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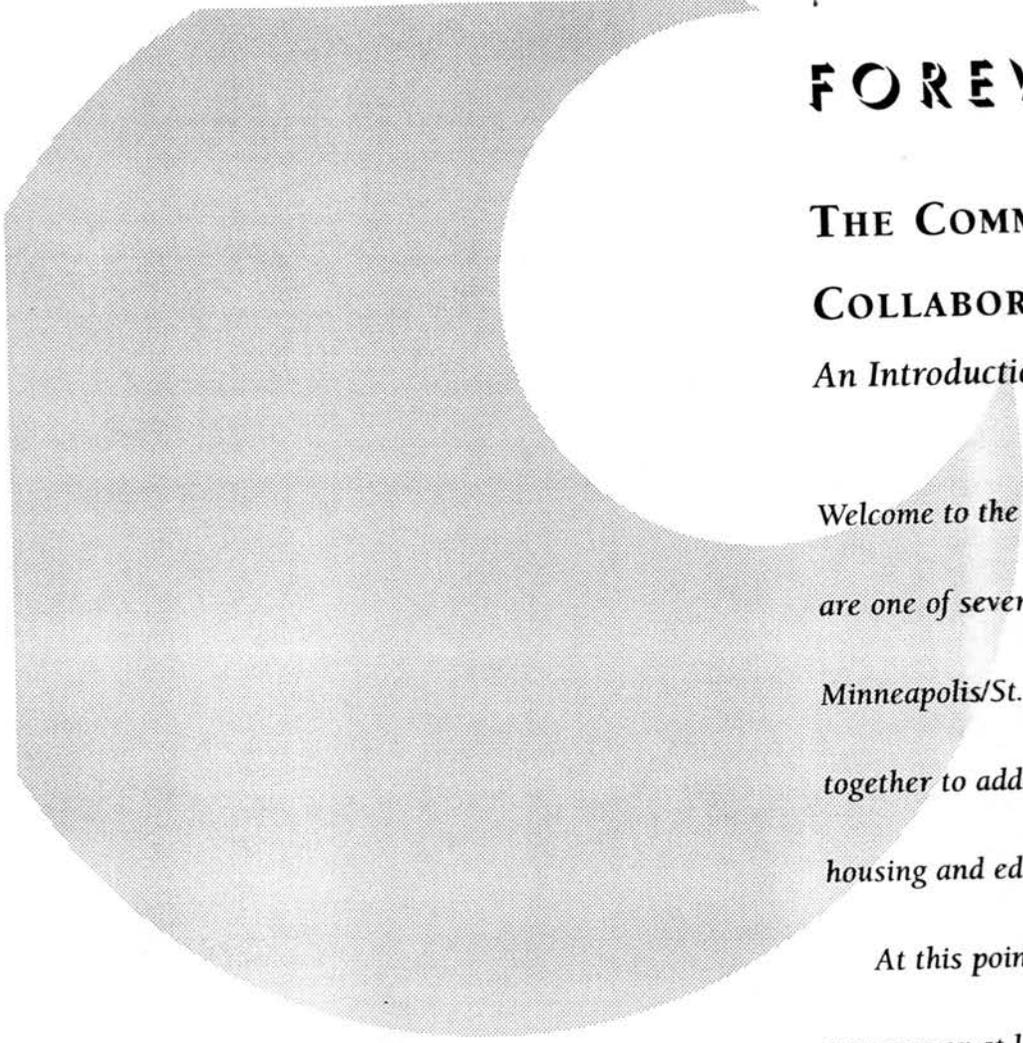
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DISCUSSION GUIDE

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CHOICES FOR COMMUNITY

A REGIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION, HOUSING & SEGREGATION IN THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA

EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

SPONSORED BY

THE COMMUNITY CIRCLE COLLABORATIVE

AND

THE EDUCATION AND HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

OCTOBER 1998

FOREWORD

THE COMMUNITY CIRCLES COLLABORATIVE:

An Introduction to the Process

Welcome to the Community Circles project. You are one of several hundred residents of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area who have come together to address issues of segregation in housing and education.

At this point, you may be feeling a bit nervous or at least unfamiliar with the process. Perhaps this is because study circles are a fairly new, uniquely democratic process being tried across the country. Rest assured that the process has been tried by thousands of citizens with great success in many areas. The impacts of these efforts range from new friendships and neighborhood projects to city-wide action plans and even new state legislation.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY CIRCLES PROJECT?

Many people have recognized that citizens of the Twin Cities are increasingly divided along the lines of race and class. The Community Circles project was created out of a belief that local citizens should study these issues and find ways to address them.

Since December 1996, over 500 residents of the Twin Cities metropolitan area have been involved in community circles – small, democratic discussion groups – on these issues. These participants shared their hopes, concerns, and recommendations at a Community Forum held in May 1997. Using the foundation laid by the first round of circles, we hope the second round will act as a springboard for action at the neighborhood, community, and regional levels.

One of the central goals of the Community Circles project is to institutionalize the art of guided conversation in our metropolitan area. We sincerely believe that solutions to serious and often divisive issues, such as education and segregation, can be found if we learn how to put aside our fears and prejudices and work together.

WHY ARE COMMUNITY CIRCLES UNIQUE?

Most of what we have come to think of as "politics," in the media or in public meetings, is dominated by "posturing" or "positioning" by a handful of advocates on each side. Study circles, however, are a *sharing* of ideas, thoughts, and perspectives. Agreement is not necessary in order to have a successful conversation. What is important is increasing understanding, of the issues, and of ourselves.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CIRCLE?

■ The community circle is a simple process for small-group deliberation. 10-15 people meet regularly over a period of several weeks to address a critical public issue in an honest and democratic way.

■ The discussions are facilitated by a person who is there not to act as an expert on the issue, but to keep the discussion focused.

■ The facilitator and participants utilize a framework laid out in a discussion guide. The discussion guide can also be used as a reference, informing the study circle participants of differing points of view about the issues of concern.

■ A study circle progresses from a session on personal experience to some of the larger questions surrounding the issue. After four sessions, participants engage in an Action Forum. Finally, in session five, members of the circle will reconvene to discuss how they can take action on the issue.

WHERE HAVE COMMUNITY CIRCLE PROGRAMS BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

An evaluation of a study-circle program in Greater Cleveland showed basic changes in attitude as a result of the study circles. Study-circle participants in Lima, Ohio have done everything from building new playgrounds to changing the makeup of a regional development board. A state-wide study circle program in Oklahoma helped the state legislature enact sweeping changes in the criminal justice system.

THE SCHEDULE

SESSION ONE

Who are we? Why are we here?

SESSION TWO

What is the nature of segregation in the Twin Cities?

SESSION THREE

What should we do about residential segregation?

SESSION FOUR

What should we do about unequal opportunity and achievement in schools?

SESSION FIVE

How can we take action?

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF YOU?

- A commitment to the entire five-session schedule and the Action Forum
- A promise to share thoughts honestly and respectfully
- A willingness to listen deeply to others
- A preference for collaboration rather than competition
- A desire to find common ground and creative solutions

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

You should feel successful if your group has:
- Participated in respectful discussions with people who have different points of view
- Encountered new ways of evaluating and understanding the issues, especially those we personally may not be receptive to hearing.
- Enumerated the strengths and weaknesses of the Twin Cities and come to a more informed view than before the process began
- Generated concrete suggestions of how we as individuals and as a community can deal with issues of education, housing, and segregation
- Acted as a catalyst for and listed action steps to be taken in the future to ensure optimal educational and life opportunities for all Twin Cities children
- Applied some of the ideas exchanged in these sessions to your own daily life

SESSION ONE

Getting Started

PART ONE: WHY ARE WE HERE?
• *Facilitators: take about fifteen minutes to review the task and the charge of the study circles.*

The Task of the Community Circles
Keeping the conversations centered on the following two questions:

■ *What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic, and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities area children and families?*

■ *What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance the educational, housing, and economic opportunities of all children and adults in the Twin cities area?*

PART TWO:
CONNECTING PEOPLE AND THE ISSUES
• *Facilitators: Use a series of questions to jump-start the conversation; let the participants get to know each other and develop more personal connections to the issue. Try to limit this section to about 40 minutes.*

Examples:
1) Relate a story or give an example to illustrate how your neighborhood or schools helped to shape your attitudes about yourself and your future.
2) Where did you grow up? What kinds of things are important to you in describing this place? (families, jobs, schools, neighbors, etc.)
3) Why do you live where you live now?
4) Why did you decide to take part in this study circle program?

What are we doing right? *Did you know that...*
❯ The Twin Cities are consistently rated one of the most livable communities in America
❯ Minnesota has been a leader in many policy issues from environmentalism to gender equity

❯ The regional economy is viable and growing, the business community is thriving and rich in resources.
❯ Downtown is growing, at least 150,000 jobs are expected by 2000
❯ Older neighborhoods are being redeveloped
❯ There is an extensive system of metropolitan governance – a rarity actually, especially given the size of the budget and the scope of authority of the Metropolitan Council, for instance.
❯ The communities of color have dedicated leadership and many grassroots level organizations.
❯ Overall crime and in particular violent crime has been reduced
❯ The new light rail project could improve mobility for a wide variety of residents
❯ Communities of faith are committed and organized on a variety of social issues

What are some of our challenges?
Did you know that...
❯ **Our Schools:**
• In 1996-97 school year, 70 percent of all students in the Minneapolis Public Schools received free or reduced-cost lunches (a key indicator of poverty used by government agencies). In St. Paul, 75 percent of students of color and 35 percent of white students received free or reduced-cost lunches. In some inner ring suburban districts, as few as 4% of students receive free or reduced–cost lunch, and an average of 26% of students are on free or reduced-cost lunch.
• Many students have weak educational preparation in the form of pre-school education, come from homes with few or no educational materials, or have parents whose educational experiences are limited, negative, or both.
• Student populations are diversifying everywhere, but students of color are increasingly concentrated in the core cities. In the metro area, 16% of all students are persons of color, nearly 60% of these students attend Minneapolis schools.
• Poor students are concentrated in the core cities.
• Children and families are increasingly under stress; students may be burdened by additional responsibilities and anxieties at a young age because of instability, frequent moves, and family or neighborhood violence.

- School staff members must increasingly cope with teen pregnancy, crime, gang activity, and drug use among their students.

> **Our Housing:**
- Affordable housing is becoming increasingly scarce, especially with the loss of many large federal subsidies.
- In the Twin Cities, 59 percent of poor households spend at least half their income for housing.
- Poverty is concentrating in the Twin Cities at a rate that is nearly twice as fast as the national average.
- People of color are increasingly concentrated in the core cities and in poverty.
- Women and children are the fastest growing category of homeless citizens.
- One third of homeless citizens are working full-time; another third work part-time.
- People of Color are likely to face some form of housing discrimination one out of two times when seeking rental housing.
- Studies show that people of color are less likely than whites to be approved for mortgages to purchase housing.

> **Our Community:**
- Racial and economic segregation are intensifying
- The income gap between the rich and the poor grows wider every year.
- Many citizens have limited access to the benefits of living in our community such as adequate transportation, jobs that pay livable wages, a quality education, and decent, affordable housing.
- Juvenile crime is increasing even though overall crime levels are falling.
- The average income of a Twin Cities African-American was already a low 61 percent of the average income of a white earner in 1980, but by 1990, black incomes had fallen to only 49 percent of white incomes.
- Poor blacks are more than twice as likely to live in extreme poverty tracts than poor whites.

> **Our Economy:**
- Large numbers of dropouts and low levels of school achievement are producing students with inadequate skills for the increasingly high-tech workplace.

- Between 1980 and 1990, 67 percent of new jobs in the Twin Cities metropolitan region were created in the outer ring suburbs.
- Affordable housing is scarce near the majority of available jobs and job growth areas, requiring workers to either make long, expensive commutes, settle for low-paying nearby jobs, or remain unemployed.
- Less than half of the jobs in Minneapolis pay what is considered a livable wage.
- Transportation is inadequate,
- Minorities are underrepresented in many job fields

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How do you perceive life in the Twin Cities now? Do we have two separate societies? If so, how would you describe them?
2. What do you feel are the strengths of the region? What do you feel are the most important challenges?
3. How do the data about poverty, housing, and communities of color relate to your neighborhood?
   Is it consistent with your experience?
   How have these demographic trends shaped your experiences, opportunities, or identity?
4. Do you think segregation in the Twin Cities has a positive effect, negative effect, or no effect at all on the life opportunities of the children you know?
5. Do you see life opportunities getting better or worse in the future?
   Do you see life opportunities increasing or decreasing in your neighborhood? (e.g., jobs, income, health...)
6. Are some people doing better than others? Why or why not?
7. How is segregation today different than segregation in the 1960's?
8. What constitutes "discrimination?" What is "segregation?"

What are the Reasons for Segregation in the Twin Cities?

Many of us share a desire to do something about segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. 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 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.

● Viewpoints:

1 **Racial prejudice causes people to live apart.** *According to this view,* the most basic reason for segregation is that many people are prejudiced against people of other races and do not want to live in integrated neighborhoods. However, a racial attitudes survey found that whites are more likely to be uncomfortable living next to people of color, or sending their children to school with students of color. This kind of prejudice isn't just limited to whites – people of color are sometimes biased against whites, and different ethnic minorities can be biased against one another. Attitudes are compounded by the fact that whites are on average wealthier, and therefore have greater choices in where to live. The resulting "white flight" intensifies racial and economic segregation. Furthermore, potential home buyers and renters can be affected by the prejudice of real estate agents, landlords, lending institutions, or residents. The prejudice of real estate agents can dramatically impact which homes are shown, in what neighborhoods, and to whom. Proponents of this view point to a recent HUD study which revealed that significant numbers of people of color are often discouraged from moving into or staying in white communities by the overt or covert prejudice of real estate agents or residents.

2 **High crime and poor schools drive people away.** *According to this view,* segregation is the logical outcome of people trying to avoid or escape what they perceive to be bad situations. City neighborhoods are usually noisier, some are dirtier, and a recent media study showed that Twin Cities residents believed there was twelve times more violent crime in our core cities than actually occurs. Families may also move to the suburbs in search of educational opportunities for their children; city schools are generally perceived to be poorer in quality, with lower average test scores, older facilities, and higher student-teacher ratios than suburban schools. Such experiences and perceptions lead people who can afford homes in the suburbs to move there, while those who cannot must stay in the city. Economic segregation is the natural result of individual choices and because whites as a whole are wealthier, suburbanization creates racial segregation as well. While

segregation isn't good, it is happening because individual want to make the best choices possible.

3 Institutional racism in housing, hiring, and education leads to inequities. *According to this view*, racism is firmly established in the institutions of our society. Institutional power continues to be distributed in a way that favors whites, disadvantages people of color, and leads to segregation. "Institutional racism" is entrenched in our businesses, government agencies, the media, schools, the criminal justice system, religious communities, and more. Sometimes this kind of racism is unplanned and unintended, and most often it is indirect or hidden, making it very hard to deal with. For instance, many hiring practices use racially biased standardized tests that keep out otherwise qualified applicants, lenders engage in unfair lending practices or use different criteria for different groups; schools disproportionately route students of color into remedial classes and white students into college prep courses. Qualified people of color are not hired because "they won't fit in." Such practices may appear benign on the surface, but they disproportionately affect the opportunities of people of color. It has been this way for so long that white people aren't even aware of the "white privilege" they carry with them.

4 People like to live where they have "elbow room." *According to this view*, the "American dream" of owning your own home with some land around it is the single greatest cause of segregation. Americans don't like living in small apartments or the narrow lots of city neighborhoods. Many people came to this country to avoid that kind of lifestyle and find more elbow room. At the moment, whites are wealthier on average, so they are better able to realize their dreams. As people of color get richer, more of them will move out to their own homes outside of the city (in many suburbs this is already happening.) This doesn't mean we shouldn't try to do something about segregation. However, we should remember that there are positive reasons for moving out of the cities; we can't blame people for wanting to live where there is more greenery and open space.

5 Public policies and economic trends promote and maintain divisions among people. *According to this view*, government decisions on issues such as transportation, housing, and zoning contribute greatly to segregation. Federal home loan programs, coupled with significant spending on new roads and wastewater treatment facilities has made it possible – indeed, attractive and convenient – for people with means (mostly whites) to get away from the problems associated with city living while retaining access to good jobs and cultural amenities in the central cities. Zoning boards often pass restrictions which effectively prevent more affordable houses or apartments from being built in affluent neighborhoods and suburbs. In effect this legally screens out low- and moderate-income housing developments in such cities and physically separates different housing types. In fact, there just isn't enough affordable housing in general. Compounding this problem, the majority of the poor and urban residents are minorities concentrated into a few neighborhoods. Dealing with segregation will have to become an important policy priority if we are to make any progress.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which of the viewpoints seems most likely to describe the causes of segregation? Why?
2. Who do you think would hold each of these views?
3. Are there other viewpoints which should be represented? What are they?
4. Are some of these reasons for segregation becoming more prominent, while others get less important? Why do you think this is happening?
5. Each viewpoint states a reason for segregation – does each one also suggest ways of doing something to change segregation? What are they?

*Did you know that...*In Minnesota, people of color have much higher unemployment rates and lower incomes that whites at the same education level.

*Did you also know...*Housing subsidies for middles and upper class homeowners (mortgage interest and property tax deductions) far exceed housing subsidies for poor renters,

SESSION THREE

What Should we do about Housing and Residential Segregation in the Twin Cities?

● **Viewpoints:**

1 Enforcement of Anti-Discrimination Laws should be stepped up by agencies already in place. *According this view,* all people have the right to choose where they want to live. However, racial steering by real estate agencies, discriminatory practices by landlords, and unfair lending practices, e.g., redlining in the mortgage industry have made free housing choice nearly impossible for many. Because of these discriminatory practices, people of color and the poor often become concentrated in a few neighborhoods. People who feel discriminated against should use the agencies already in place or bring lawsuits against those who violate their right to fair housing, and agencies should file class-action lawsuits to block discriminatory practices.

