



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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and Diversity Commission*

Dick Little, AICP
Executive Director

Amy Rodquist
Community Circles Coordinator

June 3, 1999

Dear Community Circle Dialogue Participants, Facilitators and Sponsors:

Please join us at a gathering of community circle dialogue participants from across the metropolitan region. We are very excited to bring together all of you who have participated in and facilitated the community circle dialogues on race, housing, and education this spring and last fall. Currently, over 50 groups have met or are currently meeting throughout the Twin Cities area. This will be the first gathering of all these groups and past participants.

On Tuesday, June 22 from 5:30-9:00 p.m., we will be celebrating and reflecting on our experiences and lessons learned, then exploring some possible next steps over good food and discussion. The meeting will be held at **St. Stephanus Lutheran Church, 739 Lafond Avenue** in Saint Paul. A map and an agenda are enclosed.

Another important event is also currently being planned. On **June 18**, we will be hosting an information session for organizations interested in sponsoring new community circle dialogues. This meeting will be held from **9:30-11:30 a.m. at St. Paul's City Hall, 75 W. Kellogg Boulevard**. Please invite your friends and colleagues who have expressed an interest in joining or sponsoring a community circle dialogue to this meeting. This is an opportunity to hear from organizations who have already sponsored a community circle dialogue and to find out more about how to get involved as a sponsor.

We look forward to seeing you soon. **Please call Linda Hoskins at 651-642-4060 by June 16 to RSVP.**

Cordially,

Barb Rose
Cities at Work
Community Circle Dialog Project

Dick Little
Education and Housing
Equity Project

Opportunities for Action

HOUSING

Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH)

Mobilizing congregations and people of all faiths to ensure decent safe and affordable housing for everyone in the Twin Cities metropolitan community.

122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 310

Minneapolis, MN 55404

Contact: Joy Sorensen-Navarre

612-871-8980

Saint Paul Housing Campaign

A broad based coalition for neighborhood development and affordable housing. Members include Saint Paul Tenants Union, Community Stabilization Project, MICAH, Jewish Community Action, SPEAC, and Coalition for the Homeless.

Contact: Bob Walz, 651-646-8805 or Dan Lee, 651-222-5863.

St. Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Congregations (SPEAC)

Faith-based social justice initiatives to address segregation, poverty and urban disparities

Contact: Pamela Twiss

612-333-1255

2720 East 22nd Street

Minneapolis, MN 55406

and **Interfaith Action**

Contact: Jay Schmitt

612-333-1258

Minnesota Housing Partnership

Supporting the creation and preservation of affordable housing in Minnesota through technical assistance, education, and legislative advocacy.

122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 230

Minneapolis, MN 55404

Contact: Chip Halbach

612-874-0112

Jewish Community Action

Bringing together Jewish people from diverse traditions and perspectives to promote understanding and action about social and economic justice issues in Minnesota.

621 West Lake Street, Room 209

Minneapolis, MN 55408

Contact: Vic Rosenthal

612-822-1442

HOUSING—continued

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity

Bringing families and communities in need together with volunteers and resources to build decent, affordable housing.

3001 4th Street SE

Minneapolis, MN 55414

Contact: Julie Gugen or Amy Johnson

612-331-4090, ext. 614

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

Supports the Inclusionary Housing Initiative which promotes development of housing affordable at a range of incomes and uses innovative building techniques to lower construction costs. Also seeks community support for reduction of regulatory barriers to housing affordability.

Contact: Russ Adams

612-332-4471

Minnesota Fair Housing Center

Dedicated to the elimination of discrimination in housing and enforcement of the Fair Housing Act through fair housing testing, research, education and public policy advocacy on behalf of racial and ethnic minorities, the disabled, and others protected under federal and state human rights laws.

2700 University Ave

Saint Paul, MN 55104

Contact: Larry Winnans or Christy Snow

651-917-8869

Urban Coalition 50/30 Initiative

Promoting and researching home ownership for households of color

Contact: Yusef Mgeni

612-348-8550

2000 by 2000 Initiative

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

Contact: Barbara Jeanetta

651-649-1109

EDUCATION

Achievement Plus Initiative

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

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

Jane Addams School for Democracy's Learning Exchange Circles

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

Contact: Shelly Rottenberg
651-690-8786

Saint Paul Ramsey County Children's Initiative

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

Contact: Roger Banks
651-917-4891

Minnesota Minority Education Partnership

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

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

Center for School Change

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

Contact: Joe Nathan, 612-625-3506
and **New Twin Cities Charter School Project**
Contact: Nancy Smith, 612-625-75552

Support Our Schools

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

Contact: Roger Barr
651-603-8858

Minnesota Parenting Association

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

Contact: Roxy Foster
651-290-4755

RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Institute on Race and Poverty

Researching the relationship between housing, segregation, and educational achievement

