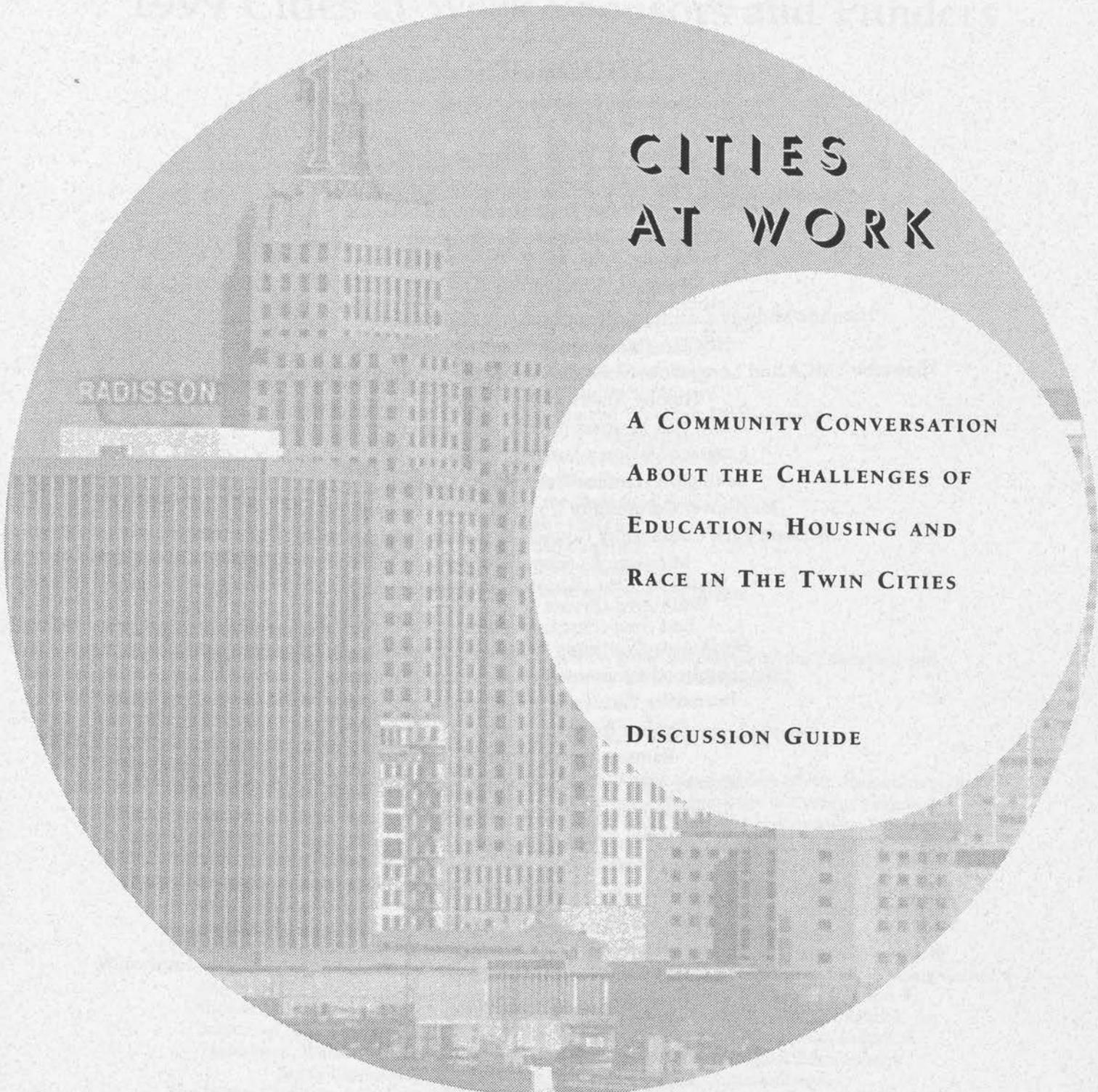




Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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**CITIES
AT WORK**

**A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION
ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF
EDUCATION, HOUSING AND
RACE IN THE TWIN CITIES**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1999 **Cities at Work Community Circle Dialogues**
EDUCATION AND HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

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Saint Paul Public Schools
3M Corporation
United Way of the Saint Paul Area
University UNITED
The Urban Coalition
YMCA of Greater Saint Paul
And a diverse group of community volunteers

Adapted from *Choices for Community* - a discussion guide developed by the Education and Housing Equity Project Community Circle Collaborative.

Community Circle Collaborative

The following organizations were consulted or participated in the development of the discussion guide:
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability + Central Community Housing Trust + Citizens League +
Center for the American Experiment + Center for Democracy and Citizenship + Center for Policy Studies +
Center for School Change, Twin Cities Charter School Project + Center for Urban and Regional Affairs +
Communities of Color Institute + Family Housing Fund + Institute on Race and Poverty +
Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis, Housing Discrimination Law Project + Lindquist and Vennum, PLLP +
Metropolitan Council Data Center + Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing +
Minneapolis Public Schools, School District No. 1 + Minneapolis Urban League +
Minnesota Center for Corporate Responsibility + Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative +
Minnesota Department of Human Rights + Minnesota Facilitators Network + Minnesota Fair Housing Center +
Minnesota Minority Education Partnership + Minnesota Office of Dispute Resolution +
Office of State Representative Myron Orfield + Pacer Center + Saint Paul Public Schools +
Saint Paul Department of Human Rights + Seed Academy/Harvest Preparatory School +
Schulman, Walcott and Schulman + Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution +
Study Circles Resource Center + Transit for Livable Communities +
The Urban Coalition + and the Board of Directors of the Education and Housing Equity Project

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INTRODUCTION

About Cities at Work and the Education and Housing Equity Project

In 1997, the Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP) joined efforts with the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP) and the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH) to sponsor the first "community circle conversations" about the challenges of education and housing segregation in the Twin Cities. Out of these conversations grew a shared commitment to promoting regional housing opportunities and school programs that break down barriers of race, culture, and economics.

Since 1995, the Wilder Foundation and a host of other community organizations and local businesses have promoted discovery about Saint Paul's future through an annual series of public forums. Many of you have joined the over 2,000 interested citizens, policymakers, religious leaders, government workers, neighborhood activists, and the business community who have gathered at these events to discuss and learn about critical issues facing our city.

The 1999 *Cities at Work* forum series, *A Public Dialogue on Race, Connections, and Commitment*, began last spring and continues this fall. Offering good food and conversation, these four public forums provide a time and place to participate in nurturing a future for Saint Paul as a multicultural community based on trust and equality.

About the Community Circle Dialogue Project

In 1999, *Cities at Work* initiated the community circle dialogue project as an additional opportunity for honest dialogue and lively discussion about the challenges Saint Paul faces to provide equity in housing and education for all Saint Paul residents. *You are a part of this project which is linked to similar conversations in other parts of the metropolitan region and across the nation.* In Saint Paul, neighborhood groups, nonprofit community-based organizations, schools, local businesses and churches are sponsoring similar community dialogues around the city this spring and fall.

continued

NOTE: In this discussion guide the terms *Twin Cities*, *Twin Cities area* and *Twin Cities metropolitan area or region* are used interchangeably and refer to the 7-county area within the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council.

A Call to Action

Community circle dialogues allow for a small, diverse group of people to share viewpoints and exchange ideas. The dialogues also engage us in committing to individual and community actions which will create a more vital city that is attractive to all who live, work and do business in Saint Paul. **On November 8 from 5:00-8:30 p.m. at Arlington High School, you are invited to join others at a *Cities at Work* forum, *Beyond Tolerance: A Call to Action*.** This event will be an opportunity for you to share your ideas for action for individuals, organizations and community-wide goals, strategies, policies or projects.

Making connections and new friendships. Sharing ideas. Planning new initiatives. The 1999 *Cities at Work* forum series and Community Circle Dialogue Project launch discussion about the effects of racism on housing, education and race in our community.

The viewpoints included in the following discussion guide should be used as a starting point to open the discussion about some of the very important challenges we face as a community. These viewpoints were developed with the assistance of many Twin Cities research and community-based organizations. They are not meant to be comprehensive or definitive. Instead, they are merely intended to provide a wide variety of viewpoints for participants *to begin a thoughtful and respectful discussion*.

Personal reflections. Family stories. Sharing dreams and recollections. Examining data together. Opening our hearts and minds. The community circle dialogues allow us an opportunity to be honest and to listen to what we can learn from each other.

A Focus for Discussion

This discussion guide offers you an opportunity to look at various viewpoints about the complex effects of race and racism on housing and education. They are a starting point for a thoughtful and respectful dialogue and are intended to launch our community in a search for answers to the following questions:

- ◆ Do patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation have impact on the educational achievement and life opportunities of children and adults living in the Twin Cities? How? What are the impacts?
- ◆ What can we do as individuals and as a community to enhance the educational, housing, and economic opportunities of all children and adults living in Saint Paul and the Twin Cities region?

SESSION ONE – Facilitators Guide

Getting Started

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome

Facilitators:

- Welcome everyone to the group. Introduce yourself, co-facilitator and scribe (if available) as well as the key contact for the sponsoring organization.
- Explain why each of you chose to volunteer your time to facilitate a community circle dialogue.

2. Introductions

Facilitators:

- Ask each participant to tell the group something about a "community" that they belong to and encourage them to include something they like or appreciate about the community.
- You should go first to model how to respond to the question.

3. Setting the Context

Facilitators:

(Use the flip charts you have prepared to move quickly and to connect with visual learners.)

A. Explain the topic of the circle dialogue:

- Consider the effects of race and racism on housing and education
- Look at some possible solutions to these community challenges

B. Summarize the flow of the five sessions:

- **SESSION ONE:** Who we are: Our personal stories
- **SESSION TWO:** What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?
- **SESSION THREE:** How can we address the housing challenges in our city and our region?
- **SESSION FOUR:** What can we do about the achievement gap in our schools?
- **SESSION FIVE:** Ideas for action: Making a difference

continued

C. Explain how the dialogue can possibly impact participants on three levels:

- Individual attitudes, opinions or beliefs
- Activities with neighborhood, church or other groups they may be involved with
- Community-wide goals, strategies, public policies and projects

D. Share goals of the community circle dialogue:

- To have a respectful dialogue so that everyone will feel safe to share and learn from each other
- To increase awareness about the complex effects of racism in our communities; especially in housing and education
- To think of ideas for action that we can take as individuals or as a group. (Pass out brochures for Call to Action and Citizens Summit.)

E. Pass out:

- Profiles (to be collected and returned)
- Attendance roster
- What the Research Shows and other handouts

Facilitators:

Explain that the handouts are to be used as a resource for the group's discussion if desired and encourage participants to bring other materials to share during the course of the dialogue. Acknowledge that the group's experiences and ideas are the most important resource for the dialogue.

4. Guiding Principles for Dialogue

Facilitators:

- Create a "mind-map" on a flip chart with RESPECT in middle.
- Allow group to define what respect means to them.
- Save this flip chart and explain that it will be used for each session to remind group of ground rules for discussion. OPTIONAL: Use Dialogue vs. Debate handout from facilitator handbook.

continued

SESSION ONE

Who we are: Our personal stories

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitators:

- Model brevity and depth.
- Ask participants to identify themselves by name as they respond.
- Allow all participants to answer each question.
- Record responses on flip chart.

1. Why did you decide to participate in this community circle dialogue?
2. What are our stories about experiences with racism, prejudice, segregation or cultural differences?

CLOSING

Facilitators:

Review format of next session. Describe how viewpoints can be shared by reading aloud and recommend that participants read through the material ahead of time.

- Ask participants to share what they liked about the circle dialogue or something they learned. Was there anything that made anybody uncomfortable during the dialogue?
- What do each of the participants think they will remember most from the evening?
- Ask participants if there is anything else shared during the session that should be noted on the flip chart.

SESSION TWO

What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?

Many of us share a desire to do something about segregation in our communities. But when we are asked to describe the kinds of segregation problems we are facing, our answers vary a lot. We tend to disagree even more about what caused these problems in the first place.

It makes sense, then, to talk about the reasons for segregation before we talk about solutions (in fact, it may help us to come up with solutions). This session presents a range of viewpoints on the question, "What are the reasons for segregation?" Each view is written in the voice of someone who supports that position. The viewpoints are not presented as "truths" - they are intended as a starting point for discussion. As you talk about the views, remember to give a fair hearing to each other's ideas.

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome

Facilitators:

- Welcome everyone to the group.
- Share names around the circle.

2. Revisit the discussion guidelines

Facilitators:

- Post flip charts from first session.
- Ask for other suggestions.

3. Briefly reflect on last session

Facilitators:

- Ask the group the following question:
 - What is something new you heard from the first session?

DISCUSSION VIEWPOINTS

Facilitators:

Read through each of the following viewpoints one at a time out loud as a group. (Ask for volunteers; let participants know it's okay to pass.) After each of the viewpoints is read, ask the following questions:

1. What reaction do you have to this viewpoint?

OPTIONAL:

2. What was a surprise or new information to you?
3. Does this viewpoint remind you of anything?

continued

SESSION TWO

Viewpoints

1 Racial prejudice and discrimination cause people to live apart.

According to this view, the main reason for segregation is that many people are prejudiced against people of other races and do not want to live in integrated neighborhoods. Prejudice can be both covert (when it is covered up) and overt (when people don't try to hide it). Prejudice isn't just limited to whites; people of color are sometimes biased against whites, and different ethnic groups can be biased against one another. A recent HUD study showed that many people of color are discouraged from moving into, or staying in, white communities by both the prejudice of real estate agents and the people who live in the communities. The prejudice of real estate agents affects which homes and neighborhoods they show to which people. The practices of lending institutions - banks and mortgage companies - are also often prejudiced against people of color.

2 Perception of high crime and poor schools drive people away.

According to this view, segregation is the result of people trying to move away from situations which they think are bad. A recent study by the media showed that people living in the Twin Cities believed there was twelve times more violent crime in our core cities than there really was. Families also move to the suburbs looking for better schools for their children. Many people think that city schools are lower in quality, with lower average test scores, older buildings, larger classes, and more violence than suburban schools. When people move to the suburbs they create segregation, which is often by race as well as by economic class.

3 People like to live where they have "elbow room."

According to this view, the single greatest cause of segregation is the "American dream" of owning your own home with some land around it. Many

Americans don't like living in small apartments or the narrow lots of city neighborhoods. Right now whites are wealthier on average, so they are better able to move to their dream homes. As people of color get richer, many will move to their own homes outside the city. In many suburbs this is already happening. Those who are poorer stay in the city, where they become more and more isolated.

4 Institutional racism in housing, hiring, and education leads to inequality.

According to this view, racism is a deep part of our society's institutions. Institutions increase segregation by favoring whites and discriminating against people of color. It has been this way for so long that white people don't even know they carry "white privilege" with them. Institutions affected by racism include our businesses, government agencies, the media, the criminal justice system, schools, religious communities, and more. Sometimes this kind of racism is not planned or intended. This "institutional racism" is usually indirect or hidden, which makes it very hard to deal with. For example, many hiring practices use racially biased tests, which keep out people who are qualified for jobs. Or qualified people of color are not hired because "they won't fit in." Lenders sometimes use unfair practices, such as having different requirements for different groups of people when they apply for loans. Schools have a larger percentage of white students than students of color who are prepared for college. Schools could be a lot more successful than they are now with students of color and with poor students.

5 Government policies and economic patterns create divisions among people.

According to this view, our government has made decisions about transportation, housing, and zoning which contribute to segregation by economic class and race. For many years, the government has spent large amounts of money on freeways which allow people to commute between homes in the suburbs and jobs in the city. The government has also spent money on sewer systems which allow

suburban communities to grow. Affordable housing, built with government assistance, has mostly been built in core cities and poor neighborhoods.

Planning and zoning boards often pass restrictions that prevent affordable houses or apartments from being built in the richer neighborhoods and suburbs. This is a way to legally keep low-income and moderate-income housing developments out of many neighborhoods. Most of the poor people who live in the Twin Cities are people of color who live in just a few neighborhoods.

CLOSING

Facilitators:

Use this time to give a quick overview of the next session and make any announcements.

- What is one thing you will tell a friend about tonight's dialogue?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitators:

To focus your discussion, select any of these questions or use questions that your group creates:

- Record responses on flip chart.

1. What hit your hot button while reading or listening to these viewpoints?
2. In your lives, have you experienced any of the situations described in these viewpoints?
3. Each viewpoint states a reason for segregation. Which of the viewpoints best describes the causes of segregation?
4. Based on our dialogue tonight, what are some of the best ways to fight segregation?

SESSION THREE

How can we address housing challenges in the Twin Cities?

Many people can agree that there is a housing crisis in our community. Yet there is little consensus on what we can do about it. The goal of this session is to think and talk about possible directions for change. In this session, you'll find a range of views or options on how we might address and make progress on the housing challenges we face. Use them as a starting point for discussion.