2 Limit new growth and expansion. *According this view,* the boundaries of the suburbs continue to expand as new developments move farther out into the surrounding farm or open land. This expansion forces the metro area to direct a disproportionate amount of its precious resources to new infrastructure and lures white, middle class residents farther away from the city. If this growth was limited, eventually developers would have to reinvest within the now deteriorating city and inner-ring suburban neighborhoods instead.

3 Exclusionary zoning practices should be eliminated. *According this view ,* many suburbs have zoning requirements which serve to increase the cost of living in their city, In turn, this makes affordable housing developments, such as apartments or multi-family houses, and access to the resources of the community unavailable. If such policies were challenged, new development could occur, resulting in more housing choices and diversified neighborhoods.

4 Reinvest in the core cities and inner-ring suburbs. *According to this view ,* funds should be directed to re-developing the core and inner-ring suburbs. Home ownership is key to the success of such a strategy. Because city neighborhoods

currently have disproportionately high rates of renters, and consequently, most landlords and tenants have less investment in these neighborhoods, creative strategies must be used to make home ownership more viable. If property taxes were reduced, neighborhoods were beautified and kept safe, shopping districts improved, and new housing with modern amenities more available, the city would appeal to many more buyers, The citizens living in city would be less likely to leave for the suburbs and core cities could lure middle class residents back into the city.

5 Begin a system of **mandatory requirements for new development.** *According this view,* efforts to desegregate neighborhoods, both racially and on the basis on socioeconomic status, have been voluntary thus far and have had limited success. In Minnesota, targets have been set, but are rarely met. In many cities, zoning laws actually prohibit the development of affordable housing. As we focus on redeveloping the core cities, we must also explore strategies for desegregating the suburbs. Through mandatory provisions requiring the inclusion of affordable housing units in all new multi-unit developments and providing bonuses to developers who do so, all people will eventually have more housing choices and neighborhoods will be more diverse racially and socioeconomically.

6 **Let the market regulate itself.** *According to this view,* the best role for government in desegregating housing development and neighborhoods in the Twin Cities is to reform the property tax structure and other codes which hinder profitable development in low income housing. High land prices and the cost of construction already keep the market from providing new affordable housing. If government would stop over-regulating land use and eliminate unneccesary administrative processes for builders, building affordable housing would be more appealing to the private sector and more units would be built.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Try to imagine all of the possible outcomes of the changes proposed by each viewpoint. Who would be most effected? Who would stand to benefit the most? The least?
2. Which of these viewpoints do you feel would be most effective in remedying segregation in the Twin Cities? Are there any that would be ineffective in dealing with segregation?
3. At the public level, what are the strengths of each plan? What are the weaknesses?
4. What would need to happen to actualize any of the strategies? What are the obstacles to realizing the solution?

Section Three Glossary:

> **Racial Steering** is the practice of directing or encouraging renters or home buyers toward neighborhoods or buildings which match their perceived race.
> **Zoning requirements** rules and regulations which govern land use in a particular area.
> **Exclusionary Zoning:** is the practice of using zoning authority to mandate high-cost development through excessive building and lot requirements and costly administrative processes.
> **Redlining** is the practice by lending institutions of refusing to invest in certain neighborhoods because of specific racial characteristics, as well as economics and location.

Education Policies and Segregation in Education

Basic Issues to Address

> How have our schools worked for some children and how they have worked against other children? What are the internal (institutional) factors and what are the external (community) factors that could be causing this?

> Understanding the nature of "white privilege": People of color are usually aware of how systems and institutions work against them. How well do whites understand how the system works in their favor?

> Looking at the relationship between persistent residential racial and economic segregation, school segregation and educational achievement in our schools: what do we see?

SECTION ONE:
SOME CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOLS TODAY

> At the Level of Individuals *Did you know that...*

1. School counselors often do not make info about scholarship opportunities accessible to students of color.

2. Many teachers are unaware of the effects of their decisions on the participation of students of color

> Small-group/Community *Did you know that...*

1. Neighborhood groups often relate to school administrations and faculty out of an adversarial mode. This tends to reduce their efforts to advocacy.

2. ...

3. ...

> Institutional/regional *Did you know that...*

1. Public school systems often do not assign sufficient resources to system-wide initiatives intended to help students of color access higher education (like the MEP program of the St. Paul District.)

2. Public school curricula tend not to validate the cultural perspectives of communities of color. An example: history is taught from the perspective of European colonizing process, the perspectives of others are dealt with in a trivial extent and sometimes as though they are subversive.

What should we do about unequal opportunity and achievement in schools?

SECTION TWO:
CREATING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

School reform is an ongoing discussion in our area. In several school districts achievement is high and the outlook is good, but there is a disproportionate lack of achievement among other schools and segregation abound.

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 of all students? What is the role of integration in such a solution?

> *Option One:* **Community and magnet schools.** *According to this view,* previous attempts to desegregate schools have required extensive busing and have drawn students out of their home neighborhoods. However, students of color now represent the majority of the students in the Minneapolis district (projected to be 70% students of color for the school year 1998-99, with kindergartners at 75%). With changes in the ratio of students of color to white students come changes in the meaning of busing and desegregating schools. Parents are now requesting to send their children to schools closer to home so that they can become more involved in their children's education. Research overwhelmingly indicates that this kind of parent involvement increases student achievement. Student achievement is the primary goal of the school district and according to school district research and recent

national polls, achievement is also the goal of the majority of parents, even across racial and ethnic lines. Because achievement is what is most important, the majority of our resources and efforts should be strategically directed at achievement needs. Giving parents the choice to send students to community schools is an effective and proven effort to increasing student achievement.

> *Option Two:* **A metro-wide school district should be created.**
According to this view, it is necessary to extend the resources of the region to all children, regardless of where they live. Magnet schools, interdistrict schools , and busing are all key in achieving this goal. Because students can choose from many options, this plan eliminates the need for forced busing if a student chooses a school close to home, but also extends more opportunities to a greater number of students than before.

> *Option Three:* **Support efforts to build more charter schools.**
According to this view, Charter schools can create highly effective learning environments with more accountable school administration and increased opportunities for parent involvement than the larger rule-bound bureaucracies in which they exist. Because charter schools are public, they are free and they are not bound by district lines, so they are also open to all students. Not only do charter schools promise to increase achievement, but they can voluntarily draw diverse student bodies, providing models of integration for other schools.

> *Option Four:* **Create a variety of school choice options for students and a system of incentives for educators.**
According to this view, the competitive nature of a free market situation creates a natural push to deliver higher quality while simultaneously improving efficiency. Private schools have been in this situation for years; in order to compete against other private and public educational options, such schools must attract students through the promise of better quality instruction, more attention to individual students, and higher success rates. However, public school districts currently have a "monopoly" on

public education, and consequently have come to take students and parents for granted. The result of increased school choice and a free market situation is of benefit to all involved, offering students a better chance at success and the community a more educated, better prepared citizenry than a non-competitive situation. The public education system should not only access the advantages of such a system by offering qualified students vouchers for the private school of their choice or by introducing the services of various contractors into the mainstream public schools, but it will give public school districts an added "incentive" to improve itself and retain its current students.

> *Option Five:* **Create Regional or Statewide Strategies for Educational Adequacy.**
According to this view, the actual costs of educating the student body of school can vary dramatically across districts; St. Paul and Minneapolis, serve large, diverse populations that present significant educational challenges to the schools. With growing concentrations of at-risk students – children living in poverty, children of color, children with native languages other than English, and children with special education needs – the resources needed to assure that each child receives an adequate education are greater than in other school districts. At the same time, segregation creates other school districts with large concentrations of tax base and disproportionately few at-risk students, allowing such schools to pool and distribute more resources per student. While efforts have been made in the past to redistribute revenue, the question remains of whether more state-level money is even enough to create equity while the available local tax base continues to vary so much – wealthy districts typically have greater success in passing excess levies from property tax, for instance, while poorer districts tend to cut programs and increase class sizes to balance their budgets. In spite of these challenges, the Minnesota constitution makes it the legal obligation of the State, not individual school districts, to provide sufficient and appropriate resources, policies, and programs to assure an adequate education to each of its learners.

> *Option Six:* Culture specific schools, as opposed to integration, increase the educational opportunities of students of color.

According to this view, the large scale failures of urban students of color within the mainstream public schools can be remedied best by offering specialized public schools for these students. Teachers, curriculum, and methods of instruction are so infused with the value system of the white middle class that efforts to put white students and students of color together in the classroom will only continue to produce the same results. Culture specific schools, however, have tailored their instruction methods to the learning needs of the students, provided more adult role models of color than mainstream schools, and increased overall achievement.

> *Option Seven:* Reversing the patterns of de facto residential segregation will truly desegregate schools.

According to the view, the efforts made by various reformers of education and advocates of housing merely treat the symptoms of the underlying problem: Americans live very segregated lives. Unless neighborhoods are integrated and the housing choices of all Americans are expanded, segregation will continue and schools will reflect it. As long as the educational opportunities of children are determined by the area in which they live, and where we live is correlated with the color of our skin, the educational opportunities of students will be affected. Breaking down the patterns of segregation, therefor, is the best way to deal with equalizing the educational and life opportunities of all children.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which of these viewpoints comes closest to your own? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?
2. To what extent does this viewpoint address with segregation? To what extent does it address education?
3. In what ways should we utilize institutions in our communities to make progress on the issue of racial segregation?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective?

5. Which kinds of proposals would you like to see policymakers concentrate on?

Section Four Glossary:

> **Magnet schools** are open to all students within a district who may be interested in the school's particular theme. Examples of magnet school themes are science and mathematics, arts, language-specific, Montessori, etc.

> **Charter schools**
In Minnesota, a groups of educators can request a "charter" from a local school district to start an independent school. Because charter schools are public schools, they must observe the basic requirements of public education and are subject to student performance standards, but have flexibility in incorporating alternative curriculums. (Kolderie)

> **Interdistrict schools** allow students from multiple districts to attend the same public school.

> **Vouchers:**
Proposed voucher plans can take many forms, but in its most basic form, a voucher is a check given to parents by the government to be spent on tuition for a child enrolled in a private school. Usually the amount of the voucher is identical to the amount of the per-pupil expenditure given to public schools.(Kaufman)

> **De facto vs. de jure:**
De facto is something which exists in fact, though it may not be mandated by law. De jure is something which is mandated by law.

Making a Difference: What is the Community's Responsibility?

While the issues of segregation in education and housing can seem overwhelming, it is possible to make a difference. In communities around the country, people have found ways – from individual efforts to large-scale plans – to address these issues.

By participating in this community circle program, you have already made a contribution. But the second phase of the Choices for Community project is designed to help you connect with other kinds and levels of action. At the conclusion of the community circles, participants from all over the metro area will meet for an action forum, where task forces will be formed to move forward with implementation plans. The records from each community circle will also be gathered into a document which summarizes the thinking of all the participants to help guide the thinking of public officials and other policy makers.

This session is designed to help you contribute to the action forum and the report, as well as think further about your own action plans.

HOUR ONE:
THINKING TOGETHER ABOUT HOW WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Think about the many different types of "action" and "actors." If an answer seems to present possibilities for future action, even if only as a component of a solution take note. Pay special attention to the persons, organizations, and areas in the community and their respective role in any action possibilities.

❯ What were some of the main areas of agreement in your discussions over the last few weeks?

❯ Think back to sessions two, three, and four. What seemed to be the key ingredients of the solutions you chose? What were the roles of schools? Of communities? Were there any themes in the solutions chosen by other members of the study circle?

❯ What is the responsibility of the community – the public, government, schools, teachers, businesses, families, neighborhoods, etc – for addressing these problems?

❯ In what ways is your community tied to the well being of other communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan region?

❯ Should these problems be of concern to all Twin Citians? Why? Do we need a healthy whole in order to be healthy individually? Are there costs and risks of further delay?

❯ What are the implications of race and racial relations in the Twin Cities? For children? For adults? For Whites? For people of color?

❯ Given the residential patterns articulated already, what do you think the Twin Cities will look and feel like ten years from now? How do you want it to look? Are these two visions more similar or different?

❯ Where do you see possibilities to influence this outcome? Offer possible viewpoints...

HOUR TWO:
IDEAS FOR ACTION

Use the following questions to decide what needs to be done to begin organizing for action, and to help you prepare for the action forum.

• In each category (individual, small-group or institutional, community-wide), what two or three ideas seem most practical and useful?

Some examples:
Promising Practices in the Twin Cities

Community-level Initiatives
❯ State legislative initiatives (i.e., Fiscal Disparities Act, Livable Communities Act)
❯ Holman Lawsuit
❯ NAACP lawsuit
❯ Tri-District School (Maplewood, North St. Paul, and St. Paul)
❯ Interdistrict Schools (ie, WMEP, West Metro Education Program)

Small-Group Initiatives
❯ Form a group around a particular issue (i.e., to monitor major institutions in the community, such as banking)
❯ Church/faith-based groups
❯ Clubs, associations, etc.
❯ Parents of common school, neighborhood, or district
❯ Neighborhood or block organizations (i.e., Neighborhood Tutoring Project)

Individual-level Initiatives
❯ Urban Coalition's 50/30 Program
❯ MICAH's Suburban Housing Initiative
❯ Implementing the Minneapolis Housing Principles
❯ AMS' Inclusionary Zoning Initiative
❯ Letters to representatives

Setting Priorities for the Report *and the* Action Forum:

For the Report and the Action Forum, it will be especially useful to know what your top action priorities are. This will help the CCC organizers create the task forces at the action forum, and help them know what to emphasize in the report.

• Pick one or two ideas from the list, and spend some time on those in particular:

1) What would it take to turn our ideas into reality? What kinds of support or help do we need in order to take these steps?
2) What resources are already in place that could help us move ahead?
3) What would those steps be? What other groups might we link up with?

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APPENDICES

I. Snapshot: Where We Are Today (Data and Maps)

II. Thinking about Action Possibilities: 4 Case studies

III. Promising Practices in the Twin Cities (contact info)

IV. Discussion Report Forms

V. Compendium of readings

These appendices are provided as separate insert sheets at the back of this guide.

APPENDIX 1

Snapshot

Thinking about Action Possibilities:
4 Case Studies:

Portland, Oregon (metro governance and containing sprawl)

Gautreaux: Mobility Programs
The Gautreaux Assisted Housing Program resulted from a massive housing discrimination lawsuit in 1976. The court found that the Chicago Housing Authority and HUD, through funding and oversight, had deliberately located public housing so as to perpetuate and intensify racial segregation. The remedy focused on moving low-income blacks to less segregated areas. To date, over 7000 families have participated in the Gautreaux program. All the participants were households headed by black women on public assistance. Some participants moved to predominantly black, low-income, city neighborhoods while others moved to middle-income, primarily white suburban neighborhoods outside of Chicago.

A long term study compared what has happened to the two groups. Across every indicator

Raleigh and Durham, NC: Metropolitan Wide School Districts
Raleigh-Durham are twin cities in North Carolina that exemplify both the benefits of integration and the dangers of segregation. In the mid-1970's, Raleigh business leaders noted that the population of poor people of color within the city school district was steadily increasing. At the same time, the population of the county district was growing whiter and wealthier. To combat this trend and ensure integration and educational equity, the city and suburban school district boundaries were dissolved. They also added inner-city magnet schools and began busing 15% of the city students to the suburbs, Raleigh's initiative showed very positive results. By the mid-1980's, the racial mix had leveled, achievement scores had increased among black students, and core neighborhoods remained stable. Although attitudes toward integration are wavering today, the school board continues to exercise its influence, sometimes to the extent of securing low

to moderate income housing.

Durham did not follow Raleigh's lead and has grown increasingly segregated by race and class. By the 1980's, Durham's city schools were 90% black and predominantly low-income. Educational achievement also declined markedly. It wasn't until the 1990's that the nearly bankrupt district began to adopt integrative strategies. Since then the area's racial mix has leveled, and drop-out rates and test scores have improved.

Norfolk, Virginia (return to neighborhood schools)

APPENDIX III

Promising Practices and Contact Info

APPENDIX IV

Discussion Report forms

What do you think?

The Education and Housing Equity Project will assemble a document, entitled "Choices for Community: Creating an Agenda for Building Inclusive Communities and Successful Schools in the Twin Cities and Metropolitan Region." This document will represent some of the views of study circle participants and the results of the Action Forum.

Your group is invited to submit a summary of your discussions for that document. As a participant, you may want to use this form to take notes during the discussion (especially if you have volunteered to be the group's official recorder). Try to capture the main ideas that emerge during the discussion, using exact words or recalling actual stories or examples given by other participants whenever possible. Keep in mind that only one final form can be submitted per group.

Recall:

The Task of the Community Circles

Keeping the conversations centered on the following two questions:

■ *What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic, and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities area children and families?*

■ *What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance the educational, housing, and economic opportunities of all children and adults in the Twin cities area?*

What were some issues of common concern within your group?

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What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

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Did your group have any action ideas?

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Other comments:

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Community Circle Collaborative

Lead Partner
Education and Housing Equity Project

Organizing Partners
Citizens League
City of Minneapolis, Office of the Mayor
Institute on Race and Poverty, University of Minnesota
INTER-RACE, Augsburg College
Macalester College Department of Urban Studies
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing
Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism
Minneapolis Public Schools
Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program
Minnesota Minority Education Partnership
Minnesota Public Radio Civic Journalism Project
Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative of the Greater Mpls-St. Paul Area Council of Churches
MN Fair Housing Center
Minnesota Meeting
People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, North Chapter
Southside Neighborhood Housing Center
Twin Cities Free-Net
Urban Coalition
West Metro Education Project

Funding Partners
Otto Bremer Foundation
Bush Foundation
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
Minneapolis Foundation
The Saint Paul Foundation
The Saint Paul Companies
Star Tribune

National Partners
Study Circles Resource Center
Kettering Foundation/ National Issues Forum

In addition to the organizing and funding partners, many partner organizations and individuals are joining the collaborative as resource partners, facilitators, and as sponsors of the community circles being convened throughout the metropolitan area.

