



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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2211 Riverside Avenue, CB 185
Minneapolis, MN 55454
P: 612-330-1505
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E: ehep@augsborg.edu

Education & Housing Equity Project

Memo

To: Community Circle Sponsors
From: Pam Jewson
CC: Dick Little & Barbara Blackstone/Community Circle Facilitators
Date: 04/07/99
Re: *Important Upcoming Events!*

Congratulations on your participation in a current or upcoming Community Circle discussion. We would like to take this opportunity to let you know about some very important upcoming events.

1. The fair housing play ***"Like Waters Rolling Down"*** created and produced by MICAH and the Illusion Theatre that we are co-sponsoring with about 26 other groups, will take place on April 25, at the Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

2. ***"Hate Crimes & Bias Incidents: A Challenge to Inclusive Communities"***, sponsored by MICAH and the Minnesota Fair Housing Center will take place Tuesday, April 27, from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., also at the Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church.

3. "Citites at Work", which we are co-sponsoring in Saint Paul, will present 2 forums: "***Stop Talking, Just Do It!***" on Wednesday April 28, from 5:00 - 8:30 p.m., at Arlington High School, 1459 Rice Street, St. Paul, MN and "***Face to Face***", on Tuesday May 18, from 5:00 - 8:30 p.m. at Bandana Square.

These three very important events need to be conveyed to the people who are or will be participating in your Community Circles. Please find enclosed more information about each event. We would like you to distribute the fliers and other brochures about these events to your participants.

Please call our office for further information and to let us know how many fliers & brochures you will be needing.

Sincerely,



Pam Jewson
EHEP Administrative Assistant

EHEP BOARD MEMBERS

Community Circles Participant Profile

1. Community Circle Location _____
2. Community where you live: City _____ Neighborhood? _____
School District _____
3. Community where you work: City _____ Downtown or Business District? _____
4. Ethnic/Racial background?

_____ African American	_____ Hispanic/Latino/Chicano
_____ American Indian/Native American	_____ White/European
_____ Asian American	_____ Mixed Racial Background
_____ Arab/Middle Eastern	_____ Other
5. Gender Male _____ Female _____
6. Age/Generation: Born in... _____ 1920's _____ 30's _____ 40's _____ 50's
_____ 60's _____ 70's _____ 80's
7. Household/Family: Married/Partnered no children _____ Married/Partnered with children _____
Single alone _____ Single with children _____ Minor living with family _____ Room Mate _____
Other family configuration (e.g., extended family) _____ Other _____ Number in your household _____
8. Income Level: Low _____ Moderate _____ Middle _____ High _____
9. Education (highest level attained): Grade or Middle School _____ High School _____
College studies _____ Community College/Vo-Tech _____ College Degree _____
Graduate studies _____ Graduate School Degree _____ Are you currently a student? _____
9. Political Affiliation: DFL _____ Republican _____ Reform _____ Other _____
Independent (no affiliation) _____
10. Political Perspective: Liberal _____ Conservative _____ Moderate _____
Libertarian _____ Other _____
11. Housing Situation: Home owner _____ Renter _____ Landlord _____
Single-Family _____ Multi-Family _____ Other _____
12. Religious Affiliation/Faith Group: Catholic _____ Protestant _____ Jewish _____
Muslim _____ Unitarian _____ Other _____ No affiliation _____
13. Employment/Occupation: Government _____ Education _____ Private Industry _____
Corporate _____ Small Business _____ Self Employed _____ Non-profit _____
Not Employed _____ Retired _____ Other _____
14. Do you have children attending K-12 Schools? _____ Public School _____ Private School _____ Other _____

MMEP
announces
Community Circles
on
Education, Housing and Segregation

In January through May 1999, the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc. (MMEP) and the Education & Housing Equity Project (EHEP) will join other organizations to co-sponsor citizen discussions on some of the most pressing social and economic issues facing our communities and metropolitan region.

Community circles are small, facilitated discussion groups that examine, discuss and deliberate on important policy issues. They consist of 8 - 15 participants who meet for five sessions of two hours each. A specially prepared discussion guide is used to help focus the conversation.

The circles will consider such topics as:

- reshaping schools so all children can learn together and ultimately succeed
 - reversing the growing achievement gap along racial and economic lines
- and
- creating housing stability that positively impacts student learning.

Discussion results will be used to inform State and local policy makers. All participants are then invited to attend the Citizens Summit to be co-sponsored with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio.

Additional sponsors are needed (includes securing meeting locations and dates, invitations and recruitment) as well as discussion participants and scribes.

For more information or to participate, call Carlos Mariani-Rosa (MMEP) at 612/330-1645, or Dick Little (EHEP) at 612/330-1505.

"What the Research Shows"

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

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

“What the Research Shows”

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)

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 #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?