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome

Facilitators:

- Welcome everyone to the group.
- Share names around the circle.
- Also revisit the discussion guidelines if you like.

2. Briefly reflect on last session

Facilitators:

- Ask the group the following question:
 - What is something new you heard or learned from the last session?

DISCUSSION VIEWPOINTS

Facilitators:

Explain that this session focuses on further understanding segregation and presents different options for addressing the housing challenges our city and the region are facing. Read through each of the scenarios one at a time out loud as a group. (Ask for volunteers; let participants know it's okay to pass.) After each of the viewpoints is read, ask the following questions:

- What reaction do you have to this viewpoint?

OPTIONAL:

- What was a surprise or new information to you?
- Does this viewpoint remind you of anything?

Viewpoints

1 Invest in the construction and preservation of affordable housing.

There is now a serious shortage of lower-cost housing; in the Twin Cities, less than 2% of all rental properties are vacant. *According to this view*, one reason for the shortage is that the cost of housing keeps going up. That includes the cost of building new affordable housing, and the costs of repairing and maintaining housing. Another cause of the shortage is unfair zoning policies in many of the suburbs. These "exclusionary" policies stop affordable housing from being built, or let it be built only when it is isolated on the less good land. These policies have to be challenged. More affordable housing needs to be developed in the suburbs because that's where many of the "living wage" jobs have been growing the fastest. But we also need more decent, affordable housing in the urban neighborhoods, for working families who want to stay in the center cities.

2 Create programs and policies that help people buy homes and fix up neighborhoods in the core cities.

According to this view, we need to make our city more attractive to home buyers and investors. The following things would help do that: lower property tax rates; help people make their neighborhoods safe and beautiful; develop attractive shopping areas throughout the cities; make sure people can find all kinds of housing; and make sure people can get the help they need to buy homes.

3 Require or encourage neighborhoods to have housing for people with different incomes.

According to this view, desegregation of our neighborhoods has not been very successful when it is voluntary instead of required by law. Our neighborhoods are still segregated by race and by economics. This view recommends that whenever new apartments or multi-housing units are built, builders should include affordable housing units in the same buildings. This should happen in all neighborhoods

in the Twin Cities region. If developers are given incentives and benefits for building mixed-income projects, there will eventually be more housing choices and more diverse neighborhoods in both the core cities and the suburbs.

4 Enforce anti-discrimination laws.

According to this view, people have the right to choose where they want to live. But for many individuals and families housing choice is almost impossible. That is because of unfair lending practices and discrimination by landlords and real estate agencies. Saint Paul has many of its poorest people and people of color living in just a few neighborhoods in the city's core. That is also true in many other communities in the metropolitan region. People should file class-action lawsuits if they think they have been treated with discrimination. That way, they can help put an end to unfair housing practices.

5 Limit the metropolitan region's growth and expansion.

According to this view, as the Twin Cities region gets larger, expanding into farming areas and open land, an unfair amount of resources goes to housing and development in the outer-ring suburbs. This flow of resources encourages white middle class people to move out of the city. We need to limit the growth of suburbs. We need to provide incentives which make it easier for people to invest in and fix-up neighborhoods in the Minneapolis, Saint Paul and inner-ring suburbs.

6 Focus on jobs and transportation solutions; that includes the redevelopment of polluted lands, called brownfields, and employer-assisted housing.

According to this view, many of the people who need jobs live in the core cities because that's where most of the affordable housing is. But most of the living-wage jobs are being created in the outer-ring suburbs. We need to improve the public transportation system to get central city workers to these jobs.

continued

SESSION THREE

Another solution is for employers to help their workers get affordable housing close to where the jobs are. We also need to create more living-wage jobs in the cities, close to where people live. One way to do that is to clean up and develop brown-fields in the cities. That is often expensive and time consuming to do.

7 Let the land market control and regulate itself.

According to this view, the government makes too many rules and regulations about how land is used. The government also makes it harder than it has to be for builders and developers, with unnecessary red tape. More people would build affordable housing in the Twin Cities if the government had fewer regulations and less red tape.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitators:

To focus your discussion, select any of these questions or use questions that your group creates:

- Record responses on flip chart.

1. What hit your hot button while reading or listening to these viewpoints?
2. In your lives, have you experienced any of the situations described in these viewpoints?
3. Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own personal viewpoint?
4. What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these approaches?

CLOSING

Facilitators:

Use this time to give a quick overview of the next session and make any announcements.

- What is one thing you will tell a friend about tonight's dialogue?

SESSION FOUR

What can we do about the achievement gap in our schools?

School reform is an ongoing discussion in our region. In several school districts achievement is high and the outlook is good, but there is a disproportionate lack of achievement in some schools and communities.

Everyone can agree that better test scores and higher achievement are good for the community and for our students, but given the many disparities within the Twin Cities, can we agree on what can or should be done to increase the opportunities for all students? What is the role of integration in narrowing the achievement gap?

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome

Facilitators:

- Welcome everyone to the group.
- Share names around the circle.
- Also revisit the discussion guidelines if you like.

2. Briefly reflect on last session

Facilitators:

- Ask the group the following question:
 - What is something new you heard or learned from the last session?

DISCUSSION VIEWPOINTS

Facilitators:

Explain that this session focuses on developing a further understanding of education challenges facing our city school district and the entire region – particularly the achievement gap and unequal education opportunities. It may be helpful to review some of the data provided in the demographic handout to give participants a better feel for the issue. Then read through each of the following scenarios one at a time out loud as a group. (Ask for volunteers; let participants know it's okay to pass.)

1. What reaction do you have to this viewpoint?
- OPTIONAL:
2. What was a surprise or new information to you?
 3. Does this viewpoint remind you of anything?

continued

SESSION FOUR

Viewpoints

1 Reverse the patterns of segregation in housing to desegregate schools.

According to this view, to improve education and housing, we have to tackle the underlying problem which is: Americans live very segregated lives. If children's educational opportunities depend on where they live, and where we live is affected by the color of our skin, segregation in housing will affect children's education. Neighborhoods need to be integrated and all Americans need more housing choices. Until that happens, segregation will continue and schools will reflect that. The best way to give all children equal opportunities is to break down the patterns of segregation.

2 Offer neighborhood-based schools.

According to this view, we should give families the choice to send their children to neighborhood schools, because that has been proven to increase student achievement. In the past, we have bused students out of their neighborhoods to help integrate schools city-wide. This often gave parents no choice about their children being bused. But our population has changed, and now students of color are the majority of Saint Paul and Minneapolis students - over 60% of all students in 1997-98. Now we need to look at busing again, to see if it integrates schools and if it's really worth it to bus children out of their neighborhoods. Parents want to send their children to schools closer to home because then they can be more involved in their children's education. Research clearly shows that parent involvement increases student achievement. Our resources and efforts should be used on things which improve student achievement.

3 Make schools multicultural and inclusive.

According to this view, desegregating schools based only on balancing numbers of students is not enough. True integration is different from quotas

and different from assimilation, which expects people to "fit in" to the dominant culture. Schools should reflect and honor the diversity of the communities they serve. This view says that diversity in schools offers many rich and wonderful opportunities for students, parents and teachers to learn and grow. Students and families bring cultural differences related to customs, art, music, literature, and values. Schools which have a wide diversity of students and staff can build upon that diversity to improve their curriculum and programs. Students in those schools learn how to work, play and communicate with one another. That is important in today's world, which is changing so that more cultures are living and working closely together.

4 Create culture-specific schools.

According to this view, the best solution for students of color who live in cities is special public schools which focus on the needs of one cultural group of students. These schools have curriculum, instructional methods, and values which meet the students' needs. They have more adult role models of color and higher student achievement. Students of color will continue to fail in most schools because the schools are so strongly influenced by the value system of the white middle class.

5 Let families choose schools for their children, and encourage schools to be responsive to the needs of students and families.

According to this view, when families can choose their children's schools, they will pick schools which they think will meet their children's needs and provide the best education. Schools will compete with each other for students. That competition results in higher quality schools. The schools use money and other resources well, and become more efficient. Schools will also improve their programs and instruction, pay more attention to individual students, and have higher student success rates. Increasing school choice therefore benefits everyone. Students have a better chance of success and the community gets citizens who are more educated and better prepared for life. Public school districts have taken students and parents for granted. With

more school choices for families, public schools will work to improve themselves.

6 Create more inter-district schools.

According to this view, because segregation and inequalities are so wide-spread, we need to share the resources of the metro region with all children of that area, no matter where they live. Magnet schools, inter-district schools, and busing are all important for reaching this goal. Because students would have more school choices, this plan would make forced busing unnecessary because students might choose a school close to home. [This plan also offers more opportunities to many more students than before.]

7 Create regional or statewide plans and strategies for equity in all school districts.

According to this view, the Minnesota Constitution makes it the legal obligation of the State, not individual districts, to provide the resources, policies and programs that are needed to guarantee that all children receive an adequate education. The costs of educating students can be much higher in some districts than in others. Saint Paul and Minneapolis serve large, diverse populations that have significant challenges for schools. Saint Paul and Minneapolis need more resources than many other districts to guarantee each child a quality education. A higher percentage of students in those districts are children-at-risk: students living in poverty, and children who need extra help to learn English. Segregation has created richer districts which have a higher tax base; those districts can raise more tax money for schools. Those districts also have fewer students who are at risk, and more dollars for every student. The state has tried to get more money to districts which need it. But the districts do not always use state money for at-risk students. There is not enough state money to give all districts equal resources, because some school districts have more money from their own district taxes (such as property taxes). We need new plans for local regional and statewide equity in the schools.

8 Support efforts to develop more charter schools.

According to this view, charter schools can create very successful learning environments. The school administrators are more accountable, and there are more opportunities for parent involvement than in large school districts. Because charter schools are public, they have no tuition fees. And because they are not limited by district boundaries, they are open to all students. Charter schools promise to increase student achievement. They can choose to have very diverse student bodies and can emphasize multicultural teaching practices. They can be models of integration for other schools.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitators:

To focus your discussion, select any of these questions or use questions that your group creates:

- Record responses on flip chart.

1. What hit your hot button while reading or listening to these viewpoints?
2. In your lives, have you experienced any of the situations described in these viewpoints?
3. Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own personal viewpoint?
4. What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these approaches?

CLOSING

Facilitators:

Use this time to give a quick overview of the next session and make any announcements.

- What is one thing you will tell a friend about tonight's dialogue?

SESSION FIVE

Making a difference: A commitment to action

What is the community's responsibility? How can we move from words to action? While the issues of segregation in education and housing can seem overwhelming, it is possible to make a difference. In Saint Paul, Minneapolis and in communities around the country, people have found ways – from individual efforts to large-scale community action – to face some of these challenges.

By participating in this community circle dialogue, you have already made a contribution. Coming together to learn from each other and share ideas and concerns is a form of action. Finding ways to keep these conversations going and working to include more and more people in the dialogue is also an important action step. The purpose of this session is to identify additional steps for how we can move to the next level of action. What can we do as individuals, in groups or organizations, and collectively as a community to address the challenges our community is facing about housing, education and race?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Facilitators:

1. This session is an opportunity for circle dialogue participants to explore what kinds of next steps they are interested in.
2. Review the three kinds of action that have been talked about in the circle:
 - Personal feelings, attitudes, beliefs or experiences that can lead to individual commitment to action
 - Group action through work with others, i.e. neighborhood or church involvement or activities
 - Community-wide goals, strategies, policies and projects
3. Point out the Ideas for Action section of discussion guide.
4. Pass out the A Call to Action and Citizens Summit brochures and encourage participants to attend.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitators:

- Record responses on flip chart.
1. Are there individuals or organizations in your community that have inspired you to want to join them or learn more about their work?
 2. What are some ideas for individual or group action?
 3. How can we reinforce or support each other in these efforts?

WHERE DOES THIS GROUP GO FROM HERE?

Facilitators:

Please explain:

- Some circle dialogue groups decide to stay together to continue to dialogue about things they didn't have time to talk about yet.
- Other groups meet on a new schedule to continue to further build the relationships they have begun in the circle.
- Other groups decide to meet again to plan a presentation of some of their group's ideas or recommendations to others they identify it is important to share ideas with.

MORE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does this group want to keep on meeting to continue the dialogue?
 - When? Where? How often? Why?
2. Are there one or two issues or concerns that the group feels need to be addressed further?
 - Does this group want to plan a presentation of some of the key ideas or recommendations that were shared and discussed?
 - When? Who will we present these ideas to? Where? How?
3. Is there something else participants would like to do together as a group?

CLOSING

Facilitators:

Please ask these questions:

- What has been most valuable about your experiences in this circle dialogue?
- What do you think is one thing you might do differently as a result of being a part of this series of dialogues?

IDEAS FOR ACTION

What you can do as an individual:

- ◆ **Attend meetings** of your local school board, planning and zoning commission, city council or other groups that make important decisions affecting the issues you have discussed. Do your homework, share your ideas, get others to attend with you. Volunteer to serve on local problem-solving task forces.
- ◆ **Be informed** about local and regional issues. Read and contribute commentary to local and ethnic newspapers. Express your opinion on race and multicultural concerns with local papers and radio programs. Write letters to your government representatives on issues of fair and affordable housing and on the need for creating communities and schools that enable all kids to succeed.
- ◆ **Build new relationships**, especially with people from different racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups than your own.
- ◆ **Assume leadership**. Take initiative. You don't have to be a public official or a well-known person to be a leader. Become a regional citizen.
- ◆ **Rally and demonstrate** at the legislature on issues of important moral and economic consequence to the region.
- ◆ **Become involved** in your local school's site-based management council or Compensatory Aid team.
- ◆ **Volunteer to tutor or mentor** students-at-risk in your school district.
- ◆ **Volunteer to be a tester** for a fair housing testing organization such as the Minnesota Fair Housing Center. **Challenge discriminatory practices** wherever and whenever you encounter or witness them.
- ◆ **Get involved** in any of the promising practices and organizations noted here. Nearly all of these initiatives are volunteer-driven or supported. Join a housing or education advocacy organization and become an advocate. Create a movement for active involvement in countering Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) responses when affordable housing is proposed in your community. Tell your story if you have one that expands public awareness of affordable housing as a need and an asset in our communities. Inform and influence public policies on important legislative initiatives dealing with the critical regional linkages between housing, education, race relations, social equity, transportation, environment, land use and economic development that lead to greater stability and equity in the metropolitan area.

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Community-Wide Initiatives

The following list is a sampling of community efforts already underway. It can be used as a resource for exploring what you as an individual can do to begin organizing for action and to identify organizations already engaged in activities you may want to join. It can also be used as a tool for exploring possibilities for collective action as a community. Note: This list is by no means comprehensive, but is intended simply as a starting place for generating ideas for action.

HOUSING

Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA)

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, MICAHA, Jewish Community Action, SPEAC, and Coalition for the Homeless. Contact: Bob Walz, 651-646-8805 or Dan Lee, 651-222-5863

Saint Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Congregations (SPEAC) and Interfaith Action

Faith-based social justice initiatives to address segregation, poverty and urban disparities. 2720 East 22nd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55406. Contact: Pamela Twiss, 612-333-1255 or 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

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

continued

IDEAS FOR ACTION

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

State legislative initiatives, i.e., proposed amendments to the Fiscal Disparities Act and the Livable Communities Act, the Housing and Economic Vitality Initiative, and proposed affordable housing legislation containing inclusionary housing strategies.

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 policymakers 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, 612-625-7552

Support Our Schools

Supports public education in Saint 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

Multi-district schools (Tri-district Magnet School for Maplewood, North Saint Paul and Saint Paul).

Contact: Fred Storti, 651-487-5450

and Downtown Interdistrict School

Contact: Barbara Shin, 612-627-2686

IDEAS FOR ACTION

RACE RELATIONS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative

A statewide interdenominational network of individuals and congregations united to struggle against racism and building multicultural diversity in our communities.

Contact: Jim and Nadine Addington, 612-871-3622

Frogtown Pluralism Circle

A neighborhood network of residents and service providers working together to dismantle racism and combat unfair institutions in Saint Paul's Frogtown neighborhood.

Contact: Melvin Giles, 651-265-5712

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

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, 651-659-0409

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

Project Common Ground, a collaborative sponsored by the Saint Paul and Stillwater public schools to promote understanding and interaction among students of diverse backgrounds, increase academic performance, and provide leadership development training through multi-ethnic cross-district teams of students.

Contact: 651-433-1113

MRA in the Twin Cities/Hope in the Cities, an inter-racial, multi-faith coalition of individuals in government, business, education, media, religious, and community organizations creating a process of healing through honest conversation on race, reconciliation, and responsibility.

Contact: Steve Dickenson, 651-646-8617

Better Together

Faith-based social justice initiatives to address segregation, poverty, and urban disparities led by **Interfaith Action** and the **Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council (SPEAC)**.