In the preparation of this document the Collaborative was assisted by
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1999 Community Circles Dialogues

Discussion Guide

SCHEDULE

SESSION ONE

Getting Started

SESSION TWO

What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?

SESSION THREE

How can we address housing challenges in the Twin Cities?

SESSION FOUR

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

SESSION FIVE

Making a Difference

GUIDELINES FOR RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE

These guidelines are intended as a starting place for respectful and productive circle discussions:

◆ 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.

Getting Started

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Why are we here?

Community circles are intended to:

- **Raise awareness** about the challenges of race, housing and education for our neighborhoods, our city and our region, and to help participants learn more about the complexity of these issues.

- **Provide an opportunity to talk** honestly and deeply about these issues and explore some possible solutions.

- **Generate suggestions** for possible action that we can take as individuals, as organizations, and/or collectively as a community, to address the challenges of race, housing, and education.

3. How do we create a productive dialogue?

Take this opportunity to set expectations and meeting guidelines for your group.

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND THE ISSUES

1. Tell us your name and a favorite community and/or neighborhood event in which you participate.

2. Share some of your personal "story" with the group by responding to the following questions:

- Where did you grow up? (big city, inner city neighborhood, suburb, rural, small town, farm, etc.)

- How did you feel about where you lived and your experience in general?
- How did where you grew up influence your opinion on race, education, or housing?
- Why did you decide to take part in this community circle dialogue?

3. Briefly discuss your reactions to what you've heard:

- What stood out for you in these stories? What was your reaction to listening to others' stories?
- What made you uncomfortable? What did you find you could identify with?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How have you experienced racism personally?

- How do you see life opportunities changing in your neighborhood — for better or worse? increasing or decreasing?

- How is segregation today different than segregation in the 1960's?

CLOSING

- What words or phrases from today's discussion do you think you will remember most?

- What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?

- What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION TWO

What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome and re-introductions

2. Revisit the discussion guidelines

3. Briefly reflect on last session/ demographic handout

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?

◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?

◆ In your own experience, how influential are some of these reasons for segregation? Are some more than others? Why?

◆ Each viewpoint states a reason for segregation. Which of the viewpoints most likely describes the cause of segregation? Why?

◆ In these viewpoints, what ways of doing something to affect segregation are suggested? What are your own suggestions?

CLOSING

❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?

❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?

❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

How can we address housing challenges in the Twin Cities?

1. Welcome and re-introductions

2. Briefly reflect on the previous session about the causes of segregation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

◆ Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own personal perspective? Why?

◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?

◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?

◆ What are the strengths of each approach? What are the weaknesses?

◆ Who would be most affected by each viewpoint? Who do you think would benefit the *most*? The *least*?

◆ Which of the viewpoints do you feel could work *most* effectively?

◆ Which of the viewpoints do you feel could work *least* effectively?

◆ What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these approaches?

◆ What are some steps that *communities* might be able to take in the area of housing and residential segregation?

◆ What are some steps that *individuals* might be able to take in the area of housing and residential segregation?

CLOSING

❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?

❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?

❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION FOUR

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

1. Welcome and re-introductions

2. Briefly reflect on the previous session about the different options for addressing the challenges of housing and segregation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

◆ Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?

◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?

◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?

◆ What are the strengths of each perspective? What are the weaknesses?

◆ Who would be most affected by each viewpoint? Who do you think would benefit the *most*? The *least*?

◆ What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these options?

◆ What are some steps that you think might help our communities to address the achievement gap in our schools? What efforts would you like to see policymakers focus on?

◆ What are some steps that individuals might be able to take to address the achievement gap and unequal opportunity in our public schools?

CLOSING

❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?

❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?

❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION FIVE

Making a Difference

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome and re-introductions

2. Briefly reflect on the previous session about the different options for addressing the student achievement gap.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

◆ Thinking back to the previous sessions, were there any common threads that emerged from the group's discussions? Were there any common themes in the solutions you chose for addressing the challenges we discussed?

◆ What were some of the main areas of agreement that were discussed over the last few weeks?

◆ What do you think is the responsibility of the community as a whole to address these challenges?

◆ What is the role of our institutions (schools, city and state governments, Metropolitan Council, the business community, religious groups, neighborhood and community-based organizations, etc.) in addressing these challenges?

IDEAS FOR ACTION

While there may not be consensus within your circle about how to best address some of the challenges discussed here, there may be ideas or solutions which have emerged over the past few weeks and are supported by most participants. As a group, try to answer the following question:

◆ What are the three most powerful action steps your group feels would make a difference? (These may range from individual efforts to large-scale initiatives, and could address one or many of the issues discussed.)

CLOSING

❖ What has been valuable to you about these circle dialogues?

❖ What do you think you might do differently in the future as a result of being part of this series of dialogues?

Conversations at the Crossroads
Faith Compendium

Dear Community Circle Participant,

The Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH) knows that people of faith have a special role in the Conversations at the Crossroads dialogues. We believe that people of faith should be heard from.

Across the country there are groups like yours - congregations, interfaith organizations and informal groups of persons - who have been moved to express their faith by taking Part in important public policy discussions.

Over the next few weeks you will be wrestling with a number of complex and challenging issues: including racism, segregation, inequality, housing, education. As you Take part in these conversations, we encourage you to bring your personal faith perspective to the discussion. In particular, you might address the following questions:

- What does your faith tradition have to say about the key issues under discussion (e.g. racism, segregation, inequality, housing, education)?

- Does your faith call you to enhance the educational, housing and economic Opportunities of your fellow citizens? If so, in what ways?

- Some members of the religious community would argue that the problems facing the Twin Cities metropolitan area are, at root, spiritual. Do you agree? what does it mean to say that the root of a problem is spiritual?
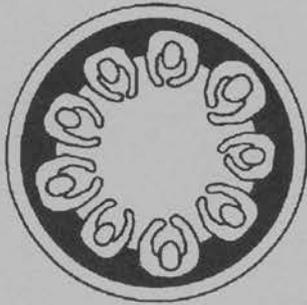
Also, as part of your discussions, you might reflect on a particular passage from the scriptures. A few examples are provided here:

- *Is this not the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thong of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?* (Isaiah 58:6)

- *Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God.* (Micah 6:8)

- *Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream.* (Amos 5:24)

- *We are all members of one body; when one member suffers, all suffer as one.* (I Corinthians 12:26-27)

These are questions that people of faith need to wrestle with. We are, after all, called to Righteousness. But these are hard questions, hard because to answer them is to go beyond the world of self and family and enter the complex, conflict ridden, and often confusing world of politics and public policy.

This is a world that many of us would choose to avoid. Yet, the future of our children and our region is at stake. Some changes can only be made through social policy and political action.

Arthur Simon, founder of Bread for the world, a religious based anti-hunger lobby, has said that "Faith without advocacy makes it difficult to achieve a certain level of justice and our failure to advocate robs others of hope and diminishes hope in all of us."

CHOICES FOR COMMUNITY

A REGIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION, HOUSING AND SEGREGATION IN THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA

Community Circle Collaborative

Lead Partner
Education and Housing Equity Project

Organizing Partners
Citizens League
City of Minneapolis, Office of the Mayor
Institute on Race and Poverty, University of Minnesota
INTER-RACE, Augsburg College
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Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative of the
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Minnesota Fair Housing Center
Minnesota Meeting
People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, North Chapter
Southside Neighborhood Housing Services
Twin Cities Free-Net
Urban Coalition
West Metro Education Project

Funding Partners
Bremer Foundation
Bush Foundation
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
Minneapolis Foundation
Saint Paul Foundation

National Partners
Study Circles Resource Center
Kettering Foundation/National Issues Forum

In addition to the organizing and funding partners, many partner organizations and individuals are joining the collaborative as resource partners, facilitators, and as sponsors of the community circles being convened throughout the metropolitan area.

In the preparation of this document the Collaborative was assisted by
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Foreward

This conversation guide is dedicated to the proposition that we, the citizens, are ultimately responsible for what happens to us.

Our hope is that the guide will assist you and your fellow conversation partners in examining and making choices together on the difficult but important challenges of segregation, housing and education.

The Twin Cities metropolitan region is at a crossroads. Issues of affordable housing, community stability, educational achievement and race relations make up the news and affect our lives. The problems facing our communities can continue to present us with historic opportunities to forge a new path in civic cooperation and problem-solving.

To forge a new path requires our coming together, to "struggle" together over what should and should not be done about these issues facing the character and quality of our region. Together we will inform ourselves and talk with one another in community circles, contribute to public policy making for our communities, and hopefully move ourselves and our communities to responsible, positive civic action.

Dick Little, Coordinator
on behalf of
The Community Circle Collaborative and
The Education and Housing Equity Project

The Community Circle Collaborative:
Introduction to the Process

Thank you for participating in the Community Circle Collaborative process, a guided conversation focused on the challenges of segregation, housing and education in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Across the metropolitan area, dozens of groups similar to yours will be conducting conversations regarding these issues. Your participation involves you in a small but significant community of people who are taking action to address these difficult and important issues.

For at least three sessions of two hours each, over the course of three to five weeks, you will gather with other members of your circle to share opinions, facts and perspectives. The goal of these sessions is to fully discuss the issues from many points of view and to develop potential solutions as your circle sees fit. Eventually, we hope to share some of these solutions with public policy makers so that the entire region may benefit from this process.

Before you begin your conversation, please read this guidebook. While it does not cover every perspective, the guidebook provides background that can help you more fully understand the issues and can help you in discussing them more fully.

How The Circle Process Works

In many cultures, circles are symbols of equality, fairness, completeness. The Community Circle Process has been designed with these qualities in mind.

In the early days of American democracy, communities held town hall meetings or sat around pot-bellied stoves or spinning wheels to discuss major issues. We were smaller, more homogenous; we knew each other well.

There is much to celebrate about America. The future is filled with possibility. But there is no escaping the underlying moral question, which is also a political one. Are we, or are we not, still in this together?

The pros and cons of those early American meetings were essentially the same: homogeneity bred greater agreement and less conflict; however, other voices in the community--those of women, slaves, Native Americans, poor families, and immigrants outside the mainstream--were seldom heard.

As American democracy has grown to include a wider variety of individuals, the need to broaden discussion about major issues affecting the nation has increased. Today, inclusiveness is highly prized because the Jeffersonian vision of "an informed citizenry," essential to a healthy democracy, cannot be fully realized without it.

The Community Circle Collaborative process is one way to sample the broadest possible spectrum of opinion within a community. A similar process has been used in many parts of the nation to help create a public voice about major issues. The Community Circles themselves are a refreshing change from the narrow and often restrictive discussions of the past and the competitive debates used in present day political programs.

Without the effort to bring people together for informed and civil conversation, the most extreme voices will be free to frame the issues. Public spirited conversation will be drowned out by shrill debate; our common interests and values will get lost in the sea of opposition and conflict.

Why a "Conversation" ?

Much of what we see in the media and in public meetings today cannot be called conversation for many reasons. Chief among them is the fact that advocacy of one point of view or another, at the expense of decorum, is an integral part of what is often called "positioning" or "posturing." This kind of communication has become an accepted fact in most of the media, but it ultimately leads to public cynicism and withdrawal from the political process.

On the other hand, to "converse" means to "share words with others" and carries the implication of equality of opportunity and status. A "conversation" is a sharing of ideas, thoughts, and perspectives intended to lead to understanding. Unity of purpose is inherent in the word; a conversation should clear the air by honestly reflecting differences and similarities.

Agreement, however, is not necessary in order to have a successful conversation. What is important is listening, reflecting and speaking from both the head and heart. Mutual respect and a belief in the healing nature of sharing ideas across boundaries of ethnicity, geography, socioeconomics and even language differences can go a long way toward making a conversation satisfactory.

One of the goals of the sponsors of this program is to institutionalize the art of guided conversation in our metropolitan area. We sincerely believe that solutions to serious and often divisive issues can be found if we put aside our fears and prejudices and work together.

What is Required of You?

Your role as a participant in the Community Circle Collaborative Process includes the following expectations:

- ✓ A commitment to the entire 3 to 5 session schedule
- ✓ A promise to share thoughts honestly and respectfully
- ✓ A willingness to listen deeply to others
- ✓ A preference for collaboration rather than competition
- ✓ A desire to find common ground and creative solutions

What You Can Expect?

When you invest your time and effort in the Community Circle Collaborative Process, you will receive:

- ✓ The opportunity to be heard
- ✓ Challenges to some beliefs, attitudes and assumptions
- ✓ Moments of great insight and inspiration
- ✓ Feelings of confusion and, at times, alienation
- ✓ A sense of accomplishment

How To Begin

1. Your facilitator has been trained to help your circle begin conversations. Please follow his/her guidelines as outlined at the beginning of each Community Circle meeting.

2. Read the materials in this guidebook before you begin your conversations.

3. Please feel free to conduct your own research using the bibliography in the back or any other materials.

4. Please do not seek to dominate conversation or monopolize the floor at any time. Remember to be courteous. Agree on common ground rules for your group.

5. Although the discussion period may vary depending on the size of each Community Circle, keep in mind that it is difficult to sustain sessions of more than two hours.

The Task of the Community Circles

Keeping the conversations centered on the following two questions:

➤ *What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities area children and families?*

➤ *What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance the educational, housing and economic opportunities for all children in the Twin Cities area?*

These are important questions affecting our future. The Twin Cities metropolitan region is moving toward a crossroads. We have an historic opportunity to confront many of the problems of urban decline that have already overwhelmed other metropolitan areas.

We hope that through conversations such as the one in which you are participating today, a greater understanding of these issues can emerge, along with new ideas for solutions.

Part One:
A Snapshot of Where We Are Today
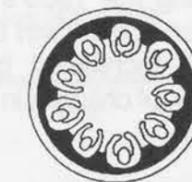
Every year when the list of America's most livable cities is published, the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis are high on the list. By standards used to judge major metropolitan areas--job growth, well-built housing stock, access to parks and recreation, good schools and social services, lower crime rates--Minneapolis and St. Paul are superior to many other cities. In comparison to other areas, the Twin Cities is a wonderful place to live. Yet, we are not immune from the social problems that plague other cities. This is particularly true of challenges related to segregation, poverty, housing and education.

40% of America's central cities are programmed to fail. Camden and East St. Louis are already clinically dead. Gary, Bridgeport, Newark, Hartford, Cleveland, and Detroit are on life-support. Although they seem fairly healthy, Boston, Minneapolis, and Atlanta are already infected.

Segregation & Poverty
● The proportion of people of color who live in poverty is higher in Minneapolis/Saint Paul than in any other central city in the nation.

● In 1990, per capita income for the region's people of color averaged about $8,500, compared to nearly $18,000 for whites.

● The concentration of poverty in the two cities and the degree of income disparity between the regions' central cities and the suburbs are among the nation's highest.

● Less than half the jobs in Minneapolis pay what is considered a livable wage.

● Between 1980 and 1990, 67 percent of new jobs in the Twin Cities metropolitan region were created in the outer ring suburbs.

● The poverty rate in Minneapolis is 18.5%; in St. Paul it is 16.7%; in the suburbs, it is only 4.54%.

● Among African Americans, the poverty rate in the Twin Cities metropolitan region is 37 percent, more than six times the rate for whites. For Native Americans, Asians, and Latinos, the rates are 40 percent, 32 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

● The highest poverty rate on a city-wide basis is among Asians living in St. Paul: 6 out of every 10 lives in poverty.

● The United Way recently cited data revealing that the highest incidence of poverty in Minnesota occurs in specific neighborhoods of Minneapolis and St. Paul, and that a disproportionate number of those living in poverty are women, children and people of color.

●During the 1980's the population of children in the Twin Cities metropolitan region increased by 6.5%, but the number of children in poverty increased by 62%.

●Over 73,000 people in the metropolitan region's suburbs currently live in poverty. The numbers are growing.

●About 60 percent of Minnesota families in poverty have at least one family member in the work force.

Housing and Jobs

●According to the 1989 American Housing Survey, over 37,000 households in our metropolitan region spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing. (The federal government considers 30 percent to be affordable.)

●The percent of households, locally, paying excessive amounts for housing is greater than the national average.

●The metro region's economy is increasingly becoming suburbanized. The region gained 225,000 new jobs in the 1980's, only 5,400 of which went to the central cities. As a result, there is a significant mismatch between those who need the jobs and where the jobs are actually located.