Community Circle Report Form

Session #1-4

Sponsoring Organization: _____ Date: _____

Session: ___#1 ___#2 ___#3 ___#4 Number of Participants (today): _____

Facilitator: _____ Co-Facilitator (if any) _____

Scribe: _____

Please describe two or three main themes/ideas 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 #5

Sponsoring Organization: _____ Date: _____

Session: ___#1 ___#2 ___#3 ___#4 Number of Participants (today): _____

Facilitator: _____ Co-Facilitator (if any) _____

Scribe: _____

Please describe the action ideas generated in today's discussion:

1. What can *individuals* do to make a difference?

2. What can groups/ organizations do to make a difference?

3. What can the community or region do to make a difference?

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

**Education and
Housing Equity
Project**

Memo

To: Prospective and Committed Sponsors of Community Circle Dialogues on Education, Housing and Segregation

From: EHEP - Education and Housing Equity Project, Pam Jewson, Administrative Assistant

Date: 01/13/99

Subject: Site Commitment Forms and Announcement of Kick-Off Forums
Conversation at the Crossroads of Education, Housing and Race

On behalf of the Education and Housing Equity Project, we would like to thank you for your interest in sponsoring a Community Circles conversation. As we anticipate the next round of Community Circles, we are excited that you may be adding your voice to address issues of segregation in housing and education in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Enclosed with this memo is the **Site Commitment Form**. **Please complete and return this form to us as quickly as possible.** This information will enable us to help publicize your circle to prospective participants, assign a facilitator(s) to your circle, and deliver the discussion guides in advance of your first meeting. Remember that the schedule for each community circle must include at least five sessions of 2 hours each.

Also enclosed is the flyer announcing the **Community Circle Kick-Off Forums** on January 21, in St. Louis Park and February 4, in St. Paul. **We strongly encourage you to attend or send sponsor representatives to at least one of these Forums.**

I look forward to hearing from you. If I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to call me (or Dick Little) at the Education and Housing Project at 612-330-1505 (612-330-1507 fax).

THE COMMUNITY CIRCLE PROJECT

PLEDGE OF PARTICIPATION FOR: SPONSORS

The Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP) is excited to partner with you as we anticipate the next successful round of Community Circle Conversations. As a sponsor, we invite you to thoughtfully review the Pledge of Participation form, carefully noting each responsibility and your capacity to complete the vital sponsor roles, ensuring the full success of this project.

Responsibilities of Sponsors:

1. Recruit between 8 and 15 people for each community circle.
2. Arrange a meeting space and time for each community circle or recruit participants for a designated time and location.
3. Distribute discussion materials to each participant.
4. Promote the program by any means possible, including bulletins, newsletters, and personal contacts.
5. Participate in evaluation process of community circle.
6. Provide childcare and transportation services as needed by participants.
7. Provide hospitality for participants, ensuring light snacks and beverages, writing board and name tags at each meeting.
8. Keep records of participation for your Community Circle, complete with address and phone listings.
9. Designate a scribe for each Community Circle, capturing in written record the highlights of each conversation.

EHEP will work closely along side you, providing:

- Discussion Guide
- Trained facilitator (and training to your facilitators)
- Informative background materials
- Calendar of related events
- Information clearinghouse for pairing organizations
- Action Forum to connect citizens with service and action opportunities

All community Circles will be invited to take part in a Citizens Summit to be co-sponsored with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio. Results will be shared with legislators and local officials.

Name of sponsoring organization or agency that you represent:	
Your name: (please print)	
Your address:	
Your telephone & fax:	
Your e-mail (if applicable):	

I understand the responsibilities of Sponsors and commit my organization to this project. This commitment is based on approval from our Board of Directors, Executive Director, or other appropriate authority.

In addition, my organization can provide the following:

_____ Co-Facilitator _____ Media equipment _____ Copying services _____ Translator(s)
_____ We will collaborate with the following organization(s) to jointly co-sponsor one or more circle(s): _____

To achieve greater diversity in our community circle, we would like to be paired with a group different from ourselves _____

Signature

Date

Return to:
Dick Little
Education & Housing Equity Project
2211 Riverside Ave CB 185
Minneapolis, MN 55454
tel: (612) 330-1505 fax: (612) 330-1507

Invest in Strengthening Your Community: Sponsor a Community Circle

The Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP) invites **you** to join dozens of other community groups in sponsoring citizen discussions on the most pressing social, economic, and political issues facing our region. When you sponsor a Community Circle, productive dialogue that invites everyone to take part in the conversation and work for the good of our community's future replaces the negative conflict that discourages participation. As you invest your time and effort in the Community Circle Conversations, the rewards will come back to you in a multitude of ways. Sponsoring a Community Circle is a way for you to:

Strengthen your constituency base and become more visible on a metro wide level

Participate in historical discussions on the topics of education, housing and segregation, helping to build cohesion and understanding in the Twin Cities region

Organize and help impact key legislative decisions

Nurture and build relationships with other organizations that share similar goals, concerns and mission statements

Sharpener your awareness and gain deeper understanding on the most pressing issues facing our region

Oppose oppression and move communities towards social justice

Recruit citizens who are anxious to make a difference in an organization like yours

The Education and Housing Equity Project sincerely believes that the solutions to serious and often divisive issues can be found if we put aside our fears and prejudices and work together. Come join us, and be apart of the solution to strengthen our community.

Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP)
2211 Riverside Ave, CB 185
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Phone: 330-1505 or Fax: 330-1507

Site Commitment

Sponsoring Organization: _____

Contact: _____
Name Phone E-mail

We will provide space for Conversations at the Crossroads Circles as follows:

Location	Dates & Times
Name of location: _____	Day _____ Time: _____
Address: _____	
City: _____	Dates: _____
Phone: _____	_____
On Site Contact: _____	

Name of location: _____	Day _____ Time: _____
Address: _____	
City: _____	Dates: _____
Phone: _____	_____
On Site Contact: _____	

_____ EHEP may assign participants to this/these locations.

_____ We, as sponsors, will fill 8-15 places per circle, so please don't assign participants.

*By January 15, 1999
Fax to 612-330-1507 or mail to:
EHEP, Augsburg College, CB185, 2211 Riverside Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55454*

Steps to Success

Goal setting for sponsors

Hazy goals produce hazy results. Clearly define your goals. Write them down, make a plan for achieving them, set a deadline, visualize the results and go after them. Wishing will not bring success, but planning, persistence, and burning desire will. Success is an attitude, get yours right. It is astonishing how short a time it takes for very wonderful things to happen. -Barbara Smallwood

Meeting Place and Schedule:

- What resources do you have available either with your organization or in your community? i.e., schools, libraries, community centers, churches, businesses, etc. _____
- Whom can you contact? _____
- Preferred location, day of week, time of day: _____
- Our organization will secure (number) _____ meeting spaces and dates for 5 community circle sessions by (date) _____
- Keep these things in mind: the participants may need childcare and transportation. How are you preparing for this? Is the location able to accommodate hospitality needs?

Recruiting and Publicity:

- Where is your sphere of influence? How can you make this project known, i.e. newspapers, bulletins, personal contacts, other organizations, etc _____
- How can you achieve diversity? Race, ethnicity, age, gender, income, political ideology, etc _____
- Do you need pairing with another organization; if so, what other organizations could you pair with? _____
- Our organization will recruit (number) _____ participants by (date) _____

Administrative:

- Who is your "go to" person? Overseeing details of: registration, troubleshooting, contact with EHEP, coordinating of details, etc? _____
- Who are other individuals on the "Team" that believe in this project and will work to make it successful? _____
- Who would make a good scribe for the community circle (good listener, observer, writer and reporter)? _____
- If you know of an experienced, professional moderator or facilitator, please contact us.

Questions:

Please keep record of your questions throughout the morning, and we will take time to answer them at the conclusion of the session, or following the session.

Prospective and Committed Meeting Sponsors and Recruiters 1999 Community Circles

12-9-99

Arden Hills Human Rights Commission
Black Ministerial Alliance
Bloomington Human Rights Commission
Cathedral of St. Mark's Episcopal, Minneapolis
Center for Asian and Pacific Islanders (CAPI)
Commonbond Communities
East Metro Women's Consortium
Eden Prairie Human Rights and Diversity Commission
East Metro/St. Paul Office of Inter-district Initiatives
First Unitarian Church of Minneapolis
First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Golden Valley Black History Committee and Human Rights Commission
Governor-elect Ventura administration - transition team
Hiawatha YMCA
Hmong American Partnership
Jefferson Center
James J. Hill Magnet School, Saint Paul
Linden Hills Neighborhood Association
Macalester College Anti-Racism Initiative
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA) - member congregations
Minneapolis NRP and City of Minneapolis
Minneapolis Public Schools, Libraries, Community Centers
Minnesota League of Human Rights Commissions - metro area member commissions
Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP) - member organizations
Minnesota Center for Corporate Responsibility
Metropolitan Council HRA
MRA of the Twin Cities
National Conference for Community and Justice, Minnesota Office
North Metro Affordable Housing Coalition (NEMCAH)
Project for Pride in Living
Ramsey Action Program
Ramsey International Fine Arts School, Minneapolis
Richfield Diversity Connection
St. Louis Park Board of Education and Human Rights Commission
St. Paul Public Schools
Stillwater Public Library and Bahai Faith Community
Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity
Unitarian-Universalist Metro Stability Task Force
University of St. Thomas
United Auto Workers Ford Local
West Metro Education Program
Whittier Alliance
White Bear Lake Unitarian Church
Wilder Foundation (Cities At Work)
 Children's Initiative and Family Centers
 Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA)
 Intergenerational Dialogue (Jim Gambone)
 Mount Zion Synagogue
 Multicultural Action Group/Americorps Volunteers
 St. Paul Area Council of Churches (Congregations in Communities)
 St. Paul Chamber of Commerce (Leadership St. Paul alumni and participants)
 St. Paul District Councils

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 Tues., Jan. 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

Seating is limited

Call by Fri., Jan. 29 to reserve your space

St. Paul Residents – call Amherst H. Wilder Foundation

(651) 642-2083 (2088 fax) Attention Kate Murphy

Other East Metro Residents - call EHEP (612) 330-1505 (1507fax)

2211 Riverside Avenue CB 185
Minneapolis, MN 55454
P: 612-330-1505 F: 612-330-1507
E: eh@augsbu.edu

Education and Housing Equity Project

Memo

To: Committed Sponsors/Community Circles on Education, Housing and Race
From: EHEP-Education and Housing Equity Project
Date: 03/15/99
Subject: Information and forms for Community Circle Sponsor :
Note this memo includes action items that require your immediate attention!