Contact: Petey Mitchell, 651-771-1152

Research initiatives, such as the work on 40 developmental assets of young people by the **Search Institute** 651-376-8955; research on the status of Twin Cities communities of color by the **Urban Coalition** 612-348-8550; culture-specific research by **HACER (Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research)** and the **American Indian Research and Policy Institute** 651-644-1728; and research on the relationship of housing, segregation, and educational achievement by the **Institute on Race and Poverty**, 612-625-8071.

SAIN'T PAUL. Minnesota's capital city. A city proud of its past and its tradition of strong, tightly knit neighborhoods. Today, many people are migrating here to live and find work, put down new roots, and raise families. The face of **SAIN'T PAUL IS RAPIDLY CHANGING**. We are increasingly becoming a rich, multicultural community that is economically and culturally diverse.



On University Avenue, Asian food markets and restaurants, insurance companies, employment agencies, and many other small businesses open daily to serve a growing Southeast Asian community. Sprinkled in other neighborhoods, community newspapers emerge printed all or partly in Spanish, Hmong, Russian, Cambodian, Somali, and many other languages. Our classrooms are filled with students from many **DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS**—45,000 of these students speak one of 54 different languages at home.

If we as a community can recognize the richness of this multicultural identity, we can **TAP THE ASSETS** of all our community's residents to create wealth and sustain economic growth in Saint Paul. We can engage all of our youth and our future leaders in planning for the next century. And we can **COLLABORATE ACROSS CULTURAL DIFFERENCES** to strengthen and invigorate our neighborhoods to **CREATE A HEALTHY AND VITAL CITY**.

The **1999 CITIES AT WORK** forum series, *A Continuing Public Dialogue on Race, Connections, and Commitment to Action*, provides a time and place to participate in honest dialogue about shaping our city's future.



This fall, we invite you to join families, interested residents, faith-based groups, policymakers, business leaders, nonprofits, neighborhood organizations, and funders from across Saint Paul at the 1999 *Cities at Work* forums. **SHARE GOOD FOOD**. Engage in respectful, **LIVELY DIALOGUE**. Explore **NEW IDEAS**. Learn more about **WHO WE ARE** as a community. Renew old friendships and make **NEW CONNECTIONS**. Together, we can unleash the power of our community and commit to creating a future Saint Paul that is an attractive place for all of us to live and work.



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Cities at Work 1999

The 4th annual series to promote dialogue and discovery about Saint Paul's future

Cities at Work 1999

The 4th annual series to promote dialogue and discovery about Saint Paul's future

FALL FORUMS

A Continuing Public Dialogue on Race, Connections, and Commitment to Action

The Changing Faces of Business
Thursday, October 14, 1999

Beyond Tolerance: A Call to Action
Monday, November 8, 1999



The Changing Faces of Business

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Saint Paul's business sector is increasingly impacted by our changing population. Minority-owned businesses are sprouting up, entire business districts are changing character, and the mainstream business community is racing to recruit and develop a new workforce and attract a broader customer base. Business has to change as our communities grow and transform. It's time to think globally—and build new connections and partnerships within our local community.

Breakout sessions will feature local businesses that are successfully reaching broader market segments, innovative ventures and partnerships by local companies, doing business in the inner city, success stories on recruiting and retaining workers...AND MORE!

WALK AWAY WITH

- a deeper understanding of our changing business community
- ideas to use the next day
- new connections and potential partners

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- Duane Benson, Minnesota Business Partnership
- Dr. Bruce Corrie, Concordia University

Registration/Breakfast: 8:00 AM

Public Forum: 8:30 AM-noon

Light lunch to follow, hosted by 3M

Metro State University

700 East 7th Street

Beyond Tolerance: A Call to Action

Monday, November 8, 1999

Talk. Dialogue. Action. Can we move beyond talk and passive tolerance for our cultural and economic differences to committed action? For the past eight months, over nine hundred people have been engaged in dialogue on the challenges of housing, education, and racial reconciliation in our community. Learn from their experiences and join others in forging action steps that make a difference in our community. We can complement each others' strengths and assets as we work community-wide towards cross-cultural understanding and racial reconciliation.

Registration/Buffer Dinner: 5:00 PM

Public Forum: 5:30-8:30 PM

Arlington High School

1459 Rice Street

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: John Powell, Institute on Race and Poverty

HEAR what others have discussed and learned in the 1999 *Cities at Work* forums and in the Community Circle Dialogues about the impact of racism and economics on their lives.

EXPLORE how group and individual actions can address the challenges of economic and racial injustice.

DISCOVER how you can personally become involved with others to initiate community-wide strategies.

SHARE good food and conversation as we affirm our ongoing commitment to eliminating racism and creating a more inclusive community.

Community Circle Dialogues

What are community circle dialogues?

Small, diverse discussion groups that meet for five, two-hour sessions over a period of two months for honest and open dialogue. The discussions are led by trained facilitators and use a written study guide to explore the challenges of housing, education, racism, and multiculturalism in Saint Paul.

What is the purpose of the community circle dialogues?

Community circle dialogues build a greater understanding of other viewpoints and encourage individuals and communities to take action and promote public policy change.

How can I get involved?

The community circle dialogues are being sponsored by community-based organizations, schools, neighborhoods, and local businesses throughout Saint Paul and the broader metropolitan region. For more information about how you or your organization can participate, call 651-659-6031.

Cities at Work 1999 Sponsors and Funders

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation • Asian Pacific Endowment for Community Development • Catholic Charities • City Solutions • Community Employment Partnership • East Side Neighborhood Development • Education and Housing Equity Project/Community Circles Collaborative • Jane Addams School for Democracy • Leadership Saint Paul • Local Initiatives Support Corporation • MRA Initiatives for Change-Twin Cities • Minnesota Alliance with Youth • MN Hmong Chamber of Commerce • National Conference for Community and Justice • Neighborhood Development Center • Otto Bremer Foundation • St. Paul Area Council of Churches • Saint Paul Human Rights Department • St. Paul/Ramsey Children's Initiative • St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development • St. Paul Planning Commission • St. Paul Public Schools • 3M Corporation • United Way of the Saint Paul Area • University UNITED • The Urban Coalition • YMCA of Greater St. Paul • And a diverse group of community volunteers

Registration

All events are free and open to the public, but advanced registration is required for meals. For more information, contact Linda at 651-642-4060 or lmh@wilder.org

Please check the forum(s) you plan to attend:

The Changing Faces of Business

Thursday, October 14, 8:00 AM-noon
Metro State University, 700 East 7th Street

Beyond Tolerance: A Call to Action

Monday, November 8, 5:00-8:30 PM
Arlington High School, 1459 Rice Street

Name _____

Organization (if any) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

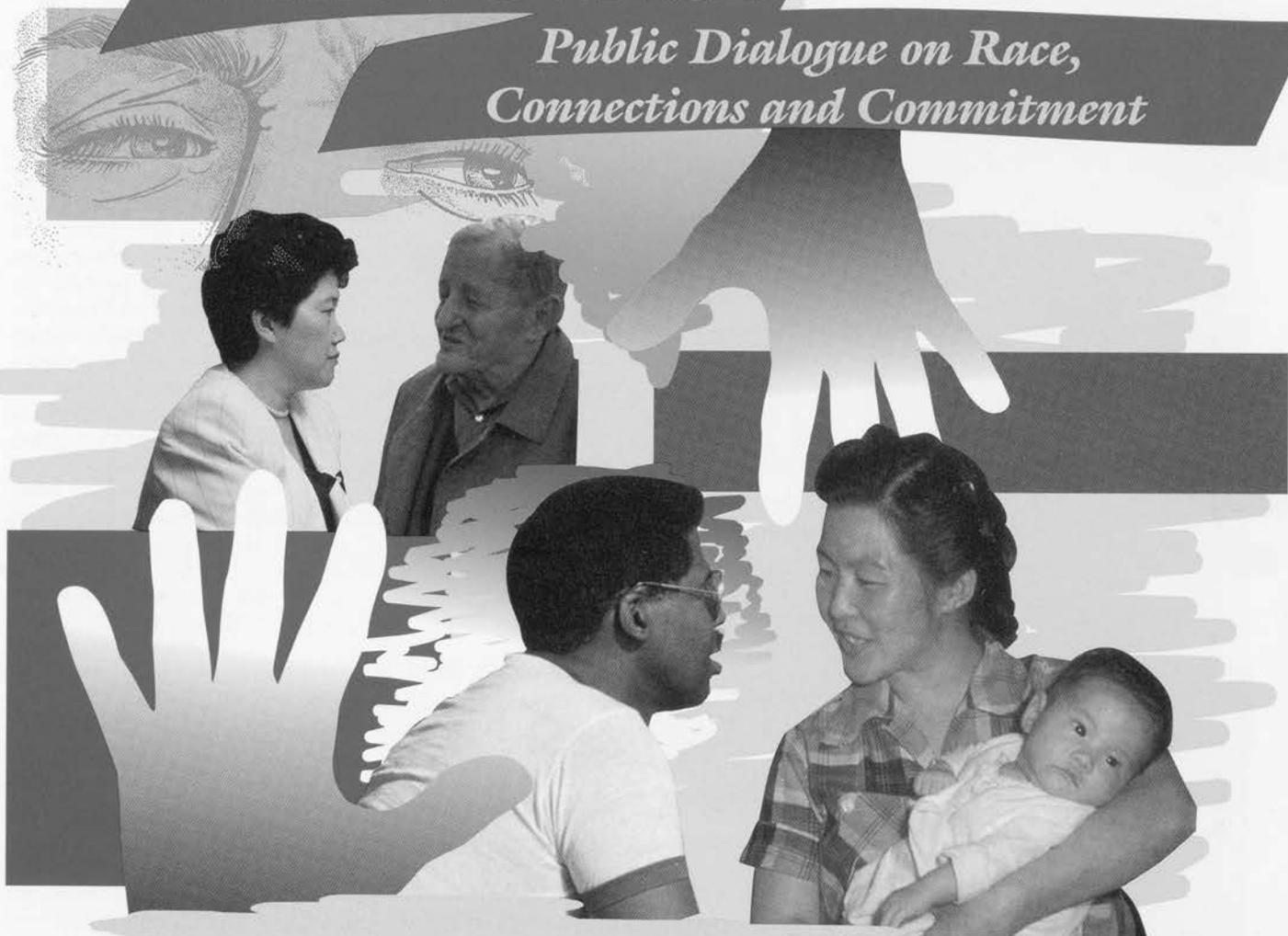
Send completed forms to: Linda Hoskins, Wilder Foundation,
919 Lafond Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104 OR fax: 651-642-2088

Community Matters

A publication sponsored by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation for involved citizens and civic leaders working together to strengthen Saint Paul and its neighborhoods.
Summer 1999 • Vol. 6, No. 3

FACE TO FACE

*Public Dialogue on Race,
Connections and Commitment*



Do we avoid talking about the experience of race and racism in our community?

This spring, *Community Matters* set out to find out who is talking and thinking about race and racism and which individuals and organizations are contributing to this personal and public conversation.

Throughout our community, people are struggling to overcome prejudices and biases, taking risks to speak out against injustice, and organizing with others to combat racism and promote cultural pluralism. In this issue of *Community Matters*, stories of innovative community initiatives and personal commitments from across the metropolitan region are shared. Yes, much work is yet to be done to dismantle racism imbedded in our public policies and institutions. But the commitment behind this ongoing work deserves to be recognized and acknowledged. Through these efforts, we will become a stronger and healthier community that values and utilizes the assets of all our residents.

Community Matters

is published by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation with contributions from F.R. Bigelow Foundation, Otto Bremer Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Saint Paul Foundation, and The St. Paul Companies, Inc. *Community Matters* is produced with the assistance of the *Community Matters* Advisory Committee composed of representatives from Saint Paul neighborhood and community-based organizations.

Our aim is to increase understanding about issues affecting the vitality of Saint Paul, to report on resources available to formal and informal leaders throughout the city, and to build connections among those working to strengthen our communities.

Editor: Barbara Rose

Contributing Writers: David Hennessey, Mathew Abts, Venise Battle, Angelique Beards, Hector Garcia, Jodi Kiely, Natasha Leskia, Dick Little, Anna Lucas, and Deborah Mitchell

Photos: Ron Germundson, Anna Barker, Kristin Kidder, and Dick Little

Design & Production: RSC Graphics

To submit information for publication, be added to our mailing list, or request additional copies of *Community Matters*, please call Barb Rose at (651) 659-6031, fax at (651) 642-2088 or email to bar@wilder.org.

With special thanks to Saint Paul Public Schools, Guadalupe Area Project, Galaxy Youth Center, Wilder Forest, the Hungry Mind Review, the participants in the Spring 1999 Cities at Work forums and all who shared their time and stories for this issue.

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FACE TO FACE:

Public Dialogue on Race, Connections, and Commitment

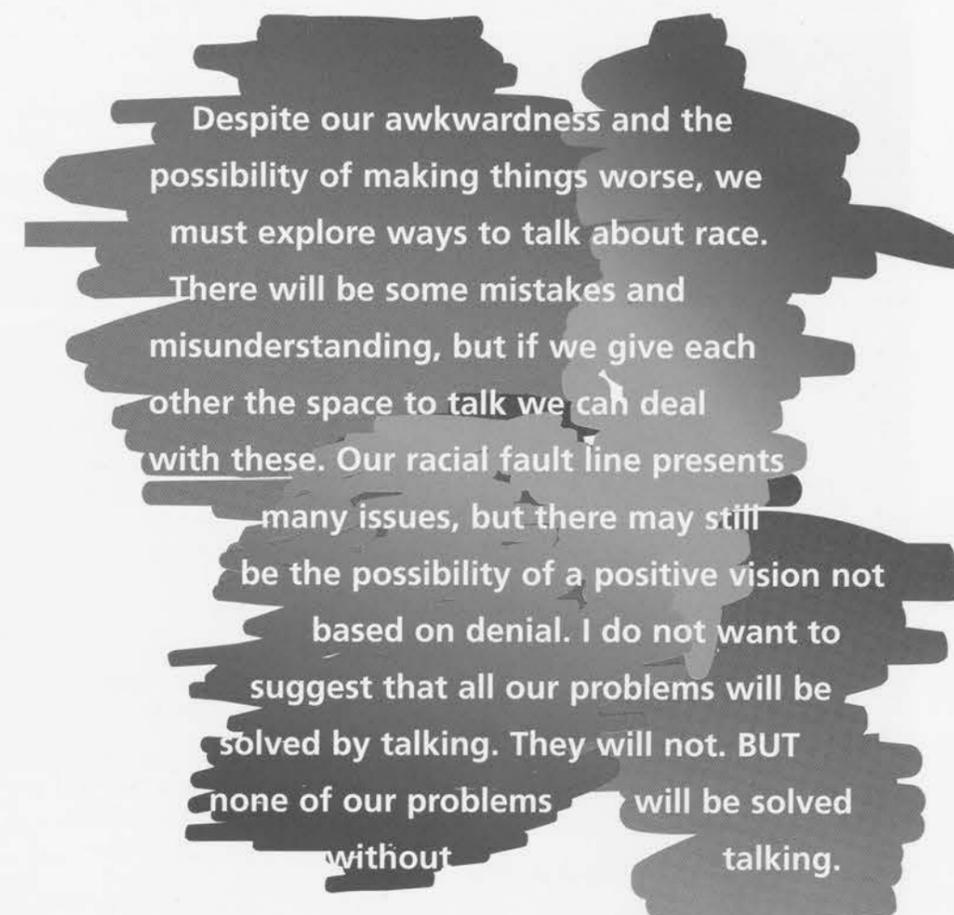
by David Hennessey

The 1999 *Cities at Work* public forum series entitled *Unleashing the Power of Our Community: A Public Dialogue on Race, Connections, and Commitment*, is taking steps to engage Saint Paul citizens in understanding and tackling the complex impacts of racism both in our city and the Twin Cities metropolitan region. Small groups of residents are meeting all over the city this spring, summer, and fall in community circle dialogues and public forums to talk about the impacts of racial and economic segregation on housing, education, and race. Over 700 people have been involved in the forums and community circle dialogues since March.

What's the relevance of all this talk?

Why do we need to continue dialogue about racism in both its personal and institutional forms? Why is it important to tap into and celebrate the cultural diversity of our community?

continued on next page



Despite our awkwardness and the possibility of making things worse, we must explore ways to talk about race.

There will be some mistakes and misunderstanding, but if we give each other the space to talk we can deal

with these. Our racial fault line presents many issues, but there may still

be the possibility of a positive vision not based on denial. I do not want to

suggest that all our problems will be solved by talking. They will not. BUT

none of our problems will be solved without talking.

Excerpted from *Talking Race*, an essay by John Powell, Executive Director of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota Law School. Reprinted with permission from *Hungry Mind Review*, Number Forty-Five, Spring 1998.

