



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

Revised 11-10-98

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Education & Housing Equity Project (EHEP) is to build broad-based partnerships that engage Twin Cities area citizens in public discussion, analysis and action that promotes racially and economically inclusive communities which provide families and children of all races, incomes and ethnic backgrounds access to quality housing and schools throughout the metropolitan area.

Current Activities:

- (1) Exploring how to build a coalition that can work for racially and economically inclusive communities and respond to the segregation and disparities now developing in the housing and schools of the Twin Cities metro area.
- (2) Working in collaboration with other housing, education, religious, business, community and anti-racism organizations to plan and implement a metro-wide study circle and community forum project for 1997 and 1999 that focuses on the questions:
 1. "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?" and,
 2. "What can or should citizens do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance the educational, housing, and economic opportunities of all children and adults in the Twin Cities metropolitan area?"

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Principal Staff:
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Education & Housing Equity Project
Board of Directors

12-1-98

Barbara Bearman: Small business owner; member, executive committee, Minneapolis Branch NAACP; former member, St. Louis Park Human Rights Commission and Minneapolis Civil Rights Commission; former chair, District 44 DFL Party.

Keith Hardy: Coordinator of Design Services Group, Equipment Services Division, SuperValu Corporation.

JoAnn Heryla: Southwest Area Superintendent, Minneapolis Public School District #1.

Jim Hilbert: Attorney, Shulman Walcott & Shulman; former Legal Fellow and Co-director of Programs, Institute on Race and Poverty.

Dr. Josie Johnson: Senior Fellow, College of Education and Human Ecology, University of Minnesota; long-time education and civil rights leader.

Matthew Little: Member of executive committee and former president, Minneapolis Branch NAACP; long-time civil rights leader.

Hope Melton: Prevention Coordinator, Ramsey County; board member, DFL Education Foundation and Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods.

Dr. Van Mueller: Professor, Department of Educational Policy and Administration, University of Minnesota.

Rep. Myron Orfield: State Representative, District 60B (southwest Minneapolis), Minnesota House of Representatives; author of *Metropolitica: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability*. Emily Greenwald, Legislative Assistant, serves as Representative Orfield's alternate on the board.

Dr. John Powell: Director, The Institute on Race and Poverty, University of Minnesota; author of *Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education, and Persistent Segregation*. Gavin Kearney, Coordinator of Research and Programs, currently serves as the Institute's designated representative on the board.

Thomas Ross: Policy Advocate, Minneapolis Urban League; currently on loan to serve on the Governor's transition team.

Dr. Luz Maria Serrano: Interim Assistant Superintendent of Accountability, Technology & Support Services, St. Paul Public School District #625.

Joy Sorensen Navarre: Executive Director, Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA).

Jerry Timian: Director, First Call for Help, St. Paul United Way; member, St. Louis Park School Board.

Dr. Cris Toffolo: Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of St. Thomas.

Gloria Winans: Chair, Eden Prairie Human Rights and Diversity Commission; Communications Director, Minneapolis United Way.



Fax

To: Sandy Heirerbacker Center for Living Democracy	From: Dick Little, Executive Director Education & Housing Equity Project
Fax: 802-254-1227	Pages: 2
Phone: 802-254-1234	Date: 12/15/98
Re: Organization Profile	CC:

Urgent **For Review** **Please Comment** **Please Reply** **Please Recycle**

Sandy, forwarded with this fax coversheet is a short description of our organization and project. Sorry for the delay in getting it too you. I hope it's not too late. Please edit it as you see fit. The discussion guide and brochure are in the express mail to you. Things got pretty hectic around here. We are pleased to be included in your directory, and look forward to working with you on national as well as regional and local initiatives. Please include us on your mailing list; we'll do likewise.

Please give our regards to Paul DuBois and Frances Moore Lapp'e

**Community Circles on Education, Housing and Race: A Project of the Community Circles Collaborative and the Education & Housing Equity Project
Minneapolis-Saint Paul, MN metropolitan area**

The Community Circles Collaborative is a metro-wide dialogue initiative spear-headed by a partnership of Twin Cities area organizations in the public, private and non-profit/civic sectors. The dialogue project is coordinated by the Education & Housing Equity Project, created as a catalyst for engaging the citizens from all walks of life in public conversations about the challenges of inequality in educational opportunities and segregation of housing and communities in the metropolitan area. Its objective is to promote racially and economically inclusive communities that give families of all incomes, races and cultural backgrounds access to affordable housing and quality schools throughout the metropolitan area.