Education

●The central cities represent 22% of metropolitan enrollment, and 55% of the region's impoverished elementary school children

●In the 1996-1997 school year, 70 percent of all students in the Minneapolis Public Schools received free or reduced lunches (a key indicator of poverty used by government

How The Twin Cities & Other Large Cities Compare
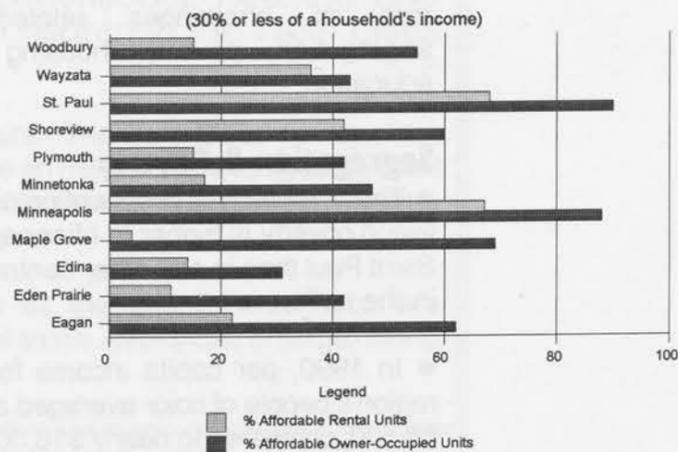
Poverty Rates for People of Color in Central Cities

Rank	Central Cities	Rate for People of Color
1	Mpls./St. Paul	44.6
2	Miami	41.6
3	Milwaukee	40.7
4	Pittsburgh	40.7
5	Cincinnati	38.8

Poverty Rates for People of Color in Metropolitan Areas

Rank	Metropolitan Area	Rate for People of Color
1	Milwaukee	39.3
2	Pittsburgh	35.0
3	Mpls/St Paul	34.7
4	Cincinnati	32.1
5	Detroit	31.1

Source: Metropolitan Council (1990 Census data)

1996 Level of Affordable Housing

(30% or less of a household's income)

Legend
■ % Affordable Rental Units
■ % Affordable Owner-Occupied Units

agencies). In St. Paul, 75 percent of students of color and 35 percent of white students received free or reduced lunches. In the inner ring suburban districts, as few as 4% of students are on free or reduced lunch, and an average of 26% of students are on free or reduced lunch.

●In the Twin Cities metropolitan area, 16% of all students are persons of color. Of those 16% students of color in the metro area, nearly 60% are in the Minneapolis schools.

●In Minneapolis, students of color make up 65% of the total student population; in St. Paul, 60%.

●Inner ring suburban school districts represent 15% of the total metro area enrollment. 10% of those students are students of color.

●In 1996 basic skills tests scores, a very strong correlation was made between economic status and scores on reading and math scores. (See graph on page 7).

Legal Context

●A lawsuit filed by the Minneapolis branch of the NAACP against the State of Minnesota alleges that schools in Minneapolis are "inadequate as a matter of law and as a matter of fact."

●The St. Paul School District has also filed suit against the State of Minnesota alleging "inequity of resources" and unfair distribution of state funds.

●A consent decree in the settlement of *Hollman v. Cisneros* provides opportunities for families affected by discrimination and segregation in publicly assisted housing to relocate throughout Minneapolis and suburbs.

Children in Poverty

(changes from 1979 to 1989)

Mpls.	1979	1989	% Change
African American	38.5	53.9	+15.4
American Indian	48.9	66.3	+17.4
Asian	49.0	55.8	+6.8
Latino	31.3	40.6	+9.3
White	10.3	12.9	+2.6
TOTAL	18.0	30.6	+12.6

St. Paul	1979	1989	% Change
African American	33.7	54.2	+20.5
American Indian	24.3	46.4	+22.1
Asian	57.1	68.9	+11.8
Latino	24.3	30.2	+5.9
White	9.9	11.8	+1.9
TOTAL	14.4	26.9	+12.5

Metro Area	1979	1989	% Change
African American	34.1	50.6	+16.5
American Indian	35.2	53.3	+18.1
Asian	26.6	39.3	+12.7
Latino	18.8	23.3	+4.5
White	5.6	6.4	+0.8
Total	7.5	11.4	+3.9

Source: Urban Coalition, 1993

The Color of Test Scores in Minneapolis Public Schools

Source: Minneapolis Public Schools as printed in the *Star-Tribune*

Percentage passing both reading and math basic skills tests

District as a Whole	27%
Female	28%
Male	26%
African American	9%
American Indian	13%
Hispanic	14%
Asian American	18%
White	54%

Gains in Percentage Passing Reading Tests among continuously enrolled African-American Students

1990-1991	17.7%
1991-1992	19.0%
1992-1993	20.3%
1993-1994	21.3%
1994-1995	22.1%
1995-1996	22.9%
1996-1997 (goal)	21.9%

Rate of Improvements in Average Reading Scores

Percentage of students bettering scores by 0%-24%:
- 1996: 40%
- 1997: 19%

Percentage of students bettering scores by 25%-49%
- 1996: 50%
- 1997: 37%

Percentage of students bettering scores by 50%-69%:
- 1996: 69%
- 1997: 59%

The importance of continuous enrollment in one school is evident in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, where tests reveal that pupils continuously enrolled in their schools show substantially more academic growth than their peers who move between schools.

Race, Poverty, Basic Skills Test Scores

School District	% Students of Color (1994-95 school yr.)	% Students eligible for lunch program	% pass Rate (1996) Basic Math	% Pass Rate (1996) Basic Reading
Wayzata	6.6	7	87	71
Saint Paul	51.9	56	52	44
West St. Paul	15.3	16	67	61
Minneapolis	61.0	61	43	38
Edina	4.8	2	95	88
Eden Prairie	5.8	4	91	79
Moundsview	8.2	10	86	71
Brooklyn Center	32.66	44	64	53
Anoka-Henn.	6.1	15	70	52
Richfield	20.3	22	71	62

Questions For Conversation

1. What do you think are the most significant problems facing your immediate community? The broader community?

2. Looking at the bullet points and charts provided on the preceding pages, is there any data on the previous pages that surprises you?

3. Do you believe that the Twin Cities metropolitan region is racially and economically segregated? Do we have two (or more) separate societies? If yes, what in your daily life leads you to conclude this?

4. What is your own neighborhood like in terms of race? Class? Ethnicity? National origin?

5. How does data about poverty, housing and communities of color relate to your neighborhood? Is it consistent with your experience?

6. What is the Twin Cities metropolitan region doing right? What is it doing wrong? Make two lists and compare them.

7. Do some people have more opportunities than others? Why?

8. Do you see life opportunities increasing or decreasing in your neighborhood?

9. What does racism mean to you? Do you believe the Twin Cities metropolitan region is a racist area? Why?

10. What affect do you think personal racism has on the quality of life in the metropolitan region?

11. What impact do you think *institutional racism* has on the poverty, housing and education issues we are discussing?

12. If you were to think of this circle meeting as your community, what characteristics would you say unite you as a group? What expectations do you have of each other?

Segregation prevents access to wealth accumulation by residents of isolated, poor communities of color, thereby establishing barriers to market participation. Lack of educational opportunities, poor job accessibility and declining housing values in isolated, low-income communities are symptoms of the problem. Further, racial and economic segregation damages the whole metropolitan region, including both the urban cores and the suburbs. Segregation geographically polarizes metropolitan communities along lines of race, income and opportunity, and separates urban centers from the surrounding suburbs.

Part Two:
Creating a Vision for your Future

Now that we've taken a look at the way things are today in the Twin Cities metropolitan region, it is time to consider our vision for the future. Each individual's vision may be different, but in approaching this exercise, we invite you to think broadly about the community. In fact, we invite you to dream a little about what the Twin Cities metropolitan region could be like, what resources would be needed to realize the vision, and what policies or programs would need to be changed, or eliminated.

The assumptions underlying this visioning process are simple:

1. All of us want the best for ourselves and each other

2. Our success as a community depends on the success of most, if not all, others.

3. As a community, we have yet to realize our greatest aspirations and must work together to fulfill our potential.

Questions To Facilitate Visioning Our Future

*   What do you/we want the community to look and feel like five years from now? 10 years? 20 years?

*   What are the underlying values that will be needed to sustain the community in the future?

*   What do you need from your community? What does your community need from you?

*   In what ways is your community tied to the well-being of other communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan region?

*   As a group, can you articulate a scenario of the future that meets the needs of everyone?

Part Three: What Can We Do?
➢ *Three Perspectives*

What can or should we do as individuals and as a community to enhance educational achievement and life opportunities for *all* children in our metropolitan area?

In the pages that follow, three of the major perspectives on the above question are presented. These perspectives represent different and to some extent conflicting points of view. *They are by no means mutually exclusive, nor are they the only ones circulating in the marketplace of ideas.* They may not be yours, or represent the views of any of the participants in your Circle group. They do attempt to capture the essence of some of the public policy choices most frequently expressed by public leaders. Our purpose in presenting these is to stimulate conversation and provide a framework for deeper conversation and deliberation.

Questions to Consider

As you deliberate on the choices that we need to consider about our future, we ask that you consider the following questions in relation to each of the three perspectives we have provided, as well as other perspectives that you develop through your conversations.

*   ✧ *What is appealing about this perspective?*
*   ✧ *What are the "down sides" of this perspective?*
*   ✧ *Can you tell a story illustrating this perspective?*
*   ✧ *Who is hurt by this perspective? Who is helped by it?*
*   ✧ *What are the long term costs, benefits, and consequences of this perspective?*
*   ✧ *How does this perspective affect the well-being of communities, the metropolitan region, the state, and the nation?*
*   ✧ *Using the three perspectives presented, what elements would you use to fashion your own perspective?*
*   ✧ *What actions are implied by each perspective? What specific ideas for implementation do you suggest?*

Strengthening the Region ➤ Building from Within

This perspective emphasizes dealing at the neighborhood level with issues of poverty, education & housing by reinvesting in the core city .

Key Premises

- Impoverished communities and schools are the result of unequal distribution of resources.

- Desegregation through busing erects significant barriers to a strong sense of community and involvement.

- Schools that are constituted around a particular cultural identity by choice can improve student self-esteem.

- It is not necessary for children of color to sit next to white children in order to maximize their academic achievement.

- Community schools are best equipped to reflect the cultural and community values of students and their parents.

- Neighborhood schools will enable more parent and community participation in the schools.

- Revitalizing the core--through a reallocation of resources both public and private--will improve the housing and economic opportunities for minorities and central city residents.

> The solution is to invest where the people already are.

> The people who are going to get into (the suburbs) are the upper-crust of the inner city. When you take these people out, what do you leave behind? The inner city gets worse than before. You need to reinvest in the inner city and rebuild it, building on the sources there.

➤Advocates Say . . .

- A stable core is essential for a stable region.

- If the region cooperates to improve schools, create jobs, and revitalize neighborhoods in the central cities, people will become more self-sufficient in the long run.

- Rather than spending millions to create new housing and duplicate existing infrastructure in the suburbs, we should use the tremendous human and economic resources in the central cities.

- If we help rebuild neighborhoods in the core and diversify the housing stock, people of all income levels will have wider choices of where to live. This will help to attract and retain middle income people and increase choices throughout the city for lower income people.

- People of color need to build a sense of community around their unique histories and culture. Moreover, they need to maintain whatever political representation they have.

> As a parent, I see no intrinsic value in having my daughter travel for hours to a far away school, potentially risking harassment by white kids because of her heritage, in order to get an education. She should be entitled to a perfectly good education right at her neighborhood public school.

- Many people prefer to live in segregated neighborhoods and go to segregated schools as long as their neighborhoods and schools have resources equal to those in other parts of the region.

- Parents, teachers, students, educators, and business and community partners can build bridges that ensure the success of locally-based schools.

- Hiring more teachers and staff of color who are from the communities they serve would help students feel a greater sense of self esteem and would therefore positively affect their academic performance.

- Neighborhood schools can help to stabilize education and may help to retain a middle class tax base.

- Creating schools of excellence through practices shown to improve student success is more important than practices focusing on racial balance.

- Community-based schools offer greater potential for adapting the school's way of doing things to the diverse cultures and communities of the students and families they are serving.

PERSPECTIVE ONE:
➤Critics Say . . .

- Pumping money into the central cities is not the answer. Many of these neighborhoods are so impoverished that revitalization is all but impossible.

- In order to create more regional stability, our communities need to be more economically and racially diverse. Building up infrastructure in the cities will do little good if our communities are still divided along race and class lines.

- The only way to break down the racial hierarchy that currently exists is to integrate. People of color need to enter into the economic and social mainstream where they will have more access to good jobs and good schools. Equally important, the dominant culture must expand its understanding of people of color and accept all people of color on their own terms. If we continue to stay apart, racial tensions will grow, and we will become more unstable as a region.

- People need to have real choices about where they live. Since a majority of the new jobs are in the suburbs, and because we have limited mass transit in the region, more low-income housing should be developed in the suburbs.

- Reinforcing existing, segregated communities will continue to perpetuate the cycle of socio-economic/racial isolation.

> The whole discussion of desegregation is corrupted by the fact that we mix up race and class. You don't gain anything from sitting next to somebody with a different skin color. But you gain a lot from moving from an isolated poverty setting into a middle class setting.

PERSPECTIVE TWO:
Market Approaches
➤ Fostering Economic Growth, Housing Choices, and Educational Opportunities

This perspective emphasizes a minimal role for government and a reliance on the marketplace to meet peoples' needs.

Key Premises

- Promoting choice and competition among schools, including private and religious schools, via vouchers and tax credits enhances school success and student achievement.

  - Housing opportunities can be enhanced by subsidizing low income households with vouchers or tax credits.

  - Providing housing vouchers will make it easier for low income families to voluntarily move to the suburbs, creating demand for affordable housing that will generate a market response.

> Markets maximize liberty, justice and efficiency.

- Private institutions (churches, foundations, businesses) are better equipped than government to respond to the needs and desires of local communities.

- In order to promote achievement, we must reward self-sufficiency, entrepreneurship and hard work.

- Public sector social welfare programs divert capital that could otherwise be invested in job creation in core communities.

- Government policies have contributed to the breakdown of families in ways that negatively impact educational achievement and economic advancement.

- Government policies have also undermined traditional values of family and personal responsibility. A return to traditional values and personal responsibility by communities of color would do more to restore their viability than any other single remedy.

PERSPECTIVE TWO:
➤Advocates Say . . .

- Integration has been tried and has not worked.

- Local communities, not regional, state or federal bureaucracies, are best equipped to answer the needs of their constituents.

- The private market system is more efficient, creative, and flexible than government in responding to job, housing, and education needs.

- Parents should have ultimate control over their children's schooling, including where their children go to school.

- Let the housing market be self-regulating; if demand is great enough, low-income housing will be developed by those who see economic opportunity in meeting these needs.

- Residence in the more affluent communities must be earned through merit and hard work and should not be granted by government fiat.

- Emphasize tax credits for job creation instead of welfare benefits for the under-employed.

> It's the person's responsibility for getting where they want to go. They have to work for it. . . .
>
> We worked hard for what we got, let them work hard for what they get. . . .
>
> There's a definite impact on the school system. If you have a large group of low income people move in, it impacts on services. We're just creating a problem for ourselves and the people moving in. . . .

PERSPECTIVE TWO:
➤Critics Say . . .

- Less than half of the jobs in Minnesota pay a livable wage. Over 60 percent of Minnesota's families in poverty have at least one person in the work force. If we want to create less dependency on the government, we have to create a market system that allows responsible people to sustain themselves.

> Extremes of wealth and poverty mock the claim that markets maximize human freedom.

- Discrimination remains a significant barrier for people of color, no matter how "responsible" they are.

- Poor people do not have the time or money to lobby for their interests and rights. The wealthy, on the other hand, use their power and continue to grow richer at the expense of the poor.

- Public subsidies for middle and upper income people already exist (e.g., home mortgage deduction and social security). A subsidy is a subsidy, whether it comes in the form of a check or a tax deduction. Perspective two simply seeks to eliminate lower income families from public support.

- The problem with social welfare policies in this country is not that we've done too much -- creating dependency -- but that we've done too little. Assistance to the poor has declined substantially in the last 20 years and continues to do so.

- The market system is neither designed to accommodate the social and economic needs and opportunities for people living below the poverty line, nor to provide for the common good. Its primary function is to make money.

- Research shows that school success is based less on the presence of a two-parent family and more on the socio-economic status of the family and the prevailing home and family environment.

- Creating tax exempt "enterprise zones" is not an effective way to stimulate economic activity and create jobs in the urban core. They are not pro-labor or pro-community, but pro-business and pro-profit.

- Basic human rights, such as housing and education, cannot be left to the whim of the marketplace.

- The creation of market driven K-12 school programs is likely to increase existing inequities in educational opportunities.

➤Creating Opportunities Region Wide

This perspective emphasizes increasing opportunities for people in jobs, housing, transportation and education through regional strategies intended to stabilize the metropolitan area

Key Premises

- A metropolitan approach has the best chance to break the cycle of racial isolation and the cycle of poverty.

> If we're going to be America and what America *proclaims* to be, then it is unacceptable to be a segregated society.

- The current concentration of poverty must be dispersed by a more equitable distribution of affordable housing.

- Racial segregation results from a combination of lack of choice and racial discrimination in the housing market.

- Schools segregated by race and income negatively impact students' educational achievement.

- Isolation by race and income removes people from the opportunity structures of society.

- Segregated communities result in segregated schools. A metropolitan region-wide program for low- and moderate-income housing precludes or at least reduces the need for busing as a remedy for segregation.

> Real integration is measured by the transformation of institutions, communities and individuals. Real integration involves fundamental change among whites and people of color, as people and communities. Integration requires that we link housing, school, employment and cultural opportunities. Linking housing and education policies, rather than focusing solely on integrating schools, directs attention to the importance and benefits of racial integration in multiple settings. By contrast, the approach of desegregating schools in isolation from other important institutions disregards the significance of building and strengthing communities.

➤Advocates Say . . .

> For America to prosper, we must first traverse the chasm of inequality . . . . Americans must not be walled off from each other by class division.

- Research shows that educational achievement and life opportunities for both white students and students of color improve in desegregated schools.

- Achievement gains are strongest when desegregation begins in the early grades and is implemented under a metropolitan-wide plan.

- People who live and learn in economically and racially diverse environments better understand others who are unlike themselves and are better prepared to work and function in a diverse society. Lack of experience with the racial "other," in turn, contributes to the mystification of racial differences and the perpetuation of ignorance, stereotypes and fears.

> Unless our children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will ever learn to live together.

