and white male, my perspective on DRG is vastly different. The most important lesson DRG has taught me is that we must model the organization we wish to see. This is about being human with each other. It is about sharing how we feel, having fun, and even disagreeing strongly but always coming back together and healing. DRG has also heightened my awareness of my role as a white male. I can see how we subvert multicultural groups by not sharing power and leadership. We are often so busy "getting things done" that we don't realize how we have ignored our colleagues, denied their humanity, and missed the very essence of the work. Finally, I am pleased, proud, and humbled that DRG considers me a member and very much appreciate the intergenerational quality of my experience with DRG. We are learning from each other. ●

*This is about being human with each other.
It is about sharing how we feel, having fun, and even disagreeing strongly but always coming back together and healing.*

Membership in DRG is open to everyone, and we welcome comments and questions about our work. For more information, call (651) 696-7080.

Community Circle Dialogues:

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conversations, generate ideas for community action and mobilize citizens to take action in new and different ways that bridge the diverse cultural, ethnic and racial communities that make up Saint Paul.

A metropolitan Citizens Summit, sponsored by Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio, is also planned for early Winter that will include participants from all of the Twin Cities area circles, and invited community and public officials. At the Summit, participants will use electronic audience response technology to discover areas of consensus and to prioritize action steps for the community. ●

If you are interested in learning more about community circle dialogues in Saint Paul, call Barb Rose at (651) 659-6031 or email her at bar@wilder.org. If you live or work in Minneapolis, call Dick Little at (612) 330-1505.



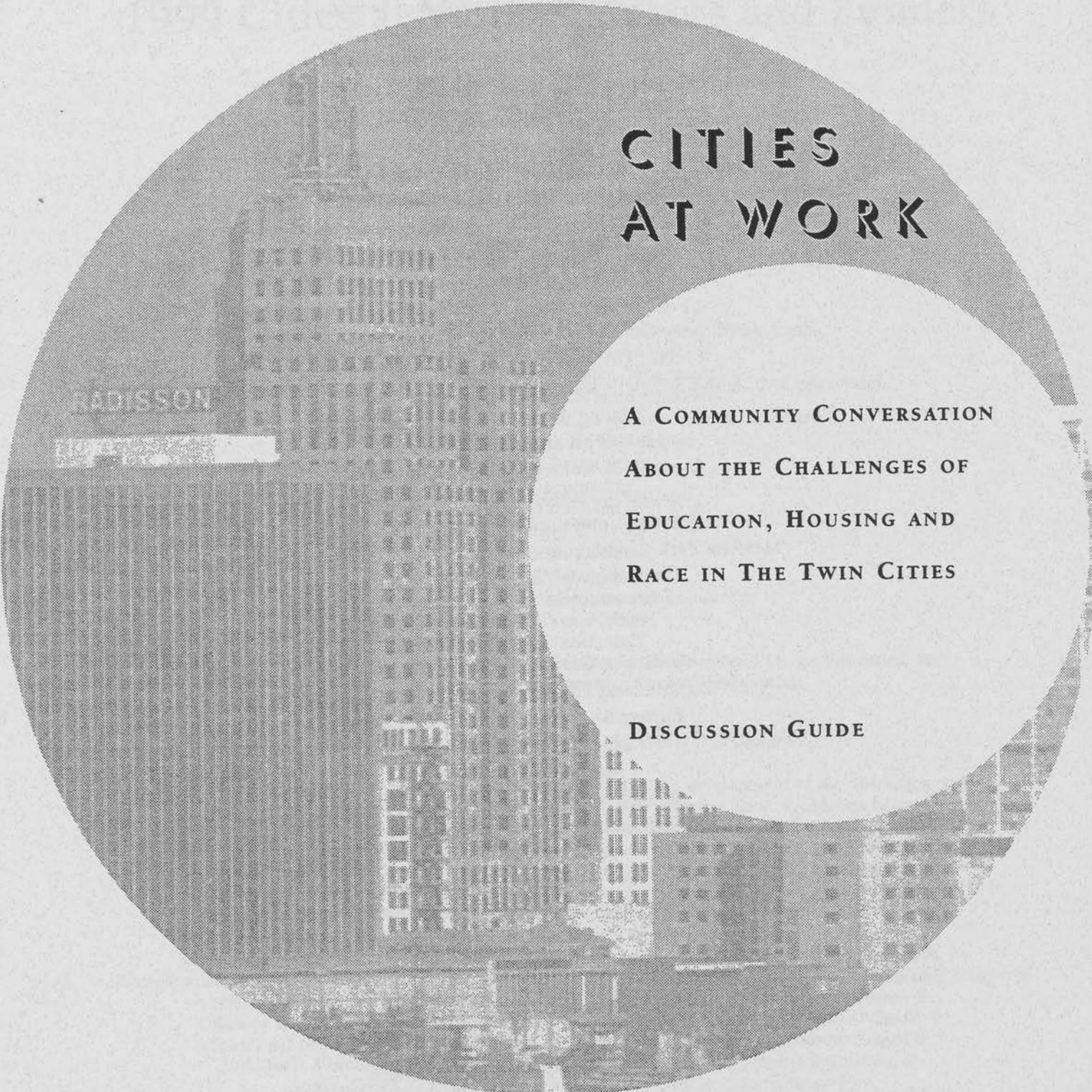
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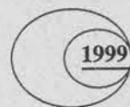


**CITIES
AT WORK**

**A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION
ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF
EDUCATION, HOUSING AND
RACE IN THE TWIN CITIES**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1999 Cities at Work Community Circle Dialogues
EDUCATION AND HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT



Sponsors

1998-1999

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Bloomington Human Rights Commission
Central Neighborhood Improvement Association
Crystal Human Rights Commission
District Five Teen Council
Frogtown Family Center
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Saint Paul Planning Commission
Saint Paul Public Schools
3M Corporation
United Way of the Saint Paul Area
University UNITED
The Urban Coalition
YMCA of Greater Saint Paul
And a diverse group of community volunteers

Adapted from *Choices for Community* - a discussion guide developed by the Education and Housing Equity Project Community Circle Collaborative.

Community Circle Collaborative

The following organizations were consulted or participated in the development of the discussion guide:
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability + Central Community Housing Trust + Citizens League +
Center for the American Experiment + Center for Democracy and Citizenship + Center for Policy Studies +
Center for School Change, Twin Cities Charter School Project + Center for Urban and Regional Affairs +
Communities of Color Institute + Family Housing Fund + Institute on Race and Poverty +
Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis, Housing Discrimination Law Project + Lindquist and Vennum, PLLP +
Metropolitan Council Data Center + Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing +
Minneapolis Public Schools, School District No. 1 + Minneapolis Urban League +
Minnesota Center for Corporate Responsibility + Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative +
Minnesota Department of Human Rights + Minnesota Facilitators Network + Minnesota Fair Housing Center +
Minnesota Minority Education Partnership + Minnesota Office of Dispute Resolution +
Office of State Representative Myron Orfield + Pacer Center + Saint Paul Public Schools +
Saint Paul Department of Human Rights + Seed Academy/Harvest Preparatory School +
Schulman, Walcott and Schulman + Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution +
Study Circles Resource Center + Transit for Livable Communities +
The Urban Coalition + and the Board of Directors of the Education and Housing Equity Project

Special thanks to the many people who volunteered their time to this effort, especially Tamsyn Alixandra from the Saint Paul Public Schools for all her help in the revision of this discussion guide.
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INTRODUCTION

About Cities at Work and the Education and Housing Equity Project

In 1997, the Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP) joined efforts with the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP) and the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA) to sponsor the first "community circle conversations" about the challenges of education and housing segregation in the Twin Cities. Out of these conversations grew a shared commitment to promoting regional housing opportunities and school programs that break down barriers of race, culture, and economics.

Since 1995, the Wilder Foundation and a host of other community organizations and local businesses have promoted discovery about Saint Paul's future through an annual series of public forums. Many of you have joined the over 2,000 interested citizens, policymakers, religious leaders, government workers, neighborhood activists, and the business community who have gathered at these events to discuss and learn about critical issues facing our city.

The 1999 *Cities at Work* forum series, *A Public Dialogue on Race, Connections, and Commitment*, began last spring and continues this fall. Offering good food and conversation, these four public forums provide a time and place to participate in nurturing a future for Saint Paul as a multicultural community based on trust and equality.

NOTE: In this discussion guide the terms *Twin Cities*, *Twin Cities area* and *Twin Cities metropolitan area or region* are used interchangeably and refer to the 7-county area within the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council.

About the Community Circle Dialogue Project

In 1999, *Cities at Work* initiated the community circle dialogue project as an additional opportunity for honest dialogue and lively discussion about the challenges Saint Paul faces to provide equity in housing and education for all Saint Paul residents. *You are a part of this project which is linked to similar conversations in other parts of the metropolitan region and across the nation.* In Saint Paul, neighborhood groups, nonprofit community-based organizations, schools, local businesses and churches are sponsoring similar community dialogues around the city this spring and fall.

continued

A Call to Action

Community circle dialogues allow for a small, diverse group of people to share viewpoints and exchange ideas. The dialogues also engage us in committing to individual and community actions which will create a more vital city that is attractive to all who live, work and do business in Saint Paul. **On November 8 from 5:00-8:30 p.m. at Arlington High School, you are invited to join others at a *Cities at Work* forum, *Beyond Tolerance: A Call to Action.*** This event will be an opportunity for you to share your ideas for action for individuals, organizations and community-wide goals, strategies, policies or projects.

Making connections and new friendships. Sharing ideas. Planning new initiatives. The 1999 *Cities at Work* forum series and Community Circle Dialogue Project launch discussion about the effects of racism on housing, education and race in our community.

The viewpoints included in the following discussion guide should be used as a starting point to open the discussion about some of the very important challenges we face as a community. These viewpoints were developed with the assistance of many Twin Cities research and community-based organizations. They are not meant to be comprehensive or definitive. Instead, they are merely intended to provide a wide variety of viewpoints for participants to *begin a thoughtful and respectful discussion.*

Personal reflections. Family stories. Sharing dreams and recollections. Examining data together. Opening our hearts and minds. The community circle dialogues allow us an opportunity to be honest and to listen to what we can learn from each other.

A Focus for Discussion

This discussion guide offers you an opportunity to look at various viewpoints about the complex effects of race and racism on housing and education. They are a starting point for a thoughtful and respectful dialogue and are intended to launch our community in a search for answers to the following questions:

- ◆ Do patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation have impact on the educational achievement and life opportunities of children and adults living in the Twin Cities? How? What are the impacts?
- ◆ What can we do as individuals and as a community to enhance the educational, housing, and economic opportunities of all children and adults living in Saint Paul and the Twin Cities region?

SESSION ONE – Facilitators Guide

Getting Started

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome

Facilitators:

- Welcome everyone to the group. Introduce yourself, co-facilitator and scribe (if available) as well as the key contact for the sponsoring organization.
- Explain why each of you chose to volunteer your time to facilitate a community circle dialogue.

2. Introductions

Facilitators:

- Ask each participant to tell the group something about a "community" that they belong to and encourage them to include something they like or appreciate about the community.
- You should go first to model how to respond to the question.

3. Setting the Context

Facilitators:

(Use the flip charts you have prepared to move quickly and to connect with visual learners.)

A. Explain the topic of the circle dialogue:

- Consider the effects of race and racism on housing and education
- Look at some possible solutions to these community challenges

B. Summarize the flow of the five sessions:

- **SESSION ONE:** Who we are: Our personal stories
- **SESSION TWO:** What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?
- **SESSION THREE:** How can we address the housing challenges in our city and our region?
- **SESSION FOUR:** What can we do about the achievement gap in our schools?
- **SESSION FIVE:** Ideas for action: Making a difference

continued

C. Explain how the dialogue can possibly impact participants on three levels:

- Individual attitudes, opinions or beliefs
- Activities with neighborhood, church or other groups they may be involved with
- Community-wide goals, strategies, public policies and projects

D. Share goals of the community circle dialogue:

- To have a respectful dialogue so that everyone will feel safe to share and learn from each other
- To increase awareness about the complex effects of racism in our communities; especially in housing and education
- To think of ideas for action that we can take as individuals or as a group. (Pass out brochures for Call to Action and Citizens Summit.)

E. Pass out:

- Profiles (to be collected and returned)
- Attendance roster
- What the Research Shows and other handouts

Facilitators:

Explain that the handouts are to be used as a resource for the group's discussion if desired and encourage participants to bring other materials to share during the course of the dialogue. Acknowledge that the group's experiences and ideas are the most important resource for the dialogue.

4. Guiding Principles for Dialogue

Facilitators:

- Create a "mind-map" on a flip chart with RESPECT in middle.
- Allow group to define what respect means to them.
- Save this flip chart and explain that it will be used for each session to remind group of ground rules for discussion. OPTIONAL: Use Dialogue vs. Debate handout from facilitator handbook.

continued

Who we are: Our personal stories

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitators:

- Model brevity and depth.
- Ask participants to identify themselves by name as they respond.
- Allow all participants to answer each question.
- Record responses on flip chart.

1. Why did you decide to participate in this community circle dialogue?
2. What are our stories about experiences with racism, prejudice, segregation or cultural differences?

CLOSING

Facilitators:

Review format of next session. Describe how viewpoints can be shared by reading aloud and recommend that participants read through the material ahead of time.

- Ask participants to share what they liked about the circle dialogue or something they learned. Was there anything that made anybody uncomfortable during the dialogue?
- What do each of the participants think they will remember most from the evening?
- Ask participants if there is anything else shared during the session that should be noted on the flip chart.

What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?