Project partners hold a shared belief in the need for civil, informed conversation across lines of race, economics and politics as a necessary precursor to mounting effective responses and actions that address the challenges and opportunities posed by a dramatically increasing level of racial and ethnic diversity in the population of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The goal of the project is to build community understanding and bridge communities of different interests in making the Twin Cities area a more equitable and inclusive community, and to produce practical recommendations for actions that organizations, policy makers and individuals can take to reverse prejudice, discrimination, segregation and inequality of opportunity in education, jobs and housing, and to develop multiculturally inclusive schools that work for all children and learners.

From 1996 through 1998, over 500 citizens and immigrants, adults and young people, from 35 communities in the metropolitan area have participated in circles, each ranging in size from 5 to 15 people and meeting as often as 6 times. The Circle conversations focused on two primary questions: (1) 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, and (2) 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? The Collaborative supplied each circle with a facilitator and a well-researched discussion guide *Choices for Community*, prepared by the Education and Housing Equity Project. The discussion results were highlighted at a concluding metropolitan citizen's forum. The project has been credited with informing the pending mediation of a metropolitan educational adequacy lawsuit and building public support for educational equity for all school children, and proposed state legislation for affordable and inclusionary metropolitan housing. A second, expanded round of community circle dialogues is planned for 1999.

**Submission to the President's Initiative on Race
Summary of 'Promising Practice'
Twin Cities Community Circles on Schools, Housing and Race.**

The Education and Housing Equity Project was founded in 1995 to advance public understanding of and constructive community responses to the growing economic and racial segregation and disparities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. EHEP's mission is to be a catalyst in building broad-based coalitions and partnerships that engage the metropolitan community in informed public conversations, analysis and advocacy for the purpose of promoting racially and economically inclusive communities that give families and citizens of all incomes, races and ethnicities access to quality schools, housing and jobs throughout the metropolitan area.

The Community Circle Collaborative is a partnership of organizations, first convened by EHEP in 1996, to organize a metro-wide dialogue on the challenges of education and housing segregation. The conversations were motivated by a recognition of the pressing need to link issues of school segregation/desegregation and disparities in educational achievement to the broader issues of segregation of housing and communities and resulting concentrations of poverty. The first dialogue was launched in 1997. 500 citizens (25% were persons of color) from 35 communities and many different walks of life joined together, 5 to 15 at a time, in community circles to discuss two central 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?" and
- "What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance educational success and housing and economic opportunities for *all* children in the Twin Cities metropolitan area?"

The Collaborative secured sponsor organizations to convene the discussions, facilitators to moderate the discussions, and educational resources to help inform the discussions. A discussion guide was also prepared to provide a common focus for the discussions. The conversations culminated with a Metropolitan Citizens Forum and a report that synthesized the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the community circles.

The project has been credited with raising the level of civic awareness, conversation and engagement in issues of race and equity in the Twin Cities area. We have brought over 500 people into conversations about issues of race for the first time. It has also expanded public support for mediation of the education equity and adequacy lawsuits currently pending before the Minnesota state courts.

A second, expanded round of conversations is planned in the fall and winter of 1998 and 1999 that will build on the first round of conversations, use a revised discussion guide, and include an action forum to connect citizens to action opportunities for addressing identified issues. At the conclusion of the conversations, EHEP and the Collaborative will co-sponsor a Citizens Summit with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio. The Summit will use electronic key pad technology to elicit focused responses on the best ways the metropolitan community can address issues of educational access and achievement and housing and school segregation. The discussions will result in an actionable agenda for participants and help to inform the policy and action agendas of the partners in the collaborative as well as public decision-making bodies.

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EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

Revised 3-20-98 (draft)

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 2. "What can and should citizens do individually and collectively to enhance education and life opportunities for all children in the Twin Cities metropolitan area?"