"America has had a dialogue about race for some time," says Melvin Giles, Facilitator at Catholic Charities in Frogtown. "That's good, but we need a dialogue on racism too. Race is still in the head, but racism goes to the heart. People need to know the burden of pain I (as a Black American) and other people of color carry living in this society. Once people acknowledge that pain, the burden can begin to transform from a heavy and paralyzing struggle to a lighter and healing

journey of more understanding and more trust, more peace and less stress. It becomes a shared journey. I can feel light as a feather, as if I'm being carried by the wisdom and knowledge of my mentors and ancestors. If I have less stress and worry, I can hear their voices. But many people have so much pain and feel so belittled that they can't even hear the voice of the person next to them."

Sonia Alvarez – President of Alvarez Communications, a management consulting firm – says we must continue to address racism because it remains with us in ways that many people

don't even see. "Most white people think of racism as deliberate acts against people on the basis of their race," she says. "However, if you ask people of color to define racism, their definition is far more inclusive. Examples include being asked for three forms of ID after the white person in line ahead of you is not asked for them or steering people of color into fields requiring less aptitude in math or science.

"Many of these acts are subconscious. Many well-meaning people offend, demean and oppress people of color without even knowing it. The only way to reveal the impact of these behaviors is to talk about it – candidly and mutually."

continued on page 6

**We need a dialogue on racism too.
Race is still in the head,
but racism goes to the heart.**

Editor's Note: On April 28, nearly 200 children, youth and adults gathered at Arlington High School for the first 1999 *Cities at Work* forum, examining youth perspectives on how to bridge cultural and racial differences.

We've assembled many of the comments made that night by both the youth panelists and audience members. They appear throughout this issue of *Community Matters*. We've identified these voices only by gender and approximate age to protect the privacy of the individuals.

A video of the entire forum, entitled *Stop Talking, Just Do It: Saint Paul Youth's Perspectives On Bridging Differences*, is available. Call Barb Rose at (651) 659-6031 for more details.

Pain shared, pain divided

Pain shared is pain divided. What I've learned from listening to children is that hurt people go out and hurt people. The pain we see in our communities is the grief nobody wants to talk about. It turns to anger. The anger turns to rage. The rage turns to violence, and violence can go in two directions: outward toward the community or inward toward ourselves. So there is no judging who has the most pain; there is just helping each other share the load.

— Adult man

Is "Race" a Valid Concept?

Editor's note: The following article first appeared in *Community Matters*, Fall 1997.

"The root and reality of racism grows out of the very false concept of 'race.' We do not seem to realize how recent this concept is. It has not been much more than three centuries that the term 'race' itself entered the English language. The error in 'race thinking' is that we are taught to believe that there is an intrinsic link between biology and what is essentially social."

Mahmoud El-Kati, Professor of History, Macalester College. From *The Myth of "Race"/The Reality of Racism: A Critical Essay*.

Is "race" a valid concept?

Michael Omi, Professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, has noted: "...most scientists feel that racial classifications are meaningless and unscientific. Professor Kenneth Kennedy of Cornell University is quoted as saying: 'In the social sense, race is a reality. In the scientific sense, it is not.'"

Omi discusses several problems with the notion of race, especially as it is codified in current census categories. Just two examples: the categories are based on the need of agencies to have objective data about the very subjective notion of one's identity; and categories, such as "Asian American," that lump together whole continents of cultures, languages and historic differences are of questionable use. Some people point out that dividing groups by "race" is a convenient way for the culture in power to control those groups.

"I tell funders that too many times we have to go after 'Indian money,' or 'Asian money,' or 'Hispanic money,'"

says Colin Wesaw, Education Specialist at Wilder Forest. "That just keeps us more segregated. We all have the same problems but have to chase after separate pots of money."

Shem Shakir, Executive Director of the Frogtown Action Alliance, also notes how much Americans segregate groups by perceived racial or ethnic differences. "Only in America do we do that," he says. "I believe we do it to keep the different ethnic tribes divided. We need to get away from the 'race issue' and simply address things as citizens."

Is "race" a valid concept? Perhaps the Metropolitan Council answers that best in introductory remarks to a publication on demographic trends in minority populations:

"...racial analysis is in itself a racist activity. It groups people by race and compares overall statistics that generalize characteristics for the group as a whole. The purposes may be worthwhile, but categorizing, generalizing and analyzing people perpetuates viewing them not as individuals, but as mem-

bers of a group, possessing characteristics one believes to apply to that group.

"What makes race a 'reality' is that people often act on what they believe are racial distinctions...Data by race would not merit much attention if it weren't for the legacy of racism..." **

References:

* "Racial Identity and the State: The Dilemmas of Classification," remarks delivered by Michael Omi at the forum, *Race and Poverty: Our Private Obsession, Our Public Sin*, October 13, 1995, sponsored by The Institute on Race and Poverty, University of Minnesota Law School.

** "Minority Population Distribution Trends in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area." Metropolitan Council, October 1993. (651) 291-6359.

Continued from page 4

Some people add that we must discuss these issues because they also have broader implications – that racism is only one example of how systematic belittling can lead to serious problems. “I believe that we all feel oppression...and at different times, we all can become oppressors,” says Ed Irwin, Manager of Youth Development Programming at Wilder Forest, who helps run historical simulations for youth (See article, page 8). “We need to liberate ourselves by recognizing our common humanity and by empathizing with each other. In Littleton, Colorado, you had two young men who felt oppression in a certain way but did not have the ability to be empathetic with other people around them. So they lost their humanity.”

Many point out that dealing with racism is only one part of a broader need to embrace cultural differences. “We have significant differences in our population whether these differences are of socioeconomic, religious or ethnic origin,” says Pixie Martin, a communications consultant. “It’s those differences we need to talk about.”

Human Relations Consultant Jim McDonough is a member of the Frogtown Pluralism Circle, a multi-ethnic and multi-agency neighborhood group that has been meeting for over two years to counter racism and cultivate a pluralistic neighborhood. (See article, page 15.) “The demographics of Saint Paul are changing,” he says. “Frogtown, for instance, went from a neighborhood of European Americans to one with many African Americans and now many Hmong as well. The Pluralism Circle feels it’s important to welcome the new people rather than react fearfully to the changes.” The group looks for positive ways to bring different cultural groups in the neighborhood together.

Giles, who also meets with the Pluralism Circle, agrees that racism is one part of the discussion of cultural

diversity. “Undoing racism is about owning up to what has been done to Native Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans and others, and liberating us from the injustice of systematic racism,” he says. “But many of the newer immigrant groups come from countries where discrimination is based on class rather than race.” That means, he says, that discussions about cultural diversity focusing on new immigrants can sometimes divert

If we fail to tap into all of the rich resources we have available to us, through other human beings, we are not maximizing our potential as a society.

needed attention from discussions about racism. “It will only be a temporary diversion provided we keep dialoguing. The gift of dialoguing is that the newer folks get to see the similarities of their experience to others’ experiences and vice versa.” This brings greater understanding and true honoring of our diversities.

Martin emphasizes that promoting cultural diversity is simply following a strong American tradition. “That is one of the strengths of this country,” she says. “The immigrant experience is not something that has happened and is finished – it continues. We aren’t perfect at it, but compared to almost any other place in the world, we are the only country so open to immigrants.”

She also notes that many immigrant communities, along with the African American and Native American communities, “come from collectivist cultures” that can teach us about building community relationships. “Our traditional American individualism takes us only so far, and we now see how much know-how we lack in creating a sustained village. We can learn about interaction from these more collective-based communities.”

Alvarez agrees that promoting cultural diversity will tap into the experience of all peoples to help solve community-wide problems. “If we fail to tap into all of the rich resources we have available to us, through other human beings, we are not maximizing our potential as a society. The only way to solve the problems of the whole is to engage the whole in the solution...New insights to old problems are critical to avoid making the same mistakes over and over again.”

For McDonough, who has participated in a community circle dialogue in Frogtown, listening to new immigrants tell their stories reconnected him with his personal family history.

Read the book before you judge its cover

I used to live in Saint Paul and now I live in Woodbury. After we moved out there I found a job. When I told people [at work] where I was from, they automatically thought that I was a thug, was in a gang and might rob the place. Nobody has ever thought that way about me before. I thought it was weird.

— Teen woman

Racism plagues the hearts, minds and spirits not only of people of color but of the dominant culture as well.

“I felt that as a first generation product of immigrants, I was removed from the immigration and acculturation process my parents and grandparents went through. But being in a room with new immigrants from another country, I really had a sense I was experiencing my own family history.” Learning about other cultures, he says, can help us learn about our own.

“To do this work requires tremendous self understanding,” Martin says.

“You need to know what contributes to your view of the world and what in that view prevents and promotes your engagement with other cultures.” She refers to the presentation by the Illusion Theater at the second Cities at Work forum on

May 18th. “They laid out three words to guide our work that evening: roots, identity, and community,” she says. “All of those elements have to be part of the dialogue.”

Giles notes that different cultural communities may need to approach the racism/diversity dialogue in somewhat different ways. “People of color, especially African Americans, Hmong and Vietnamese in Frogtown and Summit University, have to start talking with each other more,” he says. “And

there will be times when we have to recognize that some cultural groups have to talk among themselves only. I think that’s a giant need especially for European-Americans right now. Whites need to be comfortable with – or at least accept being uncomfortable with – talking about being white. Because people of color talk or think about their color and racism all the time. Whites need to talk more about being white until it becomes natural.”

Racism, Alvarez points out, affects everyone, not just people of color. “To paraphrase the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,” she says, “what affects one directly, affects all of us indirectly. Racism plagues the hearts, minds and spirits not only of people of color but of the dominant culture as well.” ●

Mixed labels

I have a question for the adults in the audience because I really don’t get it. I know if you look at me you’d think I was African American. But if I told you I was half white and am only a quarter African American, you wouldn’t believe me. So my question is – how are we categorizing each other? I just don’t get how you do that. I’m confused and puzzled.

— Teen woman

My grandmother was the oldest living Ojibway in the state of Wisconsin...But it very often happens to me that I am considered ‘white.’ I’m more Native American than I am white. So I get very angry with people who make judgments about others based on what they see.

— Adult woman

I was in a class where we were watching a movie and a lady died in the movie. When her name came up on the screen, it was a Latin name. A guy in the class said, ‘Oh, she deserves to die.’ He didn’t realize that I was Puerto Rican. I guess he thought I was African American. Later, when he found out I was a Latina he said, ‘I’m sorry. I didn’t know you were Latin.’ I just wish we would stop categorizing and quit putting people into boxes and labeling them. I mean, he was a minority himself, and still he labeled me.

— Teen woman

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Discovering Common Ground

"This is an opportunity for youth from different neighborhoods – city and suburbs – to come together and learn about each other. Kids live together, and become friends. The skills of inquiry, learning and team building are emphasized."

A teacher involved in Project Common Ground

Since 1995, a unique educational experiment has quietly taught children multicultural communication at Wilder Forest in Marine-on-St. Croix. It brings urban and suburban children and teachers together in a neutral setting to learn about each other in a natural environment. Dubbed "Project Common Ground," the program helps students of different backgrounds discover what they have in common.

"We are experiencing the growth of ethnic populations, and we need to get along as a pluralistic society," says Anna Barker, Project Common Ground Coordinator. "We know employment in the future will require workers to get along in teams, to be efficient and creative. These kids are getting hands-on experience in team building."

A joint undertaking of the Wilder Foundation and the Stillwater and Saint Paul school districts, the project brings together upper elementary and junior high age youth and their teachers at Wilder Forest for three sessions each year. Each session lasts three days and two nights. Multiethnic educators from Wilder Forest work collaboratively with the teachers during the sessions, while outside groups, such as SteppingStone Theater for Youth Development, often assist.

Activities include canoeing and hiking, astronomy and storytelling, winter survival exercises, cultural art, plays and skits, interactive games and skills development, farm activities, journaling, and historical simulations such as the Underground Railroad and the Hmong Odyssey (See article, page 12).

Barker emphasizes that Project Common Ground is built on four principles, which she summarizes with the acronym, LACE: leadership, academic achievement, cultural empathy and experiential environmental education.

"We want to grow a new generation of leaders who will stand up against racism in all its forms," she says. "But you can't understand the myth of race and racism without a solid academic grounding in history, science and the humanities. Then, cultural empathy allows students to feel what it's like to walk in another person's shoes. Finally, experiential environmental education gives students a chance for hands-on, inquiry-based learning in addition to the academic instruction."

So far, the reaction of students, parents and teachers has been very positive. A program evaluation published in 1998 by the Wilder Research Center noted that 94 percent of all

parents surveyed felt that their child's response to Project Common Ground was favorable or very favorable. According to parents, the most valued aspect of the program is the opportunity for children to meet and work with children from other classes, cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

Evaluations during the first two years of the program show that Stillwater students primarily value the experience of working with people from other cultures. But for Saint Paul students "the program appears to have a greater impact on their inquisitiveness and overall interest in school," possibly because they are learning in an outdoor environment.

According to Barker, the outdoor setting is a very important part of the program. "We need a new way of being with our young people that involves hands-on experience using nature as a template," she says with enthusiasm. "The forest is a diverse multicultural ecosystem." She also believes the natural setting helps awaken inquiring minds to solve real-life problems.

"They're allowed to ask questions, to be scientists," she says. "And the teachers work side by side with the

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News



Source: Project Common Ground

Project Common Ground participants frolic while boarding bus.

students and take these units back into the classroom – it all goes right back to the curriculum."

The project began four years ago with discussions between Wilder Foundation President Tom Kingston, former Saint Paul Schools Superintendent Curman Gaines and former Stillwater Schools Superintendent Dr. David Wettergren. The program is primarily supported by state desegregation funds.

"The idea grew out of questions about how to positively integrate schools in creative, innovative ways, looking back at the lessons we learned from the '60s," says Barker. "Busing in the '60s obviously didn't work very well, so the idea was to bring young people from both school districts together in a neutral setting to find out what they had in

Busing in the '60s obviously didn't work very well, so the idea was to bring young people from both school districts together in a neutral setting to find out what they had in common.

common. And as far as we know, there's no other program like this in the country."

Last year Project Common Ground received recognition in the President's Initiative on Race. It is now nationally recognized and highlighted on the White House web site.

The program is still developing and will soon expand its reach to high school students. Organizers have been pleased with the program's ability to extend children's horizons. As one teacher wrote in a 1998 evaluation: "This makes kids aware of the larger community. It helps kids understand that the community is bigger than just where they go to school." ●

— DH

The company we keep

It's easy to be with people who are like you. It's easy for whites to sit with whites and blacks with blacks. We see that in the [school] cafeteria. Maybe you don't think you have anything in common with people from another culture, but you should just talk to them. And another thing: maybe people look at me and think I'm racist just because I'm white. Or maybe someone who has one bad experience with a black person thinks they'll have the same experience with all black people. But you need to get to know the individual person. That's a big problem for adults – they pass those attitudes on.

— Teen woman

We all need to break away from our peer groups and meet new people.

— Teen man

Personal Reflection

Feeling Guilty for Being American

by Jodi Kiely

Editor's Note: This article was reprinted with permission of the author. It was initially published in *The Aquin*, the student newspaper of the University of St. Thomas, and later appeared in the *Rochester Post-Bulletin*.

Photo: Ron Germundson



I was standing at a bus stop in downtown Minneapolis when an old man with a scraggly gray beard, John Lennon sunglasses and clashing clothes decided to make me feel guilty for being an American.

"Kor-ee-an conflict," he said loudly, pointing at me. "I fought in that war. You should be grateful because if it wasn't for me, you wouldn't be living in this country!" Immediately, everyone turned to stare at me. The man didn't stop. He looked me up and down, nodding, and said, "I bet you're wondering how I know you're a Kor-ee-an," he said, drawing out the word again. "I fought in that war. I know what you people look like."

That wasn't the first time an incident like this has happened to me. It wasn't the first time I let someone insult me in front of strangers without defending myself. I said nothing and tried to ignore him. What I should have done was speak out against his remarks. Instead I let him board the bus as I stayed and waited another 20 minutes for the next bus to come by.

A similar situation occurred when I was at work in downtown Minneapolis. I was in the elevator when an older Caucasian man with a bad sunburn and a preppy tennis shirt stepped on. A younger man followed. The older man turned to me and said casually, "So where are you from?"

"St. Paul," I told him.

He looked at me, laughed and said, "No, where are you really from?"

This time I wasn't as timid as I had been with the Korean war veteran at the bus stop. "I am really from Rochester," I told him.

The man laughed again. "That's impossible," he said. "Even I have my European roots. Where are your ancestors from?" I told him how my dad came from an Irish family and how my mother's side was German.

The guy wouldn't give up.

"What are you talking about? Unless you're fresh off the boat or from California, you can't be from St. Paul. I mean, where in the Orient are you from?"

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to have the last word. He stepped off at his floor, and the other man also exited. The younger man had said nothing.

These things happen to me all the time. In fact, it's become so uncomfortable for me that I have stopped traveling alone with my father. When people see a young Asian woman with an older Caucasian man, the last thing that crosses their mind is the possibility that it could be a father with his daughter.