Many of us share a desire to do something about segregation in our communities. But when we are asked to describe the kinds of segregation problems we are facing, our answers vary a lot. We tend to disagree even more about what caused these problems in the first place.

It makes sense, then, to talk about the reasons for segregation before we talk about solutions (in fact, it may help us to come up with solutions). This session presents a range of viewpoints on the question, "What are the reasons for segregation?" Each view is written in the voice of someone who supports that position. The viewpoints are not presented as "truths" - they are intended as a starting point for discussion. As you talk about the views, remember to give a fair hearing to each other's ideas.

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome

Facilitators:

- Welcome everyone to the group.
- Share names around the circle.

2. Revisit the discussion guidelines

Facilitators:

- Post flip charts from first session.
- Ask for other suggestions.

3. Briefly reflect on last session

Facilitators:

- Ask the group the following question:
 - What is something new you heard from the first session?

DISCUSSION VIEWPOINTS

Facilitators:

Read through each of the following viewpoints one at a time out loud as a group. (Ask for volunteers; let participants know it's okay to pass.) After each of the viewpoints is read, ask the following questions:

1. What reaction do you have to this viewpoint?
OPTIONAL:
2. What was a surprise or new information to you?
3. Does this viewpoint remind you of anything?

continued

Viewpoints

1 Racial prejudice and discrimination cause people to live apart.

According to this view, the main reason for segregation is that many people are prejudiced against people of other races and do not want to live in integrated neighborhoods. Prejudice can be both covert (when it is covered up) and overt (when people don't try to hide it). Prejudice isn't just limited to whites; people of color are sometimes biased against whites, and different ethnic groups can be biased against one another. A recent HUD study showed that many people of color are discouraged from moving into, or staying in, white communities by both the prejudice of real estate agents and the people who live in the communities. The prejudice of real estate agents affects which homes and neighborhoods they show to which people. The practices of lending institutions - banks and mortgage companies - are also often prejudiced against people of color.

2 Perception of high crime and poor schools drive people away.

According to this view, segregation is the result of people trying to move away from situations which they think are bad. A recent study by the media showed that people living in the Twin Cities believed there was twelve times more violent crime in our core cities than there really was. Families also move to the suburbs looking for better schools for their children. Many people think that city schools are lower in quality, with lower average test scores, older buildings, larger classes, and more violence than suburban schools. When people move to the suburbs they create segregation, which is often by race as well as by economic class.

3 People like to live where they have "elbow room."

According to this view, the single greatest cause of segregation is the "American dream" of owning your own home with some land around it. Many

Americans don't like living in small apartments or the narrow lots of city neighborhoods. Right now whites are wealthier on average, so they are better able to move to their dream homes. As people of color get richer, many will move to their own homes outside the city. In many suburbs this is already happening. Those who are poorer stay in the city, where they become more and more isolated.

4 Institutional racism in housing, hiring, and education leads to inequality.

According to this view, racism is a deep part of our society's institutions. Institutions increase segregation by favoring whites and discriminating against people of color. It has been this way for so long that white people don't even know they carry "white privilege" with them. Institutions affected by racism include our businesses, government agencies, the media, the criminal justice system, schools, religious communities, and more. Sometimes this kind of racism is not planned or intended. This "institutional racism" is usually indirect or hidden, which makes it very hard to deal with. For example, many hiring practices use racially biased tests, which keep out people who are qualified for jobs. Or qualified people of color are not hired because "they won't fit in." Lenders sometimes use unfair practices, such as having different requirements for different groups of people when they apply for loans. Schools have a larger percentage of white students than students of color who are prepared for college. Schools could be a lot more successful than they are now with students of color and with poor students.

5 Government policies and economic patterns create divisions among people.

According to this view, our government has made decisions about transportation, housing, and zoning which contribute to segregation by economic class and race. For many years, the government has spent large amounts of money on freeways which allow people to commute between homes in the suburbs and jobs in the city. The government has also spent money on sewer systems which allow

suburban communities to grow. Affordable housing, built with government assistance, has mostly been built in core cities and poor neighborhoods. Planning and zoning boards often pass restrictions that prevent affordable houses or apartments from being built in the richer neighborhoods and suburbs. This is a way to legally keep low-income and moderate-income housing developments out of many neighborhoods. Most of the poor people who live in the Twin Cities are people of color who live in just a few neighborhoods.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitators:

To focus your discussion, select any of these questions or use questions that your group creates:

- Record responses on flip chart.

1. What hit your hot button while reading or listening to these viewpoints?
2. In your lives, have you experienced any of the situations described in these viewpoints?
3. Each viewpoint states a reason for segregation. Which of the viewpoints best describes the causes of segregation?
4. Based on our dialogue tonight, what are some of the best ways to fight segregation?

CLOSING

Facilitators:

Use this time to give a quick overview of the next session and make any announcements.

- What is one thing you will tell a friend about tonight's dialogue?

SESSION THREE

How can we address housing challenges in the Twin Cities?

Many people can agree that there is a housing crisis in our community. Yet there is little consensus on what we can do about it. The goal of this session is to think and talk about possible directions for change. In this session, you'll find a range of views or options on how we might address and make progress on the housing challenges we face. Use them as a starting point for discussion.

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome

Facilitators:

- Welcome everyone to the group.
- Share names around the circle.
- Also revisit the discussion guidelines if you like.

2. Briefly reflect on last session

Facilitators:

- Ask the group the following question:
 - What is something new you heard or learned from the last session?

DISCUSSION VIEWPOINTS

Facilitators:

Explain that this session focuses on further understanding segregation and presents different options for addressing the housing challenges our city and the region are facing. Read through each of the scenarios one at a time out loud as a group. (Ask for volunteers; let participants know it's okay to pass.) After each of the viewpoints is read, ask the following questions:

- What reaction do you have to this viewpoint?

OPTIONAL:

- What was a surprise or new information to you?
- Does this viewpoint remind you of anything?

Viewpoints

1 Invest in the construction and preservation of affordable housing.

There is now a serious shortage of lower-cost housing; in the Twin Cities, less than 2% of all rental properties are vacant. *According to this view*, one reason for the shortage is that the cost of housing keeps going up. That includes the cost of building new affordable housing, and the costs of repairing and maintaining housing. Another cause of the shortage is unfair zoning policies in many of the suburbs. These "exclusionary" policies stop affordable housing from being built, or let it be built only when it is isolated on the less good land. These policies have to be challenged. More affordable housing needs to be developed in the suburbs because that's where many of the "living wage" jobs have been growing the fastest. But we also need more decent, affordable housing in the urban neighborhoods, for working families who want to stay in the center cities.

2 Create programs and policies that help people buy homes and fix up neighborhoods in the core cities.

According to this view, we need to make our city more attractive to home buyers and investors. The following things would help do that: lower property tax rates; help people make their neighborhoods safe and beautiful; develop attractive shopping areas throughout the cities; make sure people can find all kinds of housing; and make sure people can get the help they need to buy homes.

3 Require or encourage neighborhoods to have housing for people with different incomes.

According to this view, desegregation of our neighborhoods has not been very successful when it is voluntary instead of required by law. Our neighborhoods are still segregated by race and by economics. This view recommends that whenever new apartments or multi-housing units are built, builders should include affordable housing units in the same buildings. This should happen in all neighborhoods

in the Twin Cities region. If developers are given incentives and benefits for building mixed-income projects, there will eventually be more housing choices and more diverse neighborhoods in both the core cities and the suburbs.

4 Enforce anti-discrimination laws.

According to this view, people have the right to choose where they want to live. But for many individuals and families housing choice is almost impossible. That is because of unfair lending practices and discrimination by landlords and real estate agencies. Saint Paul has many of its poorest people and people of color living in just a few neighborhoods in the city's core. That is also true in many other communities in the metropolitan region. People should file class-action lawsuits if they think they have been treated with discrimination. That way, they can help put an end to unfair housing practices.

5 Limit the metropolitan region's growth and expansion.

According to this view, as the Twin Cities region gets larger, expanding into farming areas and open land, an unfair amount of resources goes to housing and development in the outer-ring suburbs. This flow of resources encourages white middle class people to move out of the city. We need to limit the growth of suburbs. We need to provide incentives which make it easier for people to invest in and fix-up neighborhoods in the Minneapolis, Saint Paul and inner-ring suburbs.

6 Focus on jobs and transportation solutions; that includes the redevelopment of polluted lands, called brownfields, and employer-assisted housing.

According to this view, many of the people who need jobs live in the core cities because that's where most of the affordable housing is. But most of the living-wage jobs are being created in the outer-ring suburbs. We need to improve the public transportation system to get central city workers to these jobs.

continued

SESSION THREE

Another solution is for employers to help their workers get affordable housing close to where the jobs are. We also need to create more living-wage jobs in the cities, close to where people live. One way to do that is to clean up and develop brown-fields in the cities. That is often expensive and time consuming to do.

7 Let the land market control and regulate itself.

According to this view, the government makes too many rules and regulations about how land is used. The government also makes it harder than it has to be for builders and developers, with unnecessary red tape. More people would build affordable housing in the Twin Cities if the government had fewer regulations and less red tape.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitators:

To focus your discussion, select any of these questions or use questions that your group creates:

- Record responses on flip chart.

1. What hit your hot button while reading or listening to these viewpoints?
2. In your lives, have you experienced any of the situations described in these viewpoints?
3. Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own personal viewpoint?
4. What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these approaches?

CLOSING

Facilitators:

Use this time to give a quick overview of the next session and make any announcements.

- What is one thing you will tell a friend about tonight's dialogue?

SESSION FOUR

What can we do about the achievement gap in our schools?

School reform is an ongoing discussion in our region. In several school districts achievement is high and the outlook is good, but there is a disproportionate lack of achievement in some schools and communities.

Everyone can agree that better test scores and higher achievement are good for the community and for our students, but given the many disparities within the Twin Cities, can we agree on what can or should be done to increase the opportunities for all students? What is the role of integration in narrowing the achievement gap?

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome

Facilitators:

- Welcome everyone to the group.
- Share names around the circle.
- Also revisit the discussion guidelines if you like.

2. Briefly reflect on last session

Facilitators:

- Ask the group the following question:
 - What is something new you heard or learned from the last session?

DISCUSSION VIEWPOINTS

Facilitators:

Explain that this session focuses on developing a further understanding of education challenges facing our city school district and the entire region — particularly the achievement gap and unequal education opportunities. It may be helpful to review some of the data provided in the demographic handout to give participants a better feel for the issue. Then read through each of the following scenarios one at a time out loud as a group. (Ask for volunteers; let participants know it's okay to pass.)

1. What reaction do you have to this viewpoint?

OPTIONAL:

2. What was a surprise or new information to you?
3. Does this viewpoint remind you of anything?

continued

SESSION FOUR

Viewpoints

1 Reverse the patterns of segregation in housing to desegregate schools.

According to this view, to improve education and housing, we have to tackle the underlying problem which is: Americans live very segregated lives. If children's educational opportunities depend on where they live, and where we live is affected by the color of our skin, segregation in housing will affect children's education. Neighborhoods need to be integrated and all Americans need more housing choices. Until that happens, segregation will continue and schools will reflect that. The best way to give all children equal opportunities is to break down the patterns of segregation.

2 Offer neighborhood-based schools.

According to this view, we should give families the choice to send their children to neighborhood schools, because that has been proven to increase student achievement. In the past, we have bused students out of their neighborhoods to help integrate schools city-wide. This often gave parents no choice about their children being bused. But our population has changed, and now students of color are the majority of Saint Paul and Minneapolis students - over 60% of all students in 1997-98. Now we need to look at busing again, to see if it integrates schools and if it's really worth it to bus children out of their neighborhoods. Parents want to send their children to schools closer to home because then they can be more involved in their children's education. Research clearly shows that parent involvement increases student achievement. Our resources and efforts should be used on things which improve student achievement.

3 Make schools multicultural and inclusive.

According to this view, desegregating schools based only on balancing numbers of students is not enough. True integration is different from quotas

and different from assimilation, which expects people to "fit in" to the dominant culture. Schools should reflect and honor the diversity of the communities they serve. This view says that diversity in schools offers many rich and wonderful opportunities for students, parents and teachers to learn and grow. Students and families bring cultural differences related to customs, art, music, literature, and values. Schools which have a wide diversity of students and staff can build upon that diversity to improve their curriculum and programs. Students in those schools learn how to work, play and communicate with one another. That is important in today's world, which is changing so that more cultures are living and working closely together.

4 Create culture-specific schools.

According to this view, the best solution for students of color who live in cities is special public schools which focus on the needs of one cultural group of students. These schools have curriculum, instructional methods, and values which meet the students' needs. They have more adult role models of color and higher student achievement. Students of color will continue to fail in most schools because the schools are so strongly influenced by the value system of the white middle class.

5 Let families choose schools for their children, and encourage schools to be responsive to the needs of students and families.

According to this view, when families can choose their children's schools, they will pick schools which they think will meet their children's needs and provide the best education. Schools will compete with each other for students. That competition results in higher quality schools. The schools use money and other resources well, and become more efficient. Schools will also improve their programs and instruction, pay more attention to individual students, and have higher student success rates. Increasing school choice therefore benefits everyone. Students have a better chance of success and the community gets citizens who are more educated and better prepared for life. Public school districts have taken students and parents for granted. With

more school choices for families, public schools will work to improve themselves.

6 Create more inter-district schools.

According to this view, because segregation and inequalities are so wide-spread, we need to share the resources of the metro region with all children of that area, no matter where they live. Magnet schools, inter-district schools, and busing are all important for reaching this goal. Because students would have more school choices, this plan would make forced busing unnecessary because students might choose a school close to home. [This plan also offers more opportunities to many more students than before.]