- Evidence from successful housing mobility initiatives in other metropolitan regions suggests that the opportunity for low income and minority families to live in integrated, middle-income neighborhoods appears to modestly boost employment among adults and dramatically boost school performance among children.

- Given the location of most new jobs, economic opportunity would increase if more low-income housing opportunities were available in the suburbs.

- Segregation stands in the way of furthering the promises of American democracy. A house divided cannot stand.

> Educators and policy makers should consider policies that seek to improve education within an integrated setting.

➢Critics Say . . .

- An influx of low-income families into suburbs could lead to increased crime, declining property values and other social problems. Instead of creating problems for new neighborhoods, we need to concentrate on cleaning up the communities that need it.

- Efforts to desegregate neighborhoods and schools with high proportions of minorities assume that it is better to live and go to school in majority white settings. This is disrespectful of the strengths of communities of color.

- Because of institutional racism, people of color need to remain together in order to preserve their culture and maintain their political representation.

> Moving people from the city to the suburbs is just transplanting the problem. They need jobs.
>
> I think people would be happier if you improved their income, rather than moving them to the suburbs.
>
> It's time to educate students wherever they are and stop worrying about them mixing with others.

- "Mobility" as an option will take a long time to implement. It is a gradualistic approach and will do little to help the thousands of poor people who need help *right now*. Furthermore, it is tokenistic. Past attempts to provide mobility to low-income families and people of color have been limited in scope, actually helping few people.

- Creating region-wide low-income housing opportunities may help the families who choose to, and are able to, avail themselves of that opportunity, but does not directly address revitalization of the core city.

- Even if obstacles are removed and the poor people are "granted" more geographic mobility, the fact remains that there is a general mismatch between the skills of the poor people and the skills required by the available jobs.

➢What is your Perspective?
This perspective emphasizes . . . .

Key Premises

Advocates say . . .

Critics say . . .

Part Four: Harvesting A Public Voice
➤ *Moving to Action*

In conclusion, we ask you to consider and record two things:

> ➤ *areas of continued difference*; and
> ➤ *areas of agreement*.

Both are important for informing and advancing public conversation and advising policy makers so that they understand the boundaries of these sensitive issues. To aid in your deliberation, please consider the following:

➤ **What are the areas of tension or conflict that seem to be intractable when conversing about these issues?**

> *Please write down the issues where conflict has been unresolved. Be as thorough as you can about defining these areas of difference, and identifying actions or discussions that would still be needed to address or reduce these differences.*

➤ **Are there areas of agreement on the issues and potential solutions?**

> *Please write down the issues and areas of action where agreement exists. Be as thorough as you can about defining these areas of agreement, or "common ground," that would allow the group to recommend action. Try to identify the "trade-offs" or compromises participants would be willing to make to move in a shared direction and achieve actions aimed at the public good.*

At a public forum and citizen's summit scheduled in the near future, representatives from your community circle will be asked to share your findings and conclusions with decision makers throughout the region. A written record of the highlights of your conversation and action recommendations will also be presented to the public for their consideration. In these ways, you and your group will make a valuable contribution to evolving public policy.

> The overriding question is whether we can shift our institutions to reflect the society we have today.

We also hope that your circle deliberations and the knowledge you gain will lead to new ideas for action which participants can carry out as individuals, as members of small groups (such as your community circle) or through active involvement in organizations. In this way citizens who take part in the circle discussions will not only recommend solutions, but also become part of those solutions.

Community Circles can add much to the quality of life by providing a framework for getting to know your neighbors and stimulating individual and collective involvement in addressing important community problems. In addition, Community Circles can be used as social laboratories for discovering the answer to the most important question of all: How Should We Live Together?

> Disparity exists in the Twin Cities because of the concentration of poverty. I think this is a harm to the entire metro area. I think it is an issue for us. We need to be cooperative for the sake of the entire metro area.

We sincerely hope you have enjoyed this process and that you will use it again.

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CHOICES FOR COMMUNITY

A REGIONAL CONVERSATION
ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF
EDUCATION, HOUSING AND
SEGREGATION IN THE
TWIN CITIES
METROPOLITAN AREA

EDUCATION
& HOUSING
EQUITY PROJECT

FOREWORD

THE COMMUNITY CIRCLES COLLABORATIVE:

An Introduction to the Process

Welcome to the Community Circles project. You are one of several hundred residents of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area who have come together to address issues of segregation in housing and education.

At this point, you may be feeling a bit nervous or at least unfamiliar with the process. Perhaps this is because study circles are a fairly new, uniquely democratic process being tried across the country. Rest assured that the process has been tried by thousands of citizens with great success in many areas. The impacts of these efforts range from new friendships and neighborhood projects to city-wide action plans and even new state legislation.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY CIRCLES PROJECT?

Many people have recognized that citizens of the Twin Cities are increasingly divided along the lines of race and class. The Community Circles project was created out of a belief that local citizens should study these issues and find ways to address them.

Since December 1996, over 500 residents of the Twin Cities metropolitan area have been involved in community circles – small, democratic discussion groups – on these issues. These participants shared their hopes, concerns, and recommendations at a Community Forum held in May 1997. Using the foundation laid by the first round of circles, we hope the second round will act as a springboard for informed action at the neighborhood, community, and regional levels.

One of the central goals of the Community Circles project is to institutionalize the art of guided conversation in our metropolitan area. We sincerely believe that solutions to serious and often divisive issues, such as education and segregation, can be found if we learn how to put aside our fears and prejudices and work together.

WHY ARE COMMUNITY CIRCLES UNIQUE?

Most of what we have come to think of as "politics," in the media or in public meetings, is dominated by "posturing" or "positioning" by a handful of advocates on each side. Study circles, however, are a *sharing* of ideas, thoughts, and perspectives. Agreement is not necessary in order to have a successful conversation. What is important is increasing understanding, of the issues, of ourselves, and of each other.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CIRCLE?

■ The community circle is a simple process for small-group deliberation. 10-15 people meet regularly over a period of several weeks to address a critical public issue in an honest and democratic way.

■ The discussions are facilitated by a person who is there not to act as an expert on the issue, but to keep the discussion focused and to assure that all voices are heard.

■ The facilitator and participants utilize a framework laid out in a discussion guide. The discussion guide can also be used as a reference, informing the study circle participants of differing points of view about the issues of concern.

■ A study circle progresses from a session on personal experience to sessions on some of the larger public policy questions surrounding the issue. In the concluding session, members of the circle discuss what is the community's responsibility and how they can take action on the issue.

WHERE HAVE COMMUNITY CIRCLE PROGRAMS BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

An evaluation of a study-circle program on race relations and racism in Greater Cleveland showed basic changes in attitude as a result of the study circles. Study-circle participants in Lima, Ohio have done everything from building new playgrounds to changing the makeup of a regional development board. A state-wide study circle program in Oklahoma helped the state legislature enact sweeping changes in the criminal justice system.

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.

THE SCHEDULE

SESSION ONE

Who are we? Why are we here?

SESSION TWO

What is the nature of segregation in the Twin Cities?

SESSION THREE

What can we do about residential segregation?

SESSION FOUR

What can we do about unequal opportunity and achievement in schools?

SESSION FIVE

How can we take action?

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF YOU?

■ A commitment to the entire five-session schedule and the Action Forum
■ A promise to share thoughts honestly and respectfully
■ A willingness to listen deeply to others
■ A preference for collaboration rather than competition
■ A desire to find common ground and creative solutions

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

You should feel successful if your group has:
■ Participated in respectful discussions with people who have different points of view.
■ Encountered new ways of evaluating and understanding the issues, especially those we personally may not be receptive to hearing.
■ Enumerated the strengths and weaknesses of the Twin Cities and come to a more informed view than before the process began.
■ Generated concrete suggestions of how we as individuals and as a community can deal with issues of education, housing, and segregation.
■ Acted as a catalyst for and listed action steps to be taken in the future to ensure optimal educational and life opportunities for all Twin Cities citizens.
■ Applied some of the ideas exchanged in these sessions to your own daily life.

Getting Started

PART ONE: WHY ARE WE HERE?
• *Facilitators: take about fifteen minutes to review the task and the charge of the study circles.*

The Task of the Community Circles
Keeping the conversations centered on the following two questions:

■ *What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic, and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities area children and families?*

■ *What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance the educational, housing, and economic opportunities of all children and adults in the Twin cities area?*

PART TWO:
CONNECTING PEOPLE AND THE ISSUES
• *Facilitators: Use a series of questions to jump-start the conversation; let the participants get to know each other and develop more personal connections to the issue. Try to limit this section to about 40 minutes.*

Examples:
1) Relate a story or give an example to illustrate how your neighborhood or schools helped to shape your attitudes about yourself and your future.
2) Where did you grow up? What kinds of things are important to you in describing this place? (families, jobs, schools, neighbors, etc.)
3) Why do you live where you live now?
4) Why did you decide to take part in this study circle program?

■ **WHAT ARE WE DOING RIGHT?**
Did you know that...

• The Twin Cities are consistently rated as one of the most livable communities in America.
• Minnesota has been a leader in many policy issues from environmentalism to gender equity.
• The regional economy is viable and growing; the business community is thriving and rich in resources.
• Downtown Minneapolis is growing; at least 150,000 jobs are expected by 2000.
• Older neighborhoods are being redeveloped.
• There is an extensive system of metropolitan governance – a rarity actually, especially given the size of the budget and the scope of authority of the Metropolitan Council, for instance.
• The communities of color have dedicated leadership and many grassroots level organizations.
• Overall, crime and, in particular, violent crime has been reduced.
• The new light rail initiative and connecting bus system could improve mobility for a wide variety of residents.
• Communities of faith are committed and organized on a variety of social issues.

■ **WHAT ARE SOME OF OUR CHALLENGES?**
Did you know that...

❑**OUR SCHOOLS:**
• In 1996-97 school year, 70 percent of all students in the Minneapolis Public Schools received free or reduced-cost lunches (a key indicator of poverty used by government agencies). In St. Paul, 75 percent of students of color and 35 percent of white students received free or reduced-cost lunches. In the inner ring suburban districts, as few as 4% of students receive free or reduced–cost lunch, and an average of 26% of students are on free or reduced-cost lunch.
• Many students have weak educational preparation in the form of pre-school education, come from homes with few or no educational materials, or have parents whose educational experiences are limited, negative, or both.
• Student populations are diversifying everywhere, but students of color are increasingly concentrated in the core cities. In the metro area, 16% of all

students are persons of color; nearly 60% of these students attend Minneapolis schools.
• Students from poor families are also concentrated in the core cities, in core neighborhoods.
• Student achievement levels in the core cities, especially in core neighborhoods, are considerably lower than achievement levels in suburban districts.
• Children and families are increasingly under stress; students may be burdened by additional responsibilities and anxieties at a young age because of instability, frequent moves, and family or neighborhood violence. These factors affect student achievement.
• School staff members must increasingly cope with teen pregnancy, crime, gang activity, and drug use among their students.
• School counselors often do not make information about scholarship opportunities accessible to students of color.
• Many teachers are unaware of the effects of their decisions on the participation of students of color.
• Public school systems often do not assign sufficient resources to system-wide initiatives intended to help students of color access higher education.
• Public school curricula in some districts tend not to validate the cultural perspectives of communities of color. An example: history is taught from the perspective of European colonizing process; the perspectives of others are dealt with to a trivial extent and sometimes as though they are subversive.

❑**OUR HOUSING:**
• Affordable housing is becoming increasingly scarce, especially with the loss of many large federal subsidies. The need for affordable housing greatly exceeds the supply.
• The housing vacancy rate in the metropolitan area is currently less than 1%.
• In the Twin Cities, 59 percent of poor households spend at least half their income for housing.
• Poverty is concentrating in the Twin Cities at a rate that is nearly twice as fast as the national average.
• People of color are increasingly concentrated in the core cities and in poverty, and isolated from opportunities others take for granted.
• Women and children are the fastest growing category of homeless citizens.
• One third of homeless citizens are working full-time; another third work part-time.

• People of color are likely to face some form of housing discrimination one out of two times when seeking rental housing.
• Studies show that people of color are less likely than whites to be approved for mortgages to purchase housing.
• Housing subsidies for middles and upper class homeowners (mortgage interest and property tax deductions) far exceed housing subsidies for low income renters.

❑**OUR COMMUNITY:**
• Racial and economic segregation are intensifying.
• The income gap between the rich and the poor grows wider every year.
• Many citizens have limited access to the benefits of living in our community such as adequate transportation, jobs that pay livable wages, a quality education, and decent, affordable housing.
• Juvenile crime is increasing even though overall crime levels are falling.
• The average income of a Twin Cities African-American was already a low 61 percent of the average income of a white earner in 1980, but by 1990, black incomes had fallen to only 49 percent of white incomes.
• Poor blacks are more than twice as likely to live in extreme poverty tracts than poor whites.

❑**OUR ECONOMY:**
• Large numbers of dropouts and low levels of school achievement are producing students with inadequate skills for the increasingly high-tech workplace.
• Between 1980 and 1990, 67 percent of new jobs in the Twin Cities metropolitan region were created in the outer ring suburbs.
• Affordable housing is scarce near the majority of available jobs and job growth areas, requiring workers to either make long, expensive commutes, settle for low-paying nearby jobs, or remain unemployed.
• Less than half of the jobs in Minneapolis pay what is considered a livable wage.
• Transportation is inadequate, especially for people without cars (30% of core city households and nearly 50% of households of color) and people who live in the inner core who seek better paying jobs in the outer ring.

- Minorities are underrepresented in many job fields and professions.
- In Minnesota, people of color have much higher unemployment rates and lower incomes than whites at the same education level.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you perceive life in the Twin Cities now? Do we have two separate societies? If so, how would you describe them?
2. What do you feel are the strengths of the region? What do you feel are the most important challenges?
3. How do you view race relations in the Twin Cities? Have you experienced racism personally?
4. How do the data about poverty, housing, and communities of color relate to your neighborhood? Is it consistent with your experience? How have these demographic trends shaped your experiences, opportunities, or identity?
5. Do you think segregation in the Twin Cities has a positive effect, negative effect, or no effect at all on the life opportunities of the children you know?
6. Do you see life opportunities getting better or worse in the future? Do you see life opportunities increasing or decreasing in your neighborhood? (e.g., jobs, income, health...)
7. Are some people doing better than others? Why or why not?
8. How is segregation today different than segregation in the 1960's?

BASIC ISSUES TO ADDRESS

As Community Circle participants move into the next sessions, they are invited to consider the following questions:

1. Have our schools and housing patterns worked for some children and against other children? If so, how and why? What internal (institutional) factors and what external (community) factors could be causing this?
2. Understanding the nature of "white privilege": People of color are usually aware of how systems and institutions work against them. How well do whites understand how the system works in their favor?

3. Looking at the relationship between persistent residential racial and economic segregation, school segregation and educational achievement in our schools: what do we see?

NOTE: *The data in this session was compiled out of the contributions from many Twin Cities organizations. These organizations can supply the sources for the information they contributed and more specific data. If you would like to know about a particular statistic or how it was researched, contact EHEP staff at 612-330-1505.*

What are the Reasons for Segregation in the Twin Cities?

Many of us share a desire to do something about segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. 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 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.

● Viewpoints:

1 **Racial prejudice and discrimination cause people to live apart.** *According to this view,* the most basic reason for segregation is that many people are prejudiced against people of other races and do not want to live in integrated neighborhoods. However, a racial attitudes survey found that whites are more likely to be uncomfortable living next to people of color, or sending their children to school with students of color. This kind of prejudice isn't just limited to whites – people of color are sometimes biased against whites, and different ethnic minorities can be biased against one another. Attitudes are compounded by the fact that whites are on average wealthier, and therefore have greater choices in where to live. The resulting "white flight" intensifies racial and economic segregation. Furthermore, potential home buyers and renters can be affected by the prejudice of real estate agents, landlords, lending institutions, or residents. The prejudice of real estate agents can dramatically impact which homes are shown, in what neighborhoods, and to whom. Proponents of this view point to a recent HUD study which revealed that significant numbers of people of color are often discouraged from moving into or staying in white communities by the overt or covert prejudice of real estate agents or residents, and by the underwriting practices of lending institutions.

2 **High crime and poor schools drive people away.** *According to this view,* segregation is the logical outcome of people trying to avoid or escape what they perceive to be bad situations. City neighborhoods are usually noisier, some are dirtier, and a recent media study showed that Twin Cities residents believed there was twelve times more violent crime in our core cities than actually occurs. Families may also move to the suburbs in search of educational opportunities for their children; city schools are generally perceived to be poorer in quality, with lower average test scores, older facilities, higher student-teacher ratios, and higher levels of violence than suburban schools. Such experiences and perceptions lead people who can afford larger homes in the suburbs to move there, while those who cannot must stay in the city. Economic segregation is the natural result of individual choices and because whites as a whole are wealthier, suburbanization creates racial segrega-

tion as well. While segregation isn't good, it is happening because individuals want to make the best personal choices possible.

3 **Institutional racism in housing, hiring, and education leads to inequities.** *According to this view,* racism is firmly established in the institutions of our society. Institutional power continues to be distributed in a way that favors whites, disadvantages people of color, and leads to segregation. "Institutional racism" is entrenched in our businesses, government agencies, the media, schools, the criminal justice system, religious communities, and more. Sometimes this kind of racism is unplanned and unintended, and most often it is indirect or hidden, making it very hard to deal with. For instance, many hiring practices use racially biased standardized tests that keep out otherwise qualified applicants; lenders engage in unfair lending practices or use different criteria for different groups; schools disproportionately route students of color into remedial classes and white students into college prep courses. Qualified people of color are not hired because "they won't fit in." Such practices may appear benign on the surface, but they disproportionately affect the opportunities of people of color. It has been this way for so long that white people aren't even aware of the "white privilege" they carry with them.

