



Education and Housing Equity Project (Minneapolis, Minn.) Records.

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OTTO BREMER FOUNDATION

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May 3, 1999

Mr. Dick Little
Education Housing And Equity Project
Augsburg College, CB 185
2211 Riverside Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55454

Dear Mr. Little:

Thank you for your recent request of the Otto Bremer Foundation to provide funding to expand public understanding and informed action on community, residential, economic, and racial segregation. The trustees will consider it during a preliminary review at their next monthly board meeting. If they determine that the request will not be funded, you will be notified as soon as possible.

If the trustees determine that the request is within the Foundation's trust purposes and its present priorities, it will be assigned to staff who will review the proposal, arrange a visit if timing and travel schedules permit, and write a recommendation. Your proposal and the staff recommendation will then be presented to the board at a following meeting. The grant review process usually takes from one to three months.

If you have any questions about the status of your request during or after the review process, please call me at (651) 312-3723 or 1-888-291-1123.

Sincerely,

OTTO BREMER FOUNDATION


John Kostishack
Executive Director

JK/tph

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FOUNDATION**

Suite 2000~445 Minnesota Street
St. Paul, MN 55101-2107



Mr. Dick Little
Education Housing And Equity Project
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May 25, 1999

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John Kostishack
Executive Director
Otto Bremer Foundation
445 Minnesota Street
Suite 20000
St. Paul, MN 55101-2107

Dear Mr. Kostishack:

We are delighted that the Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP) has decided to submit funding proposals for continuation of the Community Circles on Education, Housing, and Race in the Twin Cities. Dick Little has asked us to write this letter of support, and we are honored to do so.

The Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC) is a project of the Topsfield Foundation, a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan foundation dedicated to advancing deliberative democracy and improving the quality of public life in the U. S. To carry out this mission, SCRC provides free materials and technical assistance to organizers of study circle programs, which engage large numbers of citizens in discussion and action on critical public issues.

Since we provide free materials and services, we have to apply strict criteria to our participation in a project. We assist the Community Circles project for several reasons:

- the commitment and skill of the principal organizers, including Dick Little, Barbara Blackstone, Barb Rose, and the members of the EHEP Board of Directors;
- the organizers' appreciation of the community-building power of study circles, also called community circles; and
- the fact that the Community Circles Collaborative represents a broad array of Twin Cities organizations.

These qualities were apparent when we first began assisting the Community Circles effort in 1995, and they have been the foundation for the project's success ever since. The total of 48 community circles that met during the first round, in 1997, was an impressive start.

The 50 circles now meeting during the second round hold even more promise, because the organizers took a thoughtful, comprehensive approach toward analyzing the weaknesses and strengths of the first round.

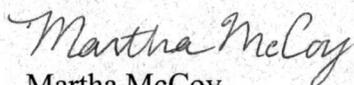
One important change that resulted from this process is a completely different approach toward action in the second round. An action forum will be held on June 22nd to help circle participants connect with new and existing action opportunities, and a Citizens' Summit will be held at the end of the year to highlight those efforts and amplify what participants said during their dialogues.

We have seen this kind of approach lead to sustained change in other communities, and we think it holds great promise for the Twin Cities. In Fort Myers, Florida, a study circle program on race with 600 participants led to the building of a shopping center in a low-income neighborhood. In Oklahoma, a state-wide study circle project on criminal justice with 1,000 citizens played an important role in the passage of state legislation on that issue. In tiny Alread, Arkansas, a study circle program on schools recruited 100 participants (in a town of 250), and led to a wide range of outcomes, including the opening of a school library and gym to the community after school hours.

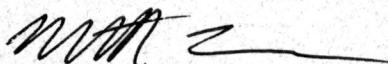
The progress made by the Community Circles project is also exciting because regional issues like segregation are so crucial to the future of many communities, and yet have – until now – not been the subject of large-scale public dialogue programs. William Barnes, co-author of *The New Regional Economies*, writes, “We need to develop a regional civics that is not about governmental entities. It’s about citizens, community groups, businesses, and government agencies coming together to act in the common interest of the region.” In that sense, the work of the Community Circles organizers is truly unprecedented. One of the segments of the June 22nd action forum will be an opportunity for attendees to take part in small-group dialogues with people from other parts of the metro area. In these discussions, participants will be able to compare notes on the conclusions they reached and the action ideas they talked about in their different community circles. By engaging citizens of the Twin Cities in honest, productive dialogue about some crucial, controversial regional issues, the Education and Housing Equity Project is the first organization in the country to try to create this kind of “regional civics.”

The Study Circles Resource Center will continue to assist the organizers of the Community Circles project. We have a strong interest in their success and we look forward to the continuation of this productive working relationship.

Sincerely,



Martha McCoy
Executive Director



Matt Leighninger
Program Director

Cc: Dick Little, Coordinator, Community Circle Collaborative

Proposal to the Otto Bremer Foundation

A. ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

History & Mission

The Education & Housing Equity Project (EHEP) was created in early 1995 by a group of education and housing advocates who shared a belief in the pressing need to link the issue of school desegregation/integration with the broader issue of segregated housing and neighborhoods. The organization's mission is to act as a catalyst to build broad-based coalitions and engage the community in public discussions and advocacy for the purpose of promoting racially and economically inclusive communities that give families of all incomes, races, and ethnicities access to schools and housing throughout the metropolitan area.

EHEP pursues its mission through a three-part strategy:

- (1) Coalition building and advocacy;
- (2) Community education and public dialogue; and
- (3) Assisting communities in becoming more inclusive and integrated.

Activities & Accomplishments

In its first year, EHEP was awarded a start-up grant to develop the organization and hired part-time staff in late 1995. Since that time, EHEP has worked to develop itself as an organization (including obtaining 501(c)(3) status and beginning a process of strategic planning) and collaborated with other organizations and individuals to determine the best strategies for making progress on these issues that are as complex and daunting as they are immediate.

With staff time limited to a part-time Coordinator's position, EHEP has been involved in the following activities and accomplished the following over the past eight months:

Coalition building. EHEP has spent its first year in numerous dialogues and collaborations. These have led to several specific coalition projects as well as a fuller understanding of the need for an organization that can link these two issues - housing and education - and help develop the desperately needed consensus and leadership to move forward. After two months of one-on-one interviews with a broad range of community leaders and experts in the fields of housing, education, anti-racism, and metropolitan stability, EHEP brought together over 30 organizations to begin the process of building a broad-based coalition that can work on these combined issues. EHEP has also helped expand the base and scope of existing coalitions by connecting the coalitions with related organizations and encouraging the linkage of housing and schools issues in their work. It has worked with a coalition focused on the re-drafting

of the State Board of Education's desegregation rule, for example, and linked that school issue with broader issues of housing segregation and metropolitan stability. Similarly, it has encouraged a coalition working on a fair housing testing campaign in suburban Hennepin to frame this issue in the context of schools and broader life opportunities, too.

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B. PURPOSE OF GRANT

Need

Public discussion about the possibilities for inclusive and integrated communities is rare, usually divisive and poorly informed, not conducted on a systematic or sustained basis, and with too few groups and individuals involved. We believe these adverse conditions imperil the chances of building inclusive and integrated communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The principal danger is that public discourse is fast settling into simplistic, distorted polarities - neighborhood schools versus forced busing, quality education versus desegregation, core cities versus suburbs, rich versus poor and, of course, whites versus people of color (especially African-Americans). A climate of public opinion poisoned by these divisions inevitably limits what policy makers (and, as we've found in our initial discussions, advocates and community leaders as well) feel they are able to do; we speculate that this climate even limits what judges feel *they* are able to do. In the current environment, the issues are captured by the most extreme and negative voices, which are then amplified by the media. The public sits and listens. Few want to get involved, because of the fear of getting burned in the heated controversy and because of the not-unreasonable judgment that little will be accomplished under these conditions.

There is a need to involve many groups and the broader public in civil, informed conversations about the possibilities for integrated communities. There is a need to expand the serious discussion of these issues beyond the courtrooms and the academic halls. As many people as possible in our community should be participating in the conversation about this issue. The discourse should not be limited to the invectives of "talk radio," the well-intentioned opinions of newspaper editorials, the sociological jargon of academia or the legal technicalities of the court.

The issue is developing rapidly. The question is who will be involved in the public discourse, and how will that discourse be framed. Unfortunately, past experience shows that these issues are easily polarized - and stay polarized. We believe that this familiar yet unfortunate outcome can be averted by organizing a wide range of groups that have a potential stake in integration, by engaging broad-based public participation in informed conversations about what segregation and integration involves and by offering assistance to communities as they seek to become better integrated.

Our Project

In response to this need and based on the experience and information we have gathered over the past year, we propose to continue and expand our work in coalition building and public education. We want to take the public discussion about racial and economic

segregation and integration to neighborhood centers, public libraries, school buildings, places of business, living rooms, and backyards - the places where ordinary people live their lives and where the real task of building inclusive communities is going to take place. We wish to encourage and inform public conversations that will help lead people to support the principle of integrated communities and to support efforts to move toward that goal. This organization seeks to educate the public - that is, to lead people to a more informed, effective understanding of the effects of segregation, why integration is important, and how it can be accomplished. Through this process, we hope that people can understand the value of integration for themselves and other people, as well as society as a whole.

We have no illusions that all people will be persuaded, or that all will be willing to participate. There are, after all, real conflicts of interest and conflicts of values. These will not be dissolved by a little talk. But without the effort to bring people together for informed and civil conversations, the most extreme voices will be free to frame the issue. Public-spirited conversation will be drowned out by shrill debate; our common interests and values will get lost in the sea of opposition and conflict.

We propose to continue and expand our current work on three fronts: (1) supporting and linking existing coalitions that are working on these related issues, (2) solidifying a broad-based coalition that can advocate for racially and economically integrated schools and housing throughout the metropolitan area, and (3) sponsoring informed public conversations that will advance the understanding and promotion of inclusive communities. Each of these elements reinforces the others.

(1) Supporting and linking existing coalitions and organizations. There are a wide range of groups and individuals in the Twin Cities metro area with a potential stake in the cause of inclusive and integrated communities and schools. We have begun connecting and collaborating with many such groups in our first year, and believe much can be accomplished simply by helping to support and expand existing coalitions that already focus on housing and school issues, but do not necessarily link those two issues together in their work. We propose to continue our coalition-building efforts by focusing on faith communities, elected officials (legislators, school boards, city councils, mayors, county boards), neighborhood groups, parent organizations, teacher and staff groups, professional education programs, labor unions, business organizations, civic groups, civil rights organizations, human rights commissions, libraries, the media, and others.

These groups all have different interests and different understandings of what integration means for them. Moreover, although we have found that many of them agree in the importance of linking school desegregation/integration with the broader issue of housing, few actively combine those two issues in their work, or in their recruitment of additional coalition members.

Over the past year we have seen – and begun to build on – a great potential for such broad coalition development and support, but also appreciate that it will require a labor-intensive effort to attract the participation of these groups in these combined issues of housing and education in ways that are appropriate to their interests and capacities. Such an effort is critically needed, however, and these groups constitute the essential infrastructure through which we can develop the broader public understanding and support for integrated communities, and a broader response to the socioeconomic and racial segregation deepening in the Twin Cities area.

(2) Solidifying a broad-based housing/education coalition. The discussions and research we have undertaken over our first year have convinced us that the building of a single coalition that can advocate for more integrated schools and neighborhoods in the Twin Cities will be challenging and slow-going. We have begun to lay the foundation for such a coalition, however – by working within existing coalitions, by listening closely to both mainstream and community leaders and citizens, and by educating them about the realities and options facing us – and will work to solidify it over the next year. We plan to move from the dialogue phase to the issue-identification and action stage, working with the same broad range of organizations and individuals we have identified over the past year, as well as others. As we have found already, once groups have the information and tools to delve into these issues and see how they must be linked and pursued in coalition, there is a powerful movement to work together. The challenge over the next year will be to support these groups and individuals in figuring out *how* to further these issues in a way that is equitable, manageable, and capable of attracting widespread support.

(3) Creating informed public dialogue and analysis. The issues of residential and school segregation have become increasingly polarized and complex. There is a palpable sense of ambivalence about what to do about segregation, as both past and present strategies seem inadequate, flawed, or even misdirected. This is true even in those communities most affected by segregation, at every level: citizens, educators, housing advocates, community leaders, and policy makers. Our first year of work has given us a deep appreciation of this confusion, even as it has frustrated and worried us, and convinced us of the necessity of widespread and well-informed public conversations about these issues. Without such conversations, we fear the silence and ambivalence – to say nothing of poor public policy and lack of leadership – will continue. We propose, therefore, to create such opportunities for education and dialogue at several levels:

- (a) The Community Circle Collaborative and the “Beyond Busing” study circle project. As noted above, EHEP has been a leading partner in this metro-wide collaboration. The CCC will organize at least 20 diverse “community circles” throughout the metropolitan region, book-ended by a Kick-Off Event and a

community-wide conference. The "Beyond Busing" community circles will address - through the prepared *Discussion Guide* and their own development of strategies - the question: "How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities?" This project will require: (1) building the Collaborative to include a broad a group as possible, including organizations, public institutions, and individuals from throughout the metropolitan region, (2) promoting and publicizing the project, (3) preparing a *Discussion Guide*, (4) providing research support to the community circles, (5) organizing the Kick-off Event and later conference, (6) fundraising, (7) recruiting and training facilitators, and (8) evaluating and reporting on the outcomes of the community circles, the forums, and subsequent action.

EHEP has provided the lion's share of staff support for this project and will continue to do so through the first round of study circles in late Fall 1996 - particularly by helping to build the number of collaborators involved in the project; coordinating its activities and communication; and preparing the *Discussion Guide* - and in the follow-up conference in early 1997. We also hope to use the *Discussion Guide* in additional study circles later in 1997 and 1998.

(b) EHEP will also organize additional public forums, smaller conversation circles, media contacts, and workshops around these issues. In addition, it will compile information and produce materials - both text and video - that can be used in support of these conversations and forums. EHEP will also organize a speaker's bureau of experts and community leaders available to speak with the media, attend meetings, and brief organizations and policy makers.

Based on our first year's work in the community, we believe these combined strategies of coalition building and community education and dialogue are the best strategies for the coming two years.

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(b) EHEP will also organize additional public forums, smaller conversation circles, media contacts, and workshops around these issues. In addition, it will compile information and produce materials - both text and video - that can be used in support of these conversations and forums. EHEP will also organize a speaker's bureau of experts and community leaders available to speak with the media, attend meetings, and brief organizations and policy makers.

Based on our first year's work in the community, we believe these combined strategies of coalition building and community education and dialogue are the best strategies for the coming two years.