We would like to provide you with some additional information to help make your circle a successful one. Please find enclosed the following:

1. **"What the Research Shows"** - information to help inform the conversations
2. **Community Circle Report Forms** - for use by Scribes to summarize their Community Circle conversations (to be returned to EHEP)
3. **Participant Profile & Evaluation Forms** - to be filled out by each Circle participant, turned into their Scribes **no later than at the fifth session** returned to EHEP)
4. **Discussion Leaders Evaluation Form** - to be filled out by facilitators & returned to EHEP
5. **Attendance Information Sheet/Roster** - to be filled out by Scribe or Facilitator & returned to EHEP
6. **Directory of Community Circles Meetings 1999** - Check your section and return to us any additional pertinent information that would complete your section.
7. **"Now That We've Talked..."** (Ideas for Community Involvement, etc.)

Each Circle might think about the possibility of presenting their findings to an audience comprised of their sponsors or sponsor governing group. This presentation would help to bring closure to the Circle and provide a catalyst for further action. This may be done after the participants have read & reviewed the scribes summary & have had an opportunity to provide their individual reaction to the summary. Further information & a memo regarding this action step will be sent later.

These forms can be used as your masters to duplicate and distribute in your Circle.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please feel free to contact either Dick Little or myself at Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP) 330-1505.

Sincerely,

Pam Jewson
Administrative Assistant

Materials
are being
revised
[Barb+Dick]
per Dick 9-15

THE COMMUNITY CIRCLE PROJECT

PLEDGE OF PARTICIPATION FOR: SPONSORS

LHUME (NRP)

The Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP) is excited to partner with you as we anticipate the next successful round of Community Circle Conversations. As a sponsor, we invite you to thoughtfully review the Pledge of Participation form, carefully noting each responsibility and your capacity to complete the vital sponsor roles, ensuring the full success of this project.

Responsibilities of Sponsors:

1. Recruit between 8 and 15 people for each community circle. *Ideal number*
2. Arrange a meeting space and time for each community circle or recruit participants for a designated time and location.
3. Distribute discussion materials to each participant.
4. Promote the program by any means possible, including bulletins, newsletters, and personal contacts.
5. Participate in evaluation process of community circle.
6. Provide childcare and transportation services as needed by participants.
7. Provide hospitality for participants, ensuring light snacks and beverages, writing board and name tags at each meeting.
8. Keep records of participation for your Community Circle, complete with address and phone listings.
9. Designate a scribe for each Community Circle, capturing in written record the highlights of each conversation.

EHEP will work closely along side you, providing:

- Discussion Guide
- Trained facilitator (and training to your facilitators)
- Informative background materials
- Calendar of related events
- Information clearinghouse for pairing organizations
- Action Forum to connect citizens with service and action opportunities

*will prepared discussion guide
focused
skilled facilitator*

All community Circles will be invited to take part in a Citizens Summit to be co-sponsored with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio. Results will be shared with legislators and local officials.

*part of continuing forum MRA
opportunities present*

Citizens Summit

Name of sponsoring organization or agency that you represent:	
Your name: (please print)	
Your address:	
Your telephone & fax:	
Your e-mail (if applicable):	

I understand the responsibilities of Sponsors and commit my organization to this project. This commitment is based on approval from our Board of Directors, Executive Director, or other appropriate authority.

In addition, my organization can provide the following:

Co-Facilitator Media equipment Copying services Translator(s)

We will collaborate with the following organization(s) to jointly co-sponsor one or more circle(s): _____

To achieve greater diversity in our community circle, we would like to be paired with a group different from ourselves _____

Call to Action - ...

Signature

Date

*pair to
2 churches
2 schools*

*to read
HousBS - ...*

Return to:
Dick Little
Education & Housing Equity Project
2211 Riverside Ave CB 185
Minneapolis, MN 55454

tel: (612) 330-1505 fax: (612) 330-1507

"What the Research Shows"

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

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

“What the Research Shows”

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?

Minneapolis Community Circles, fall 1998

Participant Profile

1. Community Circle Location _____
2. Community where you live: City _____ Neighborhood? _____
School District _____
3. Community where you work: City _____ Downtown or Business District? _____
4. Ethnic/Racial background?

_____ African American	_____ Hispanic/Latino/Chicano
_____ American Indian/Native American	_____ White/European
_____ Asian American	_____ Mixed Racial Background
_____ Arab/Middle Eastern	_____ Other
5. Gender Male _____ Female _____
6. Age/Generation: Born in... _____ 1920's _____ 30's _____ 40's _____ 50's
_____ 60's _____ 70's _____ 80's
7. Household/Family: Married/Partnered no children _____ Married/Partnered with children _____
Single alone _____ Single with children _____ Minor living with family _____ Room Mate _____
Other family configuration (e.g., extended family) _____ Other _____ Number in your household _____
8. Income Level: Low _____ Moderate _____ Middle _____ High _____
9. Education (highest level attained): Grade or Middle School _____ High School _____
College studies _____ Community College/Vo-Tech _____ College Degree _____
Graduate studies _____ Graduate School Degree _____ Are you currently a student? _____
9. Political Affiliation: DFL _____ Republican _____ Reform _____ Other _____
Independent (no affiliation) _____
10. Political Perspective: Liberal _____ Conservative _____ Moderate _____
Libertarian _____ Other _____
11. Housing Situation: Home owner _____ Renter _____ Landlord _____
Single-Family _____ Multi-Family _____ Other _____
12. Religious Affiliation/Faith Group: Catholic _____ Protestant _____ Jewish _____
Muslim _____ Unitarian _____ Other _____ No affiliation _____
13. Employment/Occupation: Government _____ Education _____ Private Industry _____
Corporate _____ Small Business _____ Self Employed _____ Non-profit _____
Not Employed _____ Retired _____ Other _____
14. Do you have children attending K-12 Schools? _____ Public School _____ Private School _____ Other _____

PARTICIPANT'S EVALUATION FORM

This form asks for a considerable amount of demographic information. You should request this information only if you have the staff time available to collate and use the responses. This document is based on a form developed by Selena Singletary in Springfield, Ohio, which was later adapted for use in San Leandro, California. The study circles in those cities focused on race relations.