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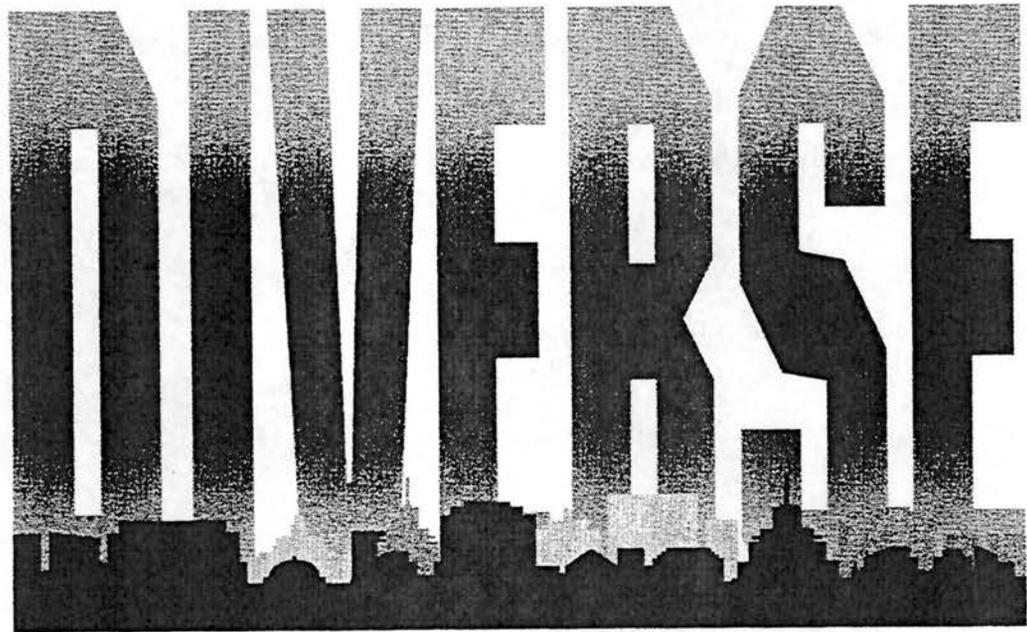
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LOCAL OFFICIALS GUIDE

GOVERNING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES: A FOCUS ON RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS

GOVERNING



COMMUNITIES

A Focus on Race and Ethnic Relations



National League of Cities

Region Explores Segregation in Housing, Education

Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota

As an idea, regionalism is on the rise. Books by David Rusk and William Dodge helped touch off the debate; now mayors, urban planners, and economists around the country have joined in. Race relations, segregation in housing and in education are central themes in the debate.

Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton is helping her community take the discussion one giant step further. "Coming Together: A Regional Conversation Addressing the Challenges of Education, Housing and Segregation," which got under way in December 1996, has involved roughly five hundred Twin Cities residents — in more than forty-five groups — in discussions about regionalism and race.

The program is sponsored by the Community Circles Collaborative, a partnership of more than twenty organizations that includes the Minneapolis Public Schools and Minnesota Public Radio. "Coming Together" is coordinated by the Education and Housing Equity Project, with funding from the Otto Bremer and Bush Foundations and in-kind support from the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

The Collaborative recruited more than one hundred other organizations, including churches and synagogues, school districts, housing agencies, human rights commissions, cities, neighborhood groups, block clubs, and other community-based groups and civic groups which, in turn, recruit and convene participants.

Municipal support for this program is significant. The mayors of a number of Twin Cities suburbs are acting as partners — convening participants, hosting forums and workshops, and speaking at kickoff events. The Minneapolis School Board helped prepare the discussion materials, provides facilitator training, and is sponsoring study circles. The city's Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) provides video coverage of the program to air on Minneapolis cable television. NRP also assists with facilitator training.

"We need to develop a regional civics that is not about governmental entities," says William Barnes, co-author of *The U. S. Common Market*. "It's about citizens, community groups, businesses, and government agencies coming together to act in the common interest of the region. If we are to prosper, all leaders need to become civic entrepreneurs." By engaging the citizens of her city in honest, productive dialogue about some crucial, controversial regional issues, Mayor Sayles Belton has already proven herself as a civic entrepreneur.

Contact: Dick Little, Community Circle Collaborative, 612-871-8980; Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton, 612-673-2100.

Study Circles on Race Relations Connect Talk With Action

Study Circle Program Examples

President Clinton's call for constructive dialogue on the difficult issue of race relations is already being answered. Over the last several years, study circle organizers in communities around the country have involved thousands of citizens in discussion and action on race.

In study circles—small-group, democratic, highly participatory discussions—people of all backgrounds and views exchange ideas and grapple with critical public issues. As citizens participate in community-wide study circle programs, they form new interracial networks, gain a deeper understanding of others' perspectives and concerns, discover common ground, and gain a greater desire and ability to take action—as individuals, as members of small groups, as members of large organizations in the community, and as voters.