When I worked at the mall in Rochester, customers would talk to me slowly and enunciate their words, assuming my English wasn't good. I even had some people ask me if I knew May Thuy or Kim Sung or others from Korea, Japan, China and Vietnam. When I went

to my boyfriend's hometown to meet his family, one of his relatives asked me if I was a foreign exchange student. That was a first.

It's frustrating because when people ask me questions like that I feel as if I have to explain my

perfect English and my Irish last name by telling them I was adopted. The majority of people living in the United States don't have to explain their history, so why should I?

When I do explain myself, some people take the conversation further, not realizing what they are saying. After learning that I was adopted, some people tell me how friends of theirs adopted a child from Korea, or how a relative traveled to China to pick up their adopted child in person. Those are touching stories, but why are they telling me this?

It seems that wherever I go, so does my ethnicity. I don't want people judging me by the way I look. No one does. And I also don't want to have to tell my life story to people in order to explain why my last name is Kiely. I may not fit the old-fashioned definition of "American," but some people don't realize that Americans aren't just black or white. ●

I may not fit the old-fashioned definition of "American," but some people don't realize that Americans aren't just black or white.

Guidelines for Multicultural Collaboration

by Marya Axner and Marcelle E. DuPraw

Reprinted with permission from the Topsfield Foundation.

- Learn from generalizations about other cultures, but don't use those generalizations to stereotype, "write-off," or oversimplify your ideas about another person. The best use of a generalization is to add it to your storehouse of knowledge so that you better understand and appreciate other interesting, multi-faceted human beings.

- Practice, practice, practice. That's that first rule, because it's in the doing that we actually get better at cross-cultural communication.

- Don't assume that there is one right way (yours!) to communicate. Keep questioning your assumptions about the "right way" to communicate. For example, think about your body language; postures that indicate receptivity in one culture might indicate aggressiveness in another.

- Don't assume that breakdowns in communication occur because other people are on the wrong track. Search for ways to make the communication work, rather than searching for who should receive the blame for the breakdown.

- Listen actively and empathetically. Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. Especially when another person's perceptions or ideas are very different from your own, you might need to operate at the edge of your own comfort zone.

- Respect others' choices about whether to engage in communi-

cation with you. Honor their opinions about what is going on.

- Stop, suspend judgment, and try to look at the situation as an outsider.

- Be prepared for a discussion of the past. Use this as an opportunity to develop an understanding from "the other's" point of view, rather than getting defensive or impatient. Acknowledge historical events that have taken place. Be open to learning more about them. Honest acknowledgement of the mistreatment and oppression that have taken place on the basis of cultural difference is vital for effective communication.

- Awareness of current power imbalances – and an openness to

hearing each other's perceptions of those imbalances – is also necessary for understanding each other and working together.

- Remember that cultural norms may not apply to the behavior of any particular individual. We are all shaped by many, many factors – our ethnic background, our family, our education, our personalities – and are more complicated than any cultural norm could suggest. Check your interpretations if you are uncertain what is meant. ●

For more information, check the Community Tool Box website at: www.toolbox.org

Moving beyond blame

We all have to learn about each other within our own cultures. Then we have to take what we've learned within our culture and educate other cultures about it. We can't just point our fingers at one culture and blame them. I know there's a long history of slavery [in this country] and of Native Americans being killed. I'm here because my ancestors were brought over here as slaves, but I'm not going to blame somebody for it. I'll create my own culture and teach other people about the culture of my ancestors.

— Teen woman

I'm African American, and there are different cultures within my own culture. But if we continue to blame other cultures for us being here for various reasons, we aren't going to get anywhere or educate anybody. So I can't blame my friend right here for what her people did to my people.

— Teen woman

Reliving Cultural History

You're in a room with a small group of people. You are all asked to write down the four most important things in your life. Then you are told to let go of them one at a time. A whip cracks every time you must part with one of the things you cherish the most – such as a loved one's smile, a safe home, a religious practice. The process continues until everything you value is gone.

"Usually there are tears at this point," says Ed Irwin, Manager of Youth Development Programming at Wilder Forest. "People try to hold on to their family members and loved ones. And we talk of how slavery stripped you of your culture and everything you knew. It stripped you of your humanity."

This is a part of the Underground Railroad scenario, one of three historical simulations conducted by Wilder

Forest staff to help participants empathize with the history of a people – African American slaves running for freedom, Native Americans moving from home to home as their lands are carved up, or Hmong refugees fleeing soldiers ordered to kill them.

"The intention is to make the group empathetic with that piece of history," says Irwin. "We're talking here about real-life situations. We don't do this to play hide and seek in the woods or to scare people. We're doing it so we can empathize with our ancestors, better understand each other and then focus on reconciliation."

The simulations, which are conducted on request for groups of youth and/or adults, are just a part of Wilder Forest's programs in youth development and cultural awareness and part of its ongoing dialogues about diversity.

"We work in a multi-cultural setting where the dialogue is continuous," says Irwin. "We want to empower participants with a sense of history and with skills in communicating, conflict resolution, problem solving and facilitation." He notes that they often do the simulations in conjunction with multi-cultural and culturally specific camp programs.

We're doing it so we can empathize with our ancestors, better understand each other and then focus on reconciliation.

Located at Marine-on-St. Croix, Wilder Forest is a center for community building and youth development, offering groups the chance to run their own programs, retreats and conferences, or to create new experiences using Wilder's natural environment and staff resources. The historical simulations are usually offered for groups of about 15 people at a time. Each one is carefully structured to give people an historical frame of reference, a recreation of the oppressive system in question, a simulated field experience outside and a debriefing afterward.

A typical Underground Railroad simulation starts with the playing of drums and music, followed by historical lectures about pre-colonial Africa, slavery in America, and the underground railroad.

Then the group is taken through a series of exercises simulating the slave ship journey, being stripped of their pride, culture and will to resist, imagining what it's like to work as a slave and hearing stories of living under slavery.

Finally, the group prepares to escape to freedom. A "conductor" leads them out into the night woods, emphasizing that their goal is to make it to freedom together, and that freedom is more a state of mind than it is an actual location. Along the way, they will be pursued by slave catchers as well as helped by various friends.

Respecting differences

The anger and the hurt that people feel block productivity. It's important to recognize anger, to see and to hear it. But then it's time to move on...to accomplish the meshing of different cultural groups.

— Teen woman

We want to empower participants with history and with skills in communicating, conflict resolution, problem solving and facilitation.

"Mahmoud El-Kati, a Macalester Professor of History, talks of history and humanity as being the same thing," Irwin says. "The ability to be empathetic is the ability to understand a people's story. If I know your story, it's hard for me to exploit you. But if I don't know your history, it's easy for me to exploit you." Slavery, he says, depended on slave owners remaining ignorant of the history of the people they enslaved.

The entire experience lasts two to three hours. A similar simulation shows how Native Americans in Minnesota viewed the conditions that

led to the 1862 uprising, as they were forced to move from their land. Another simulation traces the journey of Hmong refugees as they fled their homes at gunpoint to Thai refugee camps and finally to America. Plans are underway to add simulations of the Irish American and Swedish American immigrant experiences.

Irwin reemphasizes that the point of the simulations is to foster empathy and reconciliation.

"Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa talks of the need for wounds to be reopened sometimes so that they can heal right," he says. "Because sometimes the scab over the wound festers and rots.

That's how slavery has been in America. We've never really allowed the wounds to be opened up so that we can cry together, forgive each other, and move on. We do these simulations to get in touch with our own humanity." ●

— DH

Racism's legacy

It's so important for you to understand that this business of racism and the cover and the package that you are in is all garbage. Because your soul is what counts. Your soul is equal to anyone else's, and you can learn just as well as anyone else. But the white establishment has brought racism to you, so now you are wondering if you are not at fault. The fact of the matter is that until they learn to give, you will not be able to do anything.

— Adult man

For more information about all of the programs and facilities at Wilder Forest, call (651) 433-5198.

Underground convert

Editor's Note: The following story is just one example of how the Underground Railroad simulation can affect people personally.

"A young man came here for the Underground Railroad. His teacher had required him to come. His father was an 'Enforcer' for Hell's Angels. The young man had seen a lot of violence and believed in white supremacy. He had a leather coat, spikes – he really lived the part.

"After the Underground Railroad experience he came up, reached out, and embraced me. And he said: 'To be honest, this is the first time I ever wanted to touch a Black man without intending to harm him.' He knew when he got home he would be beaten because his dad hadn't wanted him to take the journey.

"Since then he's actually started helping us do the Underground Railroad. But the most powerful part of the story came about a month ago: he told me his dad is changing because of his (the son's) lifestyle. Now his dad encourages him to be involved with us.

"You hear story after story like this. I think for some people, this experience is the first time someone's giving them permission to deal with their feelings about slavery and not just with their intellect." ●

— Ed Irwin, Manager of Youth Development Programming, Wilder Forest

Personal Reflection

Taking a Stand: *Without struggle, There is No Progress*

by Venise N. Battle, Cretin-Derham Hall High School

I am a sixteen year old African American teenager who is well accustomed to the prejudices of American society. In my sophomore year of high school, I immersed myself in an unconventional education that broadened my horizons on the subject of diversity. It began when I joined my school's diversity group, 'P.R.I.D.E.' (People Realizing Individual Dreams Exist). Two morals that I have learned from this experience are: "Diversity is more than skin deep" and "Silence is a form of oppression." Since then, it has been a priority of mine to share this knowledge with my community. My name is Venise Battle. I am taking a stand.

Diversity is more than skin deep.

I first thought diversity only involved the racial origin of a community. I believed it was primarily a "black and white" issue. However, I have come to learn otherwise. Diversity does not only include your racial origin, but also your gender, culture, age and socio-

economic status. I have learned that there are prejudices beyond racism: sexism, ageism and classism, to name a few. With this knowledge, I realize that prejudice exists not only between communities, but within communities. Intercultural and cross cultural, both equally unjust.

Silence is a form of oppression.

It is said that silence sometimes is the best answer. Yet, with issues of diversity, it is the worst answer. I have learned that silence is a way to avoid discussion and leave an injustice unnamed. When used as an answer, prejudice is tolerated. When prejudice is tolerated, oppression is sustained.

Prejudice is a big problem. A classmate of mine once asked, "How can we make a difference? The problem is so big!" Well, my stance is that we make change by setting examples, e.g., not tolerating prejudiced comments or jokes in our homes, cars or while having fun with our friends. Ending prejudice also requires a conversion of the heart. A person must have an example of love before they can begin to love. Setting a no tolerance attitude is a start.

I refuse to tolerate prejudice. I have taken action by becoming involved in diversity projects. One such project is the Minnesota Independent School Forum Diversity Conference which was planned by a group of students from several independent schools. At the conference, over 200 people attended discussions about issues of race, gender, ageism, and several other subjects. I participated in the planning and organization of this event because I believe that by



I have learned that silence is a way to avoid discussion and leave an injustice unnamed.

creating an environment that stimulates conversation around issues of diversity, someone will walk away more aware and be able to teach others to take a stand against prejudice.

My inner strength has been tested. What has brought me through and has allowed me to continue learning is God. I now see diversity as something we humans have lost sight of. I feel that the unity of nations and love between all people is a goal that God has for us. We were not born to hate. We were created to love. When I stand against prejudice, I stand against hate. When I stand against hate, I stand for the love of all mankind.

This September, I will embark upon my senior year of high school. Even though I will be leaving my school, I hope to pass on the torch to another student, so that the progress in standing against prejudice will continue. The road ahead is a long and difficult one. Nevertheless, in the words of Frederick Douglass, "Without struggle, there is no progress."

Teen watch

Just because we're teens, people seem to think we commit crimes. You go alone to shop at stores, and if you watch carefully you see people following you around...I don't like that - they have no business following me when I'm just trying to shop...It hurts even thinking about it.

— Teen man

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Frogtown Pluralism Circle: *Our Diversity is our Greatest Asset*

by Anna Lucas, Frogtown Catholic Charities

In December 1996, a group of neighborhood residents and service providers from Model Cities, Saint Paul Rehabilitation Center, Catholic Charities, Hmong American Partnership, Saint Paul United Way and the Wilder Foundation formed a collaboration to address racism in the communities where we live and serve. The Frogtown Family Center joined the Circle in 1998.

Our first initiative was to hold an Undoing Racism retreat with the Peoples Institute for Survival and Beyond. That retreat set the stage for the Pluralism Circle's commitment to combating racism, not only as individuals but within our organizations and throughout the Frogtown community.

Over the past two years, the Pluralism Circle has sponsored several community healing ceremonies and peace

pole plantings in Frogtown. Several organizations in the Circle have sponsored anti-racism training for their staff and volunteers. The Pluralism Circle works to help people in our neighborhood learn more about each other and to treat each other with respect. We are working to get rid of racism and to combat unfair, racist systems and institutions in our community.

The Pluralism Circle actively engages all individuals and organizations interested in our vision and mission. The challenge, as we grow, is to sustain the meaningfulness and the relationships of our work and to continue to find ways to share our learning with the Frogtown neighborhood. Getting past the surface exploration of racism to making real, lasting change is a process that requires a safe space where trust is built and can be counted on. The members of the Frogtown Pluralism Circle continue to build a foundation for true lasting social change within ourselves, our organizations and our communities. We want the Frogtown neighborhood to be known across the Twin Cities as a place that welcomes and respects all people. We want to fulfill our responsibility for making this dream a reality. ●

The Pluralism Circle

Vision/Mission Statement

The Frogtown Pluralism Circle actively seeks to engage and support individuals, organizations, and communities in:

- Undoing the insidious web of individual bigotry, prejudice and institutional racism;
- Countering racism on all levels;
- Healing the wounds of the past; and
- Cultivating a dynamic pluralistic neighborhood where diversity is welcomed, respected, and seen as an opportunity for growth.

The Frogtown Pluralism Circle meets at 633 University Avenue on the third Thursday of every month at 9:00 a.m. You are welcome to join us. For more information, call Melvin Giles at (651) 265-5712.

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Breakfast Club

How to address the realities of racial tension and division has been a struggle for religious institutions across the nation for years. The Breakfast Club, a concept developed by the Chicago Urban Reconciliation Enterprise or C.U.R.E., is a unique opportunity that provides a model for individuals and communities to deliberately bridge racial and cultural barriers.

The Breakfast Club program participants include racially diverse church leaders from different congregations who meet in pairs every month for a year. The church leaders are assigned

a partner from a different race and ethnicity. Over a shared meal, the pairs intentionally discuss issues of race in order to gain an understanding of how someone from a different cultural and racial background thinks and feels. By breaking down racial barriers, personal relationships, understanding, and respect are explored and experienced. These relationships can then potentially lead to working further together on community initiatives to combat and dismantle institutional and personal racism. "We think these informal gatherings can have educational, institutional and neighborhood

impact as well as build some deep personal and private relationships," said Reverend Roger Quant of First Covenant Church on Saint Paul's East Side.

Members of Pastor Quant's congregation are participating in the Breakfast Club along with an East Side African American church, Word of Life Christian Fellowship and Unity Baptist Church in the Summit University neighborhood. So far almost 70 individuals (or 35 pairs) from these congregations have made a commitment to meet once a month for 12 months.

A Personal Experience with the Breakfast Club

by Deborah Mitchell

As I was thinking about being asked to write about the Breakfast Club, many thoughts raced through my head. How should I describe this event in my life? I decided to describe the Breakfast Club as part of a journey that I am on. It is a journey that people of color begin when they are born and only ends when they die.

The Breakfast Club idea begins with the horrible term, "racism." Each of us who volunteers to be a part of the "Breakfast Club" is assigned a partner. The partner is a person with whom you have no previous relationship, who is of the same sex but is a member of a different race. My partner is white. We meet monthly to discuss the deeply painful issues regarding race and racism. We meet during breakfast and have made a commitment to continue our discussions with each other for a year. At our first meeting, we cried many tears, but we found out that we have many things in common that have affected us greatly.

The Breakfast Club is a journey, and on any journey you learn not only about others but about yourself, too. My partner and I have decided that we are on this journey together. We hope that the relationship we are building will help her make changes in her life and help me make changes in mine. My partner and I agree that we can't change the world, but together, we can change ourselves. The greatest thing we both hope to gain is that we can be positive role models to our children. We hope our children will be watching, listening, and learning from us. ●



Photo: Ron Germondson

• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

We think these informal gatherings can have educational, institutional and neighborhood impact as well as build some deep personal and private relationships.

Breakfast Club Discussion Topics

Month	Topics
Month 1	Introductions, definitions & expectations
Month 2	First experiences with race When I was the "only" one
Month 3	Family & community views, stereotypes
Month 4	The historic & contemporary role of Scripture
Month 5	You, your friends, & your response to racism
Month 6	Is there a reason to review history? Slavery?
Month 7	White privileges; Have you benefited or suffered?
Month 8	Affirmative action, reverse discrimination
Month 9	Ethnocentric, ethnic pride
Month 10	Interracial dating & marriage, the raw nerve
Month 11	Multiracial worship & community, is it worth it?
Month 12	How I hope to make a difference. I have a dream.