4 **People like to live where they have "elbow room."** *According to this view,* the "American dream" of owning your own home with some land around it is the single greatest cause of segregation. Americans don't like living in small apartments or the narrow lots of city neighborhoods. Many people came to this country to avoid that kind of lifestyle and find more elbow room. At the moment, whites are wealthier on average, so they are better able to realize their dreams. As people of color get richer, more of them will move out to their own homes outside of the city (in many suburbs this is already happening), further isolating those who are poorer and must remain in the city. This doesn't mean we shouldn't try to do something about segregation. However, we should remember that there are positive reasons for moving out of the cities; we can't blame people for wanting to live where there is more greenery and open space, and a choice of larger homes.

5 **Public policies and economic trends promote and maintain divisions among people.** *According to this view,* government decisions on issues such as transportation, housing, and zoning contribute greatly to segregation. Federal home loan and mortgage insurance programs, coupled with significant spending on freeways and wastewater treatment facilities over many years have made it possible – indeed, attractive and convenient – for people with means (mostly whites) to get away from the problems associated with city living while retaining access to good jobs and cultural amenities in the central cities. Publicly assisted housing has historically been concentrated in core cities and poor neighborhoods, while planning and zoning boards have often passed restrictions that effectively prevent more affordable houses or apartments from being built in affluent neighborhoods and suburbs. In effect this legally screens out low- and moderate-income housing developments in many cities and neighborhoods and physically separates different housing types. In fact, there just isn't enough affordable housing in general. Compounding this problem, the majority of the poor and urban residents are minorities concentrated into a few neighborhoods. Dealing with segregation will have to become an important policy priority if we are to make any progress.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of the viewpoints seem most likely to describe the causes of segregation? Why?
2. Who do you think would hold each of these views?
3. Are there other viewpoints which should be represented? What are they?
4. Are some of these reasons for segregation becoming more prominent, while others get less important? Why do you think this is happening?
5. Each viewpoint states a reason for segregation – does each one also suggest ways of doing something to change segregation? What are they?
6. Have you heard people use terms like institutional racism, reverse racism, and white privilege? What do these terms mean to you? Do you think they have some validity?

What Should we do about Housing and Residential Segregation in the Twin Cities?

Many people can agree that segregation exists in the Twin Cities metropolitan region. Yet there is lettle consensus on what we should do about it. The goal of this session is to think and talk about possible directions for change.

The heart of this session is a range of views, or options, on how we might address and make progress on housing and residential segregation. Each is written in the voice of someone who supports that position. Use them as a starting point for your discussion.

● **Options:**

1 **Enforcement of anti-discrimination laws should be stepped up by agencies already in place.** *According this view,* all people have the right to choose where they want to live. However, racial steering by real estate agencies, discriminatory practices by landlords, and unfair lending practices, e.g., redlining in the mortgage industry, have made free housing choice nearly impossible for many. Because of these discriminatory practices, people of color and the poor often become concentrated in a few neighborhoods. People who feel discriminated against should use the agencies already in place or bring lawsuits against those who violate their right to fair housing, and agencies should file class-action lawsuits to block discriminatory practices.

2 **Limit new growth and expansion.** *According to this view,* the boundaries of the suburbs continue to expand as new developments move farther out into the surrounding farm or open land. This expansion forces the metropolitan area to direct a disproportionate amount of its precious resources to new infrastructure and lures white, middle class residents farther away from the city. If this growth was limited, eventually developers would have to reinvest within the now deteriorating city and inner-ring suburban neighborhoods instead.

3 **Exclusionary zoning practices should be eliminated.** *According to this view,* many suburbs have zoning requirements which serve to increase the cost of living in their city. In turn, this makes affordable housing developments, such as apartments or multi-family houses, and access to the resources of the community unavailable to many citizens. If such policies were challenged, new development could occur, resulting in more housing choices and diversified neighborhoods. Affordable housing in the suburbs would also allow greater access by lower income residents to jobs and educational opportunities, which have been growing the fastest in outer ring suburbs.

4 **Reinvest in the core cities and inner-ring suburbs.** *According to this view,* funds should be directed to redeveloping the core and inner-ring suburbs. Home ownership is key to the suc-

cess of such a strategy. Because city neighborhoods currently have disproportionately high rates of renters, and consequently, most landlords and tenants have less investment in these neighborhoods, creative strategies must be used to make home ownership more viable. If property taxes were reduced, neighborhoods beautified and kept safe, shopping districts improved, and new housing with modern amenities made more available, the city would appeal to many more investors and buyers. The citizens living in the city would be less likely to leave for the suburbs and core cities could lure middle class residents back into the city.

5 **Focus on jobs and transportation.** *According to this view,* because most affordable, low income housing is located in the core cities and inner ring suburbs, and most new, livable wage jobs have been generated in the outer ring suburbs, there is a serious "mismatch" or gap between people who need jobs and employers who need workers. Improving the public transportation system to connect central city residents with suburban jobs and investing in "brownfield" clean-up and industrial development in the core will create living wage job opportunities for low income residents and communities of color. Supported by educational and vocational training programs and employer-assisted housing, more core city residents will be able to obtain gainful employment and income, and thus more easily integrate into the economic and social mainstream, becoming the "new middle class" of the city.

6 **Begin a system of mandatory requirements for mixed-income development.** *According to this view,* efforts to desegregate neighborhoods, both racially and on the basis of socioeconomic status, have been voluntary thus far and have had limited success. In Minnesota, targets have been set, but are rarely met. In many cities, zoning laws actually prohibit the development of affordable housing. As we focus on redeveloping the core cities, we must also explore strategies for desegregating the suburbs. Through mandatory provisions requiring the inclusion of affordable housing units in all new multi-unit developments and providing bonuses to developers who do so, all people will eventually have more housing choices, and neighborhoods will be more diverse racially and socioeconomically.

7 **Let the market regulate itself.** *According to this view,* the best role for government in desegregating housing developments and neighborhoods in the Twin Cities is to reform the property tax structure and various codes which discriminate against affordable rental housing and hinder profitable development of low income housing. High land prices and the cost of construction already keep the market from providing new affordable housing. If government would stop over-regulating land use and eliminate unneccesary administrative processes for builders, building affordable housing would be more appealing to the private sector and more units would be built.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Try to imagine all of the possible outcomes of the changes proposed by each viewpoint. Who would be most affected? Who would stand to benefit the most? The least?
2. Which of these viewpoints do you feel would be most effective in remedying segregation in the Twin Cities? Are there any that would be ineffective in dealing with segregation?
3. At the public level, what are the strengths of each plan? What are the weaknesses?
4. What would need to happen to actualize any of the strategies? What are the obstacles to realizing the solution?

Section Three Glossary:

> **Racial Steering** is the practice of directing or encouraging renters or home buyers toward neighborhoods or buildings which match their perceived race.

> **Zoning requirements** are rules and regulations which govern land use in a particular area.

> **Exclusionary Zoning** is the practice of using zoning authority to mandate high-cost development through excessive building and lot requirements and costly administrative processes.

> **Redlining** is the practice by lending institutions of refusing to invest in certain neighborhoods because of specific racial characteristics, as well as economics and location.

> **Affordable Housing:** housing where the household is paying no more than 30% of its income for gross housing costs, including taxes and utilities.

What should we do about unequal opportunity and achievement in schools?

CREATING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

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 among other schools, and segregation abounds.

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 of all students? What is the role of integration in such a solution?

● **Options:**

1 **Create districts that combine community and magnet schools.** *According to this view,* previous attempts to desegregate schools have required extensive, sometimes involuntary busing and have drawn students out of their home neighborhoods. However, students of color now represent the majority of the students in the Minneapolis district (projected to be 70% students of color for the school year 1998-99, with kindergartners at 75%). With changes in the ratio of students of color to white students come changes in the meaning of busing and desegregating schools. Parents are now requesting to send their children to schools closer to home so that they can become more involved in their children's education. Research overwhelmingly indicates that this kind of parent involvement increases student achievement. Student achievement is the primary goal of the school district and according to school district research and recent national polls, achievement is also the goal of the majority of parents, even across racial and ethnic lines. Because achievement is what is most important, the majority of our resources and efforts should be strategically directed at achievement needs. Giving parents the choice to send students to community schools is an effective and proven effort to increasing student achievement.

2 **A metro-wide school district should be created.** *According to this view,* because segregation and disparities are so extensive, it is necessary to extend the resources of the region to all children, regardless of where they live. Magnet schools, interdistrict schools, and busing are all key in achieving this goal. Because students can choose from many options, this plan eliminates the need for forced busing if a student chooses a school close to home, but also extends more opportunities to a greater number of students than before.

3 **Support efforts to build more charter schools.** *According to this view,* Charter schools can create highly effective learning environments with more accountable school administration and increased opportunities for parent involvement than the larger rule-bound bureaucracies in which they exist. Because charter schools are public, they are

free and they are not bound by district lines, so they are also open to all students. Not only do charter schools promise to increase achievement, but they can voluntarily draw diverse student bodies and highlight multicultural teaching practices, providing models of integration for other schools.

4 **Create a variety of school choice options for students and a system of incentives for educators.** *According to this view,* the competitive nature of a free market situation creates a natural push to deliver higher quality while simultaneously improving efficiency. Private schools have been in this situation for years; in order to compete against other private and public educational options, such schools must attract students through the promise of better quality instruction, more attention to individual students, and higher success rates. However, public school districts currently have a "monopoly" on public education, and consequently have come to take students and parents for granted. The result of increased school choice and a free market situation is of benefit to all involved, offering students a better chance at success and the community a more educated, better prepared citizenry than a non-competitive situation. The public education system should not only access the advantages of such a system by offering qualified students vouchers for the private school of their choice or by introducing the services of various contractors into the mainstream public schools, but it will give public school districts an added "incentive" to improve themselves and retain their current students.

5 **Create Regional or Statewide Strategies for Educational Equity and Adequacy.** *According to this view,* the actual costs of educating the student body of a school can vary dramatically across districts; St. Paul and Minneapolis serve large, diverse populations that present significant educational challenges to the schools. With growing concentrations of at-risk students – children living in poverty, children of color, children with native languages other than English. – the resources needed to assure that each child receives an adequate education are greater than in other school districts. At the same time, segregation creates other school districts with a higher tax base and disproportionately few at-risk students,

allowing such schools to pool and distribute more resources per student. While efforts have been made in the past to redistribute revenue, the question remains of whether more state-level money is even enough to create equity while the available local tax base continues to vary so much – wealthy districts typically have greater success in passing excess levies from property tax, for instance, while poorer districts tend to cut programs and increase class sizes to balance their budgets – and state funds are often not targeted to the at-risk students within school districts. In spite of these challenges, the Minnesota constitution makes it the legal obligation of the State, not individual school districts, to provide sufficient and appropriate resources, policies, and programs to assure an adequate education to each of its learners.

6 **Culture specific schools, as opposed to integration, increase the educational opportunities of students of color.** *According to this view,* the large scale failures of urban students of color within the mainstream public schools can be remedied best by offering specialized public schools for these students. Teachers, curriculum, and methods of instruction are so infused with the value system of the white middle class that efforts to put white students and students of color together in the classroom will only continue to produce the same results. Culture specific schools, however, have tailored their instruction methods to the learning needs of the students, provided more adult role models of color than mainstream schools, and increased overall achievement.

7 **Focus on making schools multi-culturally inclusive.** *According to this view,* desegregating schools based on numerical balance alone is not sufficient; true integration should not be confused with assimilation; instead, schools should reflect and honor the diversity of the communities they serve. This view suggests that growing diversity within a school provides many rich and diverse opportunities for students, parents, and teachers. Students bring cultural differences related to art, music, literature, values and customs. The classroom provides a great opportunity for involvement of cultural diversity in the instructional program. Culturally diverse populations also provide oppor-

tunities for students to learn how to interact and communicate effectively with one another in a demographic model that more closely represents the world. It cannot be assumed that these communication skills are present. Indeed, it is necessary to teach students to communicate with one another with effectiveness and sensitivity. This needs to be part of the school curriculum. These skills can be taught as part of an overall school program on climate. They may be integrated into language arts instruction. They can be part of work in the social sciences. A large portion of learning comes from the adult models present in the student's world. Adults teach most when they least expect it. The subtleties of body language, language use, and the perception of caring are powerful influences on the way in which students learn to deal with one another's differences. The school itself models its own attitudes toward cultural differnces. Visual evidence exists on bulletin boards, in newsletters, and in the choices made in marketing school-wide functions. Parents and families feel welcome or estranged based often on the most subtle of signals at the schoolhouse door. The ultimate question is, do people feel welcome? Do they feel a part of the school? Is it clear that they are valued and viewed as important and integral parts of their child's education? The subtleties of all these things have a specific influence on the way in which culturally diverse populations work together within the school setting.

8 **Reversing the patterns of de facto residential segregation will truly desegregate schools.** *According to this view,* the efforts made by various reformers of education and advocates of affordable housing merely treat the symptoms of the underlying problem: Americans live very segregated lives. Unless neighborhoods are integrated and the housing choices of all Americans are expanded, segregation will continue and schools will reflect it. As long as the educational opportunities of children are determined by the area in which they live, and where we live is correlated with the color of our skin, the educational opportunities of students will be affected. Breaking down the patterns of segregation, therefore, is the best way to deal with equalizing the educational and life opportunities of all children.

Section Four Glossary:

> **Magnet schools** are open to all students within a district who may be interested in the school's particular theme. Examples of magnet school themes are science and mathematics, arts, language-specific, Montessori, etc.

> **Charter schools:** In Minnesota, a groups of educators can request a "charter" from a local school district to start an independent school. Because charter schools are public schools, they must observe the basic requirements of public education and are subject to student performance standards, but have flexibility in incorporating alternative curriculums.

> **Interdistrict schools** allow students from multiple districts to attend the same public school.

> **Vouchers:** Proposed voucher plans can take many forms, but in its most basic form, a voucher is a check given to parents by the government to be spent on tuition for a child enrolled in a private school. Usually the amount of the voucher is identical to the amount of the per-pupil expenditure given to public schools. **Tax credits** can serve a similar purpose but can also be used to support educational activities of students attending public schools.

> **De facto vs. de jure:** *De facto* is something which exists in fact, though it may not be mandated by law. *De jure* is something which is mandated by law.

Making a Difference: What is the Community's Responsibility?

While the issues of segregation in education and housing can seem overwhelming, it is possible to make a difference. In communities around the country, people have found ways – from individual efforts to large-scale plans – to address these issues.

By participating in this community circle program, you have already made a contribution. But the second phase of the Choices for Community project is designed to help you connect with other kinds and levels of action. At the conclusion of the community circles, participants from all over the metro area will meet for a citizens summit, where community circles will share their results with each other and the public, and an action forum, where task forces will be formed to move forward with implementation plans, and where you will have the opportunity to learn about action groups and organizations working on these issues. The records from each community circle will also be gathered into a document which summarizes the thinking of all the participants to help guide the thinking of public officials and other policy makers.

This session is designed to help you contribute to the action forum and the report, as well as think further about your own action plans.

PART ONE:
THINKING TOGETHER ABOUT HOW WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Think about the many different types of "action" and "actors." If an answer seems to present possibilities for future action, even if only as a component of a solution, take note. Pay special attention to the persons, organizations, and areas in the community and their respective role in any action possibilities.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were some of the main areas of agreement in your discussions over the last few weeks?
2. Think back to sessions two, three, and four. What seemed to be the key ingredients of the solutions you chose? What were the roles of schools? Of communities? Were there any themes in the solutions chosen by other members of the study circle?
3. What is the responsibility of the community – the public, government, schools, teachers, businesses, families, neighborhoods, etc – for addressing these problems?
4. In what ways should we utilize institutions in our communities to make progress on the issue of racial segregation?
5. In what ways is your community tied to the well-being of other communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan region?
6. Should these problems be of concern to all Twin Citians? Why? Do we need a healthy whole in order to be healthy individually? Are there costs and risks of further delay?
7. What are the implications of race and racial relations in the Twin Cities? For children? For adults? For Whites? For people of color?
8. Given the residential patterns articulated by current plans and policies, what do you think the Twin Cities metropolitan area will look and feel like ten years from now? How do you want it to look? Are these two visions more similar or different?
9. Where do you see possibilities to influence this outcome? Offer possible viewpoints...