7 Create regional or statewide plans and strategies for equity in all school districts.

According to this view, the Minnesota Constitution makes it the legal obligation of the State, not individual districts, to provide the resources, policies and programs that are needed to guarantee that all children receive an adequate education. The costs of educating students can be much higher in some districts than in others. Saint Paul and Minneapolis serve large, diverse populations that have significant challenges for schools. Saint Paul and Minneapolis need more resources than many other districts to guarantee each child a quality education. A higher percentage of students in those districts are children-at-risk: students living in poverty, and children who need extra help to learn English. Segregation has created richer districts which have a higher tax base; those districts can raise more tax money for schools. Those districts also have fewer students who are at risk, and more dollars for every student. The state has tried to get more money to districts which need it. But the districts do not always use state money for at-risk students. There is not enough state money to give all districts equal resources, because some school districts have more money from their own district taxes (such as property taxes). We need new plans for local regional and statewide equity in the schools.

8 Support efforts to develop more charter schools.

According to this view, charter schools can create very successful learning environments. The school administrators are more accountable, and there are more opportunities for parent involvement than in large school districts. Because charter schools are public, they have no tuition fees. And because they are not limited by district boundaries, they are open to all students. Charter schools promise to increase student achievement. They can choose to have very diverse student bodies and can emphasize multicultural teaching practices. They can be models of integration for other schools.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitators:

To focus your discussion, select any of these questions or use questions that your group creates:

- Record responses on flip chart.

1. What hit your hot button while reading or listening to these viewpoints?
2. In your lives, have you experienced any of the situations described in these viewpoints?
3. Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own personal viewpoint?
4. What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these approaches?

CLOSING

Facilitators:

Use this time to give a quick overview of the next session and make any announcements.

- What is one thing you will tell a friend about tonight's dialogue?

SESSION FIVE

Making a difference: A commitment to action

What is the community's responsibility? How can we move from words to action? While the issues of segregation in education and housing can seem overwhelming, it is possible to make a difference. In Saint Paul, Minneapolis and in communities around the country, people have found ways – from individual efforts to large-scale community action – to face some of these challenges.

By participating in this community circle dialogue, you have already made a contribution. Coming together to learn from each other and share ideas and concerns is a form of action. Finding ways to keep these conversations going and working to include more and more people in the dialogue is also an important action step. The purpose of this session is to identify additional steps for how we can move to the next level of action. What can we do as individuals, in groups or organizations, and collectively as a community to address the challenges our community is facing about housing, education and race?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Facilitators:

1. This session is an opportunity for circle dialogue participants to explore what kinds of next steps they are interested in.
2. Review the three kinds of action that have been talked about in the circle:
 - Personal feelings, attitudes, beliefs or experiences that can lead to individual commitment to action
 - Group action through work with others, i.e. neighborhood or church involvement or activities
 - Community-wide goals, strategies, policies and projects
3. Point out the Ideas for Action section of discussion guide.
4. Pass out the A Call to Action and Citizens Summit brochures and encourage participants to attend.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitators:

- Record responses on flip chart.

1. Are there individuals or organizations in your community that have inspired you to want to join them or learn more about their work?
2. What are some ideas for individual or group action?
3. How can we reinforce or support each other in these efforts?

WHERE DOES THIS GROUP GO FROM HERE?

Facilitators:

Please explain:

- Some circle dialogue groups decide to stay together to continue to dialogue about things they didn't have time to talk about yet.
- Other groups meet on a new schedule to continue to further build the relationships they have begun in the circle.
- Other groups decide to meet again to plan a presentation of some of their group's ideas or recommendations to others they identify it is important to share ideas with.

MORE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does this group want to keep on meeting to continue the dialogue?
 - When? Where? How often? Why?
2. Are there one or two issues or concerns that the group feels need to be addressed further?
 - Does this group want to plan a presentation of some of the key ideas or recommendations that were shared and discussed?
 - When? Who will we present these ideas to? Where? How?
3. Is there something else participants would like to do together as a group?

CLOSING

Facilitators:

Please ask these questions:

- What has been most valuable about your experiences in this circle dialogue?
- What do you think is one thing you might do differently as a result of being a part of this series of dialogues?

IDEAS FOR ACTION

What you can do as an individual:

- ◆ **Attend meetings** of your local school board, planning and zoning commission, city council or other groups that make important decisions affecting the issues you have discussed. Do your homework, share your ideas, get others to attend with you. Volunteer to serve on local problem-solving task forces.
- ◆ **Be informed** about local and regional issues. Read and contribute commentary to local and ethnic newspapers. Express your opinion on race and multicultural concerns with local papers and radio programs. Write letters to your government representatives on issues of fair and affordable housing and on the need for creating communities and schools that enable all kids to succeed.
- ◆ **Build new relationships**, especially with people from different racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups than your own.
- ◆ **Assume leadership.** Take initiative. You don't have to be a public official or a well-known person to be a leader. Become a regional citizen.
- ◆ **Rally and demonstrate** at the legislature on issues of important moral and economic consequence to the region.
- ◆ **Become involved** in your local school's site-based management council or Compensatory Aid team.
- ◆ **Volunteer to tutor or mentor** students-at-risk in your school district.
- ◆ **Volunteer to be a tester** for a fair housing testing organization such as the Minnesota Fair Housing Center. **Challenge discriminatory practices** wherever and whenever you encounter or witness them.
- ◆ **Get involved** in any of the promising practices and organizations noted here. Nearly all of these initiatives are volunteer-driven or supported. Join a housing or education advocacy organization and become an advocate. Create a movement for active involvement in countering Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) responses when affordable housing is proposed in your community. Tell your story if you have one that expands public awareness of affordable housing as a need and an asset in our communities. Inform and influence public policies on important legislative initiatives dealing with the critical regional linkages between housing, education, race relations, social equity, transportation, environment, land use and economic development that lead to greater stability and equity in the metropolitan area.

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Community-Wide Initiatives

The following list is a sampling of community efforts already underway. It can be used as a resource for exploring what you as an individual can do to begin organizing for action and to identify organizations already engaged in activities you may want to join. It can also be used as a tool for exploring possibilities for collective action as a community. Note: This list is by no means comprehensive, but is intended simply as a starting place for generating ideas for action.

HOUSING

Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA)

Mobilizing congregations and people of all faiths to ensure decent safe and affordable housing for everyone in the Twin Cities metropolitan community. 122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 310, Minneapolis, MN 55404. Contact: Joy Sorensen-Navarre, 612-871-8980

Saint Paul Housing Campaign

A broad-based coalition for neighborhood development and affordable housing. Members include Saint Paul Tenants Union, Community Stabilization Project, MICAHA, Jewish Community Action, SPEAC, and Coalition for the Homeless. Contact: Bob Walz, 651-646-8805 or Dan Lee, 651-222-5863

Saint Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Congregations (SPEAC) and Interfaith Action

Faith-based social justice initiatives to address segregation, poverty and urban disparities. 2720 East 22nd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55406. Contact: Pamela Twiss, 612-333-1255 or Jay Schmitt, 612-333-1258

Minnesota Housing Partnership

Supporting the creation and preservation of affordable housing in Minnesota through technical assistance, education, and legislative advocacy. 122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 230, Minneapolis, MN 55404. Contact: Chip Halbach, 612-874-0112

Jewish Community Action

Bringing together Jewish people from diverse traditions and perspectives to promote understanding and action about social and economic justice issues in Minnesota. 621 West Lake Street, Room 209, Minneapolis, MN 55408. Contact: Vic Rosenthal, 612-822-1442

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity

Bringing families and communities in need together with volunteers and resources to build decent, affordable housing. 3001 4th Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414. Contact: Julie Gugen or Amy Johnson, 612-331-4090, ext. 614

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

Supports the Inclusionary Housing Initiative which promotes development of housing affordable at a range of incomes and uses innovative building techniques to lower construction costs. Also seeks community support for reduction of regulatory barriers to housing affordability. Contact: Russ Adams, 612-332-4471

Minnesota Fair Housing Center

Dedicated to the elimination of discrimination in housing and enforcement of the Fair Housing Act through fair housing testing, research, education and public policy advocacy on behalf of racial and ethnic minorities, the disabled, and others protected under federal and state human rights laws. 2700 University Ave, Saint Paul, MN 55104. Contact: Larry Winnans or Christy Snow, 651-917-8869

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Urban Coalition 50/30 Initiative

Promoting and researching home ownership for households of color.

Contact: Yusef Mgeni, 612-348-8550

2000 by 2000 Initiative

A partnership between Local Initiatives Support Corporation and Saint Paul community development corporations to boost affordable housing in Saint Paul.

Contact: Barbara Jeanetta, 651-649-1109

State legislative initiatives, i.e., proposed amendments to the Fiscal Disparities Act and the Livable Communities Act, the Housing and Economic Vitality Initiative, and proposed affordable housing legislation containing inclusionary housing strategies.

EDUCATION

Achievement Plus Initiative

A collaborative partnership of the Wilder Foundation, Saint Paul Public Schools, the City of Saint Paul, the State of Minnesota, several Saint Paul neighborhoods and the East Side YMCA that promotes parent and community involvement in the schools and integrated academic and social support programs and services.

Contact: Mary K. Boyd or Michael Garcia, 651-642-4070

Jane Addams School for Democracy's Learning Exchange Circles

Circles help Hmong and Latino immigrants improve language skills, prepare for the citizenship exam, learn about employment rights, and focus on policy action projects.

Contact: Shelly Rottenberg, 651-690-8786

Saint Paul Ramsey County Children's Initiative

Linking Saint Paul's families and community members to with policymakers directing service delivery to families and children through neighborhood family centers.

Contact: Roger Banks, 651-917-4891

Minnesota Minority Education Partnership

Improving student achievement among students of color through parent and teacher training and collaborative leadership.

Contact: Carlos Mariani-Rosa or Bruce Vandal, 612-330-1522

Center for School Change

Improving public education through advocacy and research. Opportunities for volunteers include researching how to improve public education.

Contact: Joe Nathan, 612-625-3506
and New Twin Cities Charter School Project
Contact: Nancy Smith, 612-625-7552

Support Our Schools

Supports public education in Saint Paul and works for its improvement through developing new leadership, engaging the public in public education, and working with individual public schools to create projects that improve student achievement.

Contact: Roger Barr, 651-603-8858

Minnesota Parenting Association

Provides opportunities for parents and those who care about children to develop and express a collective voice. MPA hosted the Hopes & Dreams, Challenges & Strengths roundtable discussions.

Contact: Roxy Foster, 651-290-4755

Multi-district schools (Tri-district Magnet School for Maplewood, North Saint Paul and Saint Paul).

Contact: Fred Storti, 651-487-5450

and Downtown Interdistrict School

Contact: Barbara Shin, 612-627-2686

IDEAS FOR ACTION

RACE RELATIONS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative

A statewide interdenominational network of individuals and congregations united to struggle against racism and building multicultural diversity in our communities.

Contact: Jim and Nadine Addington, 612-871-3622

Frogtown Pluralism Circle

A neighborhood network of residents and service providers working together to dismantle racism and combat unfair institutions in Saint Paul's Frogtown neighborhood.

Contact: Melvin Giles, 651-265-5712

Institute on Race and Poverty

Researching the relationship between housing, segregation, and educational achievement.

Contact: jon powell or Gavin Kearney, 612-625-8071

Hate Bias Response Team

An educational and communications network for responding to victims of hate incidents and crimes.

Contact: Saint Paul Department of Human Rights, 651-266-8966

National Conference for Community and Justice

An inter-racial and multi-faith coalition of individuals and organizations in government, business, education, and media creating a process of healing through honest conversations on race, reconciliation, and responsibility.

Contact: Hector Garcia, 651-659-0409

Saint Paul Area Council of Churches

Gateways to Justice

Advocacy and education addressing affordable housing, immigration, and literacy.

Contact: Bob Walz, 651-646-8805

Hamline Midway Alliance for a Prejudice-Free Community

A neighborhood group of volunteers targeting prejudice and bigotry in the Hamline Midway neighborhood in Saint Paul.

Contact: Cathy Lue, 651-646-1986

Project Common Ground, a collaborative sponsored by the Saint Paul and Stillwater public schools to promote understanding and interaction among students of diverse backgrounds, increase academic performance, and provide leadership development training through multi-ethnic cross-district teams of students.

Contact: 651-433-1113

MRA in the Twin Cities/Hope in the Cities, an inter-racial, multi-faith coalition of individuals in government, business, education, media, religious, and community organizations creating a process of healing through honest conversation on race, reconciliation, and responsibility.

Contact: Steve Dickenson, 651-646-8617

Better Together

Faith-based social justice initiatives to address segregation, poverty, and urban disparities led by Interfaith Action and the Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council (SPEAC).

Contact: Petey Mitchell, 651-771-1152

Research initiatives, such as the work on 40 developmental assets of young people by the Search Institute 651-376-8955; research on the status of Twin Cities communities of color by the Urban Coalition 612-348-8550; culture-specific research by HACER (Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research) and the American Indian Research and Policy Institute 651-644-1728; and research on the relationship of housing, segregation, and educational achievement by the Institute on Race and Poverty, 612-625-8071.

Facilitator's Handbook

Resources for facilitating community circle discussions

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A note to facilitators

Welcome and thank you for joining this community circle project. Your time and commitment are very valuable contributions to the success of this project.

The materials in this handbook have been developed as suggested reference tools to help you monitor and facilitate your circle discussion. Many of these materials have been adapted from other sources. You are welcome to photocopy whatever you would like from this handbook to share with your group.

Again, many thanks for all your hard work. We hope this handbook provides you with some guidelines for a productive and provocative community circle.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CIRCLE?