Application to the Otto Bremer Foundation

COVER SHEET

Date of Application: April 22, 1999

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Education and Housing Equity Project

Legal Name of Organization

Augsburg College, CB 185, 2211 Riverside Avenue

Address

Minneapolis, MN 55454

(612) 330-1505

(612) 330-1507 or 1649

City, State, Zip

Telephone

FAX

Individuals Responsible:

Dick Little

Executive Director

(612) 330-1505 or 724-5662

Name of top paid staff

Title

Direct dial phone #

Contact person (if different from top paid staff)

Title

Direct dial phone #

Organization Description:

The Education and Housing Equity Project was founded in 1995 to promote racially and economically inclusive communities and schools that work for all children in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Its primary focus is on expanding public understanding and informed public action on community residential, economic and racial segregation and the educational achievement gap in our public schools. To accomplish its mission, EHEP has initiated the Community Circles Collaborative, a project that brings together citizens and community organizations from throughout the metro area in public conversations focusing on the challenges of housing segregation, educational achievement and racial equity in the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

Is your organization an IRS 501(c)(3) not-for-profit? YES NO

If no, is your organization a public agency/unit of government
or religious institution: YES NO

If no, name of fiscal agent (fiscal sponsor) _____

AMOUNT AND TYPE OF SUPPORT REQUESTED

The dollar amount being requested:

\$ 50,000 for one year (\$100,000 over 2 years)

Funds are being requested for: *Note: we are a project*

general operating support

capital

other: _____

project support

endowment

start-up costs

technical assistance

If a project, give project duration:

_____ Month _____ Year to

_____ Month _____ Year

If operating support, fiscal year:

January Month 1999 Year to

January Month 2000 Year

BUDGET

Total annual organization budget:

\$ 100,000

Total project budget (for support other than general operating):

\$ _____

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

(If operating or start-up support relate to the organization. If project and other support, relate to the project.)

Project name (if applying for project support):

Conversations at the Crossroads: Community Circle Dialogues
on Education, Housing and Segregation in the Twin Cities Area

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of the request:

We are requesting support for launching and completing the second round of community circles that will be convened in 1999 focusing on the challenges of achieving racially and economically inclusive schools and communities. Our goal is to engage over 1,000 citizens from 75% of the municipalities in the metro area participating in up to 100 study circles. These circles will consist of 8 to 15 participants each who will meet at least 5 times for 2 hours each meeting. Each circle will meet on specific dates and at specific locations, use a prepared discussion guide, and will be moderated by experienced facilitators. In addition to providing meeting places and/or recruiting diverse participants, sponsoring organizations will provide scribes to record and report the results of each circle conversation. A report to the community will be produced. A citizens summit and action forum will bring participants together at the conclusion of the circle conversations to share findings and conclusions/recommendations with community and public officials(who will also be invited to participate in the circles) and to connect participants with action opportunities and agendas (promising practices and organizations).

Geographic area served: The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

Population served: Adults and young people from many different walks of life in schools and communities in the Twin Cities area. Communities of color and lower income residents and students from inner urban areas as well as suburban communities will be emphasized and targeted in this project. Diversity of participants is a key consideration of this project.

AUTHORIZATION

Name of top paid staff and/or Board Chair:

Richard C. Little, Executive Director
Matthew Little, President, Board of Directors

Signature

Richard C. Little

Special Note: This grant request follows two years of funding (\$25,000 per year for two years) from the Bremer Foundation, and documents accomplishments over those two years as well as our proposed accomplishments for the next year. Action over the second year will be determined by the results of this next year's community circles and through a strategic planning process to be carried out by the EHEP Board and selected community circle partners. The financial reports will show that we fully matched and doubled the Bremer grants of these past two years. We will do so again over the next two years.

Application to the Otto Bremer Foundation

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

A. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Brief History

The Education & Housing Equity Project was created in 1995 to link the issue of school desegregation/integration with the broader issues of segregated housing and neighborhoods and to build an informed citizenry to advance public understanding and action on these issues.

In 1996, it partnered with some 20 other organizations, including the Minnesota Minority Partnership, the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing, the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism, the Minnesota Fair Housing Center and the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative to create the Community Circle Collaborative, a multi-sector initiative to promote inter-community dialogue on the critical issues of education, housing, race and segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. In 1997 and early 1998, approximately 500 citizens from different walks of life joined together in community circles and forums convened in 25 different communities focusing on the challenges of affordable housing, the achievement gap in our schools, the location mismatch between employees who need jobs and employers who need workers, and the role that race and segregation play in exacerbating these challenges. Each circle was supplied with a facilitator, recruited and trained by the collaborative, and a discussion guide prepared by the collaborative. The discussions culminated in a metropolitan citizen's forum held at Macalester College and a report on the results of the conversations published in 1998.

Based on the experience with these initial conversations, EHEP and other Collaborative partners approached additional organizations about the conversations, and used the results of the conversations to further define agendas and strategies that would advance the common mission of expanding housing, education and economic choices and opportunities for all citizens in the metropolitan area.

A second round of Community Circle conversations began in late 1998 and is currently underway in 1999. Based on the evaluation of the first round of conversations in 1997, we have substantially revised the discussion guide, partnered with professional facilitator and mediator organizations to facilitate the conversations, and have greatly expanded partnerships with potential sponsor groups. In the fall of 1998, Community Circles were held in Minneapolis, co-sponsored by the Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minneapolis Urban League, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, the Park and Library Boards (providing meeting spaces), the Jefferson Center (providing scribes) and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (facilitators). In February 1999 we launched a metropolitan-wide round of community circles. We also entered into a major partnership with the Wilder Foundation and "Cities At Work" partners to inaugurate "Cities at Work" community circle conversations on education, housing and race in Saint Paul. As of the date of this grant request, approximately 75 community circles in 20 different cities, engaging approximately 1,000 citizens are underway this spring or are planned to be held next fall.

At the end of 1998, our Community Circles dialogue project was selected by The President's Initiative on Race as a "Promising Practice" for advancing race relations and making progress on issues of race in the United States.

Mission & goals

The mission of the Education & Housing Equity Project is to be a catalyst for building broad-based partnerships that engage citizens and communities in public discussion, analysis and advocacy that enhances the prospects for realizing racially and economically inclusive institutions and communities that give families of all incomes, races, and cultural backgrounds access to quality schools and affordable housing choices throughout the metropolitan area.

EHEP pursues its mission through a three-part strategy:

- Coalition and partnership building and advocacy;
 - Community education and informed public conversation; and
 - Assistance to communities in becoming more inclusive and integrated
-

Coalition Building and Advocacy to Inform Public Decision Making

Since its inception, EHEP has spent a significant portion of its energies in discussions and collaborations with other organizations and groups. These have led to several jointly sponsored projects as well as a fuller understanding of the need for an organization and collaborative that can link the issues of housing and education and develop the much needed consensus and leadership to move the metropolitan community forward on these issues, and to connect them to the challenges of race, poverty and segregation. After a year of creating the organization, the second and subsequent years have been devoted to extensive research of the literature, one-on-one interviews and multi-participant focus group meetings with a broad range of community leaders and experts in the fields of housing, education, anti-racism and metropolitan stability, and building a broad-based coalition and partnerships that can work on these combined issues. Our unique contributions have been (1) to encourage the linkage of housing and school issues in the work of existing organizations and connecting this work to issues of race and (2) to promote civil, informed dialogue across economic, racial and political lines as one important way to make progress on these issues. Some of our major accomplishments have included:

- Working with the Institute on Race and Poverty to “popularize” its research by making it broadly available in commonly used language to various publics in the Twin Cities area.
 - Coalescing with both housing and education organizations to focus on the re-drafting of the State Board of Education’s desegregation rule and to link school desegregation issues with the broader issues of housing segregation and metropolitan stability (1996 and 1998).
 - Encouraging a coalition working with the newly formed Minnesota Fair Housing Center on a fair housing testing campaign in suburban Hennepin County to frame the issue of housing discrimination in the context of schools, educational achievement and access to broader life opportunities (beginning in 1996).
 - Engaging the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Mayor of Minneapolis to support and assist in the development of the community circles project and, following a presentation sponsored by the Family Housing Fund, encouraging a study of the linkage between housing/household stability and educational achievement in Minneapolis. This action led to *The Kids Mobility Project* (1997).
 - Collaborating with and supporting MICAH’s (Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing) fair housing initiative proposal to HUD to jointly develop, with the Illusion Theater, a series of theater events that highlight the need for metro-wide fair and affordable housing for people of all backgrounds and to deal forthrightly with community resistance, discriminatory practices, stereotypes and fears that impede the development of affordable housing. EHEP is represented at each of the theater events and is co-sponsoring the Minneapolis and Saint Paul performances (1997 - 1999). The first round of community circle discussions in 1997 provided the genesis for the theatre project.
 - Participating by invitation as an advisor to the consulting teams working with interested parties to mediate the currently pending educational adequacy and educational equity lawsuits (NAACP v. State of Minnesota and St. Paul School District v. State of Minnesota). Community circle partners also participated in the mediation planning retreat organized by the principal parties in the lawsuits (1997 and 1998). In early 1998, EHEP’s director testified in support of the mediation process before the Minneapolis School Board, which subsequently endorsed the same position. EHEP has been asked to continue to be a resource to the mediation process and is participating in mediation workshops in 1999. Many of the ideas that came out of the first round of community circle conversations have been used to contribute to settlement proposals for mediation of the lawsuits.
 - Working with the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and the Right to Housing Campaign to develop an Inclusionary Housing policy and legislative action proposal that could provide the basis for a new approach to expanding affordable housing choices and mixed income housing development in the Twin Cities metropolitan area (1998 and 1999). The inclusionary housing and zoning concept was one of the major ideas generated by the 1997 community circle conversations.
 - Jointly sponsoring with the Urban Coalition and the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP) a series of issue forums on the State’s proposed new Desegregation Rule, the Inclusionary Education Rule (revision of the originally proposed Diversity Rule), and multicultural competency requirements for teacher licensure. The EHEP board also contributed substantive written testimony to the State Board of Education on the proposed changes to the Profiles of Learning (1998) and the revised desegregation rule (1999).
 - Assisting the Minneapolis League of Women Voters with the Minneapolis Middle School Project (1998).
-

- Contributing to the work of the Minneapolis Affordable Housing Task Force through EHEP's Director who serves on the Task Force (1998 - 1999). Our message have been that: (1) recommendations should focus not only on providing needed housing but also on expanding people's locational choices and access to economic, social and educational opportunities; (2) recommendations should focus on barriers related to race, not only income, and (3) recommendations should focus on metropolitan as well as municipal remedies. Our message to reverse, or at least avoid, further concentrating poverty has also been heeded.

In 1999, we have agreed to be a partner with the Minnesota Housing Partnership and the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless as part of their proposals to the Minneapolis Foundation/Thorpe Fund to launch a public relations campaign to break down barriers of public resistance to affordable housing in the Twin Cities area.

Assisting Communities in Becoming More Inclusive and Integrated

EHEP has been less involved with this strategy since it largely evolves from the other two strategies. However, at least two example activities stand out.

Following the first round of community circles, we were invited by the Minnesota Fair Housing Center to assist them in planning and implementing a Hennepin County/Metropolitan Council-funded workshop for suburban housing and planning officials and human rights commissioners on best practices for achieving fair and affordable housing. In September 1998 over 100 city officials and developers attended the "Building Inclusive Communities" Conference in Bloomington. EHEP worked with the Fair Housing Center and the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability to sponsor programs that highlighted promising practices used in other parts of the country. EHEP helped to bring the Vice President of Chicago's Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities to the Twin Cities to discuss the Oak Park, Illinois experience in becoming and sustaining one of the most successful racially integrated cities in the United States.

In the East Metro Area we were invited by the Saint Paul Office of Interdistrict Initiatives to participate in the planning process to develop a multi-school district governance structure to expand inter-district and integrated education initiatives involving Saint Paul and suburban East Metro school districts. Planning workshops were held in late 1998 early 1999. Future inter-district initiatives will be dependent on continuing availability of state funding. Multi- and inter-district initiatives were the subject of considerable discussion in the 1997 Community Circles.

Following the second round of Community Circle conversations, we anticipate additional opportunities to collaborate with, broker and provide assistance to communities and school districts attempting to become more multiculturally, racially and economically inclusive.

Civic Engagement and Community Conversation

By far the most significant and distinctive work of EHEP is the "Choices for Community" Community Circle Project, recently renamed 'Conversations at the Crossroads.' In 1997, the Community Circle Collaborative launched a dialogue project in which citizens from different walks of life came together, 5 to 15 at a time, in community circles throughout the metropolitan area to discuss the future of the Twin Cities area with a focus on two central 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?" and
- "What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance educational success, and housing and economic opportunities for *all* children and adults in the Twin Cities metropolitan area?"

Community Circles of citizens from thirty-five localities were convened/hosted by a variety of local sponsoring organizations. All participants were provided with discussion guides prepared by the Collaborative, and facilitators, recruited and trained by the Collaborative, moderated each circle. The conversations culminated in a Metropolitan Citizens Forum held at Macalester College Chapel, moderated by Saint Paul's George Latimer and Minneapolis' Vivian Jenkins Nelsen. A report that synthesized the findings, conclusions and action recommendations coming out of the community circles was prepared and has been shared with project partners and various decision makers in the metropolitan area.

Since the conclusion of the first round of conversations, EHEP and its partners have been evaluating the first round, identifying promising practices that advance educational success and expand affordable housing choices, sharing the results of the conversations with various stakeholders (e.g., the West Metro Education Program), and revising and improving the process for a second round of conversations.

During 1997 and 1998, we also assisted with the launching of other civic engagement projects with similar objectives, including the Interfaith Action/Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council's interfaith dialogue and action forums on poverty, segregation and sprawl, the National Conference of Community and Justice town hall meetings on education and race (we co-sponsored two forums in Minneapolis and Saint Paul), the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations (we sponsored three dialogues in the Twin Cities), the Saint Paul Pioneer Press civic journalism project "Poverty Among Us, and in 1999 the Minnesota League of Women Voters proposed statewide study circle program on immigration. In April 1998 we co-sponsored a Study Circles training workshop for prospective sponsors and facilitators with the national Study Circles Resource Center. This event greatly increased local capacity for spawning additional civic engagement projects. The workshop also attracted new partners interested in launching the second round of community circles conversations on education, housing and race. One of these new partners is the Wilder Foundation, with whom we are co-sponsoring the 1999 "Cities at Work" Forums on "Race, Connections and Commitment." As part of the forum project, local Saint Paul organizations are or will be co-sponsoring community circle dialogues on education, housing and race.

The second round of Community Circle conversations is now underway. A round of Minneapolis Circles, co-sponsored by the Minneapolis Public School's Office of Family and Community Services and five other partner organizations, took place in the fall of 1998 and served as a prototype for the metropolitan-wide conversations that began in February 1999.

The second round (1999 Community Circle Dialogues) is built on the lessons learned from the first (1997) round. It includes a broader marketing effort and additional groups not represented in the first round, such as the business community, labor unions, outer suburban residents and employers, significantly more residents and leadership groups in Saint Paul and East Metro, and a wider range of participants from communities of color. These conversations are more clearly focused on systemic barriers and changes needed to better integrate our metropolitan community and residential living patterns across barriers of race and class, and, in the process, bring children from different backgrounds to more integrated and diverse learning environments. Added to the discussions is a focus on making our institutions, such as schools, more multiculturally inclusive and equitable. The discussions also include an action component, including an Action Forum, that will emphasize promising practices already underway in various parts of the country and the Twin Cities (e.g., East Metro Interdistrict Initiatives) and connect participants to opportunities for involvement in their community. The action component will also more directly connect the work of the community circles with the policy work of key decision makers and decisions-making bodies.

