



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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*A sample of participating and pending partners
in the Community Circle Collaborative:*

The Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism

Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton

The St. Paul Human Rights Commission & Department

Minnesota Public Radio, Civic Journalism Initiative

The Education & Housing Equity Project

The Minnesota Minority Education Partnership

The Urban Coalition

The Minneapolis Public Schools

The Edina Public Schools

The St. Louis Park Public Schools

The St. Louis Park Housing Redevelopment Authority

The Suburban Hennepin Anti-Racism Coalition

The MN Churches Anti-Racism Initiative
(of the MN Council of Churches, the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, and
the St. Paul Area Council of Churches)

The Institute on Race & Poverty

The Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA)

Alliance Works/ Alliance of the Streets

The Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods

The MN Fair Housing Center

Southside Neighborhood Housing Services

For more information about the Collaborative, contact:

Dick Little
Education & Housing Equity Project
122 W Franklin Ave #320
Minneapolis MN 55404
tel: 871-8980

Welcome!

Beyond Busing: A Metrowide Dialogue on the Challenges of Education and Housing Segregation



Kick-Off Forum

December 10, 1996

9:00-11:30 a.m.

St. Louis Park City Council Chambers

5005 Minnetonka Boulevard

St. Louis Park

Program

- 9:00 a.m. **Greeting & Welcome**
Mayor Gail Dorfman, City of St. Louis Park
- 9:05-9:20 a.m. **Introduction**
The Honorable George Latimer
& Dr. Josie R. Johnson
- 9:20-10:00 a.m. **Setting the Stage**
Curt Johnson
Chair, Metropolitan Council
Yusef Mgeni
Executive Director, Urban Coalition
- 10:00-10:30 a.m. **Why They're Participating in
"Community Circles"**
Carol Johnson
Superintendent, St. Louis Park Public Schools
Julie Idelkope
Office of Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton
Hal Clapp
Southside Neighborhood Housing Services
Rep. Myron Orfield
Minnesota House of Representatives
Leonard Witt
Minnesota Public Radio
Rev. Steve Van Kuiken
Presbyterian Church of the Apostles, Burnsville
- 10:30-11:30 a.m. **Introduction to Community Circles**
- What is a "community circle"?
 - Video: The Story of Lima, Ohio
 - Goals and expected outcomes
 - What's involved in being a Sponsor
 - Project timetable

The Community Circle Collaborative cordially invites you to come learn more about this important community-wide dialogue and how you can sponsor one the many "community circles" that will be taking place throughout the metro area in early 1997.

- What:** An introduction to a metro-wide dialogue project in which at least 200 people from all walks of life join together - 5-15 at a time - in study circles held throughout the metro area to discuss the question: "How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities?"
- A typical community circle will include 5-15 members. Each community circle will be as economically, ethnically, racially, and politically diverse as possible. Each group will meet for a total of 10 hours and be led by a trained facilitator. A common *Discussion Guide* that includes presentations of a range of viewpoints and discussion questions will help move the discussion forward.
- Who:** As a Sponsor, you will join a growing collaboration of community-based organizations, public staff and officials, and individuals working in a variety of fields, including anti-racism, housing, education, social justice, religion, law, and social research. A sampling of our partners is listed on the back of this invitation.
- Why:** The partners that make up the Collaborative are coming together with a shared belief in the need for **civil, informed dialogue and collective analysis** - across all racial, economic, and political lines - about the challenges we face in our metro-area communities and schools. Our inspiration comes from successful, large-scale programs that have taken place around the country.
- What would my role be?**
- To reach across the entire metro area, we need the help of a broad range of organizations and individuals who share our belief that - despite our many different opinions and perspectives - we can all benefit from participating in true dialogue and shared deliberation on these issues. As a Sponsor, you would help in five ways:
1. Help organize one or more study circles.
 2. Recruit between 4 and 10 people for each community circle.
 3. Arrange a site and meeting time for each community circle.
 4. Recommend possible facilitators and recorders.
 5. Help promote the program, including through bulletins, newsletters, and personal contacts.

This project is supported by grants from the Bush Foundation and Otto Bremer Foundation

Community Dialogue on Race, Housing and Education Scheduled for Fall of 1996

by Dick Little, Co-Chair, MIAR Education Task Force

Can Minneapolis break the social path followed by so many other major cities over the past two decades? What can we and our metropolitan neighbors do to work toward city- and metro-wide solutions to the race and poverty issues overwhelming the city schools and moving into the suburbs?