A community circle IS:

- a small group discussion involving deliberation and problem solving examined from many perspectives with the help of the members' knowledge and experience. This discussion is often informed by research data and discussion materials, and aided by a facilitator whose job is to manage the discussion.

A community circle IS NOT the same as:

- **a focus group**, a small group usually organized to gather or test information from the members. Participants are often recruited to represent a particular viewpoint or group at a focus group.
- **a facilitated meeting with a predetermined outcome**, a meeting such as a committee or board meeting with goals established ahead of time. *A community circle begins with a shared interest among its members. The dialogue unfolds as the process progresses and is partly guided by its members.*
- **a town meeting**, an official governance process or a large-group meeting drawing attention to a issue.
- **a public hearing**, a large-group public meeting which allows concerns to be aired.
- **a class**, with teachers and pupils, where the teacher or the expert imparts knowledge to students.

A Comparison of Dialogue and Debate

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

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

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.

In debate, winning is the goal.

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

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

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

Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.

Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.

Debate defends assumptions as truth.

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.

Debate causes critique of the other position.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.

Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.

In debate, one searches for glaring differences.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dialogue remains open-ended.

Debate implies a conclusion.

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).

The Role of Facilitators

- ◆ Remain neutral; the facilitator's opinions are not part of the discussion.
- ◆ Help the group set its ground rules, and keep to them.
- ◆ Help group members grapple with the content by asking probing questions.
- ◆ Help group members identify areas of agreement and disagreement.
- ◆ Bring in points of view that haven't been talked about.
- ◆ Create opportunities for everyone to participate.
- ◆ Focus and help to clarify the discussion.
- ◆ Summarize key points in the discussion, or ask others to do so.
- ◆ Remain objective, monitor process and guide rather than actively participating in the dialogue.

AND

- ◆ Become self-aware; good facilitators know their own strengths, weaknesses, "hooks," biases, and values.
- ◆ Put the group first.
- ◆ Develop a passion for group process with its never-ending variety.
- ◆ Appreciate all kinds of people.
- ◆ Show commitment to democratic principles.

The Role of Participants

- **Listen carefully to others.** Try to understand the concerns and values that underlie their views.
- **Maintain an open mind.** You don't score points by rigidly sticking to your early statements. Feel free to explore ideas that you have rejected or not considered in the past.
- **Strive to understand the position of those who disagree with you.** Your own knowledge is not complete until you understand other participants' points of view and why they feel the way they do.
- **Help keep the discussion on track.** Make sure your remarks are relevant.
- **Speak your mind freely, but don't monopolize the discussion.** Make sure you are giving others the chance to speak.
- **Address your remarks to the group members rather than the facilitator.** Feel free to address your remarks to a particular participant, especially one who has not been heard from or who you think may have special insight. Don't hesitate to question other participants to learn more about their ideas.
- **Communicate your needs to the facilitator.** The facilitator is responsible for guiding the discussion, summarizing key ideas, and soliciting clarification of unclear points, but he/she may need advice on when this is necessary. Chances are, you are not alone when you don't understand what someone has said.
- **Value your own experience and opinions.** Don't feel pressured to speak, but realize that failing to speak means robbing the group of your wisdom.
- **Engage in friendly disagreement.** Differences can invigorate the group, especially when it is relatively homogeneous on the surface. Don't hesitate to challenge ideas you disagree with, and don't take it personally if someone challenges your ideas.

Suggestions for Discussion Guidelines

- ◆ Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- ◆ Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- ◆ Share “air time.”
- ◆ If you are offended, say so; and say why.
- ◆ You can disagree, but don’t personalize it; stick to the issue. No name-calling or stereotyping.
- ◆ Speak for yourself, not for others.

Tips for Effective Facilitation

Be prepared

The facilitator does not need to be an expert on the topic being discussed, but should be the best prepared for the discussion. This means understanding the subject, being familiar with the discussion materials, thinking ahead of time about the directions in which the discussion might go, and preparing questions to help further the discussion.

Set a relaxed and open tone

- ◆ Welcome everyone and create a friendly relaxed atmosphere.
- ◆ Well-placed humor is always welcome, and helps to build the group's connections.

Establish clear discussion guidelines

At the beginning of the community circle, help the group establish its own discussion guidelines by asking the participants to suggest ways for the group to behave. (See page 8 for sample guidelines.)

Monitor and assist the group process

- ◆ Keep track of how the group members are participating - who has spoken, who hasn't spoken, and whose points haven't been heard.
- ◆ Consider splitting up into smaller groups to examine a variety of viewpoints or to give people a chance to talk more easily about their personal connection to the issue.
- ◆ When deciding whether to intervene, lean toward non-intervention.
- ◆ Don't talk after each comment or answer every question; allow participants to respond directly to each other.
- ◆ Allow time for pauses and silence. People need time to reflect and respond.
- ◆ Don't let anyone dominate; try to involve everyone.
- ◆ Remember: a community circle is not a debate, but a group dialogue. If participants forget this, don't hesitate to ask the group to help re-establish the ground rules.

Help the group grapple with the content

- ◆ Make sure the group considers a wide range of views. Ask the group to think about the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of looking at an issue or solving a problem.
- ◆ Ask participants to think about the concerns and values that underlie their beliefs and the opinions of others.
- ◆ Help the discussion along by clarifying, paraphrasing, and summarizing the discussion.
- ◆ Help participants to identify “common ground”, but don’t try to force consensus.

Use probing comments and open-ended questions which don’t lead to yes or no answers

This will result in a more productive discussion. Some useful questions include:

- ◆ What seems to be the key point here?
- ◆ What is the crux of your disagreement?
- ◆ What would you say to support (or challenge) that point?
- ◆ Please give an example, or describe a personal experience to illustrate that point.
- ◆ Could you help us understand the reasons behind your opinion?
- ◆ What experiences or beliefs might lead a person to support that point of view?
- ◆ What do you think people who hold that opinion care deeply about?
- ◆ What would be a strong case against what you just said?
- ◆ What do you find most persuasive about that point of view?
- ◆ What is it about that position that you just cannot live with?
- ◆ What have we missed that we need to talk about?
- ◆ What information supports that point of view?

Reserve adequate time for closing the discussion

- ◆ Ask the group for last comments and thoughts about the subject.
- ◆ Thank everyone for their contributions.
- ◆ Make any necessary announcements.
- ◆ Give a quick overview of the next session.

What is the Focused Conversation Method (ORID)?

The Focused Conversation Method (ORID) is simple and natural. To elicit the most participation from everyone in a group, start with an **Objective** or factual question. These are the easiest to answer and allow more introverted or shy personality types to participate. This is the kind of question that is so easy, you can ask everyone to answer, thereby becoming part of the discussion. The next level of question, **Reflective**, involves getting more in touch with our feelings and takes the conversation a little deeper. Some people don't respond easily to talking about their feelings, so asking for associations is another way to bring forth this level of conversation. The third level is the **Interpretive**, or meaning seeking, analyzing stage of a conversation. Much of our society tends to go immediately to this level of discussion. It is a rich stage in any conversation. Unfortunately, many people get left out of active participation when we go here too fast. That's why this is the third level of questions we suggest, not the first. The last level is **Decisional** which is really asking about your personal relationship to what's been said so far, what comes next and how you will apply what you have learned in the conversation. It is the action oriented or "where do we go from here?" stage. You can have as many or as few questions at each level as you want or need.

Most people gravitate to or have a preference to a particular stage of conversation. By creating questions that address each of the stages, you increase the likelihood of greater participation by group members.

These stages occur naturally in any good discussion where everyone is involved. We want to give you a guide for designing an effective discussion that will involve the entire group. Within the basic format there are numerous ways to create questions. Feel free to alter them to suit your own personal style.

Suggestions for Dealing with Typical Challenges

Most community circles go smoothly because participants are there voluntarily and have a stake in the program. But there are challenges in any group process. What follows are some of the most common difficulties that community circle leaders encounter, along with some possible ways to deal with those difficulties.

Problem:

Certain participants don't say anything, seem shy.

Possible responses: Try to draw out quiet participants, but don't put them on the spot. Make eye contact - it reminds them that you'd like to hear from them. Look for nonverbal cues that indicate participants are ready to speak. Frequently, people will feel more comfortable in later sessions of a community circle program and will begin to participate. When someone comes forward with a brief comment after staying in the background for most of the community circle, you can encourage him or her by conveying genuine interest and asking for more information. And it's always helpful to talk with people informally before and after the session.

Problem:

An aggressive or talkative person dominates the discussion.

Possible responses: As the facilitator, it is your responsibility to handle domineering participants. Once it becomes clear what this person is doing, you *must* intervene and set limits. Start by limiting your eye contact with the speaker. Remind the group that everyone is invited to participate - "Let's hear from some folks who haven't had a chance to speak yet." If necessary, you can speak to the person by name. "Charlie, we've heard from you; now let's hear what Barbara has to say." Be careful to manage your comments and tone of voice - you are trying to make a point without offending the speaker.

Problem:

Lack of focus, not moving forward, participants wander off the topic.

Possible responses: Responding to this takes judgment and intuition. It is the facilitator's role to help move the discussion along. But it is not always clear which way it is going. Keep an eye on the participants to see how engaged they are, and if you are in doubt, check it out with the group. "We're a little off the topic right now. Would you like to stay with this, or move on to the next question?" If a participant goes into a lengthy digression, you may have to say: "We are wandering off the subject, and I'd like to give others a chance to speak."

Problem:

Someone puts forth information which you know to be false. Or, participants get hung up in a dispute about facts, but no one present knows the answer.

Possible responses: Ask, "Has anyone heard conflicting information?" If no one offers a correction, offer one yourself. And if no one knows the facts, and the point is central to the discussion, encourage members to look up the information before the next meeting. Remind the group that experts often disagree.

Problem:

Lack of interest, no excitement, no one wants to talk, only a few people participating.

Possible responses: This rarely happens in community circles, but it may occur if the facilitator talks too much or does not give participants enough time to respond to questions. People need time to think, reflect, and get ready to speak up. It may help to pose a question and go around the circle until everyone has a chance to respond. Occasionally, you might have a lack of excitement in the discussion because the group seems to be in agreement and isn't coming to grips with the tensions inherent in the issue. In this case the leader's job is to try to bring other views into the discussion, especially if no one in the group holds them. "Do you know people who hold other views? What would they say about our conversation?"

Problem:

Tension or open conflict in the group. Perhaps two participants lock horns and argue. Or, one participant gets angry and confronts another.

Possible responses: If there is tension, address it directly. Remind participants that disagreement and conflict of ideas is what a community circle is all about. Explain that, for conflict to be productive, it must be focused on the issue; it is acceptable to challenge someone's ideas, but personal attacks are not acceptable. You must interrupt personal attacks, name-calling, or put-downs as soon as they occur. You will be better able to do so if you have established ground rules that disallow such behaviors and encourage tolerance for all views. Don't hesitate to appeal to the group for help; if group members bought into the ground rules, they will support you. As a last resort, consider taking a break to change the energy in the room. You can take the opportunity to talk one-on-one with the participants in question.

"WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS"

*Data research & analysis prepared for the
Community Circle Dialogues on Education, Housing and Race in the Twin Cities*

Prepared by the Institute on Race & Poverty
University of Minnesota, March 1999

The Twin Cities are severely segregated by race and income:

- The Twin Cities metropolitan area is one of the 10 most racially segregated metropolitan areas in the United States. (Harrison, Roderick J., and Daniel Weinberg, "Racial and Ethnic Segregation in 1990," Washington D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992).
- 65% of people of color living in the seven county metro area live in the central cities; and they are even more narrowly concentrated within specific neighborhoods of Minneapolis and St. Paul. (1990 U.S. Census).
- Although only 28% of the metropolitan population reside in the central cities, 60% of those in poverty in the metro area live within the central cities. (1990 U.S. Census).

Concentrated poverty is a growing concern for the Twin Cities.

- Areas of concentrated poverty are neighborhoods or census tracts in which 40% or more of the population is at or below the poverty level.
- Areas of concentrated poverty in the Twin Cities increased from 7 census tracts in 1970 to 33 in 1990. The number of people living in the Twin Cities living in concentrated poverty increased from 11,438 individuals in 1970 to 79,048 in 1990. (Paul Jargowsky, *POVERTY AND PLACE: GHETTOS, BARRIOS, AND THE AMERICAN CITY* (1997).
- Communities of concentrated poverty are disproportionately communities of color. Nationwide, 52% of people living in concentrated poverty are African Americans while only 23% are white. In the Twin Cities, approximately 3 out of 4 poor Blacks lives in concentrated poverty as opposed to 1 out of 4 poor Whites. (Id.)
- Although Blacks constitute only 3.6% of the total metropolitan population, they represent 24.3% of the region's concentrated poverty population. (Id.)

THE CAUSES OF RACIAL SEGREGATION AND CONCENTRATED POVERTY IN THE TWIN CITIES

Concentrated poverty and racial segregation are not solely the product of "natural" settlement patterns or market forces. Urban sprawl and white/middle class flight, subsidized by government policies on highway and infrastructure expansion and development, contribute to concentrated poverty and racial segregation in Minnesota.

- A recent Sierra Club study, "The Dark Side of the American Dream" ranks the Twin Cities

metropolitan area in the top 10 metropolitan areas threatened by sprawl. This same study found that between 1970 and 1990 162 "physically adequate" schools were closed in Minneapolis, St. Paul and the inner-ring suburbs, while 78 new schools were built further out. The study stated that if development in the Twin Cities was directed inward we could save \$600 million in infrastructure costs over the next twenty years.