Study circles create more than just talk. An evaluation of a program in the Cleveland area, where 700 citizens have participated, showed that people changed their attitudes about race as a result of their study circle experiences. In Lima, Ohio, where over 2,000 citizens have taken part, participants have done everything from building new playgrounds to winning minority representation on a regional development board. In the week after the O.J. Simpson verdict, study circles took place at over 100 sites in Los Angeles, allowing people to address a tense situation in a civil and productive way.

Cleveland—More than 700 people have been involved in "Honest Conversations," sponsored by the National Conference in the communities of Shaker Heights, Beachwood, Euclid, and North Olmsted. An evaluation conducted by researchers from Case Western Reserve University showed that participants changed some of their attitudes about race as a result of the process. Contact: Sandi Holmes, (216) 752-3000.

Wilmington/New Castle County, Del.—Almost 500 people are participating in a study circle program which began on Martin Luther King Day 1997. The DuPont Company has pledged \$15,000 to fund this program, which was initiated by the YWCA. The Mayor, County Executive, and Delaware Attorney General are members of the coalition formed for this effort, along with a host of other community organizations and businesses. Contact: Ruth Sokolowski, (302) 658-7161.

Springfield, Ohio—A study circle program, initiated by the city in 1993, is supported by a coalition which includes ecumenical associations, local universities, county government, the school system, and the public library. It has involved 1,570 citizens so far, including students who co-facilitate study circles in the city's high schools. Contact: Selena Singletary, (937) 324-7380.

Los Angeles—Hundreds of people participated in a Day of Dialogue at over 100 sites around the city only two weeks after the Simpson verdict. Sponsored and organized by the Los Angeles City Council and the Office of the City Attorney, community institutions from all sectors invited participants to talk about race relations. Since that time, successive rounds of study circles have focused on affirmative action and crime and violence. Contact: Carolyn Webb de Macias, (213) 485-7682.

Lima, Ohio—The Mayor's office, the

Ohio State University at Lima, and the interracial Clergy Task Force initiated a community-wide study circle program in 1993. Since then, more than 2,000 citizens have been involved in study circles on race relations, and also on the issue of violence. A Violence Prevention Center has been formed and a Study Circle Council has been created to coordinate the study circles and funnel input and ideas from citizens to city government. Contact: Ron Haganan, (419) 221-5282.

Minneapolis/St. Paul—Roughly 500 people are currently participating in study circles as part of the Choices for Community project. Backed by a cross-sector collaboration of more than 30 organizations, the program is involving people in dialogue on the challenge of racial segregation in housing and education. Participants attended a "citizen's summit" on these issues this summer. Contact: Dick Little, (612) 871-8980.

"Study circles are making dramatic progress on race relations in cities all over the country," says former Senator Bill Bradley.

In Tampa, Florida, over 500 people have been involved in study circles on race relations; almost 500 have taken part in a program in Wilmington, Delaware; and in Springfield, Ohio, 1,570 residents have participated, including several hundred high school students.

Study circles aren't limited to race issues. Many communities are using them to get people involved in issues like crime and violence, education, criminal justice, and youth concerns. A program on education in tiny Orford, New Hampshire, helped that town address the financial difficulties of its high school.

A program on crime in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, helped the police department implement a new community policing strategy.

In Oklahoma, a state-wide study circle program involving over 1,000 citizens enabled the state legislature to pass sweeping changes in the corrections system. At present, there are full-scale study circle programs underway in 36 communities across the country. Another 65 communities are in the process of planning such programs.

While each of these programs is unique and locally-driven, study circle organizers receive

free assistance and materials from the Study Circles Resource Center, which also works to connect this growing national network. SCRC is a project of the Topsfield Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan private foundation working to "advance deliberative democracy and improve the quality of public life in the United States."

Details: Sarah Campbell, (860) 928-2616; fax, (860) 928-3713; e-mail, scrc@neca.com. ■

NLC Report Urges "Talk" About Racism

by Bill Barnes

"The racial tension in my community is palpable but we can't get anyone to talk about it."

That's what one city official said in a NLC focus group last year; others, from all over the nation, agreed. A new NLC publication, "Talking is the First Step," says that dialogue is critical to creating effective governance in racially and ethnically diverse communities.

