



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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1999
Community Circle Project
Final Report

Sponsored by the City of Bloomington Human Rights Commission

Community Circle Report

INTRODUCTION

In each of the five Community Circle sessions, a specific format was used by the facilitators to help guide the conversations. This format was referred to as an ORID (Objective, reflective, interpretive and decisional) method. For example, in session #1, personal stories were shared among the participants. Using the ORID method, four questions were asked and are indicated as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Objective: | Where did you grow up? |
| Reflective: | How do you feel about where you lived/your experience in general? |
| Interpretive: | How did where you grew-up influence your opinions on race, education and housing? |
| Decisional: | Why did you decide to participate in this study circle program? |

When focusing on the *objective* in each session, the facilitators would ask the group what words and/or phrases stood out as they read the various sections in the study guide. When the participants were guided through the *reflective* part of the discussion, they were asked to describe what feelings, images and associations came up as they read the material. The purpose of the *interpretive* portion of each discussion was an attempt to enter into a deeper understanding of the issue at hand. With the *decisional* aspect of the discussion, a dialog around suggestions and possible next steps was formed in which to bring about positive change.

This report is a summary of each of the five sessions. Each page will highlight a different session, and will include the date, number of participants, and a specific topic that was discussed. Overall, the ORID method proved to be a valuable tool in which to organize and focus each discussion.

Community Circle Report

Sponsoring Organization: Bloomington Human Rights Commission Date: 2/24/99

Session: #1 Number of Participants (today): : 15

Facilitator: Elizabeth Campbell Co-Facilitator: Ellen Hufschmidt

Scribe: Anne Moening

Please describe two or three main themes/ideas discussed today: (1 – 2 sentences each)

Session #1: Getting Started—Personal Stories

1. **Respect—Our Guiding Principal**

Part of the first session was dedicated to a discussion around the word *respect*. This discussion formed the foundation on which the group shared their personal stories on experiences with racism and segregation.

New Insights:

- ◆ It's important that all voices are heard
- ◆ We all have something to offer
- ◆ Actions are just as important as the words we say
- ◆ It is important to have accurate knowledge about another's culture
- ◆ We must all have an inward, genuine intention to listen to one another

2. **Reflection on shared stories**

The group reflected on the personal stories that were shared. Many stories focused on spirituality and its' role in addressing segregation. There was a willingness to share and communicate by all.

New Insights:

- ◆ We are all creations of God
- ◆ Uniqueness of people
- ◆ Racism/prejudices are all too often vague and subtle
- ◆ Institutional racism
- ◆ Trust
- ◆ Excitement and anticipation of what's to come (sessions 2 – 5)
- ◆ Surprised and hurt to learn about others' experiences

3. _____

Please use remaining space to note action ideas, if any, which were mentioned in today's discussion:

Community Circle Report

Sponsoring Organization: Bloomington Human Rights Commission Date: 3/3/99

Session: #2 Number of Participants (today): : 13

Facilitator: Elizabeth Campbell Co-Facilitator: Ellen Hufschmidt

Scribe: Anne Moening

Please describe two or three main themes/ideas discussed today: (1 – 2 sentences each)

Session #2: Segregation in the Twin Cities

1. **Reasons for segregation:**

- ◆ Socialization
- ◆ Racial Prejudice
- ◆ Institutional Racism
- ◆ Public Policy: Zoning

2. **Economics of segregation:**

- ◆ Public Transit
- ◆ Affordable Housing
- ◆ Integrate (Don't segregate)
- ◆ Retain Subsidized Housing
- ◆ Build Family-oriented Housing
- ◆ Tax Incentives
- ◆ Win/Win Affordable Housing Policy
- ◆ Scatter-site Housing

3. **In the Twin Cities, we experience racism in various ways:**

- ◆ Isolation (there's not a lot of meaningful contact with communities of color)
- ◆ Racial prejudices ("Them Mexicans" or "Them Blacks")
- ◆ Institutionalized discrimination (workplace/hiring process)
- ◆ Violence

Please use remaining space to note action ideas, if any, which were mentioned in today's discussion:

Community Circle participants were asked the following: (See attached list of Bloomington's
Community Circle action ideas)

- ◆ What, as an individual, would you do differently?
- ◆ What should be done in the Twin Cities?
- ◆ What ways can we change the socialization level of our children?