Political fragmentation, contributing to and combined with poor regional planning, increases the racial and economic segregation of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

- The Twin Cities are one of the most fragmented areas in the country in terms of the number of political subdivisions and school districts by area. (David Rusk, *CITIES WITHOUT SUBURBS* (1993); Myron Orfield, *METROPOLITICS: A REGIONAL AGENDA FOR COMMUNITY STABILITY* (1997)).
- This fragmentation, combined with the lack of assertive regional planning on the part of the legislature and the Met Council, has allowed segregative practices such as exclusionary zoning to proliferate. (Barbara Lukerman and Michael Kane, *Land Use Practices: Exclusionary Zoning, de Facto or de Jure*, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota (1994); The Livable Communities Housing Task Force, *Promises Deferred: An Analysis of the Affordable Housing Provisions of the Livable Communities Act* (1998)).

THE EFFECTS OF RACIAL AND ECONOMIC SEGREGATION IN THE SCHOOLS

The racial and economic segregation in Twin Cities schools are rapidly increasing.

- The percentage of students of color in Minneapolis' and Saint Paul's public schools has increased every year since 1968.
- Minneapolis projects a minority enrollment of 78.5% in grades K-6 for the 2000-01 school year. By comparison suburban school districts enrolled no more than 28% minority students in 1994-95, and outer ring suburbs enrolled no more than 10% minority students. (Gary Orfield, et. al., *Deepening Segregation in American Schools*, (1997).
- In the 1996-97 school year, ten of Minneapolis' public schools enrolled at least 90% students of color. (Id.).
- Only 4% of Minnesota students are black but more than 53% of them attend majority non-white schools. (Id.).
- The percentage of Minneapolis Public School students eligible for subsidized lunches has grown from less than 30% in 1972-73 to nearly 70% in 1996. (Data from Minneapolis School District). In St. Paul, almost 2/3 of elementary students are eligible for subsidized lunches;

up from less than half only four years ago. (Data from Saint Paul School District).

- By contrast, less than 28% of students in all but two Twin Cities suburban school districts are eligible for subsidized school lunches. Several suburban districts have less than 8% of their students eligible for subsidized student lunches. (Metropolitan Council, *Trouble at the Core* (1992)).
- The ten poorest elementary schools in Minneapolis are 90% minority. (Minneapolis Public Schools, *Report of the Annual Racial/Ethnic Count of Students*, (1996)).

Segregation and concentrated poverty compromise student achievement.

- The Federal Government's 1966 Coleman Report concluded that the socioeconomic level of students' schoolmates was the only factor with a significant effect on a student's academic achievement. (Coleman, James, et. al., *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, 1966).
- Subsequent studies have found that racial composition of schools is also a factor in academic achievement:
 - higher percentages of minority students have a negative effect on student achievement (Bankston, Carl, and Stephen Caldas, "The Effect of School Population Socioeconomic Status on Individual Student Academic Achievement," *Journal of Educational Research*, (1997));
 - higher levels of segregation coincide with educational disadvantages as well as concentrated poverty (Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy A. Denton, *AMERICAN APARTHEID: SEGREGATION AND THE MAKING OF THE UNDERCLASS*, (1993));
 - the racial composition of schools directly impacts educational achievement. (Jencks, Christopher, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*, (1972)).

Twin Cities schools with high concentrations of minority and low-income students are failing:

- Results from the 1998 Basic Standards Test:
 - There was an overall pass rate of 71% on the math portion of the test. Pass rates varied significantly, however, by racial and ethnic group and by location: 76% for Whites, 26% for Blacks, 38% for Hispanics, 39% for American Indians, and 53% for Asians. In the Twin Cities suburbs, 77% of students passed as compared to 72% of students outstate and 41% of students in the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts. (Office of Educational Accountability, University of Minnesota, *The 1998 Minnesota Education Yearbook* (1998)).

- There was an overall pass rate of 68% on the reading portion of the test. Pass rates varied significantly, however, by racial and ethnic group and by location: 73% for Whites, 32% for Blacks, 39% for Hispanics, 38% for American Indians, and 48% for Asians. In the Twin Cities suburbs, 75% of students passed as compared to 68% of students outstate and 41% of students in the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts. (Id.).
- Of those students entering Minnesota high schools in 1994, 78% graduated by 1998 (N.B. this calculation excludes students who transferred out of state or to a non-public school). Four-year graduation rates varied significantly, however, by racial and ethnic group and by location: 82% for Whites, 36% for Blacks, 44% for Hispanics, 41% for American Indians, and 68% for Asians. In the Twin Cities suburbs, 84% of students graduated within four years as compared to 85% of students outstate and 47% of students in the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts. (Id.).

These severe gaps in educational achievement in Minnesota are occurring despite higher per pupil spending in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

- The average per pupil expenditure in 1998 for the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts was \$7,730 as compared to \$5,994 in the suburbs and \$5,781 outstate. A portion of this gap is attributable to higher spending on special instruction (\$1,421 per student in Minneapolis and St. Paul compared to \$873 in the suburbs and \$803 outstate). (Id.).

Research proves that desegregation increases achievement levels for minority and low-income students.

- Researchers of the Gautreaux program in Chicago found that "Black children who moved from racially segregated housing projects to white middle-income suburbs experienced improved outcomes by every measure." (Rosenbaum, James E., et. al., "Can the Kerner Commission's Housing Strategy Improve, Employment, Education, and Social Integration for Low-Income Blacks).
- Students of color bused to desegregated suburban schools experience improvements in reading and math. (Voluntary Interdistrict Coordinating Council, Complete Eleventh Report to the United States District Court, Eastern District of Missouri 25 (Jan. 1995)).
- Following desegregation, students of color in Kansas City schools performed better than national and district norms on achievement scores. (Moore, William, *Achievement and Enrollment Evaluation of the Investigative Learning Magnet Elementary Schools, 1990-91*, 25 (Oct. 1991)).
- The achievement gap between minority and white students greatly narrowed when Dallas implemented a desegregation plan. (*Equity and Choice: Issues and Answers in the Dallas Schools*, Presentation Before the National Committee for School Desegregation, 16 (March

1990)).

Research also suggests the desegregation does not negatively affect academic performances of whites and in some cases may improve their performances.

- Both whites and blacks improved standardized test scores when desegregation was implemented in Louisville, Kentucky. (Kentucky Commission of Human Rights, *School and Housing Desegregation are Working Together in Louisville and Jefferson County, 1975-1983*, 6-8 (1983)).
- When Norfolk, Virginia implemented a desegregation plan, standardized test scores improved for both blacks and whites. (Meldrum, Christina, and Susan F. Eaton, "Resegregation in Norfolk, Virginia: Does Restoring Neighborhood Schools Work?" (May 1994).

Desegregation has positive long-term societal effects that are not reflected in test scores.

- School desegregation encourages social integration on multiple levels: black students from desegregated schools have more social contacts with whites, are more likely to live in desegregated neighborhoods, more frequently work in desegregated areas, and are more likely to have higher career goals. (Crain, Robert, and Amy Stuart Wells, "Perpetuation Theory and the Long-Term Effects of School Desegregation," (1994); Dawkins, M., and J.H. Braddock, "The Continuing Significance of Desegregation: School Racial Composition and African American Inclusion in American Society," (1994).
- Black students in desegregated schools are more likely to graduate from high school, attend desegregated colleges, and graduate with degrees in higher paying professions. McPartland, James, and JoMills Braddock, *Going to College and Getting a Good Job: The Impact of Desegregation*, (1981).

Mandatory Desegregation Plans are Most Successful at Ending Segregation.

- A study of 20 school districts found that mandatory desegregation was more likely to reduce segregation and encourage racial balance. Fife, B., *Desegregation in American Schools: Comparative Intervention Strategies*, (1992))

OTHER EFFECTS OF RACIAL SEGREGATION AND CONCENTRATED POVERTY

In neighborhoods afflicted with a concentration of poverty, families "have to cope not only with their own poverty, but also with the social isolation and economic depreciation of the hundreds, if not thousands, of other families who live near them. This spatial concentration of poor people acts to magnify poverty and exacerbate its effects." (Jargowsky, 1997)

Racial segregation and concentrated poverty encourage the disinvestment of business and industry from poor communities of color and isolate these communities from employment opportunities.

- “The Met Council estimates that 296,274 jobs will be created in the metro area in the next 15 years. Two-thirds of these jobs (195,540) will be located in the suburbs ... from 45 to 48 percent will be in low paying industries [i.e. the type of job sought by central city residents with low skill/education levels]” (Livable Communities Task Force).
- “More than 67,000 units of housing for people earning less than \$22,000 will need to be created in suburban communities over the next fifteen years if all of the people working in these new jobs in low-paying industries in the suburbs sought housing within suburban communities.” (Livable Communities Task Force).

Racial Segregation and Concentrated Poverty are two of the primary causes of high violent crime rates in poor communities of color. (Douglas S. Massey, *Getting Away with Murder: Segregation and Violent Crime in Urban America*, 143 U. Penn. L. Rev. 1203).

Crime in the Twin Cities is disproportionately concentrated in poor central neighborhoods that tend to have high minority populations.

- Overall crime rates for Minneapolis and St. Paul are two to three times higher than suburban crime rates. (Metropolitan Council, *Trouble at the Core* (1992).).
- Within Minneapolis and St. Paul, crime is disproportionately concentrated in poor neighborhoods. (Myron Orfield, *METROPOLITICS* (1997)).

Community Circle Report Form

Session #1: Getting Started

Sponsoring Organization: _____ Date: _____

Meeting Location: _____ Number of Participants: _____

Facilitator: _____ Scribe: _____

Please describe two or three main themes or ideas about experiences with racism or segregation which your group discussed today: (1-2 sentences each)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. **Please use this space to note action ideas, if any, that were mentioned in today's discussion:**

Community Circle Report Form

Session #2: What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?

Sponsoring Organization: _____ Date: _____

Meeting Location: _____ Number of Participants: _____

Facilitator: _____ Scribe: _____

Please describe two or three main themes or ideas about the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities that your group discussed today: (1-2 sentences each)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. **Please use this space to note action ideas, if any, that were mentioned in today's discussion:**

Community Circle Report Form

Session #3: How can we address the housing challenges in the Twin Cities?

Sponsoring Organization: _____ Date: _____

Meeting Location: _____ Number of Participants: _____

Facilitator: _____ Scribe: _____

Please describe two or three main themes or ideas about the housing challenges we face in the Twin Cities that your group discussed today: (1-2 sentences each)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. **Please use this space to note action ideas, if any, that were mentioned in today's discussion:**

Community Circle Report Form

Session #4: What can we do about the achievement gap in our public schools?

Sponsoring Organization: _____ Date: _____

Meeting Location: _____ Number of Participants: _____

Facilitator: _____ Scribe: _____

Please describe two or three main themes or ideas about the achievement gap in our schools that your group discussed today: (1-2 sentences each)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. **Please use this space to note action ideas, if any, that were mentioned in today's discussion:**

Community Circle Report Form

Session # 5: Making a Difference

Sponsoring Organization: _____ Date: _____

Meeting Location: _____ Number of Participants: _____

Facilitator: _____ Scribe: _____

While there may not be consensus within your group about how to best address some of the challenges discussed, there may be ideas or solutions which have emerged over the last few weeks and are supported by most participants.

1. What are two or three of the most powerful steps *individuals* can take to make a difference?

2. What are two or three of the most powerful steps *groups or organizations* can take to make a difference?

(over)

(Session #5 report form continued)

3. What are two or three of the most powerful steps our *community or region* can take to make a difference?

4. What are some of the things participants said they would do differently in the future as a result of being part of this community circle dialogue?

1999 Cities at Work Community Circle Dialogues

Evaluation Form

Participant Feedback

This circle dialogue is part of a pilot project and your thoughtful comments and criticism will be valuable in shaping future community circles. Please take the time to give us your suggestions and ideas.

	<i>Terrible</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>O.K.</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Fantastic</i>
How would you rate your overall experience as a participant in this community circle dialogue:	1	2	3	4	5	6

➤ Please identify one or two things you gained from participating in this community circle?

➤ What would have made this experience better?

➤ Do you think that your participation in this dialogue will have any effect on your thoughts or actions in the future?

Yes Please describe: _____

No Why not? _____

➤ What issues would you suggest community circle dialogues address in the future?

	<i>Terrible</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>O.K.</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Fantastic</i>
How useful were the discussion materials?	1	2	3	4	5	6

► How could the discussion materials be improved?

	<i>Terrible</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>O.K.</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Fantastic</i>
Overall, how effective was your facilitator:	1	2	3	4	5	6

► What did your facilitator do especially well?

► How could your facilitator be more effective in the future?

► Would you recommend this program to others?

Yes Please describe: _____

No Why not? _____

Other comments?

THANKS!

DISCUSSION LEADER'S EVALUATION FORM

This document was adapted from a form developed by Selena Singletary in Springfield, Ohio.

Please complete this form after your last discussion session and return to [address] no later than [date].

1. Your name
2. The name of your study circle organizer
3. Where and when (day of the week and time) did your study circle meet?
4. How many times did your study circle meet?
5. Number of participants at:
Session I ____ Session II ____ Session III ____ Session IV ____
6. How would you characterize your study circle in terms of gender, racial and ethnic make-up, political spectrum, etc.?
7. What perspectives were well represented in your group? Which were missing?
8. What were your own observations about the dialogue and group process?
9. What did members of the group say about their discussions?
10. What was the topic of the group's liveliest discussion?
11. What were areas of general agreement? What were areas with little consensus?
12. What suggestions came from the group about how people (individuals, organizations, institutions, government) might better address the issue?
13. Did you have adequate support from your study circle's organizer and from the coordinators of the overall program? If not, what additional support would have been helpful?
14. If you were to lead another study circle, what would you change? Feel free to comment on discussion materials, organization of the overall study circle program, your meeting site, your performance as discussion leader, and any other aspects.
15. Do you have concerns, or did the group have concerns, which need to be discussed with the study circle program's working group?