"The challenge today," said NLC Executive Director Donald J. Borut, "is to cross boundaries, to acknowledge differences and bridge them, to engage and not to back off.

That is what this pamphlet is about."

More than 2,200 NLC member elected officials will receive the booklet this week.

The ten page pamphlet offers "talking points," acknowledges barriers and difficulties, and lists resources for moving forward. It says that local elected officials have unique and crucial roles to play, even if they are not "comfortable."

One official quoted in the pamphlet said "Elected officials must acknowledge that conflict exists; set the agenda; identify opportunities that we have to open up dialogue; and be willing to discuss racism."

"Talking is the First Step"

is the latest in an array of resources on diversity available to local officials. Next month, NLC will publish a 200-page guidebook, "Governing in a Diverse Community," that contains essays by city officials and scholars as well as descriptions of promising local initiatives. Training sessions and workshops on diversity also will be conducted at Congress of Cities in Philadelphia. NLC's work on this topic began in 1991 with the publication of "Diversity and Governance," a Futures Report adopted after a year of study by the NLC Advisory Council.

According to the most recent NLC opinion survey, municipal elected officials are

dissatisfied with the current level of discourse surrounding race/ethnic relations and racism.

Two-thirds (66 percent) of municipal elected officials say that their public discussions about race/ethnic relations and racism have been useful and constructive "never or almost never" or only "occasionally"—signifying a deep dissatisfaction with the current discourse surrounding race.

They also note that these discussions occur infrequently. Three-out-of-four (77 percent) say they are "never or almost never" or only "occasionally" involved in public discussions about race/ethnic relations or racism.

These city and town leaders say that when the issues of race/ethnic relations and racism do come up, it is usually as a part of other discussions on such "hot button" topics as crime and public safety, police community relations, or housing and community development.

In the 1996 focus groups, a broad mix of elected and appointed city and town officials said that "it's hard to talk publicly about race, ethnicity, and racism." ■

Additional copies of "Talking is the First Step" are available at no cost from NLC by contacting Lorraine Gloster: (fax) 202-626-3043 or (e-mail) gloster@nlc.org.

Commission on Relations (CCHR)

eshtigo Court, Suite 6A
IL 60611
312) 744-4100
744-1081
Wood, Chairman

The Chicago Commission on Human Relations, through its organized response to discrimination, bigotry, and prejudice, works to make Chicago bias-free and to ensure the fair and equal treatment of all its residents. CCHR's charges include enforcing the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance and the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance. The Commission investigates complaints to determine whether discrimination has occurred and uses its enforcement powers to punish acts of discrimination. Under the city's hate crimes law, the agency also aids those who have been victimized because of their race, color, gender, religion, age, ancestry, sexual orientation, and/or disability. CCHR also employs proactive programs of education, intervention, and constituency-building to discourage bigotry and bring people from different groups together. Its educational workshops reach students, teachers, administrators, parents, businesses, and religious and community groups. Among the special events that CCHR sponsors are Women's History Month, the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame, and a city-wide essay contest in the schools concerning ending discrimination, in addition to celebrations of African, Arab, Asian, and Latino-Hispanic culture. ■

Council on Urban

LaSalle Street, Suite 3201
L 60603
12) 782-3511
President
ded: 1971

The Chicago Council on Urban Affairs works with businesses, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and government to discuss and develop practical solutions that improve the quality of life for all Chicago residents, particularly those who suffer from discrimination and poverty. The Council focuses on creating partnerships between community-based organizations and big business and between government and educational institutions. Meetings sponsored by the Council that bring these groups together have facilitated more inclusive public policy decisions regarding welfare reform, tax policy, adult education, employment and training, neighborhood economic development, and housing. The Council publishes both a newsletter, *Update*, and a journal, *One City*. It also sponsors a neighborhood awards dinner that honors and showcases the work of community-based organizations. ■

Upholding Racial (CURE)

esbyterian Church
Park Avenue
H 43420
9) 334-3309
mes Falls
led: 1996

Citizens Upholding Racial Equality is a dialogue group made up of concerned Fremonters with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. CURE holds weekly meetings devoted to discussions of racial issues in Fremont County. CURE provides a meeting place for listening and talking openly and respectfully to learn and to understand diverse points of view. The dialogue is open to participants of all ages. Dialogue participants gain important understanding and the opportunity to create friendships among people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. ■