The quality and scope of the discussion process has also been improved. Thirty different organizations contributed to the development of a new discussion guide. A faith compendium has been prepared by the MICAH for use in community circles sponsored by congregations (churches, mosques, and synagogues). We are also developing an optional session on race and economic development, to be used in conversations sponsored by chambers of commerce and business associations. To assure better reports on the conversation results, we have developed reporting forms for use by the scribes. A partnership with the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution and Minnesota Facilitators Network has resulted in a facilitator's guide, a more user-friendly discussion guide and a facilitator's version of the guide. These two groups have been retained as partners in the project. They are recruiting and training the facilitators, most of who are experienced facilitators from their own ranks. We have also secured special training opportunities for the facilitators, scribes and sponsors, including a workshop on understanding community and institutional racism delivered by James and Nadine Addington of the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative, and a workshop on cross-cultural communications provided by Intercultural Communications Workshops, Inc., another community circle partner. These opportunities serve as volunteer compensation and as useful tools for deepening and enhancing the conversations. The circles are also being resourced with information provided by a range of organizations, including the Urban Coalition, the Family Housing Fund, the Center for School Change and the Institute on Race and Poverty; brief summaries, such as "What the Research Shows" and "Working Doesn't Always Pay for

a Home" are provided to each circle or circle participant. All of these improvements are contributing to more productive discussions and the likelihood that meaningful ideas and commitments to action will be generated by the circle conversations.

At the conclusion of Round Two, EHEP and the Community Circle Collaborative will co-sponsor a Citizens Summit with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio. The Summit will bring together participants from the community circles, and use electronic response technology to discover areas of consensus and to prioritize action steps. Many local policy makers will be invited to attend the Summit. Round two will help inform the policy and action agendas of partners in the collaborative as well as public decision-making bodies.

Organizational Structure and Administration

Project Partners

The success of EHEP's efforts rest largely on an active and committed board of directors and the strong partnership of organizations and volunteers that are part of the Community Circle Collaborative. The Community Circles project was founded by the Collaborative. Collaborative partners (past and present) are identified in the attachments. The Collaborative has been essential for (1) assuring racial, cultural, ethnic, generational, political and geographic diversity of voices in the conversations, (2) fulfilling the various tasks, objectives and leadership requirements of the project using the best possible combination of resources, and (3) assuring that the results of the community circle conversations are widely disseminated and receive widespread attention.

The Community Circle partners include:

- **Organizing partners**, who help to design the process, frame the discussion issues, prepare the discussion guide, recruit and train/orient sponsors, facilitators, scribes, and resource partners, publicize the project and work with the media, and assist with reporting and evaluation and the details of project follow-through.
- **Resource associates**, who supply background research and expertise on the issues, written and audio-visual materials to inform the discussions and provoke spirited but thoughtful conversation, media coverage, project documentation, and/or financial and in-kind backing of project activities.
- **Sponsors** (typically organizations) that supply meeting places (may include child care, transportation, translators, hospitality and other services as needed) for the conversations, schedule the conversations, publicize the circles, recruit circle participants, convene or host the circle dialogues, and secure scribes who will capture in written record the highlights and results of each conversation.
- **Facilitators**, who have professional experience in mediation and facilitation, who moderate the community circle conversations (organizations such as the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution and the Minnesota Facilitator Network are partnering with EHEP and the Wilder Foundation to provide facilitators and co-facilitators for each circle conversation). The facilitator organizations also participate in delivering facilitator training to all participating facilitators and in convening the facilitators for assessment and evaluation.
- **Participants** from many diverse backgrounds who commit to at least 5 sessions of 2 hours each and participate with 8 to 15 other citizens in informed and deliberative dialogue. The participants are the "heart and soul" of the Community Circles initiative. These are the citizens who create the "public voice."

In-kind support from the organizing partners alone in the 1997 circles amounted to more than \$15,000 in documented resources. A similar or greater contribution has been made during the 1998 circles in Minneapolis and in preparing for the 1999 circles. We expect this figure to double in 1999.

Diversity of Participation

EHEP works through its partners in many diverse settings throughout the metropolitan area. It is important to us that the groups we work with are representative of the communities with which we work, and reflect the diversity of the metropolitan community. Nine of the twenty organizing partners are groups representing primarily interests of communities of color. Many of the new groups recruited for the current round of conversations are culture-specific and multicultural organizations. Partner and sponsor organizations include congregations, non-profits, human rights commissions, neighborhood associations and community councils, youth groups, schools, family and community councils, university and college groups, a union local, a chamber of commerce, voter organizations, and city governments. Although there has been a reasonably good demographic and geographic balance of sponsors, we are striving to achieve better representation of the outer

suburbs, the business community, recent immigrants and students. Public officials are also being actively invited to participate in the second round of circles. Thanks to our principal partnership with "Cities at Work" and the Wilder Foundation, we have achieved excellent representation of Saint Paul communities. With the help of Saint Paul United Way, participation of communities of color will be significant in the St. Paul conversations.

EHEP and the Community Circle Project are distinctive from many other organizations and initiatives in their unique methodology and objective of engaging citizens and creating dialogue among disparate parts of the Twin Cities metropolitan area not only to discuss issues and challenges, but also to generate ideas and suggestions that can lead to common solutions to those issues and challenges. No other organization in the Twin Cities area is currently engaged in this kind of sustained, collaborative, grassroots dialogue and education/consensus-building and mobilizing effort that specifically links housing, education and race.

Board of Directors

Our success also rests on an active, committed and diverse board of directors. The board of directors has been expanded each year and now includes 16 members; all are key leaders in fields and institutions related to the mission of EHEP. The board has direct and extensive leadership experience in addressing issues of education, housing and race. Board member's connections and contacts in the community enhance EHEP's ability to accomplish its objectives. The board is responsible for setting policy direction for the organization; it also plays an active role in advancing the community circle project and in bringing new partners into the collaborative.

Board members come from business, civic, legislative, community service, housing advocacy, civil rights, media, education and law backgrounds. Seven of the sixteen board members, including the president, are African Americans, Southeast Asian Americans, or Latino Americans. Four additional African Americans and Asian Americans have previously served on the board.

A list and brief description of the board of directors is included in the attachments.

Staff and Volunteers

Two individuals currently staff EHEP: a full-time executive director and a part-time administrative assistant.

Dick Little, Executive Director, is responsible for all aspects of the organization and project. He has an extensive background in housing, education, race relations and use of study circles. For 20 years he was a planning and housing official with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Since 1990, he has been a research associate with the International Institute for Inter-racial Interaction (INTER-RACE) at Augsburg College, a technical assistant with the Community Policing Institute, a member of the strategic planning team for the City of New Orleans Economic Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community program, and a consultant to the Minneapolis Public Schools. He has also served as policy chair, parent representative on the site leadership council, and co-founder of the foundation at Ramsey International Fine Arts School in Minneapolis. He is in his eleventh year of serving as a mayoral appointee on the Minneapolis Planning Commission, and has a graduate degree in urban planning. He also serves as an officer on the boards of several non-profit organizations including the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA). Mr. Little was a finalist for gubernatorial appointment to the Metropolitan Council in April 1999.

Pam Jewson, Administrative Assistant, brings previous experience as an administrative assistant and field producer at KSTP, a graphic artist with the Star Tribune, and project development coordinator with the Linden Hills Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP).

EHEP has also been successful in procuring the services of three part-time student interns and research assistants over the life of our project, and we expect to do so again. The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, the University of St. Thomas, the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs, and Augsburg College are our principal internship partners. Use of consultants and 'pro bono' services has also augmented the ability of EHEP to carry out its work. Most important are in-kind staff and volunteer resources that have been provided by partner organizations. EHEP has a fiscal service agreement with Augsburg College to assure that all financial obligations and fiduciary responsibilities are carried out.

Of the five staff persons who have worked for EHEP, two are persons of color (African American and Asian American). Other staff, organizational and resource partners participating in this grant are described as part of the grant project request.

B. PURPOSE OF GRANT

Situation and Need

As the Twin Cities have become increasingly diverse in the 1990's, there has been growing public concern that economic and racial segregation in housing and among our communities is having a profound impact on the overall health and well being of the metropolitan region, and on education and employment opportunities in particular. At the same time, our institutions, especially our schools, have been "tested" by this diversity and have been found wanting: over half of the students, mostly students of color, in core city schools are failing to pass the graduation standards tests. While the overall economy has steadily improved, the unemployment rate among communities of color in the central cities and the lack of affordable housing metro-wide are at crisis levels.

A study by Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton in their publication *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* revealed that the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area is among the ten most segregated in the country. Studies have also shown that the Twin Cities ranks third highest among all U.S. urban areas in persons of color living in poverty. The work of State Representative Myron Orfield in his book *Metropolitica: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability*, and of Dr. John Powell of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota in his study *Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education and Persistent Segregation* has also given testimony to the depth and breadth of issues of segregation, racial and economic isolation and growing disparities between inner and outer communities in the Twin Cities, and their importance in "unlocking the doors" to addressing other significant issues facing the region.

Public actions to grapple with these issues have been growing in number. Examples include:

- education and housing lawsuits (NAACP v. State of Minnesota, Saint. Paul School District v. State of Minnesota, and Holman v. Cisneros)
- legislation (the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act)
- the creation and expansion of civic and advocacy groups (e.g., Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Interfaith Action and St. Paul Ecumenical Action Council, the Minnesota Right to Housing Campaign, the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing and the Minnesota Fair Housing Center)
- formation of new compacts of school districts and inter-district school initiatives (West Metro Education Program and the East Metro Office of Interdistrict Initiatives), and
- new State Rules addressing graduation standards, school desegregation, educational diversity (criteria for inclusive schools and teaching practices), and standards for multicultural competency in teacher licensure requirements.

These actions, and the frequently divisive debates some of them have generated, underscore both the opportunity and the need for developing a common understanding and basis of action for moving forward on the issues of education, housing and race in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Public conversation about the possibilities for inclusive and integrated communities has been rare, usually divisive and poorly informed, not conducted on a sustained or systematic basis and with too few groups or individuals involved, and virtually no broad public consensus or support. We began our project in the belief that such adverse conditions imperil the chances of building more inclusive communities and integrated institutions in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The principal danger has been that public discourse about these issues fast settles into simplistic, distorted polarities - neighborhood schools versus forced busing, quality education versus school desegregation, deconcentration of poverty versus preservation of existing affordable housing, cultural identity versus assimilation, individual choice versus collective responsibility, core cities versus suburbs, rich versus poor, and of course, whites versus communities of color (especially African Americans). A climate of public opinion poisoned by these divisions inevitably limits what policy makers (and, as we have found in our initial discussions, advocates and community leaders as well) feel they are able to do; we speculate that this climate even limits what judges feel *they* are able to do. In this kind of environment, the issues are too often captured by the most extreme and negative voices, which are then amplified by the media. The public sits and listens. Few want to get involved, because of the fear of getting burned in the heated controversy and because of the not-unreasonable judgment that little will be accomplished under these conditions. Others do not get involved because they do not perceive that these issues are their problem (i.e., they are somebody else's problem). Those who *do* take action typically call for reforms without touching on the vital questions of race and segregation.

As the first round of community circle conversations revealed, we do not know how to talk constructively as a community about race, although we are learning. Our project and the actions of our partners are beginning to make a positive impact on this issue.

There is a need to involve many groups and the broader public in civil, informed conversations about the possibilities for and benefits of integrated and inclusive communities. There is a need to expand serious discussion of these issues beyond the courtrooms, the academic halls, emotional public hearings and partisan legislative debates. As many people as possible, from many different stations in life should be participating in the conversation about this issue. The discourse should not be limited to the invectives of "talk radio," the well-intentioned opinions of newspaper editorials, the sociological jargon of academia or the legal technicalities of the courts.

The issue is developing rapidly. The question is who will be involved in the public discourse, and how will that discourse be framed. Unfortunately, past experience shows that these issues are easily polarized – and stay polarized. We believe that this familiar yet unfortunate outcome can be averted by reframing the issues in terms of their importance to health of the entire community, by organizing a wide range of groups that have a potential stake in integration, by engaging broad-based public participation in informed and exploratory civil conversations about what segregation and integration involves and by identifying and articulating promising practices and sources of support available to communities and community institutions as they seek to become more inclusive, better integrated and more equitable.

Our Response

Our response has been to implement informed community conversations about the challenges of racial, economic and residential segregation and unequal opportunity and achievement in our schools. The conversations have proven to be worthwhile and have contributed to building greater public understanding and expanded support for educational equity and inclusionary housing initiatives. We learned a great deal from the conversations, most importantly what can be done to make them more effective in subsequent rounds. The "public voice" that came out of the conversations reflected a growing understanding of the complexities of the issues citizens were grappling with, but also the need to move toward informed collective judgement and concerted public action. The project is helping to inform the proposed mediation process for settlement of the educational adequacy lawsuit and has expanded and deepened public understanding and support for metropolitan-wide affordable housing and regional reform.

Building on the experience of the first round of community circles and, using what we learned, we are again taking the conversation about segregation and race, the gap between the cost of housing and what people can afford, and achievement gap in education, the mismatch between housing choices and job opportunities, and the gaps between school readiness, education and job readiness out to the neighborhood centers, public libraries, schools, places of business, living rooms, and backyards of our cities – the places where ordinary people live their lives and where the real task of building inclusive communities must take place. We wish to encourage and inform public conversation and deliberation that will help lead people to a more informed, more effective understanding of the effects of segregation and lack of choice, why the choice to integrate is important, and how removal of barriers to choice can be accomplished. Through this process, we hope that people move beyond "tolerance" to understand the value of inclusion and of an integrated society for themselves, for other people, and for society as a whole, and to take action. We also hope to see new kinds of action and interaction across racial, ethnic and economic boundaries to make our communities livable for all citizens.

Experience has shown and we have no illusions that all people will be persuaded, or be willing to participate. There are, after all, real conflicts of interest and conflicts of values about these issues. These will not be dissolved by talk alone. But without a concerted *and sustained* effort to bring people together for informed and honest conversation, the most extreme voices will remain to frame the issue. Public-spirited conversation will be drowned out by shrill debate; our common interests and values will get lost in a sea of opposition and conflict. Informed, collective action must be preceded by informed and mutual conversation.

Specific Project Activities, Goals and Objectives

The *Choices for Community/Conversations at the Crossroads* Community Circle Project has and continues to be organized by a partnership of groups representing diverse segments of the community. To enable the kind of civic conversation we envisioned, the Collaborative developed "Community Circles," an approach to

community dialogue that draws on elements of four different, nationally and locally recognized models for civic engagement and discussion:

- "Study circles" promoted by the Study Circles Resource Center in Pomfret, Connecticut;
- The National Issues Forums, a public deliberation project begun by the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio; and
- The Communities of Color Empowerment Model (COCEM) of the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and
- The ORID (Objective-Reflective-Interpretative-Decisional) discussion model developed by the Minnesota Facilitators Network and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution.

The Community Circle dialogues (or conversations) combine the unique elements from each of the above approaches to bring together community members from diverse backgrounds, to engage them in deliberative discussion, to provide educational and technical resources that inform their conversations, and to develop action agendas and connect citizens to action opportunities and promising practices for addressing the issues they have been discussing.