PART TWO: PROMISING PRACTICES AND IDEAS FOR ACTION

• *Use the following ideas, examples and questions to decide what needs to be done to begin organizing for action, and to help you prepare for the action forum.*
• *In each category (Institutional/Regional, Community-wide/Non-Profit, Small Group, and Individual), what two or three ideas seem most practical and useful? What ideas and experiences of your own might you add?*

Promising Practices in the Twin Cities

■ INSTITUTIONAL/REGIONAL-LEVEL INITIATIVES

> 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)
> Metropolitan Council Livable Communities demonstration projects
> Implementation of the Holman v. Cisneros lawsuit and settlement
> The Minneapolis Housing Principles and Affordable Housing Task Force
> Proposed mediation of the NAACP v. State of Minnesota and St. Paul v. State of Minnesota educational adequacy and equity lawsuits
> Inter-district schools (West Metro Education Program schools in downtown Minneapolis and (proposed) Robbinsdale and Edina
> Multi-district schools (Tri-district School for Maplewood, North St. Paul and St. Paul)
> Minneapolis Public Schools District Improvement Agenda

■ COMMUNITY-LEVEL AND NON-PROFIT INITIATIVES

> The Urban Coalition's 50/30 Initiative promoting homeownership for households of color
> The Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing's (MICAH) Suburban Housing Initiative, Housing Advocates Network of over 1,000 volunteers, and fair housing theatre production with the Illusion Theatre "Like Waters Rolling Down"
> The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability's Inclusionary Housing Initiative
> The Minnesota Minority Education Partnership's (MMEP) Project Empowerment for improving student achievement among students of color through parent and teacher training and collaborative regional and community leadership, and Institute for Multicultural Connections, preparing young people of color for teaching careers
> Integrated, multi-cultural charter schools (Twin Cities Charter School Project)
> Community-based adult-student tutoring projects, including the Neighborhood Tutoring Project of the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) and Minneapolis Public Schools, and those of the Minneapolis and St. Paul Urban Leagues, the Minnesota Hispanic Education Program, the Lao Family Center, the Chicanos Latinos Unidos En Servicio (CLUES), the American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center (AIOIC) and the Hubb Literacy Center in St. Paul.
> Minneapolis League of Women Voters' Middle School Achievement Project
> Public Achievement Project of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, University of Minnesota
> Faith-based social justice initiatives to address segregation, poverty and urban disparities led by Interfaith Action and the St. Paul Ecumenical Action Council (SPEAC)
> The Seed Academy/Harvest Preparatory School, which began as an alternative school and pre-school for African American youth and is now a charter school with the Minneapolis Public Schools, a model of success for replication by others
> Initiatives to expand the number of teachers of color in the Twin Cities and change school curriculum and teaching pedagogies to reflect student diversity, including the Richard Green Institute at Augsburg College, the Center for Excellence in Urban Teaching at Hamline University and the Collaborative Urban Educator Program at the University of St. Thomas
> Research initiatives, such as the work on 40 developmental assets of young people by the Search Institute; research on the status of Twin Cities communities of color by the Urban Coalition; culture-specific research by HACER (Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research) and the American Indian Research and Policy Institute; and research on the relationship of housing, segregation and educational achievement by the Institute on Race and Poverty.

■ WHAT SMALL GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO:

> Expand community input on school district and multi-district issues.

> Organize events which celebrate diversity.

> Address race issues in the schools.

> Work to revitalize an assisted housing project, such as a Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity project; work to promote and welcome a range of housing choices, including affordable housing, in every community.

> Form a community development corporation.

> Work with citizens and public officials to involve more people in public decisions affecting their future.

■ 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 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 child's or 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 above. 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 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.

> Join other citizens to create *A Thousand Voices, A Thousand Families for Integrated Schools and Communities,* the next round of community circle discussions and an action initiative to identify, develop and sustain a well run, successful and integrated school and community as a model for the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

Setting Priorities for the Report and the Action Forum:

For the Report and the Action Forum, it will be especially useful to know what your top action priorities are. This will help the Community Circle organizers create the task forces at the action forum, and help them know what to emphasize in the report to the community.

• *Pick one or two ideas from the list, and spend some time on those in particular:*

1) What would it take to turn our ideas into reality? What steps would need to be taken? What kinds of support or help do we need in order to take these steps?

2) What resources are already in place that could help us move ahead?

3) What other groups might we link up with?

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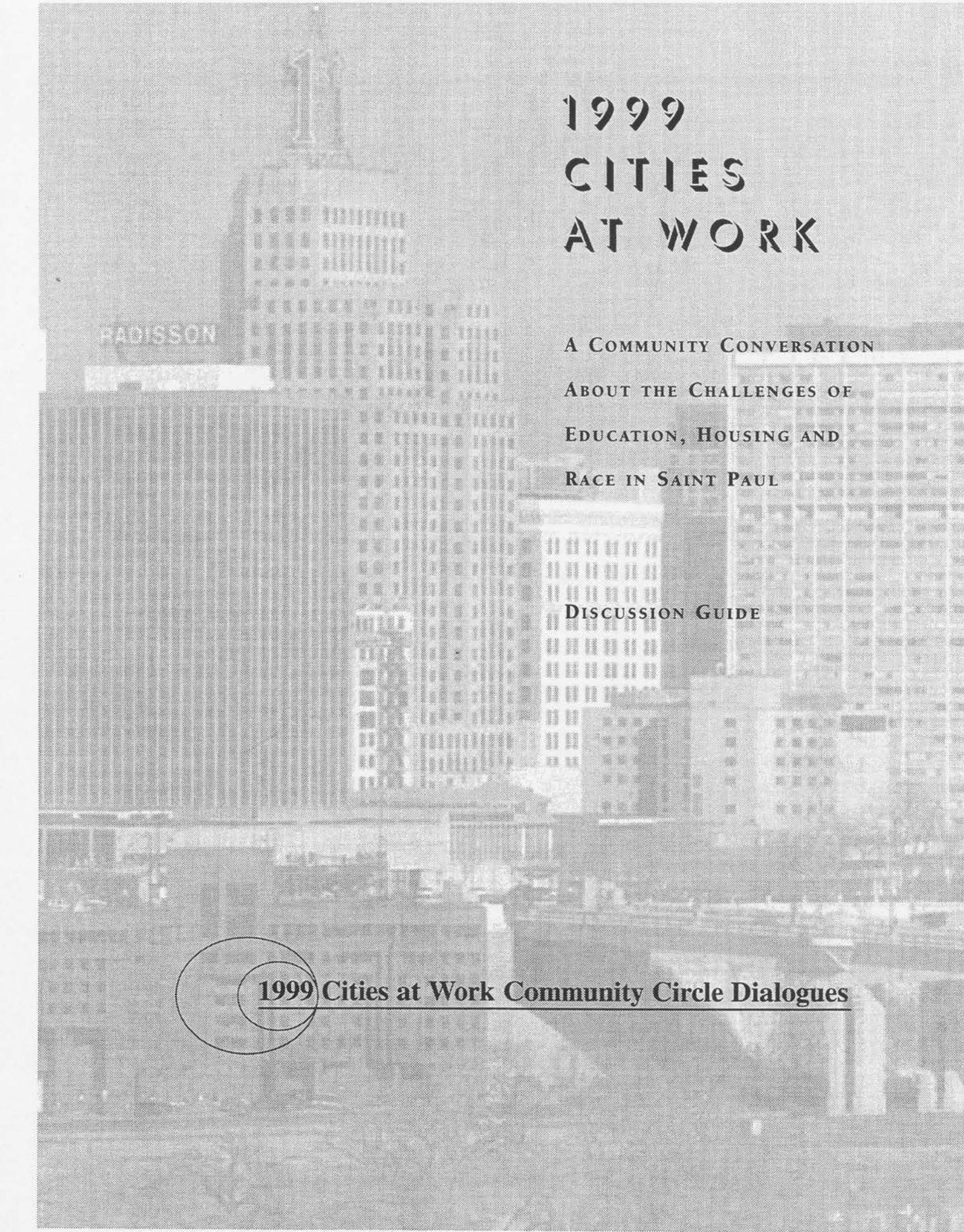Fax: 612-330-1507 or 1649
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1999 CITIES AT WORK

A Community Conversation About the Challenges of Education, Housing and Race in Saint Paul

Discussion Guide

1999 Cities at Work Community Circle Dialogues

1999 Cities at Work Sponsors and Funders

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Community Circle Collaborative

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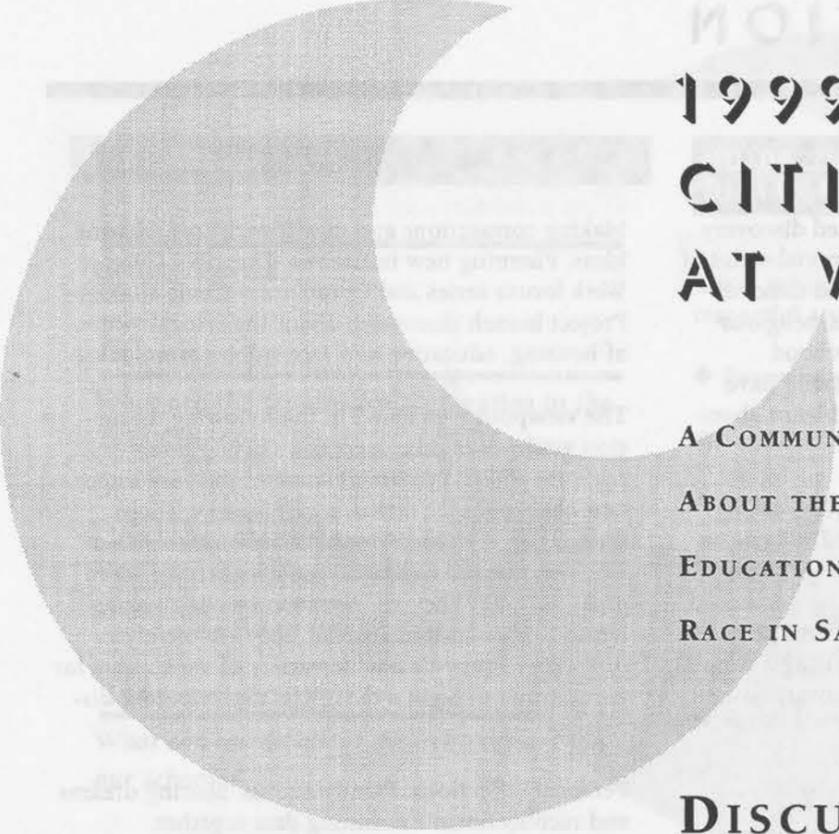
1999
CITIES
AT WORK

A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF

EDUCATION, HOUSING AND

RACE IN SAINT PAUL

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1999 Cities at Work Community Circle Dialogues

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT CITIES AT WORK

Since 1995, *Cities at Work* has 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, *Unleashing the Power of our Community: A Public Dialogue on Race, Connections, and Commitment,* begins this spring and continues in the 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

Also in 1999, *Cities at Work* has initiated the pilot 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 pilot 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.

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. In October, the final *Cities at Work* forum, *Beyond Tolerance: A Call to Action,* will be a clearinghouse of ideas for individual, organization, and collective community-wide action to promote and create positive community change.

WHY ARE WE HERE?

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 critical issues of 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

Community circle discussions should be centered around the following two questions:

◆ Do patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation have impact on the educational achievement and life opportunities of children and adults living in Saint Paul? 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?

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.

SCHEDULE

SESSION ONE

Getting Started

SESSION TWO

What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?

SESSION THREE

How can we address housing challenges in the Twin Cities?

SESSION FOUR

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

SESSION FIVE

Making a Difference

GUIDELINES FOR RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE

These guidelines are intended as a starting place for respectful and productive circle discussions:

◆ 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.

Getting Started

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Why are we here?

Community circles are intended to:

• **Raise awareness** about the challenges of race, housing and education for our neighborhoods, our city and our region, and to help participants learn more about the complexity of these issues.

• **Provide an opportunity to talk** honestly and deeply about these issues and explore some possible solutions.

• **Generate suggestions** for possible action that we can take as individuals, as organizations, and/or collectively as a community, to address the challenges of race, housing, and education.

3. How do we create a productive dialogue?

Take this opportunity to set expectations and meeting guidelines for your group.

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND THE ISSUES

1. Tell us your name and a favorite community and/or neighborhood event in which you participate.

2. Share some of your personal "story" with the group by responding to the following questions:

   • Where did you grow up? (big city, inner city neighborhood, suburb, rural, small town, farm, etc.)
   • How did you feel about where you lived and your experience in general?
   • How did where you grew up influence your opinion on race, education, or housing?
   • Why did you decide to take part in this community circle dialogue?

3. Briefly discuss your reactions to what you've heard:

   • What stood out for you in these stories? What was your reaction to listening to others' stories?
   • What made you uncomfortable? What did you find you could identify with?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

◆ How have you experienced racism personally?

◆ How do you see life opportunities changing in your neighborhood — for better or worse? increasing or decreasing?

◆ How is segregation today different than segregation in the 1960's?

CLOSING

❖ What words or phrases from today's discussion do you think you will remember most?

❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?

❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

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 and re-introductions**

2. **Revisit the discussion guidelines**

3. **Briefly reflect on last session/ demographic handout**

VIEWPOINTS

1 Racial prejudice and discrimination cause people to live apart. *According to this view,* the basic reason for segregation is that many people are prejudiced against people of other races and do not want to live in integrated neighborhoods. This kind of prejudice isn't just limited to whites – people of color are sometimes biased against whites, and different ethnic minorities can be biased against one another. Potential home buyers and renters can be affected by the prejudice of real estate agents, landlords, lending institutions, or residents. The prejudice of real estate agents can dramatically impact which homes are shown, in what neighborhoods, and to whom. A recent HUD study revealed that significant numbers of people of color are often discouraged from moving into or staying in white communities by the overt or covert prejudice of real estate agents or residents, and by the underwriting practices of lending institutions.

2 High crime and poor schools drive people away. *According to this view,* segregation is the logical outcome of people trying to avoid or escape what they perceive to be bad situations. A recent media study showed that Twin Cities residents believed there was twelve times more violent crime in our core cities than actually occurs. Families may also move to the suburbs in search of educational opportunities for their children. City schools are generally perceived to be poorer in quality, with lower average test scores, older facilities, higher student-teacher ratios, and higher levels of violence than suburban schools. Such experiences

and perceptions lead some people who can afford larger homes in the suburbs to move there. Economic segregation is the natural result of individual choices, and because whites as a whole are wealthier, suburbanization creates racial segregation as well. While segregation isn't good, it is happening because individuals want to make the best personal choices possible.

3 Institutional racism in housing, hiring, and education leads to inequities. *According to this view,* racism is firmly established in the institutions of our society. Institutional power continues to be distributed in a way that favors whites, disadvantages people of color, and leads to segregation. "Institutional racism" is entrenched in our businesses, government agencies, the media, schools, the criminal justice system, religious communities, and more. Sometimes this kind of racism is unplanned and unintended, and most often it is indirect or hidden, making it very hard to deal with. For instance, many hiring practices use racially biased standardized tests that keep out otherwise qualified applicants; lenders engage in unfair lending practices or use different criteria for different groups; schools disproportionately route students of color into remedial classes and white students into college prep courses. Qualified people of color are not hired because "they won't fit in." Such practices may appear benign on the surface, but they disproportionately affect the opportunities of people of color. It has been this way for so long that white people aren't even aware of the "white privilege" they carry with them.

4 People like to live where they have "elbow room." *According to this view,* the "American dream" of owning your own home with some land around it is the single greatest cause of segregation. Many Americans don't like living in small apartments or the narrow lots of city neighborhoods. At the moment, whites are wealthier on average, so they are better able to realize their dreams. As people of color get richer, many will move out to their own homes outside of the city (in many suburbs this is already happening), further isolating those who are poorer and must remain in the city.

5 Public policies and economic trends promote and maintain divisions among people. *According to this view,* government decisions on issues such as transportation, housing, and zoning contribute greatly to segregation. Federal home loan and mortgage insurance programs, coupled with significant spending on freeways and wastewater treatment facilities over many years have made it possible – indeed, attractive and convenient – for people with means (mostly whites) to get away from the problems associated with city living while retaining access to good jobs and cultural amenities in the central cities. Publicly assisted housing has historically been concentrated in core cities and poor neighborhoods, while planning and zoning boards have often passed restrictions that effectively prevent more affordable houses or apartments from being built in affluent neighborhoods and suburbs. In effect, this legally screens out low- and moderate-income housing developments in many cities and neighborhoods and physically separates different housing types. In fact, there just isn't enough affordable housing in general. Compounding this problem, the majority of the poor and urban residents are minorities concentrated into a few neighborhoods.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?

◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?

◆ In your own experience, how influential are some of these reasons for segregation? Are some more than others? Why?

◆ Each viewpoint states a reason for segregation. Which of the viewpoints most likely describes the cause of segregation? Why?

◆ In these viewpoints, what ways of doing something to affect segregation are suggested? What are your own suggestions?

CLOSING

❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?

❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?

❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

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 and re-introductions**

2. **Briefly reflect on the previous session about the causes of segregation.**

VIEWPOINTS

1 Enforce anti-discrimination laws. *According to this view,* people have the right to choose where they want to live. However, unfair lending practices and discrimination by landlords and real estate agencies have made housing choice nearly impossible for many individuals and families. Saint Paul, like many other parts of the region, has seen a concentration of the community's poorest people and people of color in a few neighborhoods in the urban core. This viewpoint offers that people who feel their rights to fair housing are limited by unfair discrimination should file class-action lawsuits to block discriminatory practices.

2 Limit the metropolitan region's growth and expansion. *According to this view,* there is an unfair amount of resources going to housing and development in the outer ring suburbs as the Twin Cities region expands beyond our current boundaries into more farming areas or open land. This is often luring white middle class residents out of the city. This view offers that we need to limit this growth and provide more incentives for private investment and redevelopment in our urban neighborhoods and inner-ring suburban communities.

3 Invest in the construction and preservation of affordable housing. *According to this view,* much of the housing crisis stems from the less than 2% vacancy rental rate in the Twin Cities, as well as the rising costs for both the preservation of existing affordable housing and the construction of new affordable housing. These factors have dramatically affected the supply of lower-cost housing. Exclusionary zoning policies in many suburban communities have impact on the development of

affordable housing in the suburban communities, and this also needs to be challenged. More affordable housing development in the suburbs would provide a wider range of housing choices close to where many of the "living wage" job opportunities have been growing the fastest. However, more decent, affordable housing development in the urban neighborhoods would also provide more housing options for the working families who would like to continue to live in the center cities.

4 Enact mandatory requirements for mixed-income development. *According to this view,* voluntary efforts to desegregate our neighborhoods (both racially and economically) have not been very successful. This view offers that throughout the metropolitan region, the inclusion of affordable housing units in all new multi-unit housing construction projects needs to be mandatory. Incentives for all regional developers to build mixed-income projects will eventually create more housing choices, therefore creating more diverse neighborhoods in both the suburbs and the core cities.