Coalition for Community

Street
1 48915
7) 372-4115
487-2316
l Eckhart
ed: 1995

The Coalition for Community Concerns has been conducting race-relations study circles on a small scale for several years. It has worked with city hall, the local newspaper, the police department, and the Human Relations Commission. The mayor and the police chief took part in the pilot groups. Every employee of the police department goes through the program. The Coalition is also working with the Greater Lansing Urban League as part of their "Do the Right Thing" program, which organizes dialogues on race in each of the three Lansing high schools. ■

Coming Together Project

1301 Firestone Parkway
P.O. Box 1543
Akron, OH 44309
Phone: (330) 379-3832
Fannie Brown, Executive Director
Year Founded: 1993

The Coming Together Project is a diverse, community-based organization dedicated to these ideas: every individual has equal worth; promoting an appreciation for diversity will build a strong sense of community; and bringing people together in creative, innovative ways will ensure racial harmony and cultural awareness. The Project's charge is to help participating members take the steps necessary to promote racial harmony. To this end the Coming Together Project sponsors educational forums, baseball games, and a walk/run for unity, as well as musical and theater events to improve dialogue and encourage appreciation of difference among its members and in the community at large. The Coming Together Project is in its fourth year of sponsoring workshops on racial awareness for all Summit County public and private schools and, together with the National Conference for Community and Justice (see listing), it has formed a study circle program on racism called Honest Conversations. ■

Communities of Color Institute (CCI)

1313 5th Street, SE, Suite 227
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Phone: (612) 379-3931
Fax: (612) 379-3576
Sharon Tolbert Glover, Director
Year Founded: 1993

The Communities of Color Institute is designed to help strengthen nonprofit organizations serving communities of color. Led by a board of representatives from the African American, American Indian, Asian American, and Mexican/Latino communities, the program reflects the culture and values of each community. CCI services include management development, technical assistance, development and philanthropy training, and diversity workshops ("Undoing Racism"). The institute functions as a catalyst in building collaborations and coalitions with existing organizations. ■

Community Circle Collaborative

Education & Housing Equity Project
122 West Franklin Avenue
Suite 320
Minneapolis, MN 55404
Phone: (612) 871-2519
Fax: (612) 871-8984
Dick Little, Executive Director
Year Founded: 1996

The Community Circle Collaborative is a metro-area-wide dialogue project being undertaken by a growing number of organizations and individuals throughout the twin cities. The partners that make up the Collaborative hold a shared belief in the need for civil, informed dialogue and collective analysis across all racial, economic, and political lines about the trends and changes taking place in the communities and schools of the Twin Cities metro area today. The goal of the project is to bring together community members to build understanding and to produce practical recommendations for actions that organizations, policy makers, and individuals can take. Participants in the "community circles" focus on this question: How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities? The Collaborative is coordinated by the Education & Housing Equity Project—a group which acts as a catalyst to build broad-based coalitions and engage the community in public discussions and advocacy for the purpose of promoting racially and economically inclusive communities that give families of all incomes, races, and ethnicities access to schools and housing. ■

Cultural Diversity Project

810 4th Avenue South, Suite 147
Moorhead, MN 56560
Phone: (218) 236-7277
e-mail: hn4573@handsnet.org
Yoke-Sim Gunaratne, Project
Coordinator
Year Founded: 1992

The Cultural Diversity Project is a regional collaboration between Fargo, North Dakota and its neighboring city, Moorhead, Minnesota, where citizens are addressing the opportunities and challenges of an increasingly diverse population by implementing extensive educational and outreach strategies to promote understanding of the different cultures in the region. The Project is part of a larger national initiative launched by the Pew Partnership for Civic Change. This initiative is committed to community building by creating new ways for citizens to tackle tough issues, building trust

Conversations at the Crossroads of Education, Housing & Race

What: Conversations are conducted as Community Circle dialogues. Each conversation focuses on the perplexing issues of education, housing, race and segregation in the Twin cities metropolitan area.

Community Circles are composed of 8 to 15 citizens who are committed to meeting five times for two hours each. Each circle is moderated by an experienced facilitator. A discussion guide tailored to the Twin Cities is also used to promote communication.

Approximately 50 community-based conversations are expected to take place at locations throughout the seven county metropolitan area during February, March, and April 1999.