According to some of the materials provided by C.U.R.E., "the one-year commitment provides the framework that will encourage accountability and incentive to meet when the discussions get heated or challenging."

The Breakfast Club program emphasizes that, through the Church, a common bond can help address racial tensions and differences. However, the gulf between racial groups persists. The Breakfast Club is based on racial righteousness versus racial reconciliation. Whereas reconciliation implies that there is a need to restore something that has been broken, racial righteousness implies that there is something new to be forged spiritually.

Each Breakfast Club participant receives a monthly mailing that includes resources to help guide the discussions. The 12 topic areas are listed in the table. Monthly phone calls from the Breakfast Club coordinators evaluate the progress of the groups and provide additional support as needed. Every quarter, a large group meeting brings all the pairs together to share their experiences and learn from others. At the end of the year, participants will be surveyed and asked to support the materials and meeting costs for a new Breakfast Club member. ●

To find out more about the Breakfast Club, contact Reverend Roger Quant at the First Covenant Church, 1280 Arcade Street, Saint Paul, MN 55106 or (651) 774-0344.

Sources: © C.U.R.E., (Chicago Urban Reconciliation Enterprise)

Jewish Community Action

by Amanda Seigel, Jewish Community Action

Jewish Community Action (JCA) was founded in 1995 with the mission to bring together Jewish people from diverse traditions and perspectives to promote understanding and action about social and economic justice issues in Minnesota. JCA unites individuals and congregations to bring a distinct Jewish voice to broader community efforts to address social and economic problems. The organization provides leadership and training to increase Jewish advocacy and activism on social justice issues and seeks to develop coalitions with communities of color and religious communities.

In 1998, Jewish Community Action conducted a congregational inreach program, in which JCA members surveyed members of their congregations on current social issues. The three main issues identified during the

inreach were racial justice, affordable housing, and community reinvestment. This discovery led to the formation of working groups for each issue.

JCA's Racial Justice Working Group seeks to build anti-racist leadership and action in the Jewish community. The group's objectives include developing anti-racism training that can be provided in the Jewish community and working with communities of color on local issues. As part of this work, JCA serves as a member of the Governor's Commission on the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday events, and has worked for the past two years to help coordinate events. JCA also sponsored "Intersecting Rhythms," a series of cultural programs exploring African American and Jewish American identity, expression, and cross-cultural dialogue.

JCA's Affordable Housing Working Group contributes to JCA's ongoing involvement in affordable housing issues. The group's objectives include preserving subsidized housing and other affordable housing, increasing affordable housing in urban and suburban areas, and promoting training and advocacy for Russian and English speaking members of the Jewish community around affordable housing issues. JCA is active at the legislative level in mobilizing members of the Jewish community to influence affordable housing policy and work with other local affordable housing advocacy groups.

Role models

One form of racism is pressure from the grown-ups around us. For instance, my stepfather is really racist. I try not to let that affect me because right now one of my greatest role models is a white man, Chris Vandel. He's one of my greatest role models. When I see somebody like him being a leader, I think that maybe I can take his position one day and follow in his footsteps.

— Teen man

JCA's Community Reinvestment Working Group seeks to explore and increase Jewish investment in core urban areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The group's objectives include promoting Jewish institutional investment in community development institutions such as credit unions, and establishing specific financial goals related to Jewish investment in low-income communities. This work is part of national initiative sponsored by the Philadelphia-based Shefa Fund to stimulate stronger and more visible American Jewish Institutional investment in low-income community development projects. ●

For more information about Jewish Community Action, please contact us at 612-822-1442.

Personal Reflection

Overcoming Fears

by Angelique Beards, Guadalupe Area Project



Source: Guadalupe Area Project

I think there is a fear about things that are different from what we know. So because of this fear, we avoid it. We avoid it by mocking it or ignoring it. People do these things because they are ignorant. We only know ourselves and beyond that, there are some things we choose not to explore. In order to overcome this fear, I believe we must become more

knowledgeable. I can't think of a better place to do that than at school. At school, there is a common ground, a neutral territory where the opportunity for us to face and overcome our fears is waiting around every corner. School has a very diverse atmosphere, but more times than not, you will see segregation. People cling to what they know and to people like themselves.

To break this bad habit, I think information needs to be available for

I am

*I am from God, Creator of all,
I am from the garden, where the apple was ate.
The place where the world was at one time harmonious,
but now is just the complete opposite.*

I am from a place. A place I have never been. Another place where I was happy.

I am from the ship that brought me to where I am now. The place where many of my greats jumped and then drowned to their death.

*I am from the beatings we received only because we tried to leave.
I am from the struggles we endured to be free by law, not knowing that once free we would always in some small way still be imprisoned by hate.*

I am from confusion. Confusion because I am also the counter.

I am from a place where we decided we wanted more. We weren't happy. We had to bring misery to others also. I am from the ship that brought them here. I was the captain. I am from the hand that chained and enslaved those people and then raped them. I am the one who took the children, screaming, from their parents arms.

I am from all this. All this I have done never knowing that one day it would become me. From all of that it has transformed me to become who I am now: I am irony. I am love and hate. I am greed. I am power. I am man. I am woman and child. I am up. I am down. I am Black. I am White. I am respect. I am looked up to and also looked down upon on.

*I am all these things. All these things are me. I am everything...
I am the future...I am the past. And I am now. I AM ME!*

— Angelique Beards

People do these things because they are ignorant...I believe we must become more knowledgeable.

everyone. I feel that the schools should have more discussions about diversity, and there needs to be more productive activities during celebrations of Black History month, Hmong New Year, Day of the Day, etc. There also needs to be more multicultural and diverse staff on board who can help us initiate the process of learning about our own heritage and other cultures. By doing this, there will be less looking down and more looking up at a person because they are different than you.

From this learning process an understanding will develop, and from this understanding some walls can get knocked down and bridges built in their places. ●



Macalester College Dismantling Racism Group Opens Minds and Hearts

by Mathew Abts, Macalester College Dismantling Racism Group

The Dismantling Racism Group (DRG) is a multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural learning community struggling to unlearn racism. Composed of local community members, Macalester students, staff, faculty and alumni, DRG is creating an anti-racist institutional philosophy for

Macalester College and its surrounding community. Recently, DRG joined other student groups to initiate an internal review of multiculturalism at

Macalester. This effort has heightened awareness of the ongoing problem of institutional racism on campus and in the community.

DRG has offered introductory anti-racism training conducted by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (New Orleans) and Crossroads Ministry (Chicago). Almost 100 individuals have attended, and 40 have completed advanced anti-racism training with the People's Institute.

The experience with this training has been tremendously valuable.

Upcoming training opportunities are available August 11-13, and DRG invites anybody interested to attend. At a recent DRG meeting, several DRG members shared with *Community Matters*.

Matt

Before my involvement in DRG I focused my time on proving that I was not a racist. Until I was nine years old, I lived in a mainly African American neighborhood. I went to the local

school and played with the local kids – African Americans, Laotians and Mexicans. Since I was nice to people of color – and I didn't tell racist jokes – I thought I couldn't be a racist.

The training provided a few definitions

I think white privilege is obvious to people of color, and I felt a little foolish that it had to be pointed out to me.

that transformed my thinking. One was white privilege, which is defined as the advantages white people have because people give us the benefit of the doubt when we apply for a job, or a mortgage, or try to get an apartment or an education. People of color are discriminated against in subtle and blatant ways on a daily basis. I think white privilege is obvious to people of color, and I felt a little foolish that it had to be pointed out to me. Now that I see white privilege, the real challenge is acting on this knowledge.

Chris

As I became aware of white privilege and institutional prejudice, I began to see power in every interaction. I came to understand that untamed power is one of the main dangers of an institution. Everyone thinks they are doing what is in others' best interest, but without accountability, there is no way to be sure. Accountability is one of the most important aspects of the Dismantling Racism Group.

Nathan

Being a native of South Africa, I have experienced the brutal injustices of racism almost my entire life. I did not expect to receive any new information or insights on the matter. However, the first day of training proved to be a real shock to my sensibilities. I was confronted with the radical notion that all white people were racists by virtue of their white privilege and their participation, whether conscious or unconscious, in a racist system. It dawned upon me that it was precisely because white people refused to acknowledge their own racism that it (racism) was able to propagate and fester in this society and my own. In my country white people consider their racism to be a desirable and beneficial state of affairs for everyone involved, whereas in this country, white people believe that racism is a relic of the past, or the burden of minorities.

My experience with DRG hasn't been confined to the culpability of white people. I have also realized my own

continued on back page

In my country white people consider their racism to be a desirable and beneficial state of affairs for everyone involved, whereas in this country, white people believe that racism is a relic of the past, or the burden of minorities.

Twin Cities Healing the Heart of America 2000 Offers Hope

by Hector Garcia, National Conference for Community and Justice

In January, the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), invited concerned individuals and organizations to attend the St. Paul and Minneapolis showings of the National Conversation on Race, Ethnicity and Culture broadcast from Hartford, Connecticut. Since February, this group has been meeting monthly at the Minneapolis Community Development Agency to build better connections between local anti-racism efforts and to create a stronger voice for these efforts throughout the Twin Cities community.

In the year 2000, the group plans to sponsor a Twin Cities enactment of a project known as *Healing the Heart of America*. Originated in Richmond Virginia in 1993 with the work of a nonprofit organization, *Hope in the Cities*, the project is now spreading to other cities to help heal the wounds of racism and bring about racial reconciliation and cooperation. The former capital of the Confederacy and a port of entry for African slaves, Richmond recently has become an example of how honest conversation can break down stubborn and old barriers between races.

The newly elected Tim Kaine recently became the first white mayor of the city to publicly express regret for the history of slavery. This was a gesture toward reconciliation that is still unique in the nation and a strong indication of a move away from traditional race-based politics. In 1998,

other community leaders in Richmond convened teams of elected officials, community activists, and business people from around the country to offer testimonies about the positive impact of the *Hope in the Cities'* work on Richmond's business sector and the community as a whole.

We can bring communities together through shared history.

The *Twin Cities Healing the Heart of America 2000* will be based on the Richmond model. It will include a conference and a Unity Walk through history and will be preceded and followed by a series of community dialogues about personal experiences and perspectives with race. The dialogues in the Twin Cities will be facilitated by *Hope in the Cities* and NCCJ. In an interview by *Nation's Cities' Weekly*, published by the National League of Cities, Rob Corcoran, the national coordinator for *Hope in the Cities*, said, "If talk is done well, that is action. If people truly go through the dialogue experience, they are going to be different people, behave differently, relate to other people differently. ...We can bring communities together through shared history."

The Unity Walk through history will need to be quite different in the Twin Cities than it was in Richmond. Whereas Richmond's historical sites of racism on the Unity Walk were primarily related to relations between blacks and whites, the history of the Twin Cities will be told through a series of multiracial and multicultural stories.

These stories can help break down barriers, identify cultural blind spots and help to create further progress in racial harmony and cooperation.

The rich heritage of the United States provides an inspirational precedent to all planners and participants of the *Twin Cities Healing the Heart of America 2000*. The excellence and

strength in the country's economy and government is due largely to the rich resources provided by the native and immigrant groups which formed it. This precedent presents a challenge throughout the next millennium to Minnesotans. We can promote and implement a commitment of resources to create and strengthen our communities based on racial equality and justice. ●

If you are interested in learning more about this project, call Hector Garcia, Executive Director of the National Conference at (651) 659-0401.

Moving Beyond Dialogue:

What are the Most Powerful Steps That Could Help Our Community Work Together Across Cultural and Racial Differences?

On May 18, participants at the *Cities at Work* forum, **Face-to-Face: How we Interact** met in small groups to discuss this question. The following list summarizes the responses recorded by each of the groups that evening.

- ✎ Create more time and space for engaging in cross-cultural dialogue and public discussion with neighbors and others
- ✎ Continually challenge our own racial and cultural prejudices, biases, and assumptions and those of others
- ✎ Insure that the public schools offer a multicultural curriculum that is affirming and inclusive of the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the student population
- ✎ Insure that the composition of the public school administration, teachers, and staff reflect the racial and cultural diversity of our school population and have adequate training and resources to be supportive and responsive to these diverse groups
- ✎ Nurture and celebrate the pluralism of our community to preserve the rich cultures and ethnic heritages found in our community
- ✎ Explore more ways for people of all cultural and racial backgrounds to tell and share their stories
- ✎ Find more opportunities to learn from and with youth
- ✎ Initiate and promote more community-based multicultural collaborative efforts ●

Saint Paul New Americans Advisory Committee: A Forum for Immigrant Issues

by Bob Webber, New American Advisory Committee

The Saint Paul New Americans Advisory Committee (NAAC) is a volunteer committee established by Mayor Norm Coleman. NAAC promotes relations and connections between Saint Paul's growing immigrant community and the Mayor's Office. NAAC members are appointed by the Mayor, but NAAC meetings are open to the public. In fact, the advisory committee encourages anyone interested in discussing social and/or political issues that affect immigrants to attend the meetings.

Over the past year, exploring how to engage the immigrant communities' active citizenship has been one of NAAC's major concerns. Minnesota Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer and Bert Black guided committee members on a tour of the Secretary of State's office in May. The committee also recently met with the Saint Paul Police Department and hopes to collaborate soon on some materials that will facilitate relations between the police and new immigrant communities.

Last year, the NAAC focused its work on welfare reform and studying the fast-growing Somali community. A panel of Somali leaders and activists helped to design and organize a public forum. A brochure about the Somali community was also developed for community-wide distribution. Sirad Osman, a Somali job counselor recently joined the committee.

The Mayor's Office sends a representative to every meeting. Cha Vang currently represents the Mayor. Bob Webber is the Chair and Interim Secretary. NAAC meetings are held bi-monthly at the Hubbs Center, 1030 University Avenue West. The next

meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 26 from 4:00-5:30 p.m. If you would like to attend a NAAC meeting or would like more information about the committee, please contact the Mayor's Office at (651) 266-8510. ●

Root causes of pain

I think we are only dealing with the surface issue. We talk about all the pain people feel [from racial stereotyping], but we are not talking of the sources that cause the pain...I can try to have good personal relations with people, but if I am systematically advantaged as a white person, that will undercut my personal efforts day in and day out. So when I hear you asking how discrimination feels I'm not sure that's the critical question. I already know how everyone feels to be discriminated against.

I agree that the pain of discrimination is 100 percent valid. I'm just saying we need to look at the root causes of that pain and not just talk about interpersonal relations...I would suggest we take a critical look at how we divide our resources. Look at a map of the Twin Cities: most of the African American people are living right in the center and most of the whites are in the suburbs. Then look at the way money goes to the schools - the suburbs put money in their schools and the inner city schools get less funding. That problem goes much deeper than interpersonal relationships.

— Adult man

Community Circle Dialogues: *Reflection and Action on Education, Housing and Race in the Twin Cities*

by Dick Little, Education and Housing Equity Project

There is growing ethnic and racial diversity within Saint Paul and the entire Twin Cities region. We are becoming increasingly polarized along the lines of race and class. Demographic changes in the central cities, suburban communities, and school districts point to serious issues of equity and access to opportunity in both housing and public education.

Community-wide study circle programs have taken place in many communities across the country (See sidebar, next page), but the Twin Cities community circle dialogue project is the first attempt at a region-wide program. With the growing national attention to regional policy issues such as urban sprawl, segregation, social equity, and transportation, the regional approach to community circle dialogues is an innovative model. Recently, the community circles on education, housing and race in the Twin Cities were selected by the President's Initiative on Race as a model of a "Promising Practice for Racial Reconciliation" and as an innovative approach to our nation's racial problems.

Metro-wide Community Circle Dialogues

The community circle dialogues on education, housing and race, initially launched by the Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP), encourage civic engagement and multi-

cultural conversations to help build more inclusive communities in the Twin Cities. In 1997, EHEP and partnering organizations, including the Minnesota Minority Education Project and the Metropolitan Interfaith Council, sponsored the first "community conversations" or community circle dialogues on the challenges of segregation in education and housing. In the fall of 1998, a new round of community circles was launched in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

The community circle dialogue project has brought together hundreds of people in dozens of communities throughout the Twin Cities region, who met in "community circles." Suburban moms, city dwellers, recent immigrants, small business people, the

underemployed, people of color, pastors, police officers, teachers and many others have met in small groups to explore the related issues of housing and school segregation. Dialogue participants share personal experiences with prejudice and racism and develop their ideas for building integrated and inclusive communities that work.

In 1999, several major community activities had their genesis in the circle dialogues of 1997 and 1998. The innovative and inclusionary housing legislation sponsored by the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability was recently passed into law by the 1999 State Legislature. MICAH (Minnesota Interfaith Coalition for Affordable Housing) and the Illusion Theater



Community circle dialogue participants share experiences at June gathering.