5 Provide more viable incentives for home ownership and other forms of investment in the core cities to diversify the housing stock in our communities. *According to this view,* if property tax rates in Saint Paul were reduced, neighborhood beautification and safety initiatives encouraged, more shopping districts developed, and more new housing of all types made available, the city would become more attractive to investors and home buyers.

6 Focus on jobs and transportation solutions, including brownfield re-development and employer-assisted housing. *According to this view,* there is a serious gap between people who need jobs and employers who need workers because most of the low-income housing is located in the core cites while most of the job opportunities are being generated in the outer-ring suburbs. This view offers that improving the public transportation system to get central city workers to these jobs is essential. Investing in brownfield or polluted land clean-up and industrial development in the urban core will also create more living wage job opportunities in the

city, close to where people live. These projects are often very expensive and time consuming. The development of more employer-assisted housing close to where the jobs are can also provide more housing choices in the core cities and neighborhoods.

7 Let the market regulate itself. *According to this view,* if the government would stop over-regulating land use and eliminate unnecessary administrative redtape for builders and developers, the construction of new affordable housing projects would be more attractive to the private sector and would increase in the Twin Cities.

◆ Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own personal perspective? Why?

◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?

◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?

◆ What are the strengths of each approach? What are the weaknesses?

◆ Who would be most affected by each viewpoint? Who do you think would benefit the *most*? The *least*?

◆ Which of the viewpoints do you feel could work *most* effectively?

◆ Which of the viewpoints do you feel could work *least* effectively?

◆ What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these approaches?

◆ What are some steps that *communities* might be able to take in the area of housing and residential segregation?

◆ What are some steps that *individuals* might be able to take in the area of housing and residential segregation?

CLOSING

❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?

❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?

❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

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 and re-introductions**

2. **Briefly reflect on the previous session about the different options for addressing the challenges of housing and segregation.**

VIEWPOINTS

1 Offer neighborhood-based schools. *According to this view,* previous attempts to desegregate schools have required extensive, sometimes involuntary busing and have drawn students out of their home neighborhoods. However, students of color now represent the majority of the students in the Saint Paul district (nearly 60% students of color for the 1997-98 school year). With changes in the ratio of students of color to white students come changes in the meaning of busing and desegregating schools. Parents are now requesting to send their children to schools closer to home so that they can become more involved in their children's education. Research overwhelmingly indicates that this kind of parent involvement increases student achievement, and student achievement is the main goal of the school district. The majority of our resources and efforts should be strategically directed at achievement needs. Giving parents the choice to send students to neighborhood schools is an effective and proven way to increasing student achievement.

2 Create metro-wide school district. *According to this view,* because segregation and disparities are so extensive, it is necessary to extend the resources of the region to all children, regardless of where they live. Magnet schools, interdistrict schools, and busing are all key in achieving this goal. Because students can choose from many options, this plan eliminates the need for forced busing if a student chooses a school close to home, but also offers more opportunities to a greater number of students than before.

3 Support efforts to develop more charter schools. *According to this view,* charter schools can create highly effective learning environments with more accountable school administration and increased opportunities for parent involvement than the larger rule-bound bureaucracies in which they exist. Because charter schools are public, they are free and are not bound by district lines, so they are also open to all students. Not only do charter schools promise to increase achievement, but they can voluntarily draw diverse student bodies and highlight multicultural teaching practices, providing models of integration for other schools.

4 Create a variety of school choice options for students and a system of incentives for educators. *According to this view,* the competitive nature of the free market situation creates a natural push to deliver higher quality while also improving efficiency. Private schools have been in this situation for years; in order to compete against other private and public educational options, such schools must attract students through the promise of better quality instruction, more attention to individual students, and higher success rates. However, public school districts currently have a "monopoly" on public education, and consequently have come to take students and parents for granted. Increased school choice and a free market situation is of benefit to all involved, offering students a better chance at success and the community a more educated, better prepared citizenry. In addition, it will give public school districts an added "incentive" to improve themselves and retain their current students. The public education system should offer qualified students vouchers for the private school of their choice and should introduce the services of various contractors into the mainstream public schools.

5 Create regional or statewide strategies for educational equity and adequacy. *According to this view,* the actual costs of educating the student body of a school can vary dramatically across districts; Saint Paul and Minneapolis serve large, diverse populations that present significant educational challenges to the schools. With growing concentrations of at-risk students – children living in poverty, children of color, children with native languages other than English – the resources needed to assure that each child receives an adequate education are greater than in other school districts. At the same time, segregation creates other school districts with a higher tax base and disproportionately few at-risk students, allowing such schools to pool and distribute more resources per student. While efforts have been made in the past to redistribute revenue, the question remains of whether more state-level money is even enough to create equity while the available local tax base continues to vary so much – wealthy districts typically have greater success in passing excess levies from property tax, for instance, while poorer districts tend to cut programs and increase class sizes to balance their budgets, and state funds are often not targeted to the at-risk students within school districts. In spite of these challenges, the Minnesota constitution makes it the legal obligation of the State, not individual school districts, to provide sufficient and appropriate resources, policies, and programs to assure an adequate education to each of its learners.

6 Develop culture specific schools. *According to this view,* the large scale failures of urban students of color within the mainstream public schools can be remedied best by offering specialized public schools for these students. Teachers, curriculum, and methods of instruction are so infused with the value system of the white middle class that efforts to put white students and students of color together in the classroom will only continue to produce the same results. Culture specific schools, however, have tailored their instruction methods to the learning needs of the students, provided more adult role models of color than mainstream schools, and increased overall achievement.

7 Make schools multiculturally inclusive. *According to this view,* desegregating schools based on numerical balance alone is not sufficient; true integration should not be confused with assimilation; instead, schools should reflect and honor the diversity of the communities they serve. This view suggests that growing diversity within a school provides many rich and diverse opportunities for students, parents, and teachers. Students bring cultural differences related to art, music, literature, values and customs. The classroom provides a

great opportunity for involvement of cultural diversity in the instructional program. Culturally diverse populations also provide opportunities for students to learn how to interact and communicate effectively with one another in a demographic model that more closely represents the world.

8 **Reverse the patterns of de facto residential segregation to truly desegregate schools.**
According to this view, the efforts made by various reformers of education and advocates of affordable housing merely treat the symptoms of the underlying problem: Americans live very segregated lives. Unless neighborhoods are integrated and the housing choices of all Americans are expanded, segregation will continue and schools will reflect it. As long as the educational opportunities of children are determined by the area in which they live, and where we live is correlated with the color of our skin, the educational opportunities of students will be affected. Breaking down the patterns of segregation, therefore, is the best way to deal with equalizing the educational and life opportunities of all children.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

◆ Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?

◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?

◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?

◆ What are the strengths of each perspective? What are the weaknesses?

◆ Who would be most affected by each viewpoint? Who do you think would benefit the *most*? The *least*?

◆ What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these options?

◆ What are some steps that you think might help our communities to address the achievement gap in our schools? What efforts would you like to see policymakers focus on?

◆ What are some steps that individuals might be able to take to address the achievement gap and unequal opportunity in our public schools?

CLOSING

❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?

❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?

❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

Section Four Glossary:

❯ **Magnet schools** are open to all students within a district who may be interested in the school's particular theme. Examples of magnet school themes are science and mathematics, arts, language-specific, Montessori, etc.

❯ **Charter schools:** In Minnesota, a group of educators can request a "charter" from a local school district to start an independent school. Because charter schools are public schools, they must observe the basic requirements of public education and are subject to student performance standards, but have flexibility in incorporating alternative curricula.

❯ **Interdistrict schools** allow students from multiple districts to attend the same public school.

❯ **Vouchers:** Proposed voucher plans can take many forms, but in its most basic form, a voucher is a check given to parents by the government to be spent on tuition for a child enrolled in a private school. Usually the amount of the voucher is identical to the amount of the per-pupil expenditure given to public schools. Tax credits can serve a similar purpose but can also be used to support educational activities of students attending public schools.

❯ **De facto vs. de jure:** *De facto* is something which exists in fact, though it may not be mandated by law. *De jure* is something which is mandated by law.

SESSION FIVE

Making a Difference

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 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?

TO BEGIN ...

1. **Welcome and re-introductions**

2. **Briefly reflect on the previous session about the different options for addressing the student achievement gap.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

◆ Thinking back to the previous sessions, were there any common threads that emerged from the group's discussions? Were there any common themes in the solutions you chose for addressing the challenges we discussed?

◆ What were some of the main areas of agreement that were discussed over the last few weeks?

◆ What do you think is the responsibility of the community as a whole to address these challenges?

◆ What is the role of our institutions (schools, city and state governments, Metropolitan Council, the business community, religious groups, neighborhood and community-based organizations, etc.) in addressing these challenges?

IDEAS FOR ACTION

While there may not be consensus within your circle about how to best address some of the challenges discussed here, there may be ideas or solutions which have emerged over the past few weeks and are supported by most participants. As a group, try to answer the following question:

◆ What are the three most powerful action steps your group feels would make a difference? (These may range from individual efforts to large-scale initiatives, and could address one or many of the issues discussed.)

CLOSING

❖ What has been valuable to you about these circle dialogues?

❖ What do you think you might do differently in the future as a result of being part of this series of dialogues?

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

Saint Paul's City Comprehensive Housing Plan outlines plans for the building of 6,000 new units over the next 20 years. *651-266-6657*

2000 by 2000 Initiative, a partnership between Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the City of Saint Paul, and eight community development corporations to boost production of affordable housing in Saint Paul. *651-649-1109*

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, an assisted housing program which works to revitalize neighborhoods and provide opportunities for home ownership to low-income families who work with volunteers to construct or to refurbish their new home. *612-331-4090*

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.

Metropolitan Council Livable Communities demonstration projects. *651-602-1140*

Urban Coalition 50/30 Initiative promotes home ownership for households of color. *612-348-8550*

Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH) Suburban Housing Initiative is a Housing Advocate Network of over 1,000 volunteers. *612-871-8980*

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability's Inclusionary Housing Initiative. *612-870-3443*

EDUCATION

Achievement Plus Schools Initiative is a partnership of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, the Saint Paul Public Schools, the City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, the State of Minnesota, several Saint Paul neighborhoods, and the East Side YMCA. The collaboration's goal is to improve student's academic achievement and promote parent and community involvement in the schools. The schools provide integrated academic, health, social, and recreational programs and support services for families and the community during traditional school hours and on evenings, weekends, and vacations. *651-642-4070*

Jane Addams School for Democracy's **learning exchange circles** with neighborhood residents and college students meet twice a week at Neighborhood House on Saint Paul's West Side to help Hmong and Latino immigrants improve English skills and prepare for the citizenship exam, learn about employment rights in the workplace, share cultural stories, and focus on policy action projects on welfare reform and immigration legislation. *651-690-8786*

Saint Paul/Ramsey Children's Initiative, an effort to link the wisdom of Saint Paul's family and community members with the decision-makers directing service delivery to children and families through the establishment of neighborhood family centers. *651-917-4896*

Multi-district schools (Tri-district Magnet School for Maplewood, North St. Paul and St. Paul). *651-487-5450*

The **Minnesota Minority Education Partnership's (MMEP) Project Empowerment** focuses on improving student achievement among students of color through parent and teacher training and collaborative regional and community leadership; and **Institute for Multicultural Connections**, which works to prepare young people of color for teaching careers. *612-330-1522*

RACE RELATIONS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

City of Saint Paul's Human Rights Department's Hate Bias Response Teams's educational resources and communications network for responding to victims of hate incidents and crimes. *651-266-8966*

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. *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. *651-646-8617*

Voices of Pain and Hope is a report by the Saint Paul Planning Commission completed in 1992 that surveys the level of poverty, social isolation, and racial tension in Saint Paul. *651-266-6573*

Saint Paul Area Council of Churches, Congregations In Communities Gateway to Justice program, a lunch-time brown bag series of conversations on social justice issues such as affordable housing, immigration, and literacy. *651-646-8805, ext. 19*

Better Together *771-1152*

The Hamline Midway Alliance for a Prejudice Free Community, a group of community members in Saint Paul's Hamline Midway neighborhood who have joined together to eliminate prejudice, bigotry, and hate crimes in their neighborhood. They have developed an "on call" system to support people who are targets of hate crime, prejudice or bigotry and work with local businesses and other community groups and individuals to heal and strengthen the community.
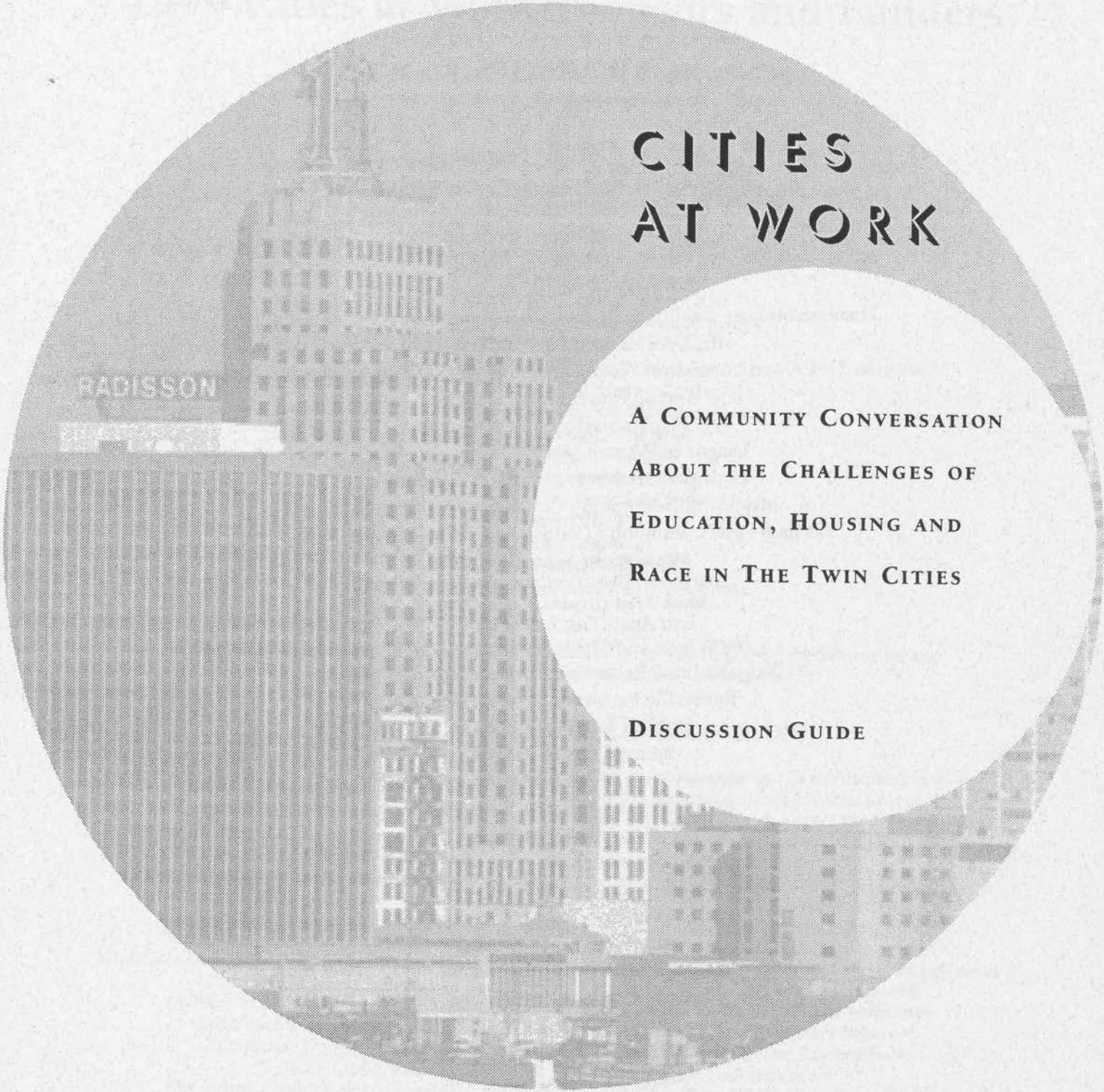
Faith-based social justice initiatives to address segregation, poverty, and urban disparities led by **Interfaith Action** and the **St. Paul Ecumenical Action Council (SPEAC)**.

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*.

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 child's, or 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 above. 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 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.

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

1999 Cities at Work Community Circle Dialogues
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Sponsors

1998-1999

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Central Neighborhood Improvement Association
Crystal Human Rights Commission
District Five Teen Council
Frogtown Family Center
Hamline/Midway Coalition Alliance for a Prejudice-Free Community
HECUA (Metro Urban Studies Term)
Hiawatha YMCA and Longfellow-Nokomis Family & Community Resource Center
Hmong American Partnership
J.J. Hill Montessori Magnet School
League of Women Voters of Minneapolis
Lexington/Hamline Community Council
Mayflower Community Congregational Church
Merriam Park Community Council & Goodwill/Easter Seals
Minneapolis School District
Southwest Area (Barton Open School)
South Area (Bryant Square Park)
East Area (East Lake Library)
North Area (Northstar Elementary School)
Neighborhood Economic Development Alliance
Burnsville Partnerships for Tomorrow
Project for Pride in Living
Ramsey Action Program
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Saint Paul Planning Commission
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.

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.

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.

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

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

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.

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?

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?

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.

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 brownfields 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?

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 (MICAH)
Mobilizing congregations and people of all faiths to ensure decent safe and affordable housing for everyone in the Twin Cities metropolitan community.
122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 310, Minneapolis, MN 55404.
Contact: Joy Sorensen-Navarre, 612-871-8980

Saint Paul Housing Campaign
A broad-based coalition for neighborhood development and affordable housing. Members include Saint Paul Tenants Union, Community Stabilization Project, MICAH, Jewish Community Action, SPEAC, and Coalition for the Homeless.
Contact: Bob Walz, 651-646-8805 or Dan Lee, 651-222-5863

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

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.