These are some of the questions driving an MIAR-initiated collaborative of 20 civic and community-based organizations and public agencies to organize a metro-wide dialogue project for the Fall of 1996. The collaborative will bring at least 200 citizens from all walks of life to join together, 5 to 15 at a time, in "community circles" to discuss the question: How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities for our children? Each Circle will also examine and deliberate on alternative policy choices for the metropolitan area.

This project was started in the fall of 1995 by members of MIAR's Education Task Force, beginning with a workshop on "Study Circles" held at the MIAR Inter-Faith Harmony Conference. The partners (see partial list at end of article) that have since joined the project share the belief that civil, informed and culturally inclusive democratic dialogue and collective analysis -- across racial, economic and political lines -- is the best way to bridge differences and confront the changes taking place in our communities and schools today.

Talk about race and poverty is common-place, but the kind of talk that will help us begin to solve our problems together is not. There is also a need to build a "public voice" at the community level that contributes to public-policy making on the difficult issues of erasing the racial achievement gap in our schools and seeking alternatives to the economic and racial segregation in our schools, housing and jobs. Using two successful models of community conversation and collaboration -- the "study circles" developed by the national Study Circles Resource Center and the Kettering Foundation's National Issues Forums, and used with great success in communities around the country, and the "Communities of Color Empowerment Model" developed by the Minneapolis-based Minnesota Minority Education Partnership -- the "Community Circles" project will attempt to address these concerns. The community circle approach will provide a framework for discussion in which people from different backgrounds can respectfully exchange ideas and experiences and feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, yet work through difficult issues and move toward informed action.

The project will be launched with a community forum in late September. The community circles will then be convened by the sponsoring organizations and will meet for about 10 hours over the next few months. Each group will include 5-15 members and will be as

economically, ethnically, racially and regionally diverse as possible. The circles will be moderated by trained facilitators and will have a recorder. A common discussion guide has been prepared for use by all participants; however, each group will be encouraged to set its own agenda for subsequent circle discussion and request research on specific topics. A "charge" will be given to the community circles to deliberate on possible answers to the issues of race, housing and education currently vexing public officials and to find common ground. Following the community circle discussions, a second forum will be held in January 1997, to bring together the "voices" and share the findings and conclusions with the larger Twin Cities community, elected officials, the MIAR Leadership Board, and the boards of the other collaborating partner organizations.

In addition to the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism, participating partners so far include the Urban Coalition, the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, the Education and Housing Equity Project, the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing, the University of Minnesota's Institute on Race and Poverty, the Minnesota Fair Housing Center, the Anti-Racism Initiative of the MN and Greater Minneapolis and St. Paul Council of Churches, Southside Neighborhood Housing Services, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Alliance of the Streets, the Suburban Hennepin Anti-Racism Coalition, the Minneapolis Public Schools, the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (pending), the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning and several St. Paul organizations.

For more information about the Community Circles Collaborative and opportunities to participate in the project, contact representatives of any of the participating organizations, or call Dick Little at INTER-RACE (724-5662 or 339-0820), Darcy Seaver at MICAH (871-8980 or 379-3602) or Bruce Vandel at MMEP (330-1509).



PRESS ADVISORY

December 26, 1996

WHAT: *BEYOND BUSING: A METROWIDE DIALOGUE ON THE CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION AND HOUSING SEGREGATION*

WHEN: Tuesday, December 10, 1996 – 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.

WHERE: St. Louis Park City Council Chambers – 5005 Minnetonka Boulevard, St. Louis Park

WHY: To begin an informed and civil dialogue on two of the most controversial issues facing the Twin Cities.

CONTACT: Dick Little (w)871-8980 (h)724-5662

Please see attached flyer.

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Rev. Wade Schemmel

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

Rev. Arthur Tredwell

Exodus Development Company

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Executive Director

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The St. Paul Human Rights Commission

The St. Paul Human Rights Department

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A Call to Action!

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Curt Johnson
Chair, Metropolitan Council
Yusef Mgeni
Executive Director, Urban Coalition

10:00-10:30 a.m.

Why They're Participating in "Community Circles"

Carol Johnson
Superintendent, St. Louis Park Public Schools
Office of Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton
John Kostishack
Otto Bremer Foundation
Hal Clapp
Southside Neighborhood Housing Services
Steve Van Kuiken
Pastor, Presbyterian Church of the Apostles,
Burnsville

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Reports from participants in a pilot study circle
What's involved in being a Sponsor
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