The Community Circle Project is engaging a broad cross-section of the Twin Cities metropolitan community to study, discuss, and build a shared understanding of the issues of racial and economic segregation in the region and their effect on education, employment, and broader "life opportunities." It is intended to be a catalyst for promoting greater community involvement and action on these issues, including expanded efforts to decrease housing segregation and increase affordable housing choices, decrease the gap in educational achievement along racial and economic lines and increase opportunities for successful education in an integrated setting. The circles include a broad cross-section of the both "non-traditional" participants (low-income households and communities of color) and "traditional" participants in a community-wide dialogue about these complex, interconnected issues. Experience in the first round of conversations suggests that community circles can provide unique settings for collaborative learning, for working through often polarizing social and political issues like these, for facilitating honest conversation, and for building more productive exchanges about the prospects for building more inclusive organizations and communities. As similar projects elsewhere in the country have shown, such "circles" broaden perspectives, deepen understanding, and inspire participants to become more involved in the public and civic life of their community. They can also lead to new ways to address difficult and complicated issues in ways that lead to broadly supported, constructive community and legislative initiatives.

The second round of community circle conversations build on the experience and lessons of the first round conversations. We have developed a newly revised and improved discussion guide (based on consultation with and participation of 32 organizations) with a facilitator's version and a participant's version to help further focus the conversations. We are using more experienced facilitators resulting from a formal partnership with the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution and the Minnesota Facilitators Organization. We have broadened our publicity and recruiting effort to expand participation by populations under-represented in the first round, most notably through a formal partnership with the Wilder Foundation and Saint Paul "Cities At Work" partners, and we have placed a greater emphasis on follow-through and action that citizens, organizations and the community or region can take following the discussions. At the conclusion of the conversations, we will hold an Action Forum and a metropolitan Citizens Summit. The Wilder Foundation will also conduct a "Call to Action" Forum for Saint Paul participants and the public as part of the "Cities at Work" forum series.

Specific activities and a timeline for accomplishing the 1999 Community Circles and the results they are intended to realize are outlined in the attachments.

Project Resources

In addition to EHEP staff, those most directly involved in achieving these activities include the following individuals and organizations:

Paul Kiley, a media, communications and marketing consultant with past experience as head of the California Literacy Program. He is providing 'pro bono' services to help communicate and market the project to potential sponsors and participants, the public and the media.

Barbara Blackstone, State Mediator with the Minnesota Office of Dispute Resolution and Mediation, and an officer of the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR), Minnesota Chapter. Barbara is heading up the process of recruiting, training and assigning facilitators. She and a cadre of facilitators from SPIDR facilitated the Minneapolis Community Circles in fall of 1998. Approximately 65 facilitators are moderating the 1999 Community Circles. They are performing this service voluntarily. In return for their services, we are providing training workshops for the facilitators on subjects ranging from "Understanding Community and Institutional Racism" to "Cross-cultural Communications Skills." This training further advances the objectives and effectiveness of the community circle conversations.

Mariann Johnson, mediator, facilitator with the Minnesota Facilitators Network and professional organizational development consultant. She has led the effort to develop a facilitator's guide and facilitator's version of the discussion guide for the community circle project.

Sponsor representatives, who host the circles and/or arrange the meeting places for the circle dialogues, and *scribes* who record and prepare reports on the discussions. Sponsors and scribes are volunteers or paid staff providing in-kind services.

A *Community Circle working group* of individuals from the EHEP board and volunteers and staff from community circle partner organizations (e.g., *Joy Sorensen Navarre* of MICAH, *Carlos Mariani* of MMEP and *Gavin Kearney* of the Institute on Race and Poverty) assist in planning and carrying out the details of promoting and implementing the community circle project (voluntary/in-kind).

Augsburg College, office of business and financial accounting (*Jeff Swenson and Paul Pierson*), is providing payroll and fiscal services to EHEP.

EHEP has made extensive and creative use of interns, volunteers and consultants (paid and in-kind) in the past and will continue to do so in 1999 (writers, graphic designers, training professionals, speakers, etc.). *James and Nadine Addington* of the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative are delivering the workshops on understanding community and institutional racism. *Karima Bushnell* of Intercultural Communications Workshops, Inc. is providing cross-cultural communications training to the facilitators. *Feigenbaum Design Group* and *Community Media Services* provide our graphic and design services. Interns from HECUA (the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs) and CURA (the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs) have provided research and writing services. *Nikki Carlson* of Interfaith Action and principal of EYDYA, Inc. has provided 'pro bono' services for developing our data base and communications plan.

We are also being assisted by some of our collaborating partners with the organization of the project. In Saint Paul, we are carrying out the community circles as an integral part of the 'Cities at Work' Forums co-sponsored by the *Wilder Foundation*. *Barb Rose*, editor of *Community Matters* at Wilder, and her staff are working with us to organize 'Cities at Work' community circles in Saint Paul. They have also developed a Saint Paul-oriented discussion guide adapted from the *Choices for Community* guide. Staff of the *League of Human Rights Commissions* is working with us to enable suburban human rights commissions to take the lead role in sponsoring community circles in their communities and partnering with other organizations to implement the circles. Our national partner, the *Study Circles Resource Center*, has and will continue to provide substantial advice and in-kind support to our project. Cable TV networks such as *Saint Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN)* are providing video production services for documenting and broadcasting the project (e.g., the East and West Metro "Kick-Off" Forums). Other media partners covering our project include *Kinshasha Kambui* of KFAI radio, *Brandt Williams* of KMOJ radio and *Al McFarland* of Insight News.

Experience during the last two years has taught us that the project and collaborative will not continue to work unless EHEP is more adequately staffed. Our success to date demands that we expand beyond a one-person non-profit. To effectively carry out its objective of sustaining the momentum of the community circle project and building the successful development of inclusive communities and schools into the agendas of other public and community organizations, EHEP must expand its capacity.

We propose the creation of two new staff positions in 1999: (1) a full-time administrative assistant to assist the director and to manage the daily operations of EHEP activities, and (2) a community circles coordinator to oversee and manage the community circles project as it moves from discussion to action and to coordinate

activities with the community circles collaborative. A study has been prepared that has identified and recommended the addition of these staff positions as essential to the continued success of our work. We are also adding computer capacity to complement these staff additions. For these reasons, we are expanding our budget and funding requests in 1999.

A list of the principal project partners and an organizational/project budget are included in the attachments.

Impact of activities

The proposed activities will benefit the communities we are serving by advancing the agenda and prospects for integrated and equitable education in Twin Cities area public schools, and for integrated and inclusive communities that are open and affordable to all Twin Citians. They will also benefit our communities by harnessing the potential of our region's rich diversity of citizens in creating communities that work for all citizens.

The first round of conversations has already been used to inform the areas for mediation of the education lawsuits between the NAACP, Saint Paul Schools and the State of Minnesota. Ideally, the second round of conversations will present a timely opportunity to "test" and discuss the recommendations to the legislature coming out of the first round of mediation talks, focusing on schools. The community conversations will also present an opportunity to inform a possible second round of mediation meetings focusing on external factors, such as housing, transportation, family and community services, and jobs. The community circle conversations should directly contribute to an informed, mediated settlement that will lead to more equitable, inclusive and integrated education for Twin Cities area students. If mediation does not continue, the results of the circle conversations will nevertheless benefit voluntary initiatives to assure educational success for all students.

The first round of conversations has also contributed to building greater public awareness, support and commitment to fair and affordable housing throughout the metropolitan region. Barriers to affordable housing created by exclusionary zoning, other regulatory practices, and lack of public resources was identified by over two-third of the circles as a major factor influencing economic and racial segregation in the Twin Cities. Fair housing violations were also identified as more prevalent than the public generally acknowledges. NIMBYism frequently displayed at public hearings and planning commission meetings in suburban communities was also highlighted in the conversations. One of the suggestions that came out of the conversations was for creating a way to dramatize these issues for the public. MICAHA, one of the community circle partners, took this idea to heart and partnered with the Illusion Theatre to develop a fair housing play "Like Waters Rolling Down." This theatre event has received national funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and is being performed six times in different parts of the metropolitan area.

The conversations have also led to specific commitments to action. Twelve of the organizations that sponsored a community circle are or have become members of the Metropolitan Interfaith Council for Affordable Housing (MICAHA) and have joined its Housing Advocate Network. In addition, several of the first round sponsors and participants were members of Interfaith Action or Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council, who went on to model our discussion process among their member congregations and organize a metro-wide social justice and action initiative to move the legislature to address city-suburban segregation and racial-economic disparities.

Partly as a result of our project, a record number of affordable housing proposals were submitted to the State Legislature in 1999. The proposed Inclusionary Housing Initiative is an example of a concept that had its genesis in the community circle conversations. EHEP is one of the endorsers and sponsors of this proposal, which is being spearheaded through the legislature with the assistance of the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, one of our community circle project partners.

Since we began the community circle project in late 1996, reversing segregation (like curbing urban sprawl) has become an accepted part of the nomenclature of at least six major organizations working with issues of housing, education, and growth management in the Twin Cities: the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, the Metropolitan Interfaith Council for Affordable Housing, the Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council and Interfaith Action, and the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches.

The second round of circle conversations will highlight promising practices for expanding housing choices and delivering schools that work for all children, and will build greater public education, awareness and desire to become involved in supporting practices identified by circle participants as the most promising.

We think that our project will also lead to the already growing agreement on the importance of linking school desegregation/integration issues with the broader issue of housing (and related issues of public transportation and jobs). The project is contributing to greater support by advocate organizations for broader coalitions that embrace both housing and education and other related issues. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is an example. Through our coalition-building activities we expect that there will be broader public support of housing *and* education reforms that lead to more inclusive schools *and* communities.

At the conclusion of the second round of conversations, the conversation results will be presented as findings, conclusions and possible recommendations to the legislature and other decision-making bodies, and hopefully contribute to better policy making. The circle conversations should also result in greater participation in the civic life of the community by community circle participants, many of whom have not been actively involved in these issues in the past.

C. EVALUATION

How effectiveness will be measured

We intend to measure success in tangible ways. We have been and will continue track specific data about the process and results. We have already used surveys to evaluate the first round and will use focus groups to evaluate the second round of community circle discussions. Surveys will also be used to track the civic actions taken by citizens following their participation in the community circles. The research division of the Wilder Foundation and the evaluation staff of the Study Circles Resource Center are designing measures that will be used to track project results and impacts.

Criteria for a successful program and the results you expect to have achieved

Measures of success include the breadth and depth of participation in the study circles by citizens. Measures of breadth and depth include diversity of participants in terms of perspectives and viewpoints, race and ethnicity, place of work or residence, age or generation, family status and economic status. It also includes locations and numbers of participants and conversations. Participant comments about what they got out of the circle experience and how they grew or changed as a result of the experience will also be considered.

The project's impact will also be measured by the extent that our process and the circle findings, conclusions and recommendations are considered and incorporated by stakeholder and sponsor organizations, and by public decision-making bodies, such as school boards, planning commissions, city councils, the Metropolitan Council and the State Legislature. Another important measure will be the number of new participants that become involved in the work of one of the promising practices or one of the participating non-profit or community organizations as one way of moving from discussion to action. The extent to which discussion participants become more involved in the civic life of their community is an important measure that will be tracked as part of the second round of conversations.

We hope to at least double the number of participating community circles that successfully complete a dialogue in the second round from 25 circles to over 50 circles. We intend to have representation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and Latino/Chicanos and Mexican Americans as well as African Americans in the circles in numbers reflecting their percentage of the population of the metropolitan area. We are also striving through pairing of circles, cross-culturally competent recruiting and outreach practices, and partnerships with organizations reflecting diverse populations to achieve richly diverse community circle groups. We also aim to engage citizens from outer ring suburbs who presently do not see these issues as their issues. This may be the more difficult, but equally if not more important, challenge.

If these circle discussions receive public attention, raise the level of public awareness, understanding and engagement in creatively addressing issues at the intersection of race, housing and schools, and if they prompt publicly informed actions and strategies that lead to more successfully inclusive schools and communities, then our project will have been successful. When breaking down barriers to 'one community' becomes a center piece of the agendas of Twin Cities area public bodies and community-based organizations, we will have accomplished our objective and will proudly put ourselves out of business.

Who will be involved in the evaluation?

The EHEP board and staff and the partner organizations that participate in the Community Circle project will continue to be involved in evaluating the project. The Study Circles Resource Center, one of our national partners has already been assisting us in the preparation of evaluation measures and criteria for the second round of community dialogues. In addition, the Wilder Foundation research department is preparing an evaluation strategy for the 'Cities at Work' forums and community circle dialogues in Saint Paul. Their experience and expertise with evaluation will also be used to inform the evaluation process for the metro-wide circle project.

How evaluations will be used

The results of the first round of community circle conversations are being used primarily to plan the second round of conversations and also to inform the agendas of participating partners. As previously mentioned, they have also been used in designing the process for mediation of the educational lawsuits.

The results of the second round of conversations will be used to define subsequent strategies for achieving more inclusive, equitable and integrated schools and communities and to inform public policy actions that help to break down barriers to more opportunities and to desegregate the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Education & Housing Equity Project Board of Directors

1-1-99

Barbara Bearman: Small business owner; member, executive committee, Minneapolis Branch NAACP; former member, St. Louis Park Human Rights Commission and Minneapolis Civil Rights Commission; former chair, District 44 DFL Party.

Keith Hardy: Coordinator of Design Services Group, Equipment Services Division, SuperValu Corporation.

JoAnn Heryla: Southwest Area Superintendent, Minneapolis Public School District #1.

Jim Hilbert: Attorney, Shulman Walcott & Shulman; former Legal Fellow and Co-director of Programs, Institute on Race and Poverty.

Dr. Josie Johnson: Senior Fellow, College of Education and Human Ecology, University of Minnesota; long-time education and civil rights leader.

Matthew Little: Member of executive committee and former president, Minneapolis Branch NAACP; long-time civil rights leader.

Hope Melton: Prevention Coordinator, Ramsey County; board member, DFL Education Foundation and Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods.

Dr. Van Mueller: Professor, Department of Educational Policy and Administration, University of Minnesota.

Rep. Myron Orfield: State Representative, District 60B (southwest Minneapolis), Minnesota House of Representatives; author of *Metropolitica: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability*. Nikki Carlson, serves as Representative Orfield's designated board alternate when he is unable to attend board meetings.

Dr. John Powell: Director, The Institute on Race and Poverty, University of Minnesota; author of *Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education, and Persistent Segregation*. Gavin Kearney, Coordinator of Research and Programs, currently serves as the Institute's designated representative on the board.

Thomas Ross: former Policy Advocate, Minneapolis Urban League; served on the Governor's transition team; presently a business entrepreneur in south Minneapolis and highland park in Saint Paul.

Dr. Luz Maria Serrano: Assistant Superintendent of Accountability, Technology & Support Services, St. Paul Public School District #625.

Joy Sorensen Navarre: Executive Director, Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICA).

Jerry Timian: Director, First Call for Help, St. Paul United Way; member, St. Louis Park School Board.

Dr. Cris Toffolo: Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of St. Thomas.

Gloria Winans: Chair, Eden Prairie Human Rights and Diversity Commission; Communications Director, Minneapolis United Way.

1999 COMMUNITY CIRCLES PROJECT

PROJECT TIMETABLE

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| ➤ Evaluate the first round of community circles | Completed 1997 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor National Days of Dialogue groups in the Twin Cities | February 1998 |
| ➤ Issue report sharing the results of the first round of discussions | Completed April 1998 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor study circles informational and training workshop | April 25, 1998 |
| ➤ Prepare revised <i>Choices for Community</i> discussion guide | May - September 1998 |
| ➤ Publish revised discussion guide <i>Conversations at the Crossroads</i> | March 1999 |
| ➤ Recruit new partners and sponsors | Fall/Winter 1998/99 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor "Building Inclusive Communities" Conference and Dinner Event | Sept. 17 & 18, 1998 |
| ➤ Launch Minneapolis Public Schools Community Circles (pilots for 1999 circles) | Oct. - Dec. 1998 |
| ➤ Hold Sponsor Information Workshops | December 9, 1998 |
| | January 13, 1998 |
| | January 4, 1999 |
| ➤ Issue letter to mayors of Twin Cities area. | January 15, 1999 |
| ➤ National Conversation on Race (co-sponsored by EHEP with NCCJ) | January 21, 1999 |
| ➤ Hold Community Circle "Kick-Off" Forums (West Metro) | February 4, 1999 |
| (East Metro) | January 22, 1999 |
| ➤ Conduct facilitator and scribe training workshops | March 5, 1999 |
| | January 23, 1999 |
| ➤ Hold workshops on Understanding Community and Institutional Racism
(for community circle sponsors, facilitators and scribes) | March 6, 1999 |
| ➤ MICAHA fair housing theatre event "Like Waters Rolling Down"
Central Presbyterian Church, Saint Paul (co-sponsored by EHEP) | February 7, 1999 |
| ➤ Sponsors convene first community circles | February 1999 |
| Community Circles meet 5 times for 2 hours each session | Feb - June 1999 |
| ➤ Hold mid-point sharing sessions with facilitators and sponsors | April 23, 1999 |
| | May 18, 1999 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor "Cities at Work" Forums held in Saint Paul | April 28, 1999 |
| | May 18, 1999 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor MICAHA fair housing theatre event - in Minneapolis
- in northern metro suburbs | April 25, 1999 |
| | May 23, 1999 |
| ➤ Community Circles make presentations to sponsoring organizations'
governing bodies | May-June 1999 |
| ➤ Hold first action forum | June 22, 1999 |
| ➤ Hold sponsor information workshop for fall 1999 circles | June 21, 1999 |
| ➤ Prepare interim report | June - August 1999 |
| ➤ Continue evaluation of circles process and results | Summer 1999 |
| ➤ Hold training workshops for facilitators and sponsors | August or Sept. 1999 |
| ➤ Convene fall round of 1999 community circles | Sept. - Nov. 1999 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor "Cities at Work" Forums III and IV
(includes "Call to Action" Forum at conclusion of Community Circles) | Sept. and Oct. 1999 |
| ➤ Hold "Citizens Summit" with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio | Nov. or Dec., 1999 |
| ➤ Complete evaluation process and issue final report to community and
and metropolitan decision makers | January 2000 |
| ➤ Develop and implement Year 2000 Action Agenda with stakeholders
and community partners | Jan. - Dec. 2000 |

1999 Community Circles

<u>Circle #</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Status</u> (completed, current, upcoming)
<u>St. Paul</u>		
#1	Ramsey Action Programs	completed
#2	St. Paul Area Council of Churches	current
#4	J.J. Hill Montessori School	current
#5,6,7 & 23	University of St. Thomas (Saint Paul Campus)	completed & current
#24	The St. Paul Companies	current
#34	Cherokee United Methodist Church	upcoming
#34	Grace Community UCC	upcoming
#35	Payne & Phalen Community Council	upcoming
#36	District Five Teen Council/ Payne & Phalen Community Council	upcoming
#37	Frogtown Pluralism Circle/ Frogtown Family Center	current
#38	Hamline/Midway Coalition	upcoming
#39	Lexington/Hamline & Merriam Park Community Councils	current
#40	St. Paul Public Schools (Community Education)	current
#41	West Side Family Center	upcoming
#	American Indian Family Center	upcoming
#	Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women/Minnesota	upcoming
#	East Side Neighborhood Development Corp.	upcoming
#	St. Paul United Church of Christ	upcoming
#	Macalester/Groveland Family Center	upcoming
#25	Goodwill/Easter Seals & Merriam Park Community Council	current
#--	HECUA (Metro Urban Studies Term)	completed
<u>East Metro</u>		
#	Ascension Episcopal Church & Stillwater Area Public Schools	upcoming
#8	Project Respect/East Metro Women's Council (White Bear Lake)	upcoming
<u>Minneapolis</u>		
#	Northside Residents Redevelopment Council	upcoming
#15	Hiawatha YMCA & Longfellow-Nokomis Family & Community Resource Center	completed
#30 & #31	Mayflower Community Congregational Church	current
#11	First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis	upcoming
#12 & #13	Cathedral of St. Mark's Episcopal Church	completed

#14	Ramsey International Fine Arts School	completed
#	League of Women Voters of Minneapolis	upcoming
#42	Young Leaders Caucus, (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom)	current
#43	Project for Pride in Living	upcoming
#	MPIRG (Minnesota Public Interest Research Group)	upcoming
#	Masjid An-Nur Islamic Centers of Minneapolis	upcoming
#44	Westminster Presbyterian Church	upcoming

Minneapolis School District

#--	Southwest Area (Barton Open School)	completed
#--	South Area (Bryant Square Park)	completed
#--	East Area (East Lake Library)	completed
#--	North Area (Northstar Elementary School)	completed
#--	Northeast/Southeast Area (Pratt Community Center)	cancelled

West Metro

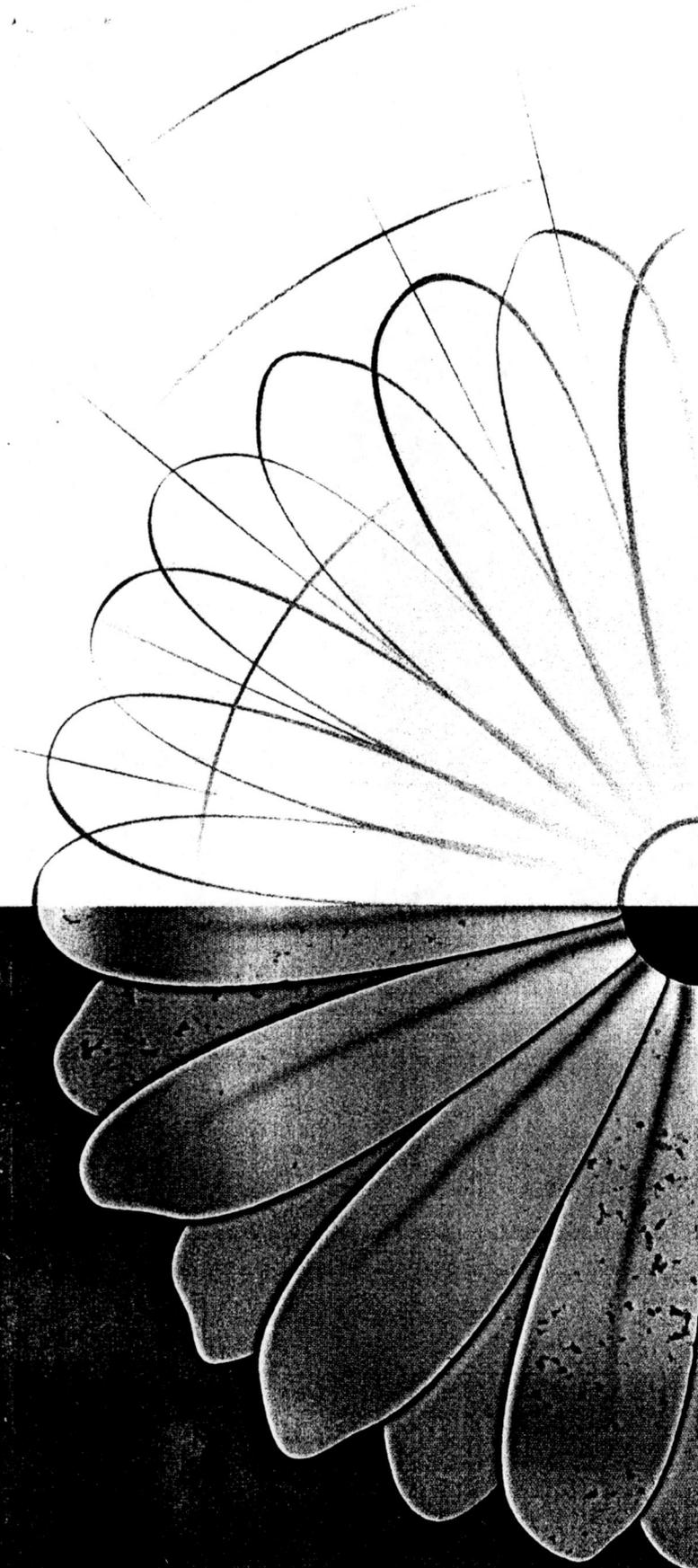
#16	Golden Valley Human Rights Commission	upcoming
#17	Wooddale Lutheran Church (St. Louis Park)	completed
#18	Eden Prairie Human Rights Commission	upcoming
#29	Crystal Human Rights Commission	current

South Metro

#19	Bloomington Human Rights Commission	completed
#20	Richfield Human Rights Commission	completed
#21	Partnerships for Tomorrow (Burnsville)	current
#26	City of Apple Valley/Family Services Collaborative	upcoming
#	Rasmussen College (Eagan Campus)	upcoming
#	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Burnsville)	upcoming
#	Presbyterian Church of the Apostles (Burnsville)	upcoming

North Metro

#28	Columbia Heights Public Schools & Chamber of Commerce	upcoming
#	American Association of University Women	upcoming
#	Northwest Hennepin Regional Human Rights Comm.	upcoming



PATHWAYS

TO ONE

AMERICA

IN THE 21st

CENTURY

PROMISING

PRACTICES

FOR RACIAL

RECONCILIATION

The President's Initiative on Race

January 1999

Community Circle Collaborative, Education and Housing Equity Project Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota

Contact(s)

Dick Little, Executive Director,
612-330-1505

Purpose

To build broad-based partnerships that engage area citizens in public discussion, analysis, and action that promote racially and economically inclusive communities with quality schools and affordable housing.

Background

The Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP) was founded in 1995 to advance public understanding of growing economic disparities and racial segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and to develop constructive community responses to these problems. EHEP's mission is to act as a catalyst in building broad-based coalitions and partnerships that engage the metropolitan community in informed public conversations, analysis, and advocacy. EHEP promotes racially and economically inclusive communities that give families and citizens of all income levels, races, and ethnicities access to quality schools, affordable housing, and livable-wage jobs throughout the metropolitan area.

In 1996, EHEP began a partnership with more than 20 organizations, including the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing, the Minnesota Fair Housing Center, the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism, the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative, and the Study Circles Resource Center. This partnership, the Community Circle Collaborative, encourages metropolitanwide dialogue about the challenges of education and housing segregation. The creation of the Collaborative was motivated

by the pressing need to link issues of school segregation and disparities in educational achievement to the broader issues of segregated housing and communities and the related issue of concentration of poverty and isolation from opportunities. The first dialogue was launched in 1997.

Program Operations

In 1997, 500 citizens from 35 communities and all major racial and cultural backgrounds participated in the Collaborative's community circle dialogues. Participants in the circle dialogues met as many as six times over 3 months to discuss two central issues: 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; and what individuals and the community can do to enhance educational success, housing choices, and economic opportunities for *all* children and adults in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Collaborative invited organizations such as schools, churches, and neighborhood councils to convene the circle dialogues. A discussion guide, *Choices for Community*, was prepared to provide a focal point for the work. The conversations culminated with a Metropolitan Citizens Forum; a final report synthesized the findings, conclusions,

Getting people involved in addressing public issues is not a "nice" thing.... What you want people to say is not that it is a nice thing to do but that it's an absolutely necessary thing to do.

Martha L. McCoy
Executive Director
Study Circles Resource
Center

*Community Circle Collaborative,
Education and Housing Equity Project
(continued)*

and recommendations of the circle dialogues. Throughout the year, many of the participants in the circle dialogues and the sponsor organizations formulated action plans and held town hall meetings in their schools and communities.

Outcomes

The Collaborative brought together more than 500 citizens and organizations in conversations about issues of race. The Circles have helped to inform and increase public support for education equity and State legislation for affordable metropolitan housing. EHEP is planning a second round of conversations for the fall and winter of 1998 and

1999 that will build on the first round and include a forum to connect citizens to efforts to address identified issues. In 1999, 1,000 citizens are expected to participate in up to 100 Circle dialogues throughout the metropolitan area. At the conclusion of these conversations, EHEP and the Collaborative will cosponsor a Citizens Summit with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio Civic Journalism Initiative. An actionable agenda addressing issues of educational access, housing, and school desegregation is to be produced at the Summit. This agenda will help shape the policy and action agendas of partners in the Collaborative and public decisionmaking bodies.

Application to the Otto Bremer Foundation

COVER SHEET

Date of Application: April 22, 1999

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Education and Housing Equity Project

Legal Name of Organization

Augsburg College, CB 185, 2211 Riverside Avenue

Address

Minneapolis, MN 55454

(612) 330-1505

(612) 330-1507 or 1649

City, State, Zip

Telephone

FAX

Individuals Responsible:

Dick Little

Executive Director

(612) 330-1505 or 724-5662

Name of top paid staff

Title

Direct dial phone #

Contact person (if different from top paid staff)

Title

Direct dial phone #

Organization Description:

The Education and Housing Equity Project was founded in 1995 to promote racially and economically inclusive communities and schools that work for all children in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Its primary focus is on expanding public understanding and informed public action on community residential, economic and racial segregation and the educational achievement gap in our public schools. To accomplish its mission, EHEP has initiated the Community Circles Collaborative, a project that brings together citizens and community organizations from throughout the metro area in public conversations focusing on the challenges of housing segregation, educational achievement and racial equity in the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

Is your organization an IRS 501(c)(3) not-for-profit? YES NO

If no, is your organization a public agency/unit of government
or religious institution: YES NO

If no, name of fiscal agent (fiscal sponsor) _____

AMOUNT AND TYPE OF SUPPORT REQUESTED

The dollar amount being requested:

\$ 50,000 for one year (\$100,000 over 2 years)

Funds are being requested for: Note: we are a project

general operating support

capital

other: _____

project support

endowment

start-up costs

technical assistance

If a project, give project duration:

_____ Month _____ Year

to _____ Month _____ Year

If operating support, fiscal year:

January Month 1999 Year

to January Month 2000 Year

BUDGET

Total annual organization budget:

\$ 100,000

Total project budget (for support other than general operating):

\$ _____

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

(If operating or start-up support relate to the organization. If project and other support, relate to the project.)

Project name (if applying for project support):

Conversations at the Crossroads: Community Circle Dialogues
on Education, Housing and Segregation in the Twin Cities Area

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of the request:

We are requesting support for launching and completing the second round of community circles that will be convened in 1999 focusing on the challenges of achieving racially and economically inclusive schools and communities. Our goal is to engage over 1,000 citizens from 75% of the municipalities in the metro area participating in up to 100 study circles. These circles will consist of 8 to 15 participants each who will meet at least 5 times for 2 hours each meeting. Each circle will meet on specific dates and at specific locations, use a prepared discussion guide, and will be moderated by experienced facilitators. In addition to providing meeting places and/or recruiting diverse participants, sponsoring organizations will provide scribes to record and report the results of each circle conversation. A report to the community will be produced. A citizens summit and action forum will bring participants together at the conclusion of the circle conversations to share findings and conclusions/recommendations with community and public officials(who will also be invited to participate in the circles) and to connect participants with action opportunities and agendas (promising practices and organizations).

Geographic area served: The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

Population served: Adults and young people from many different walks of life in schools and communities in the Twin Cities area. Communities of color and lower income residents and students from inner urban areas as well as suburban communities will be emphasized and targeted in this project. Diversity of participants is a key consideration of this project.

AUTHORIZATION

Name of top paid staff and/or Board Chair:

Richard C. Little, Executive Director
Matthew Little, President, Board of Directors

Signature

Special Note: This grant request follows two years of funding (\$25,000 per year for two years) from the Bremer Foundation, and documents accomplishments over those two years as well as our proposed accomplishments for the next year. Action over the second year will be determined by the results of this next year's community circles and through a strategic planning process to be carried out by the EHEP Board and selected community circle partners. The financial reports will show that we fully matched and doubled the Bremer grants of these past two years. We will do so again over the next two years.

Application to the Otto Bremer Foundation

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

A. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Brief History

The Education & Housing Equity Project was created in 1995 to link the issue of school desegregation/integration with the broader issues of segregated housing and neighborhoods and to build an informed citizenry to advance public understanding and action on these issues.

In 1996, it partnered with some 20 other organizations, including the Minnesota Minority Partnership, the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing, the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism, the Minnesota Fair Housing Center and the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative to create the Community Circle Collaborative, a multi-sector initiative to promote inter-community dialogue on the critical issues of education, housing race and segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. In 1997 and early 1998, approximately 500 citizens from different walks of life joined together in community circles and forums convened in 25 different communities focusing on the challenges of affordable housing, the achievement gap in our schools, the location mismatch between employees who need jobs and employers who need workers, and the role that race and segregation play in exacerbating these challenges. Each circle was supplied with a facilitator, recruited and trained by the collaborative, and a discussion guide prepared by the collaborative. The discussions culminated in a metropolitan citizen's forum held at Macalester College and a report on the results of the conversations published in 1998.

Based on the experience with these initial conversations, EHEP and other Collaborative partners approached additional organizations about the conversations, and used the results of the conversations to further define agendas and strategies that would advance the common mission of expanding housing, education and economic choices and opportunities for all citizens in the metropolitan area.

A second round of Community Circle conversations began in late 1998 and is currently underway in 1999. Based on the evaluation of the first round of conversations in 1997, we have substantially revised the discussion guide, partnered with professional facilitator and mediator organizations to facilitate the conversations, and have greatly expanded partnerships with potential sponsor groups. In the fall of 1998, Community Circles were held in Minneapolis, co-sponsored by the Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minneapolis Urban League, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, the Park and Library Boards (providing meeting spaces), the Jefferson Center (providing scribes) and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (facilitators). In February 1999 we launched a metropolitan-wide round of community circles. We also entered into a major partnership with the Wilder Foundation and "Cities At Work" partners to inaugurate "Cities at Work" community circle conversations on education, housing and race in Saint Paul. As of the date of this grant request, approximately 75 community circles in 20 different cities, engaging approximately 1,000 citizens are underway this spring or are planned to be held next fall.

At the end of 1998, our Community Circles dialogue project was selected by The President's Initiative on Race as a "Promising Practice" for advancing race relations and making progress on issues of race in the United States.

Mission & goals

The mission of the Education & Housing Equity Project is to be a catalyst for building broad-based partnerships that engage citizens and communities in public discussion, analysis and advocacy that enhances the prospects for realizing racially and economically inclusive institutions and communities that give families of all incomes, races, and cultural backgrounds access to quality schools and affordable housing choices throughout the metropolitan area.

EHEP pursues its mission through a three-part strategy:

- Coalition and partnership building and advocacy;
 - Community education and informed public conversation; and
 - Assistance to communities in becoming more inclusive and integrated
-

Coalition Building and Advocacy to Inform Public Decision Making

Since its inception, EHEP has spent a significant portion of its energies in discussions and collaborations with other organizations and groups. These have led to several jointly sponsored projects as well as a fuller understanding of the need for an organization and collaborative that can link the issues of housing and education and develop the much needed consensus and leadership to move the metropolitan community forward on these issues, and to connect them to the challenges of race, poverty and segregation. After a year of creating the organization, the second and subsequent years have been devoted to extensive research of the literature, one-on-one interviews and multi-participant focus group meetings with a broad range of community leaders and experts in the fields of housing, education, anti-racism and metropolitan stability, and building a broad-based coalition and partnerships that can work on these combined issues. Our unique contributions have been (1) to encourage the linkage of housing and school issues in the work of existing organizations and connecting this work to issues of race and (2) to promote civil, informed dialogue across economic, racial and political lines as one important way to make progress on these issues. Some of our major accomplishments have included:

- Working with the Institute on Race and Poverty to “popularize” its research by making it broadly available in commonly used language to various publics in the Twin Cities area.
 - Coalescing with both housing and education organizations to focus on the re-drafting of the State Board of Education’s desegregation rule and to link school desegregation issues with the broader issues of housing segregation and metropolitan stability (1996 and 1998).
 - Encouraging a coalition working with the newly formed Minnesota Fair Housing Center on a fair housing testing campaign in suburban Hennepin County to frame the issue of housing discrimination in the context of schools, educational achievement and access to broader life opportunities (beginning in 1996).
 - Engaging the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Mayor of Minneapolis to support and assist in the development of the community circles project and, following a presentation sponsored by the Family Housing Fund, encouraging a study of the linkage between housing/household stability and educational achievement in Minneapolis. This action led to *The Kids Mobility Project* (1997).
 - Collaborating with and supporting MICA’s (Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing) fair housing initiative proposal to HUD to jointly develop, with the Illusion Theater, a series of theater events that highlight the need for metro-wide fair and affordable housing for people of all backgrounds and to deal forthrightly with community resistance, discriminatory practices, stereotypes and fears that impede the development of affordable housing. EHEP is represented at each of the theater events and is co-sponsoring the Minneapolis and Saint Paul performances (1997 - 1999). The first round of community circle discussions in 1997 provided the genesis for the theatre project.
 - Participating by invitation as an advisor to the consulting teams working with interested parties to mediate the currently pending educational adequacy and educational equity lawsuits (NAACP v. State of Minnesota and St. Paul School District v. State of Minnesota). Community circle partners also participated in the mediation planning retreat organized by the principal parties in the lawsuits (1997 and 1998). In early 1998, EHEP’s director testified in support of the mediation process before the Minneapolis School Board, which subsequently endorsed the same position. EHEP has been asked to continue to be a resource to the mediation process and is participating in mediation workshops in 1999. Many of the ideas that came out of the first round of community circle conversations have been used to contribute to settlement proposals for mediation of the lawsuits.
 - Working with the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and the Right to Housing Campaign to develop an Inclusionary Housing policy and legislative action proposal that could provide the basis for a new approach to expanding affordable housing choices and mixed income housing development in the Twin Cities metropolitan area (1998 and 1999). The inclusionary housing and zoning concept was one of the major ideas generated by the 1997 community circle conversations.
 - Jointly sponsoring with the Urban Coalition and the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP) a series of issue forums on the State’s proposed new Desegregation Rule, the Inclusionary Education Rule (revision of the originally proposed Diversity Rule), and multicultural competency requirements for teacher licensure. The EHEP board also contributed substantive written testimony to the State Board of Education on the proposed changes to the Profiles of Learning (1998) and the revised desegregation rule (1999).
 - Assisting the Minneapolis League of Women Voters with the Minneapolis Middle School Project (1998).
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- Contributing to the work of the Minneapolis Affordable Housing Task Force through EHEP's Director who serves on the Task Force (1998 - 1999). Our message have been that: (1) recommendations should focus not only on providing needed housing but also on expanding people's locational choices and access to economic, social and educational opportunities; (2) recommendations should focus on barriers related to race, not only income, and (3) recommendations should focus on metropolitan as well as municipal remedies. Our message to reverse, or at least avoid, further concentrating poverty has also been heeded.

In 1999, we have agreed to be a partner with the Minnesota Housing Partnership and the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless as part of their proposals to the Minneapolis Foundation/Thorpe Fund to launch a public relations campaign to break down barriers of public resistance to affordable housing in the Twin Cities area.

Assisting Communities in Becoming More Inclusive and Integrated

EHEP has been less involved with this strategy since it largely evolves from the other two strategies. However, at least two example activities stand out.

Following the first round of community circles, we were invited by the Minnesota Fair Housing Center to assist them in planning and implementing a Hennepin County/Metropolitan Council-funded workshop for suburban housing and planning officials and human rights commissioners on best practices for achieving fair and affordable housing. In September 1998 over 100 city officials and developers attended the "Building Inclusive Communities" Conference in Bloomington. EHEP worked with the Fair Housing Center and the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability to sponsor programs that highlighted promising practices used in other parts of the country. EHEP helped to bring the Vice President of Chicago's Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities to the Twin Cities to discuss the Oak Park, Illinois experience in becoming and sustaining one of the most successful racially integrated cities in the United States.

In the East Metro Area we were invited by the Saint Paul Office of Interdistrict Initiatives to participate in the planning process to develop a multi-school district governance structure to expand inter-district and integrated education initiatives involving Saint Paul and suburban East Metro school districts. Planning workshops were held in late 1998 early 1999. Future inter-district initiatives will be dependent on continuing availability of state funding. Multi- and inter-district initiatives were the subject of considerable discussion in the 1997 Community Circles.

Following the second round of Community Circle conversations, we anticipate additional opportunities to collaborate with, broker and provide assistance to communities and school districts attempting to become more multiculturally, racially and economically inclusive.

Civic Engagement and Community Conversation

By far the most significant and distinctive work of EHEP is the "Choices for Community" Community Circle Project, recently renamed 'Conversations at the Crossroads.' In 1997, the Community Circle Collaborative launched a dialogue project in which citizens from different walks of life came together, 5 to 15 at a time, in community circles throughout the metropolitan area to discuss the future of the Twin Cities area with a focus on two central 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?" and
- "What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance educational success, and housing and economic opportunities for *all* children and adults in the Twin Cities metropolitan area?"

Community Circles of citizens from thirty-five localities were convened/hosted by a variety of local sponsoring organizations. All participants were provided with discussion guides prepared by the Collaborative, and facilitators, recruited and trained by the Collaborative, moderated each circle. The conversations culminated in a Metropolitan Citizens Forum held at Macalester College Chapel, moderated by Saint Paul's George Latimer and Minneapolis' Vivian Jenkins Nelsen. A report that synthesized the findings, conclusions and action recommendations coming out of the community circles was prepared and has been shared with project partners and various decision makers in the metropolitan area.

Since the conclusion of the first round of conversations, EHEP and its partners have been evaluating the first round, identifying promising practices that advance educational success and expand affordable housing choices, sharing the results of the conversations with various stakeholders (e.g., the West Metro Education Program), and revising and improving the process for a second round of conversations.

During 1997 and 1998, we also assisted with the launching of other civic engagement projects with similar objectives, including the Interfaith Action/Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council's interfaith dialogue and action forums on poverty, segregation and sprawl, the National Conference of Community and Justice town hall meetings on education and race (we co-sponsored two forums in Minneapolis and Saint Paul), the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations (we sponsored three dialogues in the Twin Cities), the Saint Paul Pioneer Press civic journalism project "Poverty Among Us, and in 1999 the Minnesota League of Women Voters proposed statewide study circle program on immigration. In April 1998 we co-sponsored a Study Circles training workshop for prospective sponsors and facilitators with the national Study Circles Resource Center. This event greatly increased local capacity for spawning additional civic engagement projects. The workshop also attracted new partners interested in launching the second round of community circles conversations on education, housing and race. One of these new partners is the Wilder Foundation, with whom we are co-sponsoring the 1999 "Cities at Work" Forums on "Race, Connections and Commitment." As part of the forum project, local Saint Paul organizations are or will be co-sponsoring community circle dialogues on education, housing and race.

The second round of Community Circle conversations is now underway. A round of Minneapolis Circles, co-sponsored by the Minneapolis Public School's Office of Family and Community Services and five other partner organizations, took place in the fall of 1998 and served as a prototype for the metropolitan-wide conversations that began in February 1999.

The second round (1999 Community Circle Dialogues) is built on the lessons learned from the first (1997) round. It includes a broader marketing effort and additional groups not represented in the first round, such as the business community, labor unions, outer suburban residents and employers, significantly more residents and leadership groups in Saint Paul and East Metro, and a wider range of participants from communities of color. These conversations are more clearly focused on systemic barriers and changes needed to better integrate our metropolitan community and residential living patterns across barriers of race and class, and, in the process, bring children from different backgrounds to more integrated and diverse learning environments. Added to the discussions is a focus on making our institutions, such as schools, more multiculturally inclusive and equitable. The discussions also include an action component, including an Action Forum, that will emphasize promising practices already underway in various parts of the country and the Twin Cities (e.g., East Metro Interdistrict Initiatives) and connect participants to opportunities for involvement in their community. The action component will also more directly connect the work of the community circles with the policy work of key decision makers and decisions-making bodies.

The quality and scope of the discussion process has also been improved. Thirty different organizations contributed to the development of a new discussion guide. A faith compendium has been prepared by the MICAH for use in community circles sponsored by congregations (churches, mosques, and synagogues). We are also developing an optional session on race and economic development, to be used in conversations sponsored by chambers of commerce and business associations. To assure better reports on the conversation results, we have developed reporting forms for use by the scribes. A partnership with the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution and Minnesota Facilitators Network has resulted in a facilitator's guide, a more user-friendly discussion guide and a facilitator's version of the guide. These two groups have been retained as partners in the project. They are recruiting and training the facilitators, most of who are experienced facilitators from their own ranks. We have also secured special training opportunities for the facilitators, scribes and sponsors, including a workshop on understanding community and institutional racism delivered by James and Nadine Addington of the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative, and a workshop on cross-cultural communications provided by Intercultural Communications Workshops, Inc., another community circle partner. These opportunities serve as volunteer compensation and as useful tools for deepening and enhancing the conversations. The circles are also being resourced with information provided by a range of organizations, including the Urban Coalition, the Family Housing Fund, the Center for School Change and the Institute on Race and Poverty; brief summaries, such as "What the Research Shows" and "Working Doesn't Always Pay for

a Home" are provided to each circle or circle participant. All of these improvements are contributing to more productive discussions and the likelihood that meaningful ideas and commitments to action will be generated by the circle conversations.

At the conclusion of Round Two, EHEP and the Community Circle Collaborative will co-sponsor a Citizens Summit with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio. The Summit will bring together participants from the community circles, and use electronic response technology to discover areas of consensus and to prioritize action steps. Many local policy makers will be invited to attend the Summit. Round two will help inform the policy and action agendas of partners in the collaborative as well as public decision-making bodies.

Organizational Structure and Administration

Project Partners

The success of EHEP's efforts rest largely on an active and committed board of directors and the strong partnership of organizations and volunteers that are part of the Community Circle Collaborative. The Community Circles project was founded by the Collaborative. Collaborative partners (past and present) are identified in the attachments. The Collaborative has been essential for (1) assuring racial, cultural, ethnic, generational, political and geographic diversity of voices in the conversations, (2) fulfilling the various tasks, objectives and leadership requirements of the project using the best possible combination of resources, and (3) assuring that the results of the community circle conversations are widely disseminated and receive widespread attention.

The Community Circle partners include:

- **Organizing partners**, who help to design the process, frame the discussion issues, prepare the discussion guide, recruit and train/orient sponsors, facilitators, scribes, and resource partners, publicize the project and work with the media, and assist with reporting and evaluation and the details of project follow-through.
- **Resource associates**, who supply background research and expertise on the issues, written and audio-visual materials to inform the discussions and provoke spirited but thoughtful conversation, media coverage, project documentation, and/or financial and in-kind backing of project activities.
- **Sponsors** (typically organizations) that supply meeting places (may include child care, transportation, translators, hospitality and other services as needed) for the conversations, schedule the conversations, publicize the circles, recruit circle participants, convene or host the circle dialogues, and secure scribes who will capture in written record the highlights and results of each conversation.
- **Facilitators**, who have professional experience in mediation and facilitation, who moderate the community circle conversations (organizations such as the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution and the Minnesota Facilitator Network are partnering with EHEP and the Wilder Foundation to provide facilitators and co-facilitators for each circle conversation). The facilitator organizations also participate in delivering facilitator training to all participating facilitators and in convening the facilitators for assessment and evaluation.
- **Participants** from many diverse backgrounds who commit to at least 5 sessions of 2 hours each and participate with 8 to 15 other citizens in informed and deliberative dialogue. The participants are the "heart and soul" of the Community Circles initiative. These are the citizens who create the "public voice."

In-kind support from the organizing partners alone in the 1997 circles amounted to more than \$15,000 in documented resources. A similar or greater contribution has been made during the 1998 circles in Minneapolis and in preparing for the 1999 circles. We expect this figure to double in 1999.

Diversity of Participation

EHEP works through its partners in many diverse settings throughout the metropolitan area. It is important to us that the groups we work with are representative of the communities with which we work, and reflect the diversity of the metropolitan community. Nine of the twenty organizing partners are groups representing primarily interests of communities of color. Many of the new groups recruited for the current round of conversations are culture-specific and multicultural organizations. Partner and sponsor organizations include congregations, non-profits, human rights commissions, neighborhood associations and community councils, youth groups, schools, family and community councils, university and college groups, a union local, a chamber of commerce, voter organizations, and city governments. Although there has been a reasonably good demographic and geographic balance of sponsors, we are striving to achieve better representation of the outer

suburbs, the business community, recent immigrants and students. Public officials are also being actively invited to participate in the second round of circles. Thanks to our principal partnership with "Cities at Work" and the Wilder Foundation, we have achieved excellent representation of Saint Paul communities. With the help of Saint Paul United Way, participation of communities of color will be significant in the St. Paul conversations.

EHEP and the Community Circle Project are distinctive from many other organizations and initiatives in their unique methodology and objective of engaging citizens and creating dialogue among disparate parts of the Twin Cities metropolitan area not only to discuss issues and challenges, but also to generate ideas and suggestions that can lead to common solutions to those issues and challenges. No other organization in the Twin Cities area is currently engaged in this kind of sustained, collaborative, grassroots dialogue and education/consensus-building and mobilizing effort that specifically links housing, education and race.

Board of Directors

Our success also rests on an active, committed and diverse board of directors. The board of directors has been expanded each year and now includes 16 members; all are key leaders in fields and institutions related to the mission of EHEP. The board has direct and extensive leadership experience in addressing issues of education, housing and race. Board member's connections and contacts in the community enhance EHEP's ability to accomplish its objectives. The board is responsible for setting policy direction for the organization; it also plays an active role in advancing the community circle project and in bringing new partners into the collaborative.

Board members come from business, civic, legislative, community service, housing advocacy, civil rights, media, education and law backgrounds. Seven of the sixteen board members, including the president, are African Americans, Southeast Asian Americans, or Latino Americans. Four additional African Americans and Asian Americans have previously served on the board.

A list and brief description of the board of directors is included in the attachments.

Staff and Volunteers

Two individuals currently staff EHEP: a full-time executive director and a part-time administrative assistant.

Dick Little, Executive Director, is responsible for all aspects of the organization and project. He has an extensive background in housing, education, race relations and use of study circles. For 20 years he was a planning and housing official with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Since 1990, he has been a research associate with the International Institute for Inter-racial Interaction (INTER-RACE) at Augsburg College, a technical assistant with the Community Policing Institute, a member of the strategic planning team for the City of New Orleans Economic Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community program, and a consultant to the Minneapolis Public Schools. He has also served as policy chair, parent representative on the site leadership council, and co-founder of the foundation at Ramsey International Fine Arts School in Minneapolis. He is in his eleventh year of serving as a mayoral appointee on the Minneapolis Planning Commission, and has a graduate degree in urban planning. He also serves as an officer on the boards of several non-profit organizations including the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA). Mr. Little was a finalist for gubernatorial appointment to the Metropolitan Council in April 1999.

Pam Jewson, Administrative Assistant, brings previous experience as an administrative assistant and field producer at KSTP, a graphic artist with the Star Tribune, and project development coordinator with the Linden Hills Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP).

EHEP has also been successful in procuring the services of three part-time student interns and research assistants over the life of our project, and we expects to do so again. The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, the University of St. Thomas, the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs, and Augsburg College are our principal internship partners. Use of consultants and 'pro bono' services has also augmented the ability of EHEP to carry out its work. Most important are in-kind staff and volunteer resources that have been provided by partner organizations. EHEP has a fiscal service agreement with Augsburg College to assure that all financial obligations and fiduciary responsibilities are carried out.

Of the five staff persons who have worked for EHEP, two are persons of color (African American and Asian American). Other staff, organizational and resource partners participating in this grant are described as part of the grant project request.

B. PURPOSE OF GRANT

Situation and Need

As the Twin Cities have become increasingly diverse in the 1990's, there has been growing public concern that economic and racial segregation in housing and among our communities is having a profound impact on the overall health and well being of the metropolitan region, and on education and employment opportunities in particular. At the same time, our institutions, especially our schools, have been "tested" by this diversity and have been found wanting: over half of the students, mostly students of color, in core city schools are failing to pass the graduation standards tests. While the overall economy has steadily improved, the unemployment rate among communities of color in the central cities and the lack of affordable housing metro-wide are at crisis levels.

A study by Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton in their publication *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* revealed that the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area is among the ten most segregated in the country. Studies have also shown that the Twin Cities ranks third highest among all U.S. urban areas in persons of color living in poverty. The work of State Representative Myron Orfield in his book *Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability*, and of Dr. John Powell of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota in his study *Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education and Persistent Segregation* has also given testimony to the depth and breadth of issues of segregation, racial and economic isolation and growing disparities between inner and outer communities in the Twin Cities, and their importance in "unlocking the doors" to addressing other significant issues facing the region.

Public actions to grapple with these issues have been growing in number. Examples include:

- education and housing lawsuits (NAACP v. State of Minnesota, Saint. Paul School District v. State of Minnesota, and Holman v. Cisneros)
- legislation (the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act)
- the creation and expansion of civic and advocacy groups (e.g., Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Interfaith Action and St. Paul Ecumenical Action Council, the Minnesota Right to Housing Campaign, the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing and the Minnesota Fair Housing Center)
- formation of new compacts of school districts and inter-district school initiatives (West Metro Education Program and the East Metro Office of Interdistrict Initiatives), and
- new State Rules addressing graduation standards, school desegregation, educational diversity (criteria for inclusive schools and teaching practices), and standards for multicultural competency in teacher licensure requirements.

These actions, and the frequently divisive debates some of them have generated, underscore both the opportunity and the need for developing a common understanding and basis of action for moving forward on the issues of education, housing and race in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Public conversation about the possibilities for inclusive and integrated communities has been rare, usually divisive and poorly informed, not conducted on a sustained or systematic basis and with too few groups or individuals involved, and virtually no broad public consensus or support. We began our project in the belief that such adverse conditions imperil the chances of building more inclusive communities and integrated institutions in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The principal danger has been that public discourse about these issues fast settles into simplistic, distorted polarities - neighborhood schools versus forced busing, quality education versus school desegregation, deconcentration of poverty versus preservation of existing affordable housing, cultural identity versus assimilation, individual choice versus collective responsibility, core cities versus suburbs, rich versus poor, and of course, whites versus communities of color (especially African Americans). A climate of public opinion poisoned by these divisions inevitably limits what policy makers (and, as we have found in our initial discussions, advocates and community leaders as well) feel they are able to do; we speculate that this climate even limits what judges feel *they* are able to do. In this kind of environment, the issues are too often captured by the most extreme and negative voices, which are then amplified by the media. The public sits and listens. Few want to get involved, because of the fear of getting burned in the heated controversy and because of the not-unreasonable judgment that little will be accomplished under these conditions. Others do not get involved because they do not perceive that these issues are their problem (i.e., they are somebody else's problem). Those who *do* take action typically call for reforms without touching on the vital questions of race and segregation.

As the first round of community circle conversations revealed, we do not know how to talk constructively as a community about race, although we are learning. Our project and the actions of our partners are beginning to make a positive impact on this issue.

There is a need to involve many groups and the broader public in civil, informed conversations about the possibilities for and benefits of integrated and inclusive communities. There is a need to expand serious discussion of these issues beyond the courtrooms, the academic halls, emotional public hearings and partisan legislative debates. As many people as possible, from many different stations in life should be participating in the conversation about this issue. The discourse should not be limited to the invectives of "talk radio," the well-intentioned opinions of newspaper editorials, the sociological jargon of academia or the legal technicalities of the courts.

The issue is developing rapidly. The question is who will be involved in the public discourse, and how will that discourse be framed. Unfortunately, past experience shows that these issues are easily polarized – and stay polarized. We believe that this familiar yet unfortunate outcome can be averted by reframing the issues in terms of their importance to health of the entire community, by organizing a wide range of groups that have a potential stake in integration, by engaging broad-based public participation in informed and exploratory civil conversations about what segregation and integration involves and by identifying and articulating promising practices and sources of support available to communities and community institutions as they seek to become more inclusive, better integrated and more equitable.

Our Response

Our response has been to implement informed community conversations about the challenges of racial, economic and residential segregation and unequal opportunity and achievement in our schools. The conversations have proven to be worthwhile and have contributed to building greater public understanding and expanded support for educational equity and inclusionary housing initiatives. We learned a great deal from the conversations, most importantly what can be done to make them more effective in subsequent rounds. The "public voice" that came out of the conversations reflected a growing understanding of the complexities of the issues citizens were grappling with, but also the need to move toward informed collective judgement and concerted public action. The project is helping to inform the proposed mediation process for settlement of the educational adequacy lawsuit and has expanded and deepened public understanding and support for metropolitan-wide affordable housing and regional reform.

Building on the experience of the first round of community circles and, using what we learned, we are again taking the conversation about segregation and race, the gap between the cost of housing and what people can afford, and achievement gap in education, the mismatch between housing choices and job opportunities, and the gaps between school readiness, education and job readiness out to the neighborhood centers, public libraries, schools, places of business, living rooms, and backyards of our cities – the places where ordinary people live their lives and where the real task of building inclusive communities must take place. We wish to encourage and inform public conversation and deliberation that will help lead people to a more informed, more effective understanding of the effects of segregation and lack of choice, why the choice to integrate is important, and how removal of barriers to choice can be accomplished. Through this process, we hope that people move beyond "tolerance" to understand the value of inclusion and of an integrated society for themselves, for other people, and for society as a whole, and to take action. We also hope to see new kinds of action and interaction across racial, ethnic and economic boundaries to make our communities livable for all citizens.

Experience has shown and we have no illusions that all people will be persuaded, or be willing to participate. There are, after all, real conflicts of interest and conflicts of values about these issues. These will not be dissolved by talk alone. But without a concerted *and sustained* effort to bring people together for informed and honest conversation, the most extreme voices will remain to frame the issue. Public-spirited conversation will be drowned out by shrill debate; our common interests and values will get lost in a sea of opposition and conflict. Informed, collective action must be preceded by informed and mutual conversation.

Specific Project Activities, Goals and Objectives

The *Choices for Community/Conversations at the Crossroads* Community Circle Project has and continues to be organized by a partnership of groups representing diverse segments of the community. To enable the kind of civic conversation we envisioned, the Collaborative developed "Community Circles," an approach to

community dialogue that draws on elements of four different, nationally and locally recognized models for civic engagement and discussion:

- "Study circles" promoted by the Study Circles Resource Center in Pomfret, Connecticut;
- The National Issues Forums, a public deliberation project begun by the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio; and
- The Communities of Color Empowerment Model (COCEM) of the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and
- The ORID (Objective-Reflective-Interpretative-Decisional) discussion model developed by the Minnesota Facilitators Network and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution.

The Community Circle dialogues (or conversations) combine the unique elements from each of the above approaches to bring together community members from diverse backgrounds, to engage them in deliberative discussion, to provide educational and technical resources that inform their conversations, and to develop action agendas and connect citizens to action opportunities and promising practices for addressing the issues they have been discussing.

The Community Circle Project is engaging a broad cross-section of the Twin Cities metropolitan community to study, discuss, and build a shared understanding of the issues of racial and economic segregation in the region and their effect on education, employment, and broader "life opportunities." It is intended to be a catalyst for promoting greater community involvement and action on these issues, including expanded efforts to decrease housing segregation and increase affordable housing choices, decrease the gap in educational achievement along racial and economic lines and increase opportunities for successful education in an integrated setting. The circles include a broad cross-section of the both "non-traditional" participants (low-income households and communities of color) and "traditional" participants in a community-wide dialogue about these complex, interconnected issues. Experience in the first round of conversations suggests that community circles can provide unique settings for collaborative learning, for working through often polarizing social and political issues like these, for facilitating honest conversation, and for building more productive exchanges about the prospects for building more inclusive organizations and communities. As similar projects elsewhere in the country have shown, such "circles" broaden perspectives, deepen understanding, and inspire participants to become more involved in the public and civic life of their community. They can also lead to new ways to address difficult and complicated issues in ways that lead to broadly supported, constructive community and legislative initiatives.

The second round of community circle conversations build on the experience and lessons of the first round conversations. We have developed a newly revised and improved discussion guide (based on consultation with and participation of 32 organizations) with a facilitator's version and a participant's version to help further focus the conversations. We are using more experienced facilitators resulting from a formal partnership with the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution and the Minnesota Facilitators Organization. We have broadened our publicity and recruiting effort to expand participation by populations under-represented in the first round, most notably through a formal partnership with the Wilder Foundation and Saint Paul "Cities At Work" partners, and we have placed a greater emphasis on follow-through and action that citizens, organizations and the community or region can take following the discussions. At the conclusion of the conversations, we will hold an Action Forum and a metropolitan Citizens Summit. The Wilder Foundation will also conduct a "Call to Action" Forum for Saint Paul participants and the public as part of the "Cities at Work" forum series.

Specific activities and a timeline for accomplishing the 1999 Community Circles and the results they are intended to realize are outlined in the attachments.

Project Resources

In addition to EHEP staff, those most directly involved in achieving these activities include the following individuals and organizations:

Paul Kiley, a media, communications and marketing consultant with past experience as head of the California Literacy Program. He is providing 'pro bono' services to help communicate and market the project to potential sponsors and participants, the public and the media.