- 4) Ask participants to share whatever information they found about ongoing efforts or programs in your community on the issue you are working on.
- 5) To figure out what you want to do, try a brainstorming session — talking and writing down ideas as you go along. Then, review the list you generated. Do any common themes emerge? If so, plan to focus your efforts on areas of consensus. If not, ask group members to rank their top three concerns (anonymously & on paper). Collect their papers, take a break, and tabulate which ideas have the most support. Put the top 3-5 ideas on the board, and discuss the list.
- 6) Think about what is already being done in the community in these areas. Are there ways to build on existing efforts and find people to work with?
 - a) You may want to contact the people who coordinate the programs that interest you, and see how your efforts might best be applied. You may want to invite someone to come and speak to your group. Or, as a group, make a site visit to the organization.
 - b) You may want to start something new — something that no one is doing in your community. Take some time as a group to think about what gaps there are in community services, programs, or other civic enterprises.
 - c) You may want to invite more people to join your group.
- 7) Take a few minutes to discuss how you will keep your group up and running.
 - Just because you agreed to convene the first meeting doesn't necessarily mean you must continue in that role. If it is not feasible for you to continue, be sure to identify other leadership within the group to carry the work forward. Whoever runs the meeting should do so in an impartial, evenhanded way, much like a study circle facilitator.
 - You should begin to develop a paper trail, documenting the work of your group. (Remember, come [date], at the kickoff event for the next round of study circles, this task force will have the chance to report on what you did.) Rotate the recorder's job from week to week.
 - For the group to remain connected to the larger study circle program, someone needs to keep in touch with the [sponsoring organization]. That person(s) might also take on the responsibility of making sure that the meetings happen — that is, finding a site, calling participants, etc.
- 8) Set a time and place for the next meeting.
- 9) Thank everyone for their contributions. Again, remind people of the importance of their work!

NOW THAT WE'VE TALKED... IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

You can help your study circles move into discussion of action by providing handouts that help them think about how to become involved locally. The following combines elements of documents developed by Robert Sherman of the Sordana Foundation and the study circle organizers in Lima, Ohio and San Leandro, California.

Take stock of yourself

- Do you prefer to work alone or with a group of people?
- Could you put together a new organization?
- Do you have a specific area of interest such as child welfare, domestic violence, or intercultural understanding?
- Do you already belong to groups that are involved with these issues, or that might move in that direction?
- Do you have skills that you could share with your community? (Every community could use a gardener, a grant writer, a computer trainer for after-school programs, or a mural painter!)
- Realistically, how much time can you commit?

Take stock of your community

- As an individual or as part of a group, talk with young people, ministers, businesspeople, social service people, teachers, city officials, police officers, and neighbors to gain more perspective on your community and the issues it faces.
- Ask people about efforts to address problems in the community, and what these efforts might need in order to be more effective.
- Read sections of the newspaper that you might have ignored in the past, including local news, opinion pages, and the calendar of events.

Take ACTION!

Now that you know more about yourself and your community, choose some ways in which you might become involved.

- Apply for appointment to a city advisory commission.
- Help organize another study circle.
- Volunteer with a social service agency or nonprofit organization.
- Volunteer to help with the city's cultural diversity celebrations.
- Volunteer to work in local schools.

Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide

- Organize or assist with a neighborhood activity (park clean-up, picnic, etc.).
- Participate in — or help develop — an ongoing neighborhood social group (i.e. monthly potlucks, weekly volleyball games) or neighborhood watch.
- Spend some time outside in your neighborhood, and make it a point to become acquainted with neighbors of all ages and backgrounds.
- Mentor a young person in an after-school program, either informally or through a Big Sisters/Big Brothers program.
- Help organize a neighborhood or citywide function to honor people working to build a stronger community. Even if you choose one or two outstanding individuals, make sure that you give more than passing acknowledgment to the hundreds of people who help in hundreds of big and little ways!

Metropolitan Citizens Summit
Education, Housing and Race in the Twin Cities Area
December 1999 (date, time and place to be determined)

At the conclusion of the 1999 Community Circle Dialogues, circle participants will be invited to participate in a "Citizens Summit" on creating better schools, livable wage jobs and affordable housing for every resident of the Twin Cities.

This event will be designed to bring "closure" to the Community Circle Dialogues and to move the community forward on education, housing and race in the Twin Cities:

- to honor the work that dedicated citizens have undertaken in the community circles;
- to provide a forum for further exchange of ideas among these diverse groups of citizens (in the form of more concrete solutions and next steps);
- to further build connections among citizens metro-wide to *act*;
- and, finally, to generate attention for citizens' ideas and recommendations among local, state and national policy leaders, the media and the public.

The ultimate goal is to begin to "change the way we do business" as an economically and racially diverse metropolitan community.

The Citizens Summit will have two parts:

1) **A citizens forum with participants from the Community Circle Dialogues**

At the forum, participants will present their best ideas for moving from ideas to action on better integrating the metropolitan area (i.e., building more inclusive communities and schools). This session will be fully interactive, with participants having the ability to electronically vote on and prioritize the various ideas presented. The forum will be moderated by a known and trusted community leader in the Twin Cities.

In addition, the forum will be attended by a number of local policy makers – elected officials from suburban, urban, metropolitan, school, county and state government – all key officials working on or influencing these issues. The goal of the meeting will be to have these policy makers present to listen to the citizens who participated in the community circle conversations, and to understand the depth of support of their ideas.

2) **A luncheon, public address to the Minnesota Meeting, and radio broadcast**

In conjunction with the forum, the Minnesota Meeting will host an address by Lani Guinier, a nationally prominent leader in civil rights, education and housing (who will have observed the citizens summit). A larger group of community leaders – largely from business and the professions – will join the participants from the citizens forum for the Minnesota Meeting, a luncheon event which will be broadcast live on the stations of Minnesota Public Radio. This event will give the guest speaker the opportunity to relate to a larger public (luncheon guests and radio listeners) her understanding of the work among citizens that took place at the "citizens summit."

Sponsors: **The Minnesota Meeting, the Minnesota Public Radio Civic Journalism Initiative, and the Education & Housing Equity Project**

Funded by: **The Minneapolis Foundation and The Saint Paul Foundation**

1999 Cities At Work—Fall Forum

A Continuing Public Dialogue on Race, Connections, and Commitment to Action

BEYOND TOLERANCE: A CALL TO ACTION

November 8, 1999

Arlington High School

Keynote Speaker: **john powell**, Institute on Race and Poverty

Talk. Dialogue. Action. Can we move beyond talk and passive tolerance for our cultural and economic differences to committed action? For the past eight months, over eight hundred people have been engaged in dialogue on the challenges of housing, education, and racial reconciliation in our community.



Learn from their experiences and join others in forging action steps that make a difference in our community. We can complement each others' strengths and assets as we work community-wide towards cross-cultural understanding and racial reconciliation.

Hear what others have discussed and learned in the 1999 Cities at Work forums and in the Community Circle Dialogues about the impact of racism and economics on their lives

Explore how group and individual actions can address the challenges of economic and racial injustice

Discover how you can personally become involved with others to initiate community-wide strategies

Share good food and conversation as we affirm our ongoing commitment to eliminating racism and creating a more inclusive community

Join these organizations and others at the Call to Action:

St. Paul Council of Churches
Education and Housing Equality Project
MN Advocates for Human Rights
Minnesota Minority Education Project
Saint Paul Housing Campaign
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
Immigration Task Force
Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing
St. Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Congregations
Hamline/Midway Alliance for a Prejudice Free Community
and MANY OTHERS.....

The agenda for the day:

Date: Monday, Nov 8, 1999
Location: Arlington High School
1459 Rice Street
5:00 p.m. Registration & Dinner
5:30 p.m. Public Forum
Opening: Yusef Mgeni
Keynote Speaker: john powell
Call to Action: Rev. Devin Miller

Cities At Work 1999—Sponsors and Funders

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation ■ Asian Pacific Endowment for Community Development ■ Catholic Charities ■ City Solutions ■ East Side Neighborhood Development/VISTA ■ Education and Housing Equity Project/Community Circles Collaborative ■ Jane Addams School for Democracy ■ Leadership Saint Paul ■ Local Initiatives Support Corporation ■ MRA Initiatives for Change-Twin Cities ■ Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce ■ National Conference for Community and Justice ■ St. Paul Area Council of Churches ■ Saint Paul Human Rights Department ■ St. Paul/Ramsey Children's Initiative ■ St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development ■ St. Paul Planning Commission ■ St. Paul Public Schools ■ 3M Corporation ■ United Way of the St. Paul Area ■ University UNITED ■ The Urban Coalition ■ YMCA of Greater St. Paul and a diverse group of community volunteers

Registration

All events are free and open to the public, but advanced registration is required for meals. For more information contact Linda at 651/642-4060 or lmh@wilder.org.

Name _____

Organization (if any) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Ph: _____ Fx: _____ E-mail _____

Send registration to: Linda Hoskins, A.H. Wilder Foundation, 919 Lafond Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104
Fax: 651/642-2088

Affordable Housing Shortage Threatens Children's Health



A new study, *There's No Place Like Home: How America's Housing Crisis Threatens Our Children*, has found that numerous children's health problems are related to the lack of safe, affordable housing for low-income families. The study was released by The Doc4Kids Project, a group of pediatricians concerned about the link between inadequate housing and child health, and Housing America, a housing advocacy group. The study found that:

America's housing shortage continues to worsen.

- Nationwide, over 12.5 million persons, one-third of them children, live in households with "worst-case" housing needs. These households live in severely substandard housing or pay more than one-half of their income for rent.
- In the past two years, nearly 1.5 million affordable housing units have been lost nationwide. These include unsubsidized units where rents have increased, privately owned housing where owners have opted out of federal subsidy programs, and public housing that has been demolished but not replaced.

Substandard housing places children at risk for disease and injury.

- Children living in housing with cockroaches and other pests, dust mites, or mold are at increased risk of asthma. 10,000 children ages four to nine are hospitalized each year for asthma attacks because of cockroach infestation in the home.
- Children living in older, deteriorating housing are at higher risk of lead poisoning from paint, soil and water. Lead poisoning can cause illness, brain damage and other organ damage. Nationwide, 14 million children ages six and under live in housing with lead paint, and 1 million suffer from lead poisoning.
- Children in substandard housing are at higher risk of burns and other injuries. Each year, 1,485 children seek medical attention for burns from exposed radiators and 187 children die in house fires attributable to faulty heating and electrical equipment.

High housing costs force families to choose between rent and food, leading to increased child malnutrition.

- Children on waiting lists for subsidized housing are six times more likely to have stunted growth than children living in subsidized housing. An estimated 21,000 children have stunted growth attributable to their lack of affordable housing.
- Children whose families do not receive housing assistance are 50 percent more likely to be iron deficient than children in subsidized housing. Over 120,000 children suffer from anemia attributable to their families' inability to afford both rent and food.

Homeless children face special risks to their physical and mental health.

- Homeless children suffer almost twice the respiratory infections and five times the diarrheal infections as housed children.
- Homeless children also experience seven times the iron deficiency, twice as many hospitalizations, and significantly worse overall health status compared to housed children.
- Homeless children suffer increased psychological problems. Half of all children in shelters show signs of anxiety and depression.

The study recommends that Congress increase the affordable housing supply by:

- Increasing the number of Section 8 vouchers, which allow low-income families to obtain housing in the private market.
- Protecting the existing affordable housing stock by providing funds to preserve federally subsidized housing.
- Increasing the availability of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, which provides tax incentives for private investment in affordable rental housing.
- Providing special rental subsidies for safe housing for low-income families whose children suffer from severe asthma or other chronic diseases.
- Eliminating the cap on deductions of shelter costs from food stamp allotments so that families in areas with high rents will receive a full allotment of food stamps.

This summary published by:
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Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 375-9644
www.fhfund.org

For more information contact:
Housing America
126 Hyde Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-771-9850 or 718-707-1016
The full report is available for purchase or
on the World Wide Web at www.igc.org/housingamerica

***Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education,
and Persistent Segregation: Final Report to the McKnight Foundation***

THE INSTITUTE ON RACE AND POVERTY
June 1997

- Conclusion #1: Major cities and metropolitan areas in the United States remain highly segregated by race.*
- Conclusion #2: While individual poverty rates have stabilized, concentrated poverty is growing rapidly particularly within urban centers.*
- Conclusion #3: People of color are substantially more likely to live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.*
- Conclusion #4: Schools in the United States remain intensely segregated by race, and some are becoming more segregated. Segregation is especially severe in urban schools.*
- Conclusion #5: Schools which enroll predominantly students of color are also likely to have high levels of poverty.*
- Conclusion #6: The Government has significantly contributed to the creation and maintenance of segregation.*
- Conclusion #7: The private sector has significantly contributed to the creation and maintenance of segregation in housing.*
- Conclusion #8: There is a substantial connection between housing and education segregation.*
- Conclusion #9: Students of racially segregated, high poverty schools face enormous educational disadvantages.*
- Conclusion #10: While achievement levels for U.S. students remain unacceptably low, achievement is especially low for low-income students of color in urban schools.*
- Conclusion #11: Attending a racially isolated and high poverty school adversely impacts achievement levels of low-income students of color.*

(over)

Conclusion #12: Neighborhoods of concentrated poverty adversely affect the economic conditions of their residents.