Community Circle Report

Bloomington Community Circle Session #2 Action Ideas

Individual Level	Collective Level (Institutional/Systematic)	Socialization Level
Focus on universally – Human Rights (Talk with people/educate about cultures and race)	Expand the City of Bloomington’s Affordable Housing Policies	Balance exposure to different cultures
First Response: “Be Myself”	Increase educational opportunities in our Community about our cultural differences	School Curriculum: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase cultural competence (give accurate knowledge about various cultures) 2. Teach the value of others’ values 3. Increase extracurricular activities (get rid of television)
Make an effort to get-to-know a family of a culture or race different from your own	Increase the number of celebrations and events that celebrate our differences	Build more Community/Family Centers (increases the chance to “bump-up-against” someone who is different than you)
Do not tell or laugh at racist jokes	Participate as a group at public meetings	Consider economic differences
Recruit people I know for job openings at my place of work	Encourage Cultural Sensitizing	Expand the Bloomington Loves It’s Kids program (do this sort of thing more often)
Offer action and services	Expand and improve our public transportation	Continue to have Martin Luther King Dinners in other people’s homes
	Teach and develop respect for all religious traditions	Develop Malcolm X Dinners
		Volunteer with your kids (This provides exposure to other ways people live/socioeconomic backgrounds, etc.)

Community Circle Report

Sponsoring Organization: Bloomington Human Rights Commission Date: 3/10/99

Session: #3 Number of Participants (today): : 14

Facilitator: Elizabeth Campbell Co-Facilitator: Ellen Hufschmidt

Scribe: Anne Moening

Please describe two or three main themes/ideas discussed today: (1 – 2 sentences each)

Session #3: Housing challenges in the Twin Cities

1. **Zoning**

A good portion of this session was spent discussing zoning and other challenges regarding housing in the Twin Cities. At the end of session #3, there was an enormous sense of appreciation for the dynamic complexity of racial segregation.

- ◆Reduces affordable housing
- ◆"Zones" people out
- ◆Affects housing/property value

2. **Other Challenges**

The group reflected on other aspects that contribute to the housing challenges in the Twin Cities.

- ◆Discriminatory real estate agents
- ◆Social and economic standards (bigger is better)
- ◆Selfishness (people don't want certain cultures living next to them)
- ◆Mandatory laws
- ◆Individual responsibility

3. _____

Please use remaining space to note action ideas, if any, which were mentioned in today's discussion:

A couple suggestions were made regarding housing in the Twin Cities. First, there is a need for zoning to be restructured. It was stated that there needs to be certain requirements to be followed to meet the needs of everyone. Second, a need for mixed-use neighborhoods was suggested. Having houses, apartments and group homes all on one block could be a healthy alternative in opposing segregated housing neighborhoods.

Community Circle Report

Sponsoring Organization: Bloomington Human Rights Commission Date: 3/17/99

Session: #4 Number of Participants (today): : 8

Facilitator: Elizabeth Campbell Co-Facilitator: Ellen Hufschmidt

Scribe: Anne Moening

Please describe two or three main themes/ideas discussed today: (1 – 2 sentences each)

Session #4: Unequal opportunity and achievement in education

1. **An objective and reflective review of the 8 options presented in study guide:**

The group formed a dialogue around the issue of education and the various viewpoints presented in the study guide. The facilitators directed the conversation by asking the follow questions:

- ◆ What words and phrases stood out for you?
- ◆ What was a surprise or new information?
- ◆ What did this option remind you of?
- ◆ To what extent does this option address segregation?
- ◆ To what extent does this option address education?