Please take a few moments to read and answer the following questions as honestly as possible. You do not need to sign your name to this form. Thank you for your time.

1. What effect, if any, has the study circle had upon the following?

	increased	no change	decreased
Your ability to discuss issues openly and frankly	3	2	1
Your understanding of your own attitudes and beliefs	3	2	1
Your understanding of others' attitudes and beliefs	3	2	1
Your ability to communicate more effectively with people who may have different beliefs	3	2	1
2. Which sessions were of most value to you? Why?
3. What one activity do you feel *[city or sponsor]* is doing to facilitate better race relations in our community?
4. If you could change one thing about race relations in *[city or region of your program]*, what would it be?
5. What important issue would you like study circles to address in the future?
6. In your opinion, how should *[city or sponsor]* follow up these study circles?
7. Please list the three most serious problems facing our community which involve *[topic of study circles]*.

Finally, we'd like to ask you a few additional questions that will help your community better understand the results of the evaluations.

8. Which age group are you in?
 under 18 18-29 30-44 45-64 65 & over
9. What is your sex?
 male female
10. What is your race or ethnicity?
11. What is your occupation?
12. What is your zip code?
13. In which of the following ranges does your family income fall?
 less than \$10,000 a year \$25,000 to 44,999
 \$10,000 to \$14,999 \$45,000 to \$64,999
 \$15,000 to \$24,999 \$65,000 and over
14. Additional comments:

If your study circle discussion leader does not collect this form, please mail it to:
[sponsor's address]

Thank you for your feedback!

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!

AFTER THE STUDY CIRCLE... I'D LIKE TO STAY INVOLVED!

The previous document helps people think about ways they might become involved with their community. The following feedback form, on the other hand, is designed to be returned to organizers of a community-wide study circle program. The form, which was originally developed by Bob Williams of the Unified School District of San Leandro, California, could be the start of a community resource bank.

I am interested in getting more involved in my community and building on the vitality of the study circle program.

I would especially like to do the following:

- Apply for appointment to a city advisory commission
- Continue to participate in the City's study circles
- Become a study circle organizer or discussion leader
- Volunteer for the Community Services Department
- Volunteer to help with the City cultural diversity celebrations
- Volunteer for a local social service agency
- Volunteer to work in local schools
- Conduct a neighborhood- or church-based study circle
- Organize or assist with a neighborhood activity (park clean-up, picnic, etc.)
- Other:

Your name:	
Your address:	
Your telephone number:	

Return to: [address, etc.]

This information sheet was used by the study circle program in New Castle County, Delaware. After the first round of study circles, the organizers held a meeting of facilitators and participants to identify the major areas in which participants wanted to take action. They also recruited interested individuals to convene task forces on these issues at the action forum. At the forum, Delaware Governor Tom Carper and US Attorney Gregory Sleet offered words of support. Then participants were invited to join task forces on four different issues: (1) Reaching our children/racism and the school system; (2) Expanding the dialogue and orienting newcomers; (3) Penetrating institutional racism: the media and affirmative action; (4) Deepening our knowledge and skills. At the forum, the groups came up with action plans, set the date and time of their next meeting, and reported back their main ideas and plans to the plenary group. Organizers are planning a second round of study circles in the fall, and the task forces will have the opportunity to report back on the work that they pursued after participating in the study circles. The information sheet, which gives conveners instructions for their work at the forum, was developed was developed with the assistance of Faye Bonneau and Ruth Sokolowski of the YWCA in New Castle County, Delaware.

TASK FORCE CONVENERS

Study Circles
[city, state]

What should happen at the Action Forum?

During the Action Forum, you'll have 30 minutes to assemble your group and begin the conversation about how participants can take action to make a difference in the community. As the group's convener, you need to watch the time carefully, and get your group to work quickly. Because the time is limited, ask participants to make their comments brief! In addition, you or a volunteer from your group should take notes to record your group's ideas so you can report back to the plenary group.

Remember that your goals, first and foremost, are (1) to bring out the major action ideas; (2) to demonstrate that the task force is about moving from talk to action, and (3) to show participants that their contributions and commitment are critical to the group's success.

Here's a suggested outline for the initial meeting at the "Action Forum and Reunion Celebration":

- 1) Pass around the sign-up sheet, and ask people to provide their names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail (if they have it). Introduce yourself, and give everyone a chance to introduce themselves to the group.
- 2) Choose a timekeeper who will monitor time and strongly encourage people to keep their comments brief.
- 3) Let the participants know that you will be reporting back to the larger group (summarizing important ideas, concerns, and plans that your group discussed) when everyone reconvenes.
- 4) Reiterate the purpose of bringing people together — that is, you are beginning a process so that people will be able to *work together* to make a difference in the community.