Source: Education and Housing Equity Project

Community Circle Dialogues Engage Citizens Across the Country

The *Cities at Work* and EHEP community circle dialogues are modeled after a highly successful study circle program developed by the national Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC), headquartered in Pomfret, Connecticut. Study circles have been used throughout the country to generate reasoned citizen dialogue, decisive policy input, and grass-roots problem solving. SCRC is a national partner in the Twin Cities circle dialogue project.

The community circle or study circle process is one important way to achieve new levels of citizenship, interaction and civic action on difficult issues affecting the community. Large scale, community-wide and metro-wide community circle programs can have a significant, cumulative impact. These impacts range from new friendships, to neighborhood projects, to city-wide action plans, to new legislation. Citizens who participate in community circles often become more involved in the civic life of their community.

Examples of other community study circle programs that SCRC has assisted include suburban Cleveland (race relations), Maine (community violence), Oklahoma League of Women Voters (criminal justice) and Lima, Ohio. In Lima, communities of faith joined forces with the state university, labor unions, the chamber of commerce, and the mayor and city council to initiate the first city-wide study circle program on race relations. Study circle participants in Lima have done everything from building a new playground to changing the makeup of a regional board. A statewide study circle program in Oklahoma helped the state legislature enact sweeping changes in the criminal system. ●

produced and performed the fair housing theater event "Like Waters Rolling Down" in churches and synagogues around the metro area this past year. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and MICAH were both partners and sponsors of the 1997 community circle dialogues on housing, education, and race. Another idea that grew out of the community circle dialogues, still in the development stage, is the creation of a property tax check-off as part of mortgage and utility payments. The funds donated will contribute to a metropolitan affordable housing fund. The small monthly donations will support fair housing initiatives and reduce up front expenses for households attempting to access better housing.

The community circle dialogues can also lead to new relationships and partnerships that contribute to overcoming racial stereotyping and discriminatory attitudes. A circle convened by Saint Paul's Commonbond Communities, Inc., brought together residents of one of their developments in Oakdale with nearby residents who had initially opposed the introduction of affordable housing in their neighborhood. New understandings, new connections and new commitments by residents are building a shared community.

Community Circle Dialogues in Saint Paul

In the spring of 1999, the *Cities at Work* public forum series kicked off their fourth season with "Unleashing the Power of Our Community: A Public Dialogue on Race, Connections and Commitments." *Cities at Work* community circle dialogues were convened to complement the citywide forums by engaging Saint Paul residents in dialogue at the grass-roots level.

A new discussion guide was developed. Experienced facilitators were recruited and trained by the Minnesota Facilitators Network and Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution. A training workshop on "Understanding Community and Institutional Racism" was offered by Minnesota Churches Against Racism. In Saint Paul, twelve community circles have met this spring; more are planning to convene in the fall. Each circle is ethnically and racially diverse, consists of 8 to 15 participants, and meets for approximately 10 hours spread over five sessions. Examples of circles meeting this spring are the Frogtown Pluralism Circle, and the SPNN (Saint Paul Neighborhood Network) Circle.

In all, more than 50 community circles have or will be convened in both Saint Paul and the Twin Cities area. *Cities at Work* and EHEP co-sponsored a gathering of the community circle participants in June. In November, *Cities at Work* will hold its final forum, "Beyond Tolerance: A Call to Action." The forum will capture the results of the community circle conversations, generate ideas for community action and

continued on back page

Macalester College...

continued from page 20

I realized that as someone who could probably become a gatekeeper, I had the responsibility to choose to either perpetuate the status quo or to agitate for change.

responsibility and duty with this issue. Many black people rise to positions in institutions where they serve as "gatekeepers" of these institutions. I realized that as someone who could probably become a gatekeeper, I had the responsibility to choose to either perpetuate the status quo or to agitate for change.

Art

As an aged (50 years old) community member and white male, my perspective on DRG is vastly different. The most important lesson DRG has taught me is that we must model the organization we wish to see. This is about being human with each other. It is about sharing how we feel, having fun, and even disagreeing strongly but always coming back together and healing. DRG has also heightened my awareness of my role as a white male. I can see how we subvert multicultural groups by not sharing power and leadership. We are often so busy "getting things done" that we don't realize how we have ignored our colleagues, denied their humanity, and missed the very essence of the work. Finally, I am pleased, proud, and humbled that DRG considers me a member and very much appreciate the intergenerational quality of my experience with DRG. We are learning from each other. ●

*This is about being human with each other.
It is about sharing how we feel, having fun, and even disagreeing strongly but always coming back together and healing.*

Membership in DRG is open to everyone, and we welcome comments and questions about our work. For more information, call (651) 696-7080.

Community Circle Dialogues:

continued from page 25

conversations, generate ideas for community action and mobilize citizens to take action in new and different ways that bridge the diverse cultural, ethnic and racial communities that make up Saint Paul.

A metropolitan Citizens Summit, sponsored by Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio, is also planned for early Winter that will include participants from all of the Twin Cities area circles, and invited community and public officials. At the Summit, participants will use electronic audience response technology to discover areas of consensus and to prioritize action steps for the community. ●

If you are interested in learning more about community circle dialogues in Saint Paul, call Barb Rose at (651) 659-6031 or email her at bar@wilder.org. If you live or work in Minneapolis, call Dick Little at (612) 330-1505.



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EAR

The image features two large, bold Chinese characters in a traditional calligraphic style. The character on the left is '耳' (ear), and the character on the right is '聽' (listen). The character '聽' is composed of the '耳' radical on the left and the '聦' radical on the right. The '聦' radical is further composed of '目' (eyes) at the top and '心' (heart) at the bottom. The overall composition is centered and occupies most of the page's width.

EYES

UNDIVIDED
ATTENTION

HEART

The Chinese characters that form the verb “to listen” tell us something significant about this skill

Courtesy of the Fall 1997 *North Carolina Mediator*.

Metropolitan Citizens Summit
Education, Housing and Race in the Twin Cities Area
December 1999 (date, time and place to be determined)

At the conclusion of the 1999 Community Circle Dialogues, circle participants will be invited to participate in a "Citizens Summit" on creating better schools, livable wage jobs and affordable housing for every resident of the Twin Cities.

This event will be designed to bring "closure" to the Community Circle Dialogues and to move the community forward on education, housing and race in the Twin Cities:

- to honor the work that dedicated citizens have undertaken in the community circles;
- to provide a forum for further exchange of ideas among these diverse groups of citizens (in the form of more concrete solutions and next steps);
- to further build connections among citizens metro-wide to *act*;
- and, finally, to generate attention for citizens' ideas and recommendations among local, state and national policy leaders, the media and the public.

The ultimate goal is to begin to "change the way we do business" as an economically and racially diverse metropolitan community.

The Citizens Summit will have two parts:

1) **A citizens forum with participants from the Community Circle Dialogues**

At the forum, participants will present their best ideas for moving from ideas to action on better integrating the metropolitan area (i.e., building more inclusive communities and schools). This session will be fully interactive, with participants having the ability to electronically vote on and prioritize the various ideas presented. The forum will be moderated by a known and trusted community leader in the Twin Cities.

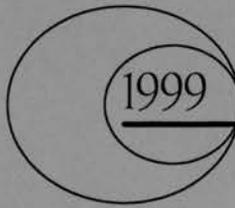
In addition, the forum will be attended by a number of local policy makers – elected officials from suburban, urban, metropolitan, school, county and state government – all key officials working on or influencing these issues. The goal of the meeting will be to have these policy makers present to listen to the citizens who participated in the community circle conversations, and to understand the depth of support of their ideas.

2) **A luncheon, public address to the Minnesota Meeting, and radio broadcast**

In conjunction with the forum, the Minnesota Meeting will host an address by Lani Guinier, a nationally prominent leader in civil rights, education and housing (who will have observed the citizens summit). A larger group of community leaders – largely from business and the professions – will join the participants from the citizens forum for the Minnesota Meeting, a luncheon event which will be broadcast live on the stations of Minnesota Public Radio. This event will give the guest speaker the opportunity to relate to a larger public (luncheon guests and radio listeners) her understanding of the work among citizens that took place at the "citizens summit."

Sponsors: **The Minnesota Meeting, the Minnesota Public Radio Civic Journalism Initiative, and the Education & Housing Equity Project**

Funded by: **The Minneapolis Foundation and The Saint Paul Foundation**



1999 CITIES AT WORK COMMUNITY CIRCLE DIALOGUES

EDUCATION AND HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

October 1, 1999

6:00-9:00 p.m.

University of Saint Thomas, St. Paul Campus

Murray Herrick Hall, Room # 151

**FALL 1999 FACILITATOR TRAINING
AGENDA**

Welcome	Barbara Blackstone
Circle Dialogues as A Tool for Building Community	Willie Nesbitt
Goals of the Community Circle Dialogue Project	Dick Little
Role of the Facilitator	Ellen Huffschmidt
Role of the Co-Facilitator	Bill Hannon
Break	
Using the Discussion Guide and Other Reference Materials	Mariann Johnson & Barb Rose
Moving from Dialogue to Action	Elizabeth Campbell
Closing	Barb Rose

Facilitator's Handbook

Resources for facilitating community circle discussions

CONTENTS

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- II. A Comparison of Dialogue and Debate (p. 5)
- III. The Role of Facilitators (p. 6)
- IV. The Role of Participants (p. 7)
- V. Suggestions for Discussion Guidelines (p. 8)
- VI. Tips for Effective Facilitation (p. 9)
- VII. What is ORID? (p. 11)
- VIII. Suggestions for Dealing with Typical Challenges (p. 12)

A note to facilitators

Welcome and thank you for joining this community circle project. Your time and commitment are very valuable contributions to the success of this project.

The materials in this handbook have been developed as suggested reference tools to help you monitor and facilitate your circle discussion. Many of these materials have been adapted from other sources. You are welcome to photocopy whatever you would like from this handbook to share with your group.

Again, many thanks for all your hard work. We hope this handbook provides you with some guidelines for a productive and provocative community circle.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CIRCLE?

A community circle IS:

- a small group discussion involving deliberation and problem solving examined from many perspectives with the help of the members' knowledge and experience. This discussion is often informed by research data and discussion materials, and aided by a facilitator whose job is to manage the discussion.

A community circle IS NOT the same as:

- **a focus group**, a small group usually organized to gather or test information from the members. Participants are often recruited to represent a particular viewpoint or group at a focus group.
- **a facilitated meeting with a predetermined outcome**, a meeting such as a committee or board meeting with goals established ahead of time. *A community circle begins with a shared interest among its members. The dialogue unfolds as the process progresses and is partly guided by its members.*
- **a town meeting**, an official governance process or a large-group meeting drawing attention to a issue.
- **a public hearing**, a large-group public meeting which allows concerns to be aired.
- **a class**, with teachers and pupils, where the teacher or the expert imparts knowledge to students.

A Comparison of Dialogue and Debate

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.

Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.

In debate, winning is the goal.

In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.

In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.

Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.

Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.

Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.

Debate defends assumptions as truth.

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.

Debate causes critique of the other position.

Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.

Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.

Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.

Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.

In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.

In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.

Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.

In debate, one searches for glaring differences.

In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.

In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other positions.

Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.

Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.

Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.

Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.

Dialogue remains open-ended.

Debate implies a conclusion.

Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR).

The Role of Facilitators

- ◆ Remain neutral; the facilitator's opinions are not part of the discussion.
- ◆ Help the group set its ground rules, and keep to them.
- ◆ Help group members grapple with the content by asking probing questions.
- ◆ Help group members identify areas of agreement and disagreement.
- ◆ Bring in points of view that haven't been talked about.
- ◆ Create opportunities for everyone to participate.
- ◆ Focus and help to clarify the discussion.
- ◆ Summarize key points in the discussion, or ask others to do so.
- ◆ Remain objective, monitor process and guide rather than actively participating in the dialogue.

AND

- ◆ Become self-aware; good facilitators know their own strengths, weaknesses, "hooks," biases, and values.
- ◆ Put the group first.
- ◆ Develop a passion for group process with its never-ending variety.
- ◆ Appreciate all kinds of people.
- ◆ Show commitment to democratic principles.

The Role of Participants

- **Listen carefully to others.** Try to understand the concerns and values that underlie their views.
- **Maintain an open mind.** You don't score points by rigidly sticking to your early statements. Feel free to explore ideas that you have rejected or not considered in the past.
- **Strive to understand the position of those who disagree with you.** Your own knowledge is not complete until you understand other participants' points of view and why they feel the way they do.
- **Help keep the discussion on track.** Make sure your remarks are relevant.
- **Speak your mind freely, but don't monopolize the discussion.** Make sure you are giving others the chance to speak.
- **Address your remarks to the group members rather than the facilitator.** Feel free to address your remarks to a particular participant, especially one who has not been heard from or who you think may have special insight. Don't hesitate to question other participants to learn more about their ideas.
- **Communicate your needs to the facilitator.** The facilitator is responsible for guiding the discussion, summarizing key ideas, and soliciting clarification of unclear points, but he/she may need advice on when this is necessary. Chances are, you are not alone when you don't understand what someone has said.
- **Value your own experience and opinions.** Don't feel pressured to speak, but realize that failing to speak means robbing the group of your wisdom.
- **Engage in friendly disagreement.** Differences can invigorate the group, especially when it is relatively homogeneous on the surface. Don't hesitate to challenge ideas you disagree with, and don't take it personally if someone challenges your ideas.

Suggestions for Discussion Guidelines

- ◆ Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- ◆ Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- ◆ Share “air time.”
- ◆ If you are offended, say so; and say why.
- ◆ You can disagree, but don’t personalize it; stick to the issue. No name-calling or stereotyping.
- ◆ Speak for yourself, not for others.

Tips for Effective Facilitation

Be prepared

The facilitator does not need to be an expert on the topic being discussed, but should be the best prepared for the discussion. This means understanding the subject, being familiar with the discussion materials, thinking ahead of time about the directions in which the discussion might go, and preparing questions to help further the discussion.

Set a relaxed and open tone

- ◆ Welcome everyone and create a friendly relaxed atmosphere.
- ◆ Well-placed humor is always welcome, and helps to build the group's connections.

Establish clear discussion guidelines

At the beginning of the community circle, help the group establish its own discussion guidelines by asking the participants to suggest ways for the group to behave. (See page 8 for sample guidelines.)

Monitor and assist the group process

- ◆ Keep track of how the group members are participating - who has spoken, who hasn't spoken, and whose points haven't been heard.
- ◆ Consider splitting up into smaller groups to examine a variety of viewpoints or to give people a chance to talk more easily about their personal connection to the issue.
- ◆ When deciding whether to intervene, lean toward non-intervention.
- ◆ Don't talk after each comment or answer every question; allow participants to respond directly to each other.
- ◆ Allow time for pauses and silence. People need time to reflect and respond.
- ◆ Don't let anyone dominate; try to involve everyone.
- ◆ Remember: a community circle is not a debate, but a group dialogue. If participants forget this, don't hesitate to ask the group to help re-establish the ground rules.

Help the group grapple with the content

- ◆ Make sure the group considers a wide range of views. Ask the group to think about the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of looking at an issue or solving a problem.
- ◆ Ask participants to think about the concerns and values that underlie their beliefs and the opinions of others.
- ◆ Help the discussion along by clarifying, paraphrasing, and summarizing the discussion.
- ◆ Help participants to identify “common ground”, but don’t try to force consensus.

Use probing comments and open-ended questions which don’t lead to yes or no answers

This will result in a more productive discussion. Some useful questions include:

- ◆ What seems to be the key point here?
- ◆ What is the crux of your disagreement?
- ◆ What would you say to support (or challenge) that point?
- ◆ Please give an example, or describe a personal experience to illustrate that point.
- ◆ Could you help us understand the reasons behind your opinion?
- ◆ What experiences or beliefs might lead a person to support that point of view?
- ◆ What do you think people who hold that opinion care deeply about?
- ◆ What would be a strong case against what you just said?
- ◆ What do you find most persuasive about that point of view?
- ◆ What is it about that position that you just cannot live with?
- ◆ What have we missed that we need to talk about?
- ◆ What information supports that point of view?

Reserve adequate time for closing the discussion

- ◆ Ask the group for last comments and thoughts about the subject.
- ◆ Thank everyone for their contributions.
- ◆ Make any necessary announcements.
- ◆ Give a quick overview of the next session.

What is the Focused Conversation Method (ORID)?

The Focused Conversation Method (ORID) is simple and natural. To elicit the most participation from everyone in a group, start with an **Objective** or factual question. These are the easiest to answer and allow more introverted or shy personality types to participate. This is the kind of question that is so easy, you can ask everyone to answer, thereby becoming part of the discussion. The next level of question, **Reflective**, involves getting more in touch with our feelings and takes the conversation a little deeper. Some people don't respond easily to talking about their feelings, so asking for associations is another way to bring forth this level of conversation. The third level is the **Interpretive**, or meaning seeking, analyzing stage of a conversation. Much of our society tends to go immediately to this level of discussion. It is a rich stage in any conversation. Unfortunately, many people get left out of active participation when we go here too fast. That's why this is the third level of questions we suggest, not the first. The last level is **Decisional** which is really asking about your personal relationship to what's been said so far, what comes next and how you will apply what you have learned in the conversation. It is the action oriented or "where do we go from here?" stage. You can have as many or as few questions at each level as you want or need.