Conclusion #13: Neighborhoods of concentrated poverty experience a disproportionately high number of adverse social conditions.

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Stable Housing + Stable Families + Stable Schools =
Better Educated Kids = Better Workforce = Better Minnesota

A SUMMARY OF THE KIDS MOBILITY REPORT

Children who move frequently attend school less often and do less well on achievement tests than do children who do not move. This was the finding of a study by the Kids Mobility Project involving children in grades 1-6 in the Minneapolis Public Schools. The findings and recommendations for action are outlined below.



How Frequently Do Children Move?

During the six-month study period (1993-4), one in five children in the Minneapolis Public Schools changed residences at least once. Some children changed residences three or more times per year.



Why Do Some Families Move So Much?

Highly mobile families move for two reasons:

- To find housing that is more affordable, in better condition, closer to work or in safer neighborhoods.
- As part of dealing with personal or family problems such as divorce, abuse, etc.



Mobility Negatively Affects School Achievement

The more moves children make, the lower their average reading scores. Average reading scores for children with three or more moves during the year were nearly 20 points lower than those of students who did not move.



Mobility Negatively Affects Attendance

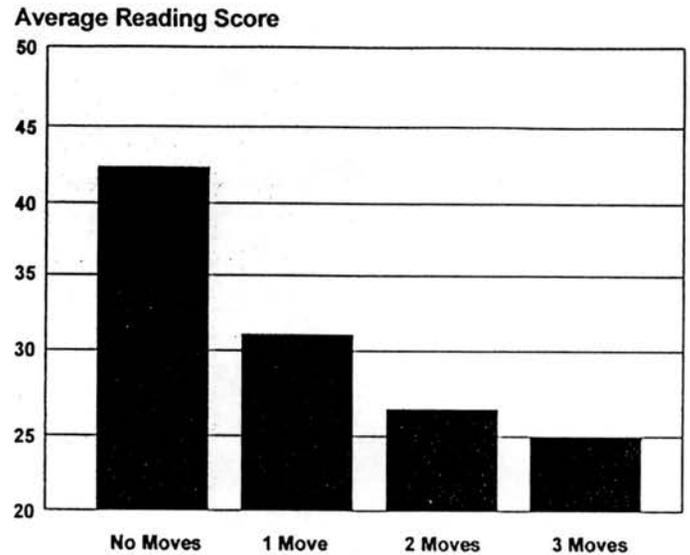
The more often students move, the worse their attendance rates. Students who did not move during the course of the study had an average attendance rate of 94 percent. Those with three or more moves dropped to an average rate of 84 percent.



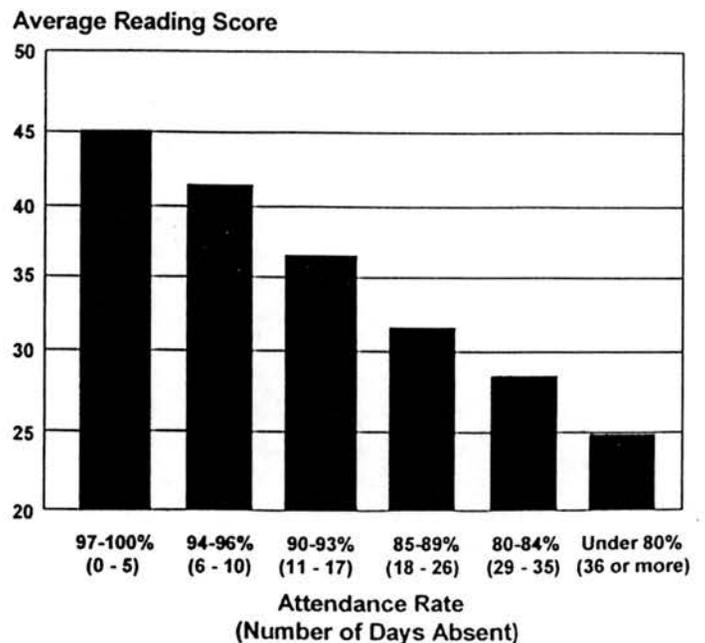
Attendance is Strongly Related to Achievement

Students with nearly perfect attendance on average had reading scores that were 20 points higher than those who attended less than 84 percent of the time.

Reading Scores by Number of Residential Moves



Reading Scores by Attendance Rate





The Kids Mobility Project learned that:

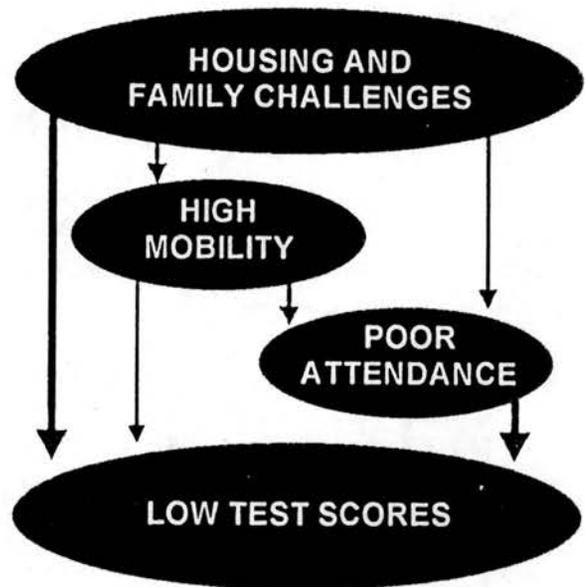
- Lack of decent, affordable housing, compounded by family and personal challenges, is causing families to move frequently.

"We have always moved to cope with the awful conditions of houses ... I saw mobility as a way to try a new life."

"You can't get good affordable housing."

- Family mobility is keeping children from attending school and doing well.

"I want stability for my child. I could see the change and how it was bad for her when we ... changed schools; it messed up her education and friendships."



What can we do NOW to enhance the school performance of children in highly mobile families?

While we cannot prevent all of the personal challenges families face, we can:

- Emphasize and improve school attendance.
- Develop more safe, quality, affordable housing.
- Connect mobile families to resources in their communities. These include other families, neighborhood centers, faith organizations and social service agencies.

For copies of the full Kids Mobility Project report or for more information, contact Sally Westby, (612) 373-2011 (o); (612) 375-0625 (fax); e-mail SalWestby@aol.com.

Participants in the Kids Mobility Project included representatives of the Family Housing Fund; Hennepin County; the Minneapolis Public Schools; and the University of Minnesota (CURA, CAREI and the Department of Educational Psychology).

A Region with Access for All: Overcoming the Social Engineering of Suburbia

∞ john a powell

Editor's Note

This essay is from a talk given at CALA in May 1998 by John A. Powell, professor at the University of Minnesota Law School and executive director of the University's Institute of Race and Poverty. He appeared with William Morrish, director of the Design Center for American Urban Landscape, John Adams, University of Minnesota professor of geography, Minnesota State Representative Myron Orfield, and Curt Johnson, chair of the Metropolitan Council.

I'm going to start with a historical perspective on how social policy has shaped metropolitan regions, then talk about some of the dynamics happening today, project it into the future, and then finally talk about solutions.

In terms of sprawl and issues of concentrated poverty, I think in order to really understand it we have to go back at least to World War II. Curt [Curt Johnson, chair of the Metropolitan Council] just talked about subdivisions where we now have large numbers of people living in subdivisions, where not only do all people look alike but all the houses look alike as well.

That was not true before World War II. Subdivisions are a relatively new phenomenon, and I don't think that was simply a function of people's deciding that they wanted to live in suburbs. In fact we know it wasn't.

When the United States adopted the Federal Housing Association (FHA) to help people buy homes, it was revolutionary. Before that time you had to put 50 percent down to buy a home. Most Americans couldn't afford to do that, and, in fact, much of the legislation came into effect during the 1930s at the height of the Depression. And the federal government stepped in and said we need to do something to make homes available to Americans and at that time most urban Americans lived in central cities. In creating a push for home ownership, the federal government also stated a clear preference for new construction outside established urban areas.

The FHA also wrote in the underwriting manuals that in order to receive FHA housing loans that would allow the buyer to put down only 5 percent (and if you were a veteran, only 3 percent) you had to live in a racially homogeneous neighborhood.

Some time later, in 1965, the Interstate Defense Highway Act created immense freeway linkages not only between cities, but also into cities, thereby separating established neighborhoods and fueling suburban growth. Thus in effect, the federal government funded and made it rational, desirable, and reasonable to move out of the central city into these large subdivisions. And it did this in



From the Minnesota Historical Society

such a way that it largely benefitted whites and prohibited blacks from living in those subdivisions.

In fact, the federal government said if you have a diverse population, you are not eligible for this program. That is not simply people exercising choice. That's the federal government, and one of the things that I still get frustrated with today. Some scholars have said that this subsidy probably cost the federal government about \$1 trillion dollars. And yet today when we look at the problem we are asked to turn to volunteerism. Let people and the markets do what they will yet we run the risks of "social engineering."

The huge irony here is that the postwar suburbs are the largest social engineering project this country has ever undertaken. And yet when we want to challenge it, we say we can't do anything. We have to basically rely on the goodwill of people, nonprofit agencies, and charities.

Zoning authorities

One of the important facts most people don't realize: Cities or municipalities have no zoning authority. Now in my saying this, you probably wonder what law school do I teach at. All zoning authority comes directly from the state, and the state delegates that authority to municipalities, but the ultimate authority rests with the state.

Thus the state government has absolute control, if it decides to exercise it, about what goes on in terms of zoning. It doesn't have to go with "hat in hand" to the suburbs and say "would you please think about zoning and affordable housing differently." That would be good for our communities. It has the authority to say "No, you can't do that. I'm delegating to you, but I am delegating with these restraints." Now politically we may not be willing to do that, but it is not a question of power or authority.

Regional sprawl and segregation

After World War II, two of the largest migrations inside the United States occurred simultaneously: blacks migrating from the South to the North and whites migrating from the city to the suburb. The latter migration was tremendously funded and supported by the federal government.

(over)

The more sprawl in a region and the more fragmented a region is, the more racially segregated and the more economically segregated the region. Unless you address sprawl and fragmentation, you cannot address problems of racial and economic segregation.

If you address sprawl and fragmentation, the separation of new jobs on the fringe and those who need them, there is a possibility that you then can break down the barriers of racial and economic segregation. And I agree with Curt Johnson's [chair of the Metropolitan Council, who also spoke at the forum] statement that one of the substantial forms of segregation that we have not paid attention to recently is economic segregation.

Concentrated versus individualized poverty

Segregation of any kind is not a function of choice. I think we have pernicious policies that support a fragmented region, and we have to think about adopting new policies. Now in terms of thinking about racial and economic segregation, concentrated poverty is where they come together. You have low-income black people and increasing numbers of Latinos living in high-poverty neighborhoods, and high poverty neighborhoods function differently than individualized poverty.

Individualized poverty is more likely a poor white's experience. Concentrated poverty, where neighborhoods and — in some places like Detroit and Cleveland — entire cities are poor — is something that blacks and Latinos experience much more of. And I want to suggest to you that they are not there because they want to be around each other. They are there because of our social policy.

In 1968 the Kerner Commission used the term "ghetto" to describe areas of concentrated poverty. Their findings also stated, and I paraphrase here, that the Negro can never forget what whites fail to understand...that whites are implicated in every aspect of building the ghetto, in its formation, in its maintenance, and in its evolution over time.

Even though you don't see white people very often in the ghetto, it is policies adopted by powerful whites that actually create ghettos. And when blacks moved from the South to the North they weren't looking to live with other blacks in the ghetto. They were moving for jobs. The economy was humming and blacks left by the millions to the North for jobs.

Today, many of those jobs have left the central cities. And blacks and Latinos increasingly can't get to those jobs. In this region that might sound like it is an important issue, but it is marginal here because the minority population is still relatively small.

The risks of a polarized future in the Twin Cities region

Our perception of "minorities" is going to change. As of the year 2000 less than half of the working force in Minnesota will be white males. After the year 2015, all growth in terms of the labor force of this state will be in the minority community. If you look at the

growth of the labor force in the state for the next 30 years, it is projected that there will 11 percent growth in the white population and 247 percent growth in the minority population. The minority population is not expanding; it is exploding.

And there are some other things that are happening that should cause us to pause. The white population is aging. The minority population is very young; in 20 or 30 years the average African American will be 26 years old. The average white will be 42 years old. Whites will not have children. Their children will be grown. They will not have children in school. You will have a labor force that is increasingly black and Latino and Asian with a lot of children in school and you will have a tremendous urge to polarize.

There will be an equally tremendous urge on the part of whites not to participate in the schooling of these children. On the other hand, the care that whites will need and the support for social security will be dependent upon workers who are increasingly black, brown, and yellow. So what I want to suggest is that unless we start addressing these issues in a way that really rethinks the sprawl and fragmentation, we are headed for a serious problem in this state and in this country.

Housing where the opportunities are

There are many problems and many ways of dealing with the fragmentation and regional sprawl. One, of course, is transportation. Another is schooling. Another, of course, is employment. Ultimately we have to look at all of them, but I want to suggest that the key is *housing itself*.

When we look at housing needs, we see that already we are tremendously undersubscribed in the number of units of low- and moderate-income housing. And while this data is accurate, it is also misleading because it doesn't talk about the spatial distribution of housing and the spatial distribution of jobs. The reality is that by and large, we do not need any more low-income housing in the central city unless we also build light rail to the central city.

We need housing where the jobs will be, and in the future the job growth in this state and in this region will not be in the central city, it will be in the suburbs. What we need is an aggressive, fair-share housing policy that results in housing being distributed throughout the region and especially where job growth is occurring.