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 Surdna 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

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

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These three aspects of action represent three visions of how best to strengthen the connection between citizens and public life. Whichever vision you are working toward, one thing is clear: study circles are a way of doing the essential work which must come before action. No matter what avenue citizens decide to take — voting differently, or communicating with leaders, or working collaboratively to address problems — study circles help them to think of themselves as members of a community capable of action.

This piece, by Matt Leighninger of SCRC, first appeared in the Summer/Fall 1995 issue of SCRC's newsletter, Focus on Study Circles.

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Recent articles by scholars and practitioners such as Robert Putnam, Bruce Adams, Jean Bethke Elshtain, and Benjamin Barber have fleshed out these concepts. A host of new organizations and efforts, including the Alliance for National Renewal, the American News Service, America Speaks, and the Civic Practices Network, are convening some of the thinkers and doers, and identifying examples of communities and programs that embody the cutting edge of democratic practice.

Many of these leaders and organizations have turned their attention to the study circle, a proven method for strengthening dialogue and democratic participation. The community-wide study circle program — in which study circles are used throughout a community to engage citizens in discussion and problem solving — is a vital model for this work. As a result, SCRC has become a focal point for this new, larger audience.

Why now? It is no secret that for many years large numbers of American citizens have felt alienated and disconnected from government and from public life in general. Some of the symptoms of this problem have been evident for a long time: falling voter participation, increasingly nasty political campaigns, and a declining sense of community. So why, all of a sudden, are more people paying attention to the need for dialogue and democratic participation?

Much of the new interest comes from public officials, who are beginning to realize that the old debates don't connect to citizens in their struggles to deal with the issues that affect their lives and their communities. It is becoming more difficult to rely on the old "right-wing" or "left-wing" ideas and policies, because those ideas and labels no longer resonate much with citizens.

Conservative and liberal public officials are interested in dialogue and democracy for very different reasons. Conservatives have long championed the need to reinforce family and community values, but they've never been more eager to find a mechanism for doing it. Many conservative thinkers and leaders have realized that merely keeping "big government" out of the way is not enough. In the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, William Bennett has called for a "return to civil society." Lamar Alexander advocates local organizing to confront community problems — his campaign slogan is "The people know what to do."

At the same time, liberals who believe in the power of government to address social problems are facing the reality that growing numbers of taxpayers don't share this belief — or at least aren't willing to sustain government spending. By encouraging citizens to examine problems like crime and poverty, liberals hope to foster community-based programs that help pick up where government has left off. Some

POSITIVE CONFLICT: AN ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR DEMOCRACY

Americans hate conflict. An employer promotes a subordinate for being "a good team player" who "doesn't make waves." A principal decides his good teachers are those with orderly classrooms without noise and — above all — without conflict. A parent praises his teenager for being "a good kid" who "never gives me problems." Entire minority communities are praised or cursed according to whether they "cause trouble" or are seen as "peaceful, good folk."

It may not matter that the thinking, creative employee may challenge conventional wisdom in ways that lead to product innovation. Or that children learn best when they are actively engaged in a subject — which may mean noise and even disagreement. Or that a teenager's developmental tasks include coming to a sense of ownership of his own values, which may require understanding them *in relation* to the values of his elders. Or that in order to take their rightful place in the American democracy, a minority community may have to demand resources and focus attention on issues that others would prefer to ignore.

Yet if we ask Americans what they think of when they hear the word conflict, we receive answers like "tension," "power grabs," "nastiness," "fights," "win/lose," "war," and "anger." Is it any wonder, therefore, that we Americans try to avoid conflict at all costs?

Indeed, this limited perspective logically leads to a version of the "flight or fight" response: either avoid conflict or be prepared to "duke it out." And since disagreements — about values, resources, and policies — are unavoidable, our courts are clogged and our city councils hold endless hearings in which parties fight over their respective positions.

We have created a contentious public culture in which a modern warrior class — mainly politician, lobbyists and highly paid lawyers — argue over every imaginable issue while the rest of us shun "politics" as the public arena of hostile interests groups. Fight or flight, battle or avoidance.

There is hope, however, in this ugly picture. Millions of Americans are acknowledging that neither fight nor flight is a very successful strategy. They are learning that one of the key barriers to a satisfying public life is the very limited set of responses we have to conflict. Fighting over our problems leaves us with polarized positions, and fleeing only allows our problems to grow larger. Yet our nation's problems are so enormous, so complex, so interrelated, we'll never arrive at real solutions by avoiding them or arguing from fixed, narrow positions.

Many are experimenting with techniques for using conflict constructively — with books like *Getting to Yes* soaring to the top of the bestseller list — but before many of us will make the effort to learn new skills we have to uproot our own prejudices about conflict. We have to fully grasp its *positive* functions:

Conflict means success, not failure. The absence of conflict usually means that diverse perspectives have been excluded from the decision-making table. When conflict — the clash of views and values — surfaces, we can congratulate ourselves. It means all interested parties are taking the first step in real problem solving. In order to produce a quality solution, different views must be heard,

critically evaluated, and reflected upon before we reach agreement. In fact, the very idea of discussion presupposes different points of view.

