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1999

CITIES AT WORK COMMUNITY CIRCLE DIALOGUES

ATTENDANCE ROSTER

Date 5/25/99

SPONSOR _____

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✓ Meetings

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3/2/99

Session Two - Segregation in Twin Cities

Viewpoint 1 - racial prejudice cause people to live apart

- point could be oversimplified
- not true, because if they have same middle class values, this shouldn't be true
- whites are wealthier & have greater choices in where to live

Viewpoint 2 - high crime & poor schools drive people away

- mugging became a realization of how safe a neighborhood is.
- if we grow up w/ idea that we should always be protected, then we always keep moving away.
- we are afraid of people of color.
- segregation is not always racism, it is about \$
↳ they can't afford to live somewhere else.
(owner, children, minorities)
- The same poor are always poor, they are given role in our society, they can't break away

Viewpoint 3 - Institutional racism leads to inequalities

- people of color must conform to white society, token diversity
- we immediately describe people as "black" - ie. newscasts
- we are racist by ignorance, we don't realize others ^{can't} have

Activity - how we have white power

- others wouldn't ~~walk~~ cross the street when I come walking
- I'm not followed in a store
- I'll be shown nicer apartments
- I can trace my ~~black~~ heritage back to 1600's
- I have a better chance of having a parent family
- My son will live longer (higher crime rate for people of color)
- I'll make more \$
- I'll fit in

Session Three: EHEP

- went over housing statistics

Analogies

- Contractors would have to foot the bill on houses

- No one wants to build, problem will worsen

- We only meet 1/20 of needs by 2020

- Women and children will be the homeless

- 20% of (St. Paul) low income housing is in

- available \$ is down \$12 billion.

- may be trying to sway the facts

- tax credits go to those with the money

- none of the poorer renters pay enough rent to catch the tax breaks

* - if you make \$8.00/hr + have an apartment for \$600/mo you have \$7/hr to spend on everything you need.

- We are messed up.

Option #1

- do they have the resources/know-how

- are there enough agencies? Are they there?

- defendants can make other excuses besides race

ex) O.J. - if you get \$ nothing else matters

- institutions need to change

- Suits take forever, where do you live in the meantime

- who rents to you after a lawsuit?

Option #2

- Stop trying to look outside, & fix the inside

- suburbs change really fast, the city doesn't

- you need the right kind of development

- you can't only revitalize into rich areas

- put equal \$'s into expensive/inexpensive projects

- subsidize contractors

gentrification - renovating old low cost housing for ↑ income residents

3/23 Session 4 EHP

Unequal opportunity & achievement in schools

① districts that combine Community + Magnet schools:

- Students of color - up to 70% of Pop. in 1998/99 School yr.
- ~ Parent involvement - easier said than done. Sometimes its not possible. good Idea, but need to stress basics of how to get them involved. (Time, expenses, developmental abilities)
- "Maslows chart" - have to start from the bottom.
- Kids need lots of encouragement - often Parents are not providing this.
- Sometimes parents hold too much influence & instill a lack of "open mindedness"
- ~ failure seen throughout life, leads to more failure

② Metro wide school districts

- ~ there's a question of funding - where would it come from & how distributed?
- All kids deserve the resources, but must take into consideration how the kids are received
- not all kids can go across town
- not all kids are going to want to step outside their "comfort zone"

③ efforts to Build more Charter schools (support)?

- Effect segregation? could be a revolving door
 - Need teachers that can incorporate multi cultural studies
 - teaches people to open up & be more tolerant.
 - reduce differences + ~~that~~ criticism if started @ a young age
- * this is a good idea

Notes for Session #5

EHEP

4/6/99

What is the Community's Responsibility?
Questions:

- ① agreement → @ people of color more difficulty obtaining: housing, education, livable wages
 - (b) suburbs versus urban issues
 - (c) affordable housing difficulty in the metro area
 - (d) stereotypes of single mothers
 - (e) more funding for suburban schools
 - (f) Ex: Minnetonka spends ≈ \$3,000 above + beyond state aid per student
 - (g) white flight from inner cities
 - (h) transportation - huge issue in the Twin Cities - none sufficient public transportation
 - (i) people advocate for "affordable" but not in their neighborhoods
- ② solutions to problems we face in our communities and schools
 - (a) now time to act with budget surplus
 - (b) low income housing has to be dispersed with increase in public transportation - for parents + children to get to schools - need city planning + thoughtfulness
 - (c) awareness - a good first step comm. circles have merit
 - (d) community pride building
 - (e) ensure enough for school books for all students
 - (f) more equitable funding for all school districts
 - (g) all schools need basics: books, equal

Because they were talking w/ classmates, ~~of~~ one was holding a broken BB. gun. They sat in jail overnight and had many restrictions until trial a number of weeks later.

One Af. Am. youth of age 16[?] had stated earlier that he had never experienced racism before and doubted that he ever would. After this experience, he was extremely discouraged. That almost 3 hour meeting (our 4th) caused a huge shift in ^{the feeling of the} ~~our~~ Circles. It was very sad to see how the experience this youth had, had altered his views about his life — to the point that it was as if we watched a child that learned there was no Santa Clause, etc. — hopelessness.

In earlier meetings parents and other adults expressed their views of racism and how it affected them. The kids did not have much to say — until they had experienced it for themselves.

The fifth meeting was very special. Julius and I asked mostly the kids what they learned in the meetings, expectations for the Comm. Circles, and what could have been improved ^{about the Circles} to be more useful to them. The kids loved answering these questions and could not stop talking. They were so pleased to voice ~~themselves~~ their opinions.

Q. What learned from the Com. Circles?

A's

- responsibility to come to the meetings
- to express own feelings
- learned about differences & similarities about how people in the Circles feel about racism
- learned to listen
- was nice to attend 2-hour meetings of just talking

Q. What was your expectation of the Com. Circles mtg.

A's

- to learn how people feel (expectation was met)
- learn new things (" not met)
- adults were not reliable in attending each week whereas the kids were.
- everyone was honest and it was ok to voice our opinions.

Q. What could have been improved?

A's

- Some subjects were hard for kids to relate to. such as housing
- We're not adults, therefore what could we possibly know about ~~the~~ education.
- There needed to be a curriculum for teens.
- Meetings could have been more casual.
- felt had to say something even if didn't want to so put in ground rules to talk only if want to.
- could brainstorm the agenda for meeting on that day of meeting

Topics the kids would have liked to talk about in relation to racism:

- getting jobs
- ways, how to make money
- ways to do more volunteer/community work.
- school problems - grades
- getting help with homework.
- when someone says something mean, etc, how to react or interact.

Demographics:

A) 9 Kids between the ages of 12 ^{4/18} to 18 =
one was hispanic the rest Af. America.
all actively involved in District 5.
a wonderful bunch of kids

B) 2 employees of District 5, one Board member; 2 were anglo, one was Af. Am.

C) About 6-8 adults came one or two times, mostly Af. Am. one Hmong.

Action Ideas:

- to develop a curriculum for youth.
- to continue discussion of this type with these youth at District 5.