Contact: jon powell or Gavin Kearney

612-625-8071

Hate Bias Response Team

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

Contact: Saint Paul Department of Human Rights

651-266-8966

National Conference for Community and Justice

Hope in The Cities

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

Contact: Hector Garcia

641-659-0409

Saint Paul Area Council of Churches

Gateways to Justice

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

Contact: Bob Walz

651-646-8805

Hamline Midway Alliance for a Prejudice Free Community

A neighborhood group of volunteers targeting prejudice and bigotry in the Hamline

Midway neighborhood in Saint Paul

Contact: Cathy Lue

651-646-1986



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July 12, 1999

Dear Community Circle Dialogue participants and facilitators,

Thank you for joining the Community Circle Gathering on June 22 at Saint Stephanus Lutheran Church in Saint Paul. Despite the heavy rain, over 75 people came to share what they learned from experiences and information gained in their community circle dialogue, and to reaffirm their commitment to "undoing" racism in our community and metropolitan area.

Enclosed is a summary of the reports made at the Gathering and a "work-in-progress" listing of some opportunities for joining with others in community action around the issues of education, housing, and racial justice. Please call Barb Rose at (651) 659-6031 or Dick Little at (612) 330-1505 if you have any additional contributions or suggestions to enhance this list. We would like to have a final version available as a resource at the "Call to Action" forum on November 8 and at the "Citizen's Summit" with Minnesota Public Radio and the Minnesota Meeting in December. We have not yet secured a location for the "Call to Action" forum but we will be sending you an announcement about this important date soon. Jon Powell from the Institute on Race and Poverty and the EHEP Board will be the keynote speaker on November 8. There will also be opportunities to strategize with others on future plans for community action.

If you are interested in becoming further involved in volunteering for this project, please complete and return the enclosed *Volunteer Opportunities* and we will contact you. We look forward to seeing you on November 8!

Sincerely,

Barb Rose
Wilder Foundation

Dick Little
Education and Housing
Equity Project

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AMHERST H.
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FOUNDATION

ESTABLISHED 1906

SERVICES TO
ORGANIZATIONS
919 Lafond Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55104
651-642-4022
FAX 651-642-2088

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SUMMARY FROM THE GATHERING JUNE 22, 1999

On June 22, participants, sponsors and facilitators of *Cities at Work* and Education Housing Equity Project (EHEP) community circle dialogues on education, housing and race gathered at St. Stephanus Church in St. Paul. During small group discussions, participants shared what they gained from their community circle dialogue experience and how it will affect their future involvement in and commitment to their neighborhood and community. Highlights from this discussion were presented to the larger group and are summarized as follows:

Value of the community circle dialogues

The community circle dialogues provided opportunities to listen to one another, share personal life stories and connections and to take the time to know and trust each other. The dialogues enabled participants to become aware of and understand complex community issues and acknowledge barriers and prejudices. Often the circles involved diverse groups of people who shared qualities of optimism and activism—and a willingness to put passion into community action. Participants encouraged future dialogue participants to:

- deepen the experience via sharing personal stories and feelings
- listen and care; take time to trust and know each other
- see the connections between education, employment, housing and transportation
- take practical action—individuals and groups can effect change

Participants recognized a need to increase diverse perspectives and experiences in the circle dialogue materials and involve more intergenerational sharing—especially with youth. Recruitment of participants with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints is seen as crucial so that issues are interpreted through a broad perspective. Action areas identified at the gathering are listed below:

Action Areas

EDUCATION

- There needs to be a way for parents, students and educators to adapt school structures to fit their community values and culture.
- We need to provide more translation and support services to non-English speaking students and parents and recognize the barriers presented by diverse languages
- The tax structure and financing programs should be changed to put more resources in the communities and schools that need it most
- We need to address the relationship between school attendance, student achievement and
 - * concentration of poverty in neighborhoods, and
 - * problems related to drug and alcohol use
- Opportunities for equitable, quality education should be available to all

HOUSING

- Our communities need to understand the links between housing, employment, and transportation, and work on them as connected issues
- We must increase community awareness of housing shortages and take steps to pull in \$ from the community
- We need to create job opportunities that provide enough income for decent, affordable housing
- A system of affordable and reliable transportation that ensures equal access of all people to work and education opportunities is needed
- The public must become more aware of how taxes affect the preservation and construction of affordable housing

RACE & RACISM

- We need to see that racism is present and real in our communities—police stops, housing discrimination, etc—and not pretend it doesn't happen. All people need and want to be safe and to have services irrespective of race.
- Circle dialogues can help people to view issues through a broader perspective, learn to let go of stereotypes, and promote tolerance, respect, and empathy across racial, ethnic and ideological boundaries
- We need to recognize that the problems of institutional racism are deep and systemic in our communities
- Communities must understand the importance of public policy and political action in addressing issues of race and racism
- Use the insights developed in circle dialogues to help voters and public officials make more informed decisions

Conclusion

Additional community circle dialogues are being formed to start in fall 1999, culminating in a *Cities at Work* "Call to Action" forum on November 8 and a Citizen's Summit in winter hosted by EHEP.