- Professor John Powell is a graduate of Stanford University and has a law degree from the University of California at Berkeley. He joined the University's law school in 1993 and teaches Civil Rights Law, Property Law, and Jurisprudence. His writings concern issues of race and poverty and the changing ways in which we understand their connections. He is the founder and executive director of the Institute of Race and Poverty at the University.

Segregation and Poverty in the Twin Cities

A Summary from and update of *Metropolitica*

During the 1980s and 1990s, the Twin Cities region became more segregated by race and by income. Beginning in parts of the central cities, areas of concentrated poverty and segregated minorities have spread outward into the inner suburbs, destabilizing these communities. What follows is a brief account of this trend, with a focus on the schools, which sound an early warning signal for the health of these communities and the region.

According to the 1990 census, extreme poverty and transitional poverty tracts accounted for only 11 percent of the metropolitan population, but 36 percent of the region's poor people lived in those tracts.¹ Simultaneously, the Twin Cities became more racially segregated. In the 1980s, the concentration of African-Americans grew faster than in any other metropolitan area in the United States with over 1 million people, except for Milwaukee, Detroit, and Buffalo. In the Twin Cities, poor blacks are more than twice as likely to live in extreme poverty tracts than poor whites (40 percent of poor blacks live in extreme tracts versus 18 percent of poor whites).

Race and Poverty

The Central Cities

The Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts have a disproportionate amount of minority students. In 1997, 67 percent of elementary school students were non-white, and over half of these were African-American students. In St. Paul, 61 percent of elementary school students were non-white; 41 percent of these were Asian, and another 39 percent African-American. In total, this is a change of 185 and 178 percent, respectively, since the early 1980s. Moreover, ten schools in Minneapolis were over 90 percent minority, with Bethune Elementary being the most segregated at 96 percent minority. In St. Paul, East Consolidated Elementary was the most segregated at 84 percent minority.

Minneapolis and St. Paul also have a disproportionate amount of poor children. In 1997, 69 percent of Minneapolis elementary school students and 67 percent of St. Paul elementary school students participated in free and reduced lunch programs.² This is a change of 188 and 258 percent, respectively, since the early 1980s. There were nine schools in Minneapolis with over 90 percent poor children, and three schools (Bethune Elementary, School of Extended Learning, and Lucy Craft Laney Elementary) with virtually all poor children (98-99 percent). In St. Paul, East Consolidated Elementary is 95 percent poor, and ten schools are over 80 percent poor.

Such dramatic changes in the concentration of poverty and minorities have contributed greatly to white flight. In the 1980s, Minneapolis lost 41 percent of its white preschool children and St. Paul lost 32 percent. Certain neighborhoods near core poverty areas lost 75-100 percent of their white preschoolers in Minneapolis and 50-75 percent in St. Paul. According to the Minneapolis Homeowner's Survey, by 1993, 45 percent of families with children planned to leave within 5 years.

As black immigration and white flight grew, so too did segregation, as shown by the concentration of minority students. In addition, in 1980, the two blackest census tracts in Minneapolis had a 2:1 ratio of black to white pre school children. By 1990, there were 19 tracts with a larger proportion of black preschoolers: seven tracts had a ratio of 3:1, and one was as high as 32:1. In St. Paul, there were four tracts with a ratio of 3:1 and one tract as high as 19:1. The areas with the highest concentration of African-Americans were also the poorest.

¹An extreme poverty tract is 40 percent or more poor, and a transitional poverty tract is 20 to 40 percent poor.

²Free and reduced lunch participation is an indicator of poverty. Because older children are less likely to participate or report their participation in these programs – due to social stigma – elementary school data is the most accurate.

The Inner Suburbs

The inner ring suburban districts have also become increasingly poor and non-white. Over the past fifteen years, these districts have experienced a major transformation. In Brooklyn Center, the amount of poor children rose from 17 to 51 percent; in Columbia Heights, 15 to 35 percent; and in Richfield, from 10 to 33 percent.

Minority populations have risen as well. In Brooklyn Center, the percent of minority children rose from 9 to 37 percent; in Richfield, from 8 to 25 percent, and in West St. Paul, from 5 to 19 percent.

As these concentrations have risen, white flight has spread into these suburbs. Eighteen of 29 inner suburbs lost white preschoolers in the 1980s. Specifically, Fridley experienced a drop of 24 percent; Brooklyn Center experienced a drop of 21 percent; St. Louis Park experienced a drop of 29 percent; Richfield experienced a drop of 14 percent; and South St. Paul experienced a drop of 14 percent.

The Second Ring

Second ring suburban districts, wedged between wealthy and rapidly declining areas, are hybrids. Some districts have experienced growing poverty without racial change. These are typically poor white, often blue collar districts with low property wealth. Other districts have experienced change in some schools, but not others. In the south, Bloomington has experienced the greatest change. In 1997, Bloomington was 19 percent minority and 21 percent poor. Yet Valley View Elementary was 45 percent minority and 51 percent poor.

Osseo has undergone the greatest change. From 1992 to 1997, Osseo went from 6 to 17 percent minority students and 9 to 18 percent poor students. Yet these district-wide numbers mask extremes within the district. In 1982, Zanewood Elementary was 13 percent minority and 20 percent poor. By 1997, it was 49 percent minority and 60 percent poor. Compare that with Elm Creek Elementary, which in 1982 was 4 percent minority/ 3 percent poor and in 1997, just 3 percent minority/ 7 percent poor. To deal with these changes, Osseo has altered attendance boundaries. The district has isolated poor minority children in older less-than-adequate buildings in Brooklyn Park, the southeastern portion of the district, and has built elaborate schools in Maple Grove, the northwestern portion of the district.

Fast-Growing Districts

Fast-growing suburban districts, which account for 21 percent of the metropolitan area's students, have a low rate of poverty and low numbers of minority students. Half of these students are in Rosemount or South Washington County, which are 11 percent minority/ 9 percent poor and 8 percent minority/ 12 percent poor, respectively. With the exception of some of the blue-collar districts like Shakopee, these districts also have a correspondingly low drop out rate.

Southern and Western Developing Districts

Finally, the southern and western developing districts are the least racially and socioeconomically diverse, consist largely of an upper middle class student body, and have low drop out rates. In 1997, Edina was the region's wealthiest school district, with only 3 percent poor students and 5 percent minority students.

Spending and Student Success

The Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts spend \$7,060 per pupil, 15 percent more than any other school district group in the region. Inner ring schools are second in per pupil spending (\$5,829 per pupil), followed by the southern and western developing districts (\$5,651 per pupil), the second ring (\$5,408 per pupil, about the metropolitan average), and lastly the fast-growing districts (\$5,050 per pupil).

Yet low non-graduation rates do not correlate with high school spending. Minneapolis and St. Paul have the highest drop-out rates: 33 percent of 9th graders do not graduate in Minneapolis, while 28 percent do not graduate in St. Paul. In the inner ring districts, approximately 1 in 7 students doesn't graduate from

high school.

Aside from the southern and western developing districts (which are wealthy enough to spend highly without asking residents to pay exorbitant property taxes), low poverty, low paying districts have attracted and kept more middle class families than high poverty, high spending districts.

One particularly disturbing trend has emerged regarding school funding. Due to low property tax revenues, most of the funding for the central cities comes from state aid. When the cities have asked the state for more funding, they have struck an unsettling bargain with the suburbs, who initially are reluctant to provide this additional funding: The cities threaten a metropolitan area desegregation law suit if their funding doesn't increase. Under pressure from constituents, suburban representatives support the increase funding. This is self-destructive regional polarization.

Desegregation and bussing

In the Minneapolis school district, bussing began in 1972 on a federal court order. This early effort to combat segregation did mitigate the situation for a number of years, but as the above statistics show, intra-city desegregation is no longer effective.

In 1983, under threat of a desegregation lawsuit against St. Paul, the State Board of Education established the "15 percent rule" – *i.e.*, if one or more buildings in a district exceed the overall district minority population by more than 15 percent, the district is segregated. The penalty for segregation is a reduction in state aid.

Currently, Minneapolis is the only district with an extensive desegregation plan. St. Paul continues to use voluntary magnet schools and the suburban districts have neighborhood schools. Districts like Osseo are legally segregated. (Again, in 1997, elementary schools district-wide were 17 percent minority, but Zanewood, Orchard Lane, Crest View, Park Brook, Willow Lane, Fair Oaks were from 35 to 49 percent minority.) Bloomington, Anoka, and Robbinsdale are also segregated.

Finally, the state formula doesn't consider inter-district or metropolitan wide data. Yet, school desegregation is now effectively impossible in the core cities and in the inner suburbs districts.

Conclusion

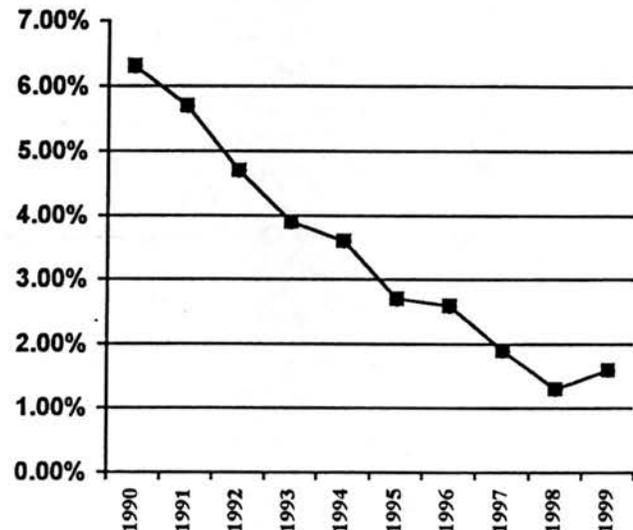
Concentrated poverty and growing segregation continue to move from Minneapolis and St. Paul into the inner suburbs and increasingly, the second ring as well. With this movement has come higher high school drop-out rates and other social changes that destabilize communities. Some districts like Osseo, are now legally segregated. More importantly, integration is no longer possible within Minneapolis and St. Paul, or within a number of inner ring districts either. A metropolitan-wide integration plan is needed.

The State of Affordable Housing in the Twin Cities

Decreasing Supply

- Over the past 8 years, the Twin Cities area vacancy rate has declined steadily, from over 6% in 1990, to a mere 1.6% in 1999.
- In order to achieve 5% vacancy, which economist and industry analysts consider to be “healthy” for a growing region, 11,000 units would have to be built at a cost of over 1 billion dollars. (Source: Apartment Search; Griffin Companies)

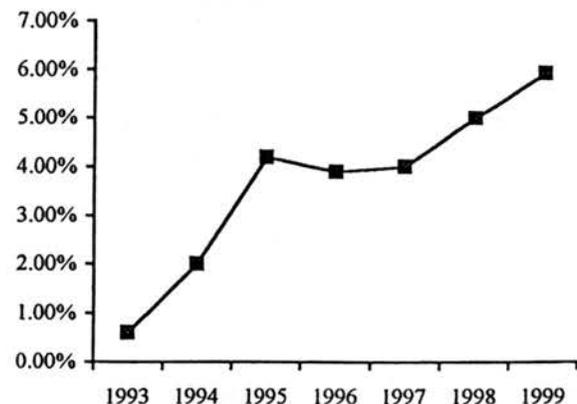
Metro Area Vacancy Rate,
1990-1998



Increasing Costs

- Average rents in the Twin Cities increased 3.9% in 1997, an additional 5% in 1998 and continue to rise at a rate of 5.9% in 1999. Average wages, however, only increased 3% in last two years.
- In the manufacturing industry, wages increased only 2.1%, and in retail the increase was only 0.9%. (Source: Griffin Companies and the Jobs Now Coalition.)

Average Annual Increase in Rents, Twin
Cities Metro Area
1991 - 1998



The Affordability Gap

Rental Housing

- Approximately 38,000 households in the Twin Cities metro area with incomes under \$30,400 (50% of the metro median income) spend at least 50% of their income on housing or live in substandard units. (Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.)
- Rents for 2-bdrm apartments range from \$645 in the northern suburbs to \$786 in the western suburbs. These rents are clearly not affordable to many low-wage workers. (Source: Apartment Search.)

Metro-Wide Rental Rates		
Unit Type	Average Rent	Vacancy Rate
1 Bedroom	\$591.47	1.6%
2 Bedroom	\$739.31	1.6%
3 Bedroom	\$984.98	2.6%

Yearly Income and Maximum Monthly Housing Payment of Various Occupations (based on 30% of income)		
Position	Median Yearly Income	Max. Monthly Housing Payment
Child Care Provider	\$14,560	\$364
Medical Assistant	\$21,403	\$535
School Bus Driver	\$18,408	\$460
Teacher Aide	\$15,928	\$398
Bank Teller	\$17,098	\$427

Home Ownership

- At the end of 1998, the median home sales prices was at **\$130,200**— up **9.7%** from the end of 1997. Typical annual increases are between 3 and 5%. Inflation for the same period was 2.1%.
- At the end of 1998, there were 36% fewer homes on the market than there was at the same time in 1997. (Source: Regional Multiple Listing Service)

Changes in Median Home Sales Price in the Metro Region, 1993-1998			
Municipality	1998 Median	1997-98 Change	1993-98 Change
Apple Valley	\$158,000	10.49%	36.50%
Blaine	\$120,000	6.19%	33.15%
Brooklyn Center	\$96,900	8.49%	25.84%
Brooklyn Park	\$119,900	4.35%	31.18%
Eagan	\$160,000	3.56%	26.09%
Eastern Dakota Co.	\$150,000	7.22%	28.28%
Fridley	\$111,900	13.14%	28.50%
Inver Grove Heights	\$152,000	17.83%	37.08%
Woodbury	\$184,900	5.66%	26.45%

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