2. **Favorite Option—Focus on making schools multi-culturally inclusive**

This viewpoint was chosen, in part, because it honors diversity and true integration. It provides opportunities to communicate with people from different cultures. This option would make it possible for all children to feel that they're a part of the school; feeling a sense of belonging. This option was also viewed as the least "top-down" approach to education. It was noted that this would increase the responsibility of the individual.

3. **Least Favorite Option—Create a metro-wide school district**

After reviewing each of the options, the group was asked to then select the option of which they were most in favor of. Of all the remaining seven viewpoints presented in the study guide, this option came in a close, last-place finish. In fact, there was no discrepancy between the other six viewpoints. The group felt that some options re-enforced or created even more segregation, increased competition, and limited resources.

Please use remaining space to note action ideas, if any, which were mentioned in today's discussion:

The Bottom Line

It is important to have the community, as a whole, accepting others' values. It is difficult to change people's socialization. Kids choices reflect what they see and hear in our society. If the whole community is not "into-it", if teachers aren't "into-it", all the money in the world won't help a specific problem. There needs to be a conscious effort behind every school's intention for the goal of greater integration.

Community Circle Report

Sponsoring Organization: Bloomington Human Rights Commission Date: 3/24/99

Session: #5 Number of Participants (today): : 11

Facilitator: Elizabeth Campbell Co-Facilitator: Ellen Hufschmidt

Scribe: Anne Moening

Please describe two or three main themes/ideas discussed today: (1 – 2 sentences each)

Session #5: Recommendations for ways to respond to racial segregation in housing and education

1. **Recommendations**

The final session was dedicated to brainstorming action ideas pertaining to the issues that were discussed in the previous sessions. Bloomington's Mayor Coral Houle attended this session and participated in our brainstorming efforts. The action ideas were broken down into three separate categories:

- ◆ Individual actions
- ◆ Community actions
- ◆ Public Policy

2. **Next Step**

The group determined that a summary of the final report would be presented to the Bloomington Human Rights Commission.

3.

Please use remaining space to note action ideas, if any, which were mentioned in today's discussion:

(Please refer to the attached list of action ideas)

Community Circle Report

Bloomington Community Circle Session #5 Action Ideas

Individual Action	Community Action	Public Policy
Focus on the positives in people	Initiate block parties with a diversity theme for food	Diversity on committees (Jesse!)
Be positive in all approaches	Encourage church exchange partnerships	Mixed-use neighborhoods having an intergenerational approach
Create personal contact with other cultures	Be a "good" neighbor	When making community decisions, consider whether or not the decision would promote/discourage segregation
Strike down stereotypes	Change MLK dinners to an educational and cultural dinner	Better training in diversity for teachers
Don't laugh at racial jokes	Develop senior/youth activities (intergenerational)	Teacher/staff of a minority group share their cultural traditions
Involvement in your community (volunteering & Habitat for Humanity)	Faith community involvement	Lobby at the Legislature for inclusionary housing properties
Travel more/learn more languages	Involvement with youth.	More diversity and multicultural curriculum in our schools
Write a letter to the editor (let your voice be heard)	Participate in neighborhood activities	Take inventory of what is already happening
Welcome minorities to your neighborhood.	Read and/or submit cultural newspaper articles (diversity enriches all of us)	Educate and celebrate more cultures
Zero tolerance for racial slurs (Jesse!)	Make affordable housing a high priority	Celebrate diversity
Run for office	Invite friends of color to gatherings	Avoid busing
Challenge racial comments	Increase the number of public service announcements on related issues	Support magnet school initiatives

Individual Action	Community Action	Public Policy
Socialize more and interact with other community organizations		Increase federal dollars for housing
		Equitable educational resources
		Recognize diverse holidays
		Increase business (public/private) neighborhood projects
		Build a first class school in the inner-city
		Freeze any zoning changes in low-income housing
		Provide incentives for businesses to create jobs in inner-cities
		Support civil servants
		Levy a tax across the board to deal with these issues
		Create magnet schools with various cultures