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Cities at Work 1999

Unleashing the Power of Our Community *A Dialogue on Race, Connection, and Commitments*

We are at a crossroads. The faces of Saint Paul are changing daily, becoming more varied and diverse. Our dramatically changing community can be our strength and vitality, or can divide us into competing identities and interests. Much is at stake. If we harness the potential of all our citizens, we can create economic growth, keep our young people engaged and our neighborhoods thriving.

Our increasing cultural and economic diversity, with its promise and challenges, touches every aspect of our lives - families, relationships, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and the city as a whole. In order to make improvements in our neighborhoods, communities and city, we have to work in partnership across cultures, economic levels and other lines that often divide us. Our community will weaken unless we can learn to work effectively with people and groups of different backgrounds, interests and approaches. The 1999 *Cities At Work* forum series brings all sectors of our community together to learn from each other how we can unleash the incredible power and potential of our city's diversity.

Cities At Work is an inter-racial, multi-neighborhood, collaborative effort made up of individuals, government, neighborhoods, funders, community organizations and faith-based groups committed to public dialogue on topics important to Saint Paul's future. The 1999 *Cities At Work* forum series explores how Saint Paul can more effectively come together as a community to respond to demographic and cultural trends that will create an even more diverse St. Paul over the next 10-20 years.

We will explore:

- How assumptions and past experiences create racial and ethnic tension
- Why discovering what we have in common is more important than focusing on differences
- How youth view diversity, and what we can learn from them
- A new definition of our community where everyone's contributions are welcome and used
- How Saint Paul can cultivate an environment that makes it an attractive place to live, work, and do business

The 1999 *Cities at Work* forum series focuses on ways we can address and embrace the impact of these changes both as individuals and as a community. The forum series stimulates dialogue among neighbors, businesses, community-based organizations and associations, nonprofit agencies, faith-based groups, policymakers, and educators as we acknowledge the changing face of our community.

Forum Series Events

Between March and November 1999, a series of events will bring people together to learn, share ideas and make commitments for future action as a community. Forum series events include:

Public Forums

Four public forums between March and November 1999 will be the centerpiece events in the series. Each forum will examine the impact and potential of our increasingly multicultural community. Each forum will highlight a different aspect of Saint Paul's diversity, and will utilize a mixture of audience participation activities, drama, presentation and discussion to stimulate learning and discovery. The forums will feature ethnic food and locations in different neighborhood gathering places around the city.

Stop Talking, Just Do It: Youth's Perspectives on Bridging Differences

Saint Paul youth will present their perspective on how to build relationships across cultural differences, focusing specifically on differences of race and sexual orientation. The forum will utilize a talk show format with youth, as well as participatory activities with the audience. The forum is intended to educate participants about youth and their experiences with diversity, and suggest how adults can provide better direction and opportunities for the future leaders of our community. Youth will tell us that we need to not just tolerate differences, but welcome and embrace differences in our city's rich and diverse multicultural environment.

Face-to-Face: How We Interact

This forum will focus on the changing faces of Saint Paul's residents and the individual awareness and interpersonal dynamics that help connect us across cultural differences. An original performance by Illusion Theater, and discussion with the actors will be a springboard to learn more about who we are as a community. Through interactive exercises the forum will emphasize the powerful impact of communication as an important first step toward tolerance, reconciliation and effective collaboration across our community.

Who's At The Table?

The work of community often occurs around tables - businesses, organizations, clubs, neighborhood associations. The faces at our tables are changing, and with the increasing diversity we often don't have the necessary experience or skills to ensure that all voices are heard, and constructive partnerships are formed. This forum will explore the experiences of several organizations and businesses in Saint Paul who have learned how to work in cross-cultural partnerships to accomplish more than any one group could have accomplished alone.

Beyond Tolerance: A Call to Action

During each public forum and the community circle dialogues, people will be identifying actions that are needed from individuals, neighborhoods, organizations and as a community to address racism, promote multiculturalism and reconciliation, and develop a strong and vital community. This final forum will take us beyond passive tolerance to create a community-wide agenda for action.

Community Circle Dialogues

The *Cities at Work Community Circle Dialogues* are discussion groups of 10-15 people from diverse backgrounds who will meet five times between February and May for honest and respectful discussion of challenges our community faces regarding race, housing and education. A trained facilitator, a written discussion guide and other resource materials will help the keep the discussions focused. At the final forum in the *Cities at Work* forum series, "A Call to Action", community circle participants will share their experiences and ideas for future community action.

Lunch Forums

Lunch or breakfast forums will be held the day of each public forum. Community leaders, elected officials and funders will be invited to give them a brief overview of the ideas that are presented at the public evening forums. The lunch forums are intended to provoke discussion and keep people who ordinarily wouldn't come to the public forums apprised of the community discussion. Lunch forums have historically been sponsored and hosted by local corporations or organizations.

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Sponsors and Funders

The Cities At Work forum series is sponsored and hosted by a broad array of individuals, groups and organizations in Saint Paul. These individuals and organizations have contributed much volunteer time - developing the forum series design, and contributing expertise, money and promotional and outreach capabilities to make the forum series a success.

Sponsors

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Catholic Charities
City Solutions
East Side Neighborhood Development/VISTA
Education and Housing Equity Project/Community Circles Collaborative
Jane Addams School for Democracy
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
MRA Initiatives for Change - Twin Cities
National Conference for Community and Justice
St. Paul Council of Churches
St. Paul/Ramsey Children's Initiative
St. Paul Planning Commission
The Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice/Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
United Way of the St. Paul Area
Urban Coalition
YMCA of Greater St. Paul
And a diverse group of community volunteers

Funders and Contributors

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
City Solutions
Otto Bremer Foundation
St. Paul Council of Churches
United Way of the St. Paul Area
Others to be determined

Potential Community Circle Dialogue Sponsors

American Indian Family Center	National Conference for Community and Justice
Assn. for the Adv. of Hmong Women in MN	Neighborhood House/Multicultural Communities in Action
Catholic Charities-Frogtown Center	New Brighton United Church of Christ
Cherokee Park United Church	North End Family Center
Concordia College	Ramsey Action Program, Inc. (RAP)
Cooperating Fund Drive	Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Dayton's Bluff Elementary School	San Martin Lutheran Church
District 5 Community Council	St. Anthony Park Community Council
East Side Neighborhood Development Co.	St. Paul Convention and Visitors Bureau
Grace Community United Church of Christ	St. Phillips Episcopal Church
Hamline-Midway Coalition	St. Paul Public Schools
Hmong American Partnership/CAAR	St. Paul/Ramsey Children's Initiative
House of Hope Presbyterian Church	St. Paul United Church of Christ
J.J. Hill Magnet School	St. Timothy Lutheran Church
Lex-Ham Community Council	The Saint Paul Companies
Macalester College	Unity Church
Mac-Groveland Family Center	University of St. Thomas
Merriam Park Community Council	West Side Family Center
Minnesota Parenting Association	Wilder Forest
MRA Initiatives for Change - Twin Cities	Wilder Foundation - The ROOF Project
Mt. Olivet Baptist Church	