Why: Community Circles offer a vehicle for engaging a broad base of citizens in action-oriented discussions of important issues facing their communities. These multiple conversations help promote more concerted action on finding community-based solutions.

It is imperative that we find effective ways to bridge racial, cultural and economic differences to make our communities better places for everyone to live. Conversations at the Crossroads offer a creative response to this imperative.

Who is leading this important effort:

These solution-focused Conversations are sponsored by local churches, schools, civic and community organizations in the metropolitan area.

Key promoters include:

- The Education and Housing Equity Project
- The Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing
- The Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc.
- The League of Human Rights Commissions
- The Wilder Foundation (Cities at Work)
- The Saint Paul Area Council of Churches
- The Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution
- The Minnesota Facilitators Network
- The Study Circles Resource Center

The lead partner is the Education and Housing Equity Project. Its mission is to promote informed public dialogue about the relationship between school segregation and inequality and the broader issues of housing and community segregation, and about the prospects for building more inclusive communities and opportunities for integrated housing and education in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Since 1996, over 500 citizens have participated in Community Circle conversations addressing the challenges of education and housing segregation. **(CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE)**

(Continued from front side)

Cost: Conversations are free to circle participants.

When: The conversations will meet during February, March and April 1999. In May, a Citizens Summit will be held with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio to highlight the results of the Community Circle dialogues. An Action Forum will also be held to connect citizens with action organizations and opportunities to implement recommendations flowing from the Circle conversations.

Where: Over 50 meeting sites in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and suburbs. Public libraries, schools, community centers, park and recreation buildings, police stations, city halls, churches and synagogues are providing meeting places/spaces.

See list of meeting places, dates and times of scheduled conversations on attached list or call 612-330-1505 for further information (press message box #1 to register for a circle).

Contact: Dick Little, EHEP Director
Phone: 612-330-1505
Fax: 612-330-1507
E-mail: ehep@augzburg.edu



Board of Directors

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Executive Director

Amy Rodquist
Community Circles Coordinator

Augsburg College, CB 185
2211 Riverside Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55454
P: 612-330-1505
F: 612-330-1507
E: ehcp@augsborg.edu

January 4, 1998

Dear Mayor:

We are writing to ask you to join with us in an exercise in democracy.

The enclosed brochure explains this activity sponsored by the Education and Housing Equity Project and its partners in the Community Circle Collaborative.

You are being asked to commit a specific amount of time as a participant in a Community Circle as a citizen who happens to be a political leader. We are suggesting that you become an equal partner with other citizens in an urgent conversation about race, segregation, and the intersection of housing and public education. As equal partners, you and other citizens (who may or may not be your immediate constituents) will be struggling with the most difficult issues facing our metropolitan area.

No one person has the answers to issues so emotionally charged and so challenging to our sense of social justice. The Community Circle gives us a chance to face these issues, which are at times, seemingly impossible to talk about.

Each circle will have a facilitator. Conversation will be informed by the discussion guide, "Choices For Community" which is enclosed for your perusal. Participation will be a learning experience for all and a chance to mutually consider recommendations for action.

The fact that you are a political leader has a special significance. Many people are losing faith in elected leaders. The policy decisions you make affect people's lives. The quality of leadership that you bring to your task influences the principles upon which your community operates, and whether your constituents have cause to have faith in the political process. How you inform your responsibilities must be of concern to you.

Participating in a Community Circle will be of benefit to you as you go forward with your civic work.

Please let us know what you think about joining us. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Little
Executive Director

INFO.

Education & Housing Equity Project
AUGSBURG COLLEGE
2211 RIVERSIDE AVENUE, CB 185
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55454

Telephone: (612) 330-1505

Fax: (612) 330-1507
(2nd line)

E-mail: eh@augsborg.edu

Shelly Ryan
w/ MMEP
change VM

College Fax: 330-1649

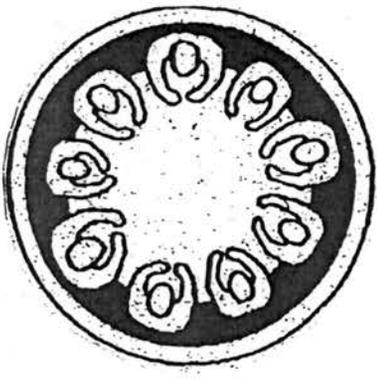
Personal e-mail: little@augsborