



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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July 3, 1996

Darcy Seaver
Community Circle Collaborative
c/o MICAH
122 W. Franklin Ave. #320
Minneapolis, MN 55404

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Dorothy Shields
AFL-CIO Department of Education

David T. Taylor
Connecticut Conference
of the United Church of Christ

Dear Ms. Seaver:

As you know, we are delighted that the Community Circle Collaborative has decided to submit funding proposals for the Community Circles project. We are honored to write this letter of support.

Since we provide free materials and services, we have to apply strict criteria to our participation in a project. We chose to assist the Community Circle Collaborative for several reasons: your articulation of the challenges posed by residential segregation in the Twin Cities; your appreciation of the community-building power of study circles; and the fact that the Collaborative already represents a broad array of Twin Cities organizations. These qualities provide a strong foundation for your study circle efforts.

We are confident that the proposed project can achieve the same successes as community-wide study circle projects in other cities. Beginning in 1992, large-scale study circle programs began to pave a new path to collaborative community action. The first programs, in Lima and Columbus, Ohio, involved thousands of citizens in discussions of race relations. Organizers were often surprised to see the collaborative efforts that resulted from dialogue, since consensus or even an explicit action plan are not the endproducts of a study circle. But the action evolved very naturally, as participants shared personal experiences, analyzed local problems, discovered common ground, and identified community assets. People realized that change could start with them, with their individual behavior and accomplishments, and that as individuals, as members of small action groups, and as members of large institutions they could make a difference.

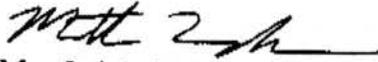
Since 1992, nineteen cities have planned and implemented study circle programs on relations, crime and violence, and education. Some examples of concrete outcomes are: youth mentoring projects, a film festival on ethnic diversity, collaborative school-business efforts, a multiracial "unity choir," improvements to a community policing program, new playgrounds, a new soup kitchen, neighborhood "peace zones," and a city-wide plan for violence prevention. Coalitions in 82 communities, ranging in size from rural counties to large cities, are in various stages of planning and implementing community-wide study circle programs.

697 Pomfret Street P.O. Box 203 Pomfret, Connecticut 06258
(860) 928-2616 FAX (860) 928-3713
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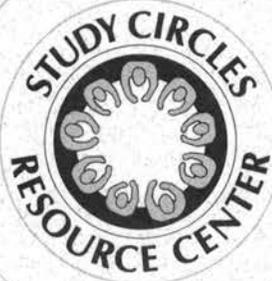
Page 2

The Study Circles Resource Center is committed to assisting the Community Circle Collaborative in this work. We are glad to provide discussion materials, consultation, and other assistance to this project. I look forward to the continuation of this productive working relationship.

Sincerely,



Matt Leighninger
Program Director



August 1, 1996

Darcy Seaver
Community Circle Collaborative
c/o MICAH
122 W. Franklin Ave. #320
Minneapolis, MN 55404

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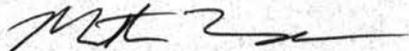
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Leighninger", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Leighninger
Program Director

Community Circle Collaborative

UPDATE

TO: All partners & interested parties
FROM: Darcy Seaver, on behalf of the Working Group
DATE: October 16, 1996

Greetings to everyone! With apologies to those who haven't been briefed recently, we'd like to provide a quick update on where we are with our growing metro-wide dialogue project. For those who have *really* been out of the loop, a quick reminder that the goal of this project is to organize study circles throughout the metro community that will focus on the question of how racial and economic segregation of housing affects educational achievement and life opportunities.

Over the summer, the Working Group's energy went primarily toward fundraising, outreach, and compiling material for the *Discussion Guide*. At present, we are focusing on the kick-off event and all of the aspects of the project that need to be in place for that to be a good one. Most importantly, we have decided to push back the date of the event and the subsequent study circles (we had initially planned on kicking off the project late this month, with the study circles themselves beginning in October). Multiple reasons drove this rescheduling: we have insufficient resources at this point to pull such an event off well in such a short period; the Discussion Guide is far from finished; we want to hold a pilot study circle beforehand; we believe there is great potential for additional participation that we have not had the time yet to tap; and, perhaps most importantly, we want to do this well!

The new timetable:

November ___:	Kick-off event invitations sent
November ___:	<i>Discussion Guide</i> draft #1 ready
Nov __ & ___:	Pilot study circle meets
December ___:	KICK-OFF EVENT
December:	Study circles organized; Facilitator training; <i>Discussion Guide</i> finalized
January-February:	STUDY CIRCLES TAKE PLACE!

The following is a more detailed update on all that has been going on:

Partner recruitment. We've been talking to many different groups and individuals over the past few months and have been very encouraged by the interest people have shown. In a wonderful development, Dr. Josie R. Johnson agreed to help guide and support the project as MIAR Co-Chair. We are delighted to have such a highly respected, inspiring educator and advocate involved in this work. Once again, thank you and welcome, Josie!

In addition, Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton has endorsed the project and agreed to help recruit George Latimer as a partner as well. Last week, Dick Little and Mike Anderson of MICAHA talked to George about the project, and he agreed to facilitate our kick-off event and larger community forum next spring. Thanks to Dick for all his continued work seeking out the support and endorsement of such luminaries. Their support has already proven to be a great help in giving the project visibility and credibility.

Other new and pending partners include: the St. Paul Human Rights Department and Commission; Rep. Myron Orfield; the MN Churches Anti-Racism Initiative (of the MN Council of Churches, the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, and the St. Paul Area Council of Churches); the Jewish Metropolitan Organizing Project; the Kettering Foundation; the MIAR Housing Task Force; Southside Neighborhood Housing Services; the St. Louis Park Housing Redevelopment Authority; and the Golden Valley Human Rights Commission. In addition, we have met with larger umbrella groups - including the West Metro Education Project, the MN Housing Partnership, and Towards Tomorrow Together (a St. Paul area anti-racism coalition) - who have encouraged us to contact their individual members about participating.

We now need to do critical follow-up with the many individuals and organizations interested in but not yet fully committed to the project. This is time-consuming, difficult coordination work that should be made easier now that we have a more definite timetable. If you are interested in helping recruit partners - *particularly Sponsor groups that can help recruit participants and offer sites* - please contact Darcy at 871-8980. This is a huge need right now. We also need some assistance in contacting media folk who might be interested in participating in the project (e.g., talking to the Star Tribune or Pioneer Press and local t.v. and radio stations).

We will be doing a large mailing to potential Sponsors and other partners in November to invite them to the kick-off event.

Discussion Guide development. With the help of Myron Orfield, the Institute on Race & Poverty, Macalester professor Carol Horton, and MICAHA Board member Steve Van Kuiken, we have compiled and reviewed much if not all of the raw material for the *Discussion Guide*. In addition, many people have given input on the draft outline for the guide and the general structure of the discussions (thank you!).

We now need to draft the full *Guide*. Although we were beginning to worry that we wouldn't have the resources to finish this by the end of the year, we have been saved by the Institute on Race & Poverty, which graciously offered to direct one of its research assistants, Melissa, to spend a month writing the guide, for a targeted completion date of _____ or so. Melissa is currently hard at work at this task. Thanks to the Communiversities Grant Program run by the CURA (the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the U of M), we will be hiring a graduate research assistant later this month to help Melissa draft and refine the Guide. Urban Coalition has also offered the services of one of its interns. Thank you to Dutchess Harris and Melissa at the IRP, CURA, and Nancy Smith at the Urban Coalition for this desperately needed help.

The draft Guide will be given a trial run in the pilot study circle, which we hope will take place in early November. In addition, we'd like as many people as possible to read through it and give us their feedback. If you'll have some time in early November to do this, please let us know!

Fundraising. Led by the indefatigable Fred Tenfingers at the Suburban Hennepin Anti-Racism Coalition and Bruce Vandal at the MN Minority Education Partnership, the fundraising team submitted a good number of proposals this summer. Our proposals requested funding for staff support, Discussion Guide and other printing, kick-off event costs, interpreters, stipends for child care, and other expenses. Unfortunately, we still await word on most of them, except for the CURA grant mentioned above.

If you have any suggestions or can help in this effort, please contact Fred at 930-3356. One bit of good news came from MICAH: they have agreed to continue to provide office space and equipment even if other funding runs out. We are also hopeful that the Otto Bremer Foundation will again fund the Education & Housing Equity Project, which has committed half of its staff time to this project. Notification on that should come by the end of October.

We may need to run the entire project this way, but keep your fingers crossed that at least some extra support will be found. In the meantime, thanks to all the individuals and organizations that have contributed so much of their time and in-kind support.

Kick-Off Event. Originally slated for late September, this event has been rescheduled to _____, as explained above. We also agreed to shift its focus and scope somewhat: instead of a large, conference-like affair that would be preceded by a separate recruitment event for potential Sponsors, we have opted to collapse those events into one. Also, because of limited resources, we need to scale back and not attempt a full conference. Instead, the event will be an opportunity to introduce and attract potential Sponsors to the project, gain greater community and media visibility, and in general motivate and inspire everyone involved. Potential participants include Sponsors, partners already committed to the project, study circle participants, the media, facilitators, and funders.

We hope to include presentations that highlight why these issues are important and why such dialogue is needed, as well as accounts from participants from the pilot study circle. We also hope to have on hand everything we need to sign up and equip Sponsors to do their part: recruiting participants and organizing the actual study circles. If you have any ideas for presenters or can help in this effort, please contact Jim McDonough at 870-9269. If you have ideas about what to include in the Sponsor packet or other materials to have on hand at the event, please contact Darcy at 871-8980.

Pilot Study Circle. As noted above, we hope to hold the pilot in early, for at least two sessions. The pilot is important for many reasons, and many of you have encouraged us to hold it as soon as possible. The pilot will allow us to test the draft *Guide*, build a clear sense of what these circles will entail, and have participants who can report on the experience at the kick-off event. If you are interested in participating in the pilot or know someone who

would like to, contact Hal Clapp at SSNS (823-5216, ext. 313) or Nancy Smith at the Urban Coalition (348-8550).

Facilitation. This is another critically important part of the project. Thanks to the Study Circle Resource Center, the local study circle network, and Jim Addington at the MN Churches Anti-Racism Initiative, we have a wealth of information and expertise about contacting and training good facilitators. This month, Bruce Vandal of MMEP will begin looking into the specifics of how we will train facilitators. If you have any suggestions for facilitation or training, please contact Bruce at 330-1509.

Project name. We are currently trying to get our creative juices flowing and think up snappy, descriptive name ideas for the project. Although Community Circle Collaborative is a great description for the partners working to organize the effort, a name that both describes what folks will be discussing in the study circles and grabs their attention seems to be needed. One idea thrown out to get us going: "Beyond busing: a metrowide dialogue about housing and education." Any reactions? Any other suggestions?

I hope this provides an adequate briefing for everyone. We apologize again to those with whom we haven't been in touch. It's exciting to have so many people interested and involved, but also difficult to coordinate, and I hope you'll bear with us. Also, feel free to contact me at any time to find out what's going on or be directed to the right team. For quick reference, however, the following is a brief list of the team leaders:

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Advisory Group:	Dick Little, MIAR	724-5662
Pilot Study Circle:	Hal Clapp, SSNHS	823-5216
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Facilitation/Sponsors:	Bruce Vandal, MMEP	330-1509

Finally, a note about meetings. After six months of meeting as a large group, we have opted to limit the number and size of meetings to those focused on the work areas listed above. If you are interested in a particular activity, please contact the person listed. For overall updates or questions, contact Darcy at 871-8980. We'll also be updating folks this way as frequently as we can.

Having so many people involved may complicate things, but in a wonderful way, we think. Thanks again, everyone!

Please pass a copy of this on to others in your organization, or others you think would be interested

If you haven't sent in your Pledge of Participation, please do so as soon as you can. If you need a Pledge form, call me.

Community Circle Collaborative

UPDATE

TO: All partners & interested parties

FROM: Darcy Seaver, Bruce Vandal, Dick Little, Jim McDonough, Fred Tenfingers, Nancy Smith, Hal Clapp, and Dutchess Harris

DATE: October 31, 1996

Greetings to everyone! With apologies to those who haven't been briefed recently, we'd like to provide a quick update on where we are with our growing metro-wide dialogue project. For those who have *really* been out of the loop, a quick reminder that the goal of this project is to organize study circles throughout the metro community that will focus on the question of how racial and economic segregation of housing affects educational achievement and life opportunities.

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November 5:	Discussion Guide draft #1 ready
November 7:	Kick-off event invitations sent
Nov 11 & 18:	Pilot study circle meets
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If you have any suggestions or can help in this effort, please contact Fred at 930-3356. One bit of good news came from MICAH: they have agreed to continue to provide office space and equipment even if other funding runs out. We are also hopeful that the Otto Bremer Foundation will again fund the Education & Housing Equity Project, which has committed half of its staff time to this project. The Equity Project did receive the good news this week that the Bush Foundation has awarded it a grant specifically for study circles, which will allow it to continue providing at least part-time staff support to the Collaborative.

We may need to continue to coordinate the project in the way we have so far (with very minimal staff support, which is part of the reason many of you have not heard from us for a while), but keep your fingers crossed. In the meantime, thanks to all the individuals and organizations that have contributed so much of their time and in-kind support.

Kick-Off Event. Originally slated for late September, this event has been rescheduled to December 10th, as explained above. We also agreed to shift its focus and scope somewhat: instead of a large, conference-like affair that would be preceded by a separate recruitment event for potential Sponsors, we have opted to collapse those events into one. Also, because of limited resources, we need to scale back and not attempt a full conference. Instead, the event will be an opportunity to introduce and attract potential Sponsors to the project, gain greater community and media visibility, and in general motivate and inspire everyone involved. Potential participants include Sponsors, partners already committed to the project, study circle participants, the media, facilitators, and funders.

We are very happy to announce that George Latimer will be the keynote speaker and emcee of sorts for this event! The event will also include presentations that highlight why these issues are important and why such dialogue is needed (by Curt Johnson, head of the Met Council, and Urban Coalition Executive Director Yusef Mgeni), as well as accounts from participants from the pilot study circle. We also hope to have on hand everything we need to sign up and equip Sponsors to do their part: recruiting participants and organizing the actual study circles. If you have any ideas for presenters or can help in this effort, please contact Jim McDonough at 870-9269. If you have ideas about what to include in the Sponsor packet or other materials to have on hand at the event, please contact Darcy at 871-8980.

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If you haven't sent in your Pledge of Participation, please do so as soon as you can.

If you need a Pledge form, call Darcy at 871-8980.

Community Circle Collaborative

We need your help!

Who do you know who might be interested in participating as a Sponsor group or as an individual participant in a study circle? We'll invite them to the Kick-Off Event.

Please list contact names and addresses (if it's handy) and return to Darcy at MICAH by October 31. Fax is 871-8984; Mailing address is 122 W. Franklin, #320, Minneapolis 55404. **Thank You!**

1. Contact Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

2. Contact Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

3. Contact Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

4. Contact Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

5. Contact Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

6. Contact Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

7. Contact Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

8. Contact Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

THE COMMUNITY CIRCLE COLLABORATIVE

SUMMARY

The Community Circle Collaborative is a metro-wide dialogue project being undertaken by a growing number of organizations and individuals throughout the Twin Cities area for early 1997. We envision a program in which at least 200 people from all walks of life join together - 5-15 at a time - in "community circles" held throughout the metro area to discuss the question: "How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities?"

The partners that make up the Collaborative are coming together with a shared belief in the need for civil, informed dialogue and collective analysis - across all racial, economic, and political lines - about the trends and changes taking place in the communities and schools of the Twin Cities metro area today. It is our hope that bringing together such groups will both build understanding and produce practical recommendations for actions that organizations, policy makers, and individuals can take. Our inspiration comes from successful, large-scale programs already launched in a number of communities around the country.

Project Goals

1. To discuss how the community in which we live and our personal experiences as members of that community affect children's education.
2. To educate participants about other communities' perspectives and experiences.
3. To examine the challenges that housing segregation pose for our educational system.
4. To develop and implement strategies to overcome these challenges.

Community Circle Structure

Community circles are small, highly participatory discussion groups that engage people in controversial, political, thought-provoking topics. The community circles model combines the small-group discussion groups known as "study circles" with a model developed by the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, which stresses providing information and research services to the groups, the cooperative development of strategies by the groups, and subsequent community forums organized by the groups.

A typical community circle will include 5-15 members. Each community circle will be as economically, ethnically, racially, and politically diverse as possible. Each group will meet for approximately 10 hours and be led by a trained facilitator. A common *Discussion Guide* that includes readings, presentations of a range of viewpoints, and discussion questions will be used by all the groups. Beyond these base materials, however, each group is encouraged to set the framework for subsequent circle discussion and request research on specific topics. The community circle approach provides a framework for dialogue that allows participants to address an issue, examine different views on both the problem and possible remedies, and pursue concerns and solutions that interest and motivate them toward action.

Levels of Organizational Involvement

Critical to the success of the project is the effective mobilization of the different organizations that make up the collaborative. To facilitate involvement, the collaborative has identified a specific process and structure. The structure identifies the roles and responsibilities of the project's partners as follows:

Project Coordinators will manage the project by providing the necessary staff support, fundraising, conducting research, and implementing the project evaluation. Organizations that agree to be Project Coordinators will sign a *Pledge of Participation* outlining their roles and responsibilities in the project.

Resource Partners will play an advisory role regarding project design, fundraising, future projects, information/research, in-kind contributions, and/or technical assistance. Resource partners will sign a *Pledge of Participation* outlining their roles and responsibilities.

Sponsors will sponsor community circles by recruiting community members, facilitating community circles, and providing a location for community circle meetings, child-care, and transportation. Sponsors will sign a *Pledge of Participation* outlining their roles and responsibilities in the project.

Timeline

The project intends to kick off in December, 1996 with a forum for potential sponsors. Facilitators will be trained in January 1997. The community circles themselves will begin shortly thereafter. A final conference for all participants - where community circles share their ideas and solutions - will take place in Spring, 1997.