Conflict uncovers interests. Often we only fully understand our own interests as they emerge in dialogue with others. Conflict can shake us out of selfishness (narrowly defined interests) as we see the larger consequences of our views through the eyes of those who disagree. Conflict that surfaces divergent interests is a necessary first step in meeting everyone's interest.

Conflict deepens our understanding of a problem. Solutions depend on accurately defining a problem. Considering diverse definitions of a problem — and the consequences of proposed solutions — helps sharpen our understanding of our most complex problems.

Conflict provides more options for action. One of the most common mistakes in problem solving is developing a premature commitment to one solution without being aware of alternatives. Conflict broadens our view of what is possible, and thus gives us more choices.

Conflict is not about "winning or losing" but about learning. Every difference, discomfort, or disagreement can be used to better know ourselves and others. They become clues to uncovering concerns, prejudices, needs, values — and goals to improving the skills we need to interact with others.

Conflict builds organizations. Groups that successfully use conflict for learning become stronger; they believe in themselves more. With confidence in their ability to use conflict constructively, they can take more risks. Since healthy conflict stimulates involvement in the problem-solving process, and encourages each of us to be heard, it deepens our sense of ownership, both of the process and, eventually, the solution.

Conflict will not go away. Yet, think how much energy and time we waste trying to avoid it or engaging in destructive battles. Simply perceiving conflict as both inevitable and useful — even essential — to healthy public discussion is the first step in turning it from a curse to a creative tool.

Study circles have much to offer in developing these democratic attitudes and skills. People usually enter study circles not as protagonists but as learners, so they can focus on those arts of democracy that produce quality talk while they learn to handle disagreements that may arise. A study circle provides an ideal setting to deepen understanding, exercise public imagination, engage in constructive dialogue, and creatively address value conflicts. A reinvigorated democracy, and fully engaged citizens, require nothing less.

This article, by Paul Martin Du Bois and Frances Moore Lappé, first appeared in the Fall 1991 issue of SCRC's newsletter, Focus on Study Circles. Du Bois and Lappé are co-founders of the Center for Living Democracy. You can reach CLD at RR #1 Fox Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301, (802) 254-1234, fax 254-1227.

DISCUSSION REPORT FORM

What do you think?

The Education and Housing Equity Project will assemble a document, entitled "Choices for Community: Creating an Agenda for Building Inclusive Communities and Successful Schools in the Twin Cities and Metropolitan Region." This document will represent some of the views of study circle participants and the results of the Action Forum; it will also be used to inform public policy making.

Your group is invited to submit a summary of your discussions for that document. Try to capture the main ideas that emerge during the discussion, using exact words or recalling actual stories or examples given by other participants whenever possible. Keep in mind that only one final form can be submitted per group.

Recall:

The Task of the Community Circles

Keeping the conversations centered on the following two questions:

- *What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic, and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities area children and families?*
- *What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance the educational, housing, and economic opportunities of all children and adults in the Twin cities area?*

What were some issues of common concern within your group?

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

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 Surdna 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.
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Facilitator's Handbook

Resources for facilitating community circle discussions

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- II. A Comparison of Dialogue and Debate (p. 5)
- III. The Role of Facilitators (p. 6)
- IV. The Role of Participants (p. 7)
- V. Suggestions for Discussion Guidelines (p. 8)
- VI. Tips for Effective Facilitation (p. 9)
- VII. Suggestions for Dealing with Typical Challenges (p. 11)
- VIII. Appendix: Sample Reporting Forms

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.

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.

Community Circle Report Form

Sessions #1-4

Sponsoring Organization: _____ Date: _____

Session: ___#1 ___#2 ___#3 ___#4 Number of Participants (today): _____

Facilitator: _____ Co-Facilitator (if any) _____

Scribe: _____

Please describe two or three main themes/ideas 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 #5

Sponsoring Organization: _____ Date: _____

Session: ___#1 ___#2 ___#3 ___#4 Number of Participants (today): _____

Facilitator: _____ Co-Facilitator (if any) _____

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.

What are two or three of the most powerful steps our community could take to address the challenges discussed? (These may range from individual efforts to large-scale initiatives, and may address one or many of the issues discussed.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

(Session #5 report form continued)

- 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?**

WHO ARE WE?

The **Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP)** was founded to promote racially and economically inclusive communities and successful schools in the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

The **Community Circle Collaborative** is a partnership of organizations convened by EHEP to organize metro-wide conversations that lead to informed action on the challenges of educational achievement and housing segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

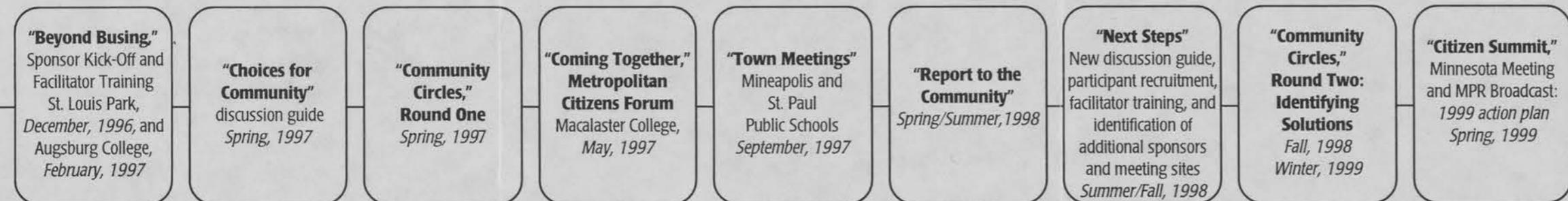
WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

We believe citizens must add their voices to the debate about how to achieve successful schools and communities that are racially and economically integrated. All metro-area families and children—of all races, incomes, cultures and ethnic backgrounds—deserve access to quality jobs, affordable housing and effective schools.