Most people gravitate to or have a preference to a particular stage of conversation. By creating questions that address each of the stages, you increase the likelihood of greater participation by group members.

These stages occur naturally in any good discussion where everyone is involved. We want to give you a guide for designing an effective discussion that will involve the entire group. Within the basic format there are numerous ways to create questions. Feel free to alter them to suit your own personal style.

Suggestions for Dealing with Typical Challenges

Most community circles go smoothly because participants are there voluntarily and have a stake in the program. But there are challenges in any group process. What follows are some of the most common difficulties that community circle leaders encounter, along with some possible ways to deal with those difficulties.

Problem:

Certain participants don't say anything, seem shy.

Possible responses: Try to draw out quiet participants, but don't put them on the spot. Make eye contact - it reminds them that you'd like to hear from them. Look for nonverbal cues that indicate participants are ready to speak. Frequently, people will feel more comfortable in later sessions of a community circle program and will begin to participate. When someone comes forward with a brief comment after staying in the background for most of the community circle, you can encourage him or her by conveying genuine interest and asking for more information. And it's always helpful to talk with people informally before and after the session.

Problem:

An aggressive or talkative person dominates the discussion.

Possible responses: As the facilitator, it is your responsibility to handle domineering participants. Once it becomes clear what this person is doing, you *must* intervene and set limits. Start by limiting your eye contact with the speaker. Remind the group that everyone is invited to participate - "Let's hear from some folks who haven't had a chance to speak yet." If necessary, you can speak to the person by name. "Charlie, we've heard from you; now let's hear what Barbara has to say." Be careful to manage your comments and tone of voice - you are trying to make a point without offending the speaker.

Problem:

Lack of focus, not moving forward, participants wander off the topic.

Possible responses: Responding to this takes judgment and intuition. It is the facilitator's role to help move the discussion along. But it is not always clear which way it is going. Keep an eye on the participants to see how engaged they are, and if you are in doubt, check it out with the group. "We're a little off the topic right now. Would you like to stay with this, or move on to the next question?" If a participant goes into a lengthy digression, you may have to say: "We are wandering off the subject, and I'd like to give others a chance to speak."

Problem:

Someone puts forth information which you know to be false. Or, participants get hung up in a dispute about facts, but no one present knows the answer.

Possible responses: Ask, "Has anyone heard conflicting information?" If no one offers a correction, offer one yourself. And if no one knows the facts, and the point is central to the discussion, encourage members to look up the information before the next meeting. Remind the group that experts often disagree.

Problem:

Lack of interest, no excitement, no one wants to talk, only a few people participating.

Possible responses: This rarely happens in community circles, but it may occur if the facilitator talks too much or does not give participants enough time to respond to questions. People need time to think, reflect, and get ready to speak up. It may help to pose a question and go around the circle until everyone has a chance to respond. Occasionally, you might have a lack of excitement in the discussion because the group seems to be in agreement and isn't coming to grips with the tensions inherent in the issue. In this case the leader's job is to try to bring other views into the discussion, especially if no one in the group holds them. "Do you know people who hold other views? What would they say about our conversation?"

Problem:

Tension or open conflict in the group. Perhaps two participants lock horns and argue. Or, one participant gets angry and confronts another.

Possible responses: If there is tension, address it directly. Remind participants that disagreement and conflict of ideas is what a community circle is all about. Explain that, for conflict to be productive, it must be focused on the issue; it is acceptable to challenge someone's ideas, but personal attacks are not acceptable. You must interrupt personal attacks, name-calling, or put-downs as soon as they occur. You will be better able to do so if you have established ground rules that disallow such behaviors and encourage tolerance for all views. Don't hesitate to appeal to the group for help; if group members bought into the ground rules, they will support you. As a last resort, consider taking a break to change the energy in the room. You can take the opportunity to talk one-on-one with the participants in question.

"WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS"

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

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

The Twin Cities are severely segregated by race and income:

- The Twin Cities metropolitan area is one of the 10 most racially segregated metropolitan areas in the United States. (Harrison, Roderick J., and Daniel Weinberg, "Racial and Ethnic Segregation in 1990," Washington D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992).
- 65% of people of color living in the seven county metro area live in the central cities; and they are even more narrowly concentrated within specific neighborhoods of Minneapolis and St. Paul. (1990 U.S. Census).
- Although only 28% of the metropolitan population reside in the central cities, 60% of those in poverty in the metro area live within the central cities. (1990 U.S. Census).

Concentrated poverty is a growing concern for the Twin Cities.

- Areas of concentrated poverty are neighborhoods or census tracts in which 40% or more of the population is at or below the poverty level.
- Areas of concentrated poverty in the Twin Cities increased from 7 census tracts in 1970 to 33 in 1990. The number of people living in the Twin Cities living in concentrated poverty increased from 11,438 individuals in 1970 to 79,048 in 1990. (Paul Jargowsky, *POVERTY AND PLACE: GHETTOS, BARRIOS, AND THE AMERICAN CITY* (1997).
- Communities of concentrated poverty are disproportionately communities of color. Nationwide, 52% of people living in concentrated poverty are African Americans while only 23% are white. In the Twin Cities, approximately 3 out of 4 poor Blacks lives in concentrated poverty as opposed to 1 out of 4 poor Whites. (Id.)
- Although Blacks constitute only 3.6% of the total metropolitan population, they represent 24.3% of the region's concentrated poverty population. (Id.)

THE CAUSES OF RACIAL SEGREGATION AND CONCENTRATED POVERTY IN THE TWIN CITIES

Concentrated poverty and racial segregation are not solely the product of "natural" settlement patterns or market forces. Urban sprawl and white/middle class flight, subsidized by government policies on highway and infrastructure expansion and development, contribute to concentrated poverty and racial segregation in Minnesota.

- A recent Sierra Club study, "The Dark Side of the American Dream" ranks the Twin Cities

metropolitan area in the top 10 metropolitan areas threatened by sprawl. This same study found that between 1970 and 1990 162 "physically adequate" schools were closed in Minneapolis, St. Paul and the inner-ring suburbs, while 78 new schools were built further out. The study stated that if development in the Twin Cities was directed inward we could save \$600 million in infrastructure costs over the next twenty years.

Political fragmentation, contributing to and combined with poor regional planning, increases the racial and economic segregation of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

- The Twin Cities are one of the most fragmented areas in the country in terms of the number of political subdivisions and school districts by area. (David Rusk, *CITIES WITHOUT SUBURBS* (1993); Myron Orfield, *METROPOLITICS: A REGIONAL AGENDA FOR COMMUNITY STABILITY* (1997)).
- This fragmentation, combined with the lack of assertive regional planning on the part of the legislature and the Met Council, has allowed segregative practices such as exclusionary zoning to proliferate. (Barbara Lukerman and Michael Kane, *Land Use Practices: Exclusionary Zoning, de Facto or de Jure*, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota (1994); The Livable Communities Housing Task Force, *Promises Deferred: An Analysis of the Affordable Housing Provisions of the Livable Communities Act* (1998)).

THE EFFECTS OF RACIAL AND ECONOMIC SEGREGATION IN THE SCHOOLS

The racial and economic segregation in Twin Cities schools are rapidly increasing.

- The percentage of students of color in Minneapolis' and Saint Paul's public schools has increased every year since 1968.
- Minneapolis projects a minority enrollment of 78.5% in grades K-6 for the 2000-01 school year. By comparison suburban school districts enrolled no more than 28% minority students in 1994-95, and outer ring suburbs enrolled no more than 10% minority students. (Gary Orfield, et. al., *Deepening Segregation in American Schools*, (1997).
- In the 1996-97 school year, ten of Minneapolis' public schools enrolled at least 90% students of color. (Id).
- Only 4% of Minnesota students are black but more than 53% of them attend majority non-white schools. (Id.).
- The percentage of Minneapolis Public School students eligible for subsidized lunches has grown from less than 30% in 1972-73 to nearly 70% in 1996. (Data from Minneapolis School District). In St. Paul, almost 2/3 of elementary students are eligible for subsidized lunches;

up from less than half only four years ago. (Data from Saint Paul School District).

- By contrast, less than 28% of students in all but two Twin Cities suburban school districts are eligible for subsidized school lunches. Several suburban districts have less than 8% of their students eligible for subsidized student lunches. (Metropolitan Council, *Trouble at the Core* (1992)).
- The ten poorest elementary schools in Minneapolis are 90% minority. (Minneapolis Public Schools, *Report of the Annual Racial/Ethnic Count of Students*, (1996)).

Segregation and concentrated poverty compromise student achievement.

- The Federal Government's 1966 Coleman Report concluded that the socioeconomic level of students' schoolmates was the only factor with a significant effect on a student's academic achievement. (Coleman, James, et. al., *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, 1966).
- Subsequent studies have found that racial composition of schools is also a factor in academic achievement:
 - higher percentages of minority students have a negative effect on student achievement (Bankston, Carl, and Stephen Caldas, "The Effect of School Population Socioeconomic Status on Individual Student Academic Achievement," *Journal of Educational Research*, (1997));
 - higher levels of segregation coincide with educational disadvantages as well as concentrated poverty (Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy A. Denton, *AMERICAN APARTHEID: SEGREGATION AND THE MAKING OF THE UNDERCLASS*, (1993));
 - the racial composition of schools directly impacts educational achievement. (Jencks, Christopher, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*, (1972)).

Twin Cities schools with high concentrations of minority and low-income students are failing:

- Results from the 1998 Basic Standards Test:
 - There was an overall pass rate of 71% on the math portion of the test. Pass rates varied significantly, however, by racial and ethnic group and by location: 76% for Whites, 26% for Blacks, 38% for Hispanics, 39% for American Indians, and 53% for Asians. In the Twin Cities suburbs, 77% of students passed as compared to 72% of students outstate and 41% of students in the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts. (Office of Educational Accountability, University of Minnesota, *The 1998 Minnesota Education Yearbook* (1998)).

- There was an overall pass rate of 68% on the reading portion of the test. Pass rates varied significantly, however, by racial and ethnic group and by location: 73% for Whites, 32% for Blacks, 39% for Hispanics, 38% for American Indians, and 48% for Asians. In the Twin Cities suburbs, 75% of students passed as compared to 68% of students outstate and 41% of students in the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts. (Id.).
- Of those students entering Minnesota high schools in 1994, 78% graduated by 1998 (N.B. this calculation excludes students who transferred out of state or to a non-public school). Four-year graduation rates varied significantly, however, by racial and ethnic group and by location: 82% for Whites, 36% for Blacks, 44% for Hispanics, 41% for American Indians, and 68% for Asians. In the Twin Cities suburbs, 84% of students graduated within four years as compared to 85% of students outstate and 47% of students in the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts. (Id.).

These severe gaps in educational achievement in Minnesota are occurring despite higher per pupil spending in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

- The average per pupil expenditure in 1998 for the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts was \$7,730 as compared to \$5,994 in the suburbs and \$5,781 outstate. A portion of this gap is attributable to higher spending on special instruction (\$1,421 per student in Minneapolis and St. Paul compared to \$873 in the suburbs and \$803 outstate). (Id.).

Research proves that desegregation increases achievement levels for minority and low-income students.

- Researchers of the Gautreaux program in Chicago found that "Black children who moved from racially segregated housing projects to white middle-income suburbs experienced improved outcomes by every measure." (Rosenbaum, James E., et. al., "Can the Kerner Commission's Housing Strategy Improve, Employment, Education, and Social Integration for Low-Income Blacks).
- Students of color bused to desegregated suburban schools experience improvements in reading and math. (Voluntary Interdistrict Coordinating Council, Complete Eleventh Report to the United States District Court, Eastern District of Missouri 25 (Jan. 1995)).
- Following desegregation, students of color in Kansas City schools performed better than national and district norms on achievement scores. (Moore, William, *Achievement and Enrollment Evaluation of the Investigative Learning Magnet Elementary Schools, 1990-91*, 25 (Oct. 1991)).
- The achievement gap between minority and white students greatly narrowed when Dallas implemented a desegregation plan. (*Equity and Choice: Issues and Answers in the Dallas Schools*, Presentation Before the National Committee for School Desegregation, 16 (March

1990)).

Research also suggests the desegregation does not negatively affect academic performances of whites and in some cases may improve their performances.

- Both whites and blacks improved standardized test scores when desegregation was implemented in Louisville, Kentucky. (Kentucky Commission of Human Rights, *School and Housing Desegregation are Working Together in Louisville and Jefferson County, 1975-1983*, 6-8 (1983)).
- When Norfolk, Virginia implemented a desegregation plan, standardized test scores improved for both blacks and whites. (Meldrum, Christina, and Susan F. Eaton, "Resegregation in Norfolk, Virginia: Does Restoring Neighborhood Schools Work?" (May 1994).

Desegregation has positive long-term societal effects that are not reflected in test scores.

- School desegregation encourages social integration on multiple levels: black students from desegregated schools have more social contacts with whites, are more likely to live in desegregated neighborhoods, more frequently work in desegregated areas, and are more likely to have higher career goals. (Crain, Robert, and Amy Stuart Wells, "Perpetuation Theory and the Long-Term Effects of School Desegregation," (1994); Dawkins, M., and J.H. Braddock, "The Continuing Significance of Desegregation: School Racial Composition and African American Inclusion in American Society," (1994).
- Black students in desegregated schools are more likely to graduate from high school, attend desegregated colleges, and graduate with degrees in higher paying professions. McPartland, James, and JoMills Braddock, *Going to College and Getting a Good Job: The Impact of Desegregation*, (1981).

Mandatory Desegregation Plans are Most Successful at Ending Segregation.

- A study of 20 school districts found that mandatory desegregation was more likely to reduce segregation and encourage racial balance. Fife, B., *Desegregation in American Schools: Comparative Intervention Strategies*, (1992))

OTHER EFFECTS OF RACIAL SEGREGATION AND CONCENTRATED POVERTY

In neighborhoods afflicted with a concentration of poverty, families "have to cope not only with their own poverty, but also with the social isolation and economic depreciation of the hundreds, if not thousands, of other families who live near them. This spatial concentration of poor people acts to magnify poverty and exacerbate its effects." (Jargowsky, 1997)

Racial segregation and concentrated poverty encourage the disinvestment of business and industry from poor communities of color and isolate these communities from employment opportunities.

- “The Met Council estimates that 296,274 jobs will be created in the metro area in the next 15 years. Two-thirds of these jobs (195,540) will be located in the suburbs ... from 45 to 48 percent will be in low paying industries [i.e. the type of job sought by central city residents with low skill/education levels]” (Livable Communities Task Force).
- “More than 67,000 units of housing for people earning less than \$22,000 will need to be created in suburban communities over the next fifteen years if all of the people working in these new jobs in low-paying industries in the suburbs sought housing within suburban communities.” (Livable Communities Task Force).

Racial Segregation and Concentrated Poverty are two of the primary causes of high violent crime rates in poor communities of color. (Douglas S. Massey, *Getting Away with Murder: Segregation and Violent Crime in Urban America*, 143 U. Penn. L. Rev. 1203).

Crime in the Twin Cities is disproportionately concentrated in poor central neighborhoods that tend to have high minority populations.

- Overall crime rates for Minneapolis and St. Paul are two to three times higher than suburban crime rates. (Metropolitan Council, *Trouble at the Core* (1992)).
- Within Minneapolis and St. Paul, crime is disproportionately concentrated in poor neighborhoods. (Myron Orfield, *METROPOLITICS* (1997)).

**1999 Cities at Work
Community Circle Dialogues**
Evaluation Form

Participant Feedback

This circle dialogue is part of a pilot project and your thoughtful comments and criticism will be valuable in shaping future community circles. Please take the time to give us your suggestions and ideas.

	<i>Terrible</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>O.K.</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Fantastic</i>
How would you rate your overall experience as a participant in this community circle dialogue:	1	2	3	4	5	6

► Please identify one or two things you gained from participating in this community circle?

► What would have made this experience better?

► Do you think that your participation in this dialogue will have any effect on your thoughts or actions in the future?

Yes Please describe: _____

No Why not? _____

► What issues would you suggest community circle dialogues address in the future?

	<i>Terrible</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>O.K.</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Fantastic</i>
How useful were the discussion materials?	1	2	3	4	5	6

► **How could the discussion materials be improved?**

	<i>Terrible</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>O.K.</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Fantastic</i>
Overall, how effective was your facilitator:	1	2	3	4	5	6

► **What did your facilitator do especially well?**

► **How could your facilitator be more effective in the future?**

► **Would you recommend this program to others?**

Yes Please describe: _____

No Why not? _____

Other comments?

THANKS!