Barbara Blackstone, State Mediator with the Minnesota Office of Dispute Resolution and Mediation, and an officer of the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR), Minnesota Chapter. Barbara is heading up the process of recruiting, training and assigning facilitators. She and a cadre of facilitators from SPIDR facilitated the Minneapolis Community Circles in fall of 1998. Approximately 65 facilitators are moderating the 1999 Community Circles. They are performing this service voluntarily. In return for their services, we are providing training workshops for the facilitators on subjects ranging from "Understanding Community and Institutional Racism" to "Cross-cultural Communications Skills." This training further advances the objectives and effectiveness of the community circle conversations.

Mariann Johnson, mediator, facilitator with the Minnesota Facilitators Network and professional organizational development consultant. She has led the effort to develop a facilitator's guide and facilitator's version of the discussion guide for the community circle project.

Sponsor representatives, who host the circles and/or arrange the meeting places for the circle dialogues, and *scribes* who record and prepare reports on the discussions. Sponsors and scribes are volunteers or paid staff providing in-kind services.

A *Community Circle working group* of individuals from the EHEP board and volunteers and staff from community circle partner organizations (e.g., *Joy Sorensen Navarre* of MICAH, *Carlos Mariani* of MMEP and *Gavin Kearney* of the Institute on Race and Poverty) assist in planning and carrying out the details of promoting and implementing the community circle project (voluntary/in-kind).

Augsburg College, office of business and financial accounting (*Jeff Swenson and Paul Pierson*), is providing payroll and fiscal services to EHEP.

EHEP has made extensive and creative use of interns, volunteers and consultants (paid and in-kind) in the past and will continue to do so in 1999 (writers, graphic designers, training professionals, speakers, etc.). *James and Nadine Addington* of the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative are delivering the workshops on understanding community and institutional racism. *Karima Bushnell* of Intercultural Communications Workshops, Inc. is providing cross-cultural communications training to the facilitators. *Feigenbaum Design Group* and *Community Media Services* provide our graphic and design services. Interns from HECUA (the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs) and CURA (the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs) have provided research and writing services. *Nikki Carlson* of Interfaith Action and principal of EYDYA, Inc. has provided 'pro bono' services for developing our data base and communications plan.

We are also being assisted by some of our collaborating partners with the organization of the project. In Saint Paul, we are carrying out the community circles as an integral part of the 'Cities at Work' Forums co-sponsored by the *Wilder Foundation*. *Barb Rose*, editor of *Community Matters* at *Wilder*, and her staff are working with us to organize 'Cities at Work' community circles in Saint Paul. They have also developed a Saint Paul-oriented discussion guide adapted from the *Choices for Community* guide. Staff of the *League of Human Rights Commissions* is working with us to enable suburban human rights commissions to take the lead role in sponsoring community circles in their communities and partnering with other organizations to implement the circles. Our national partner, the *Study Circles Resource Center*, has and will continue to provide substantial advice and in-kind support to our project. Cable TV networks such as *Saint Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN)* are providing video production services for documenting and broadcasting the project (e.g., the East and West Metro "Kick-Off" Forums). Other media partners covering our project include *Kinshasha Kambui* of KFAI radio, *Brandt Williams* of KMOJ radio and *Al McFarland* of *Insight News*.

Experience during the last two years has taught us that the project and collaborative will not continue to work unless EHEP is more adequately staffed. Our success to date demands that we expand beyond a one-person non-profit. To effectively carry out its objective of sustaining the momentum of the community circle project and building the successful development of inclusive communities and schools into the agendas of other public and community organizations, EHEP must expand its capacity.

We propose the creation of two new staff positions in 1999: (1) a full-time administrative assistant to assist the director and to manage the daily operations of EHEP activities, and (2) a community circles coordinator to oversee and manage the community circles project as it moves from discussion to action and to coordinate

activities with the community circles collaborative. A study has been prepared that has identified and recommended the addition of these staff positions as essential to the continued success of our work. We are also adding computer capacity to complement these staff additions. For these reasons, we are expanding our budget and funding requests in 1999.

A list of the principal project partners and an organizational/project budget are included in the attachments.

Impact of activities

The proposed activities will benefit the communities we are serving by advancing the agenda and prospects for integrated and equitable education in Twin Cities area public schools, and for integrated and inclusive communities that are open and affordable to all Twin Citians. They will also benefit our communities by harnessing the potential of our region's rich diversity of citizens in creating communities that work for all citizens.

The first round of conversations has already been used to inform the areas for mediation of the education lawsuits between the NAACP, Saint Paul Schools and the State of Minnesota. Ideally, the second round of conversations will present a timely opportunity to "test" and discuss the recommendations to the legislature coming out of the first round of mediation talks, focusing on schools. The community conversations will also present an opportunity to inform a possible second round of mediation meetings focusing on external factors, such as housing, transportation, family and community services, and jobs. The community circle conversations should directly contribute to an informed, mediated settlement that will lead to more equitable, inclusive and integrated education for Twin Cities area students. If mediation does not continue, the results of the circle conversations will nevertheless benefit voluntary initiatives to assure educational success for all students.

The first round of conversations has also contributed to building greater public awareness, support and commitment to fair and affordable housing throughout the metropolitan region. Barriers to affordable housing created by exclusionary zoning, other regulatory practices, and lack of public resources was identified by over two-third of the circles as a major factor influencing economic and racial segregation in the Twin Cities. Fair housing violations were also identified as more prevalent than the public generally acknowledges. NIMBYism frequently displayed at public hearings and planning commission meetings in suburban communities was also highlighted in the conversations. One of the suggestions that came out of the conversations was for creating a way to dramatize these issues for the public. MICAHA, one of the community circle partners, took this idea to heart and partnered with the Illusion Theatre to develop a fair housing play "Like Waters Rolling Down." This theatre event has received national funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and is being performed six times in different parts of the metropolitan area.

The conversations have also led to specific commitments to action. Twelve of the organizations that sponsored a community circle are or have become members of the Metropolitan Interfaith Council for Affordable Housing (MICAHA) and have joined its Housing Advocate Network. In addition, several of the first round sponsors and participants were members of Interfaith Action or Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council, who went on to model our discussion process among their member congregations and organize a metro-wide social justice and action initiative to move the legislature to address city-suburban segregation and racial-economic disparities.

Partly as a result of our project, a record number of affordable housing proposals were submitted to the State Legislature in 1999. The proposed Inclusionary Housing Initiative is an example of a concept that had its genesis in the community circle conversations. EHEP is one of the endorsers and sponsors of this proposal, which is being spearheaded through the legislature with the assistance of the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, one of our community circle project partners.

Since we began the community circle project in late 1996, reversing segregation (like curbing urban sprawl) has become an accepted part of the nomenclature of at least six major organizations working with issues of housing, education, and growth management in the Twin Cities: the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, the Metropolitan Interfaith Council for Affordable Housing, the Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council and Interfaith Action, and the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches.

The second round of circle conversations will highlight promising practices for expanding housing choices and delivering schools that work for all children, and will build greater public education, awareness and desire to become involved in supporting practices identified by circle participants as the most promising.

We think that our project will also lead to the already growing agreement on the importance of linking school desegregation/integration issues with the broader issue of housing (and related issues of public transportation and jobs). The project is contributing to greater support by advocate organizations for broader coalitions that embrace both housing and education and other related issues. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is an example. Through our coalition-building activities we expect that there will be broader public support of housing *and* education reforms that lead to more inclusive schools *and* communities.

At the conclusion of the second round of conversations, the conversation results will be presented as findings, conclusions and possible recommendations to the legislature and other decision-making bodies, and hopefully contribute to better policy making. The circle conversations should also result in greater participation in the civic life of the community by community circle participants, many of whom have not been actively involved in these issues in the past.

C. EVALUATION

How effectiveness will be measured

We intend to measure success in tangible ways. We have been and will continue track specific data about the process and results. We have already used surveys to evaluate the first round and will use focus groups to evaluate the second round of community circle discussions. Surveys will also be used to track the civic actions taken by citizens following their participation in the community circles. The research division of the Wilder Foundation and the evaluation staff of the Study Circles Resource Center are designing measures that will be used to track project results and impacts.

Criteria for a successful program and the results you expect to have achieved

Measures of success include the breadth and depth of participation in the study circles by citizens. Measures of breadth and depth include diversity of participants in terms of perspectives and viewpoints, race and ethnicity, place of work or residence, age or generation, family status and economic status. It also includes locations and numbers of participants and conversations. Participant comments about what they got out of the circle experience and how they grew or changed as a result of the experience will also be considered.

The project's impact will also be measured by the extent that our process and the circle findings, conclusions and recommendations are considered and incorporated by stakeholder and sponsor organizations, and by public decision-making bodies, such as school boards, planning commissions, city councils, the Metropolitan Council and the State Legislature. Another important measure will be the number of new participants that become involved in the work of one of the promising practices or one of the participating non-profit or community organizations as one way of moving from discussion to action. The extent to which discussion participants become more involved in the civic life of their community is an important measure that will be tracked as part of the second round of conversations.

We hope to at least double the number of participating community circles that successfully complete a dialogue in the second round from 25 circles to over 50 circles. We intend to have representation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and Latino/Chicanos and Mexican Americans as well as African Americans in the circles in numbers reflecting their percentage of the population of the metropolitan area. We are also striving through pairing of circles, cross-culturally competent recruiting and outreach practices, and partnerships with organizations reflecting diverse populations to achieve richly diverse community circle groups. We also aim to engage citizens from outer ring suburbs who presently do not see these issues as their issues. This may be the more difficult, but equally if not more important, challenge.

If these circle discussions receive public attention, raise the level of public awareness, understanding and engagement in creatively addressing issues at the intersection of race, housing and schools, and if they prompt publicly informed actions and strategies that lead to more successfully inclusive schools and communities, then our project will have been successful. When breaking down barriers to 'one community' becomes a center piece of the agendas of Twin Cities area public bodies and community-based organizations, we will have accomplished our objective and will proudly put ourselves out of business.

Who will be involved in the evaluation?

The EHEP board and staff and the partner organizations that participate in the Community Circle project will continue to be involved in evaluating the project. The Study Circles Resource Center, one of our national partners has already been assisting us in the preparation of evaluation measures and criteria for the second round of community dialogues. In addition, the Wilder Foundation research department is preparing an evaluation strategy for the 'Cities at Work' forums and community circle dialogues in Saint Paul. Their experience and expertise with evaluation will also be used to inform the evaluation process for the metro-wide circle project.

How evaluations will be used

The results of the first round of community circle conversations are being used primarily to plan the second round of conversations and also to inform the agendas of participating partners. As previously mentioned, they have also been used in designing the process for mediation of the educational lawsuits.

The results of the second round of conversations will be used to define subsequent strategies for achieving more inclusive, equitable and integrated schools and communities and to inform public policy actions that help to break down barriers to more opportunities and to desegregate the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

1999 COMMUNITY CIRCLES PROJECT

PROJECT TIMETABLE

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| ➤ Evaluate the first round of community circles | Completed 1997 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor National Days of Dialogue groups in the Twin Cities | February 1998 |
| ➤ Issue report sharing the results of the first round of discussions | Completed April 1998 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor study circles informational and training workshop | April 25, 1998 |
| ➤ Prepare revised <i>Choices for Community</i> discussion guide | May - September 1998 |
| ➤ Publish revised discussion guide <i>Conversations at the Crossroads</i> | March 1999 |
| ➤ Recruit new partners and sponsors | Fall/Winter 1998/99 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor "Building Inclusive Communities" Conference and Dinner Event | Sept. 17 & 18, 1998 |
| ➤ Launch Minneapolis Public Schools Community Circles (pilots for 1999 circles) | Oct. - Dec. 1998 |
| ➤ Hold Sponsor Information Workshops | December 9, 1998 |
| | January 13, 1998 |
| | January 4, 1999 |
| ➤ Issue letter to mayors of Twin Cities area. | January 15, 1999 |
| ➤ National Conversation on Race (co-sponsored by EHEP with NCCJ) | January 21, 1999 |
| ➤ Hold Community Circle "Kick-Off" Forums (West Metro) | February 4, 1999 |
| (East Metro) | January 22, 1999 |
| ➤ Conduct facilitator and scribe training workshops | March 5, 1999 |
| | January 23, 1999 |
| ➤ Hold workshops on Understanding Community and Institutional Racism
(for community circle sponsors, facilitators and scribes) | March 6, 1999 |
| ➤ MICAH fair housing theatre event "Like Waters Rolling Down"
Central Presbyterian Church, Saint Paul (co-sponsored by EHEP) | February 7, 1999 |
| ➤ Sponsors convene first community circles | February 1999 |
| Community Circles meet 5 times for 2 hours each session | Feb - June 1999 |
| ➤ Hold mid-point sharing sessions with facilitators and sponsors | April 23, 1999 |
| | May 18, 1999 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor "Cities at Work" Forums held in Saint Paul | April 28, 1999 |
| | May 18, 1999 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor MICAH fair housing theatre event - in Minneapolis
- in northern metro suburbs | April 25, 1999 |
| | May 23, 1999 |
| ➤ Community Circles make presentations to sponsoring organizations'
governing bodies | May-June 1999 |
| ➤ Hold first action forum | June 22, 1999 |
| ➤ Hold sponsor information workshop for fall 1999 circles | June 21, 1999 |
| ➤ Prepare interim report | June - August 1999 |
| ➤ Continue evaluation of circles process and results | Summer 1999 |
| ➤ Hold training workshops for facilitators and sponsors | August or Sept. 1999 |
| ➤ Convene fall round of 1999 community circles | Sept. - Nov. 1999 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor "Cities at Work" Forums III and IV
(includes "Call to Action" Forum at conclusion of Community Circles) | Sept. and Oct. 1999 |
| ➤ Hold "Citizens Summit" with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio | Nov. or Dec., 1999 |
| ➤ Complete evaluation process and issue final report to community and
and metropolitan decision makers | January 2000 |
| ➤ Develop and implement Year 2000 Action Agenda with stakeholders
and community partners | Jan. - Dec. 2000 |

EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

November 18, 1998

Mr. John Kostishack
Otto Bremer Foundation
Suite 2000
445 Minnesota Street
St. Paul MN 55101-2107

Dear John:

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with us on Friday. As discussed at that meeting, enclosed is a second proposal for our project. As you suggested, we are submitting a multiple-year request; specifically, we are requesting \$50,000 for a two-year period. We propose to continue and expand our current work on three fronts: (1) supporting and linking existing coalitions that are working on these related issues, (2) solidifying a broad-based coalition that can advocate for racially and economically integrated schools and housing throughout the metropolitan area, and (3) sponsoring informed public conversations that will advance the understanding and promotion of inclusive communities. Each of these elements reinforces the others.

Our work over the past year has only strengthened our belief that an organization such as the Education & Housing Equity Project is desperately needed in the Twin Cities today. The year has also confirmed for us that coalition building and community education are the most effective and promising strategies for accomplishing our ambitious mission.

We hope the Otto Bremer Foundation will agree with us and continue its generous and critical support of EHEP. We believe strongly that our work and mission help accomplish the Otto Bremer Foundation's own goal of helping communities understand and appreciate diversity, assure equal access to community resources, and combat racism and other forms of bigotry.

Thank you again, John. If you have any questions or comments or require additional information, I can be reached at MICAH on Tuesdays and Thursdays (871-8980) and at the Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (379-3602).

Sincerely,

Darcy Seaver
Co-Coordinator