HOW DO WE GO ABOUT IT?

Community Circles consist of 8-12 citizens and public officials who volunteer to meet regularly (4-6 times) over a period of weeks to study, discuss and seek common ground on important public policies. Local organizations convene the discussions and provide meeting facilities. We provide a discussion guide, background materials and a trained facilitator for each group to help advance informed conversation.

COMMUNITY CIRCLE TIMETABLE...



WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR?

The first round of discussions took place in 1997. More than 500 citizens from 35 municipalities participated. These discussions focused on understanding the challenges of raising student achievement, promoting racial equity and eliminating segregation in housing. The results of these deliberations were compiled and reported to the region in the spring and summer of 1998.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

The second round of Community Circles is being planned for this fall and winter. Community Circles will be charged with identifying the most appropriate remedies and "promising practices" for addressing racial, economic and school performance disparities and segregation in our communities.

HOW WILL WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The results will be shared with the public through a "Citizens Summit" of Community Circle participants with the Minnesota Meeting, broadcast live by Minnesota Public Radio. The results also will be compiled into a **Twin Cities Metropolitan Agenda for Action** and shared with policy makers. At the end of the discussions, an **Action Forum** will be convened to connect citizens with action opportunities and organizations working toward local and regional reform.

JOIN US!

You can be part of the solution! Openings are available for sponsoring organizations, facilitators and discussion participants throughout the metro area.

Cost to participate: FREE

For more information, call, mail, fax or e-mail us, or copy/return the attached form.

COMMUNITY CIRCLE SPONSORS

The growing list of project partners includes:

- Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
- Citizens League
- Center for School Change, Humphrey Institute
- Center for Democracy and Citizenship, University of Minnesota
- Civic Journalism Initiative, Minnesota Public Radio
- Eden Prairie Human Rights Commission
- Family Housing Fund
- Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs
- Housing Discrimination Law Project
- Hungry Mind Review
- Institute on Race and Poverty
- Intercultural Workshops, Inc.
- Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing
- Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program
- Minneapolis Public Schools
- Minneapolis Urban League
- Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative
- Minnesota Fair Housing Center
- Minnesota Journalism Center
- Minnesota Minority Education Partnership
- Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, Minnesota Chapter
- Study Circles Resource Center
- The Urban Coalition
- West Metro Education Program

Project funders include:

- Otto Bremer Foundation
- Bush Foundation
- General Mills Foundation
- Minneapolis Foundation
- The St. Paul Companies
- St. Paul Foundation
- Star Tribune

YES!

I want to join the discussion to ensure racially and economically inclusive schools and communities throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Please sign me/my organization up to:

- get more information
- endorse this project
- sponsor/convene a Community Circle
- be a facilitator/discussion group moderator
- be a discussion group participant
- be a discussion group recorder/reporter
- provide information/speak to discussion groups
- provide a meeting place for discussions
- other: _____
- be a donor. Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____
(contributions to EHEP are tax-deductible).

I/we have the following expertise/experience:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Affiliation/Organization: _____

PLEASE MAKE COPIES AS NEEDED!

Mail, call, fax or e-mail:

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E-mail: ehpe@augspurg.edu

"building inclusive communities"

Augsburg College
2211 Riverside Ave., CB 185
Minneapolis, MN 55454



"IT CAN'T HAPPEN
HERE!"
...BUT IT COULD.

Most Minnesotans believed the Twin Cities were immune to the poverty, violence, urban decay, and racial polarization that have devastated so many American cities.

**JOIN THE
METROPOLITAN
CONVERSATION
TO ENSURE
OUR REGION'S
FUTURE.**

Today the Twin Cities metropolitan region ranks third highest among all U.S. urban areas in people of color in poverty (34.7%) and is now one of the ten most racially segregated urban areas in North America.

Place
stamp
here

"There are two growing problems that this region and others are not dealing with very well. There is an increasing division in income levels and growing pockets of poverty. This is a disparity that needs to be dealt with. Racial relations need to be dealt with too. These issues, perhaps more than environment and land use, need to be high on the regional agenda."

—Vern Peterson, retiring executive director,
Association of Metropolitan Municipalities,
December 16, 1997

**YOU HAVE AN
OPPORTUNITY
TO HELP SHAPE
THE RESPONSE OF
YOUR COMMUNITY
AND REGION ON
EDUCATION, HOUSING
AND RACE**

"No issue matters more to the future of the region than the education and training of our young people, so do not expect us to sit quietly on the sidelines any longer... We need a little less Minnesota Nice and more insistence on results."

—Curt Johnson, Chair, Metropolitan Council,
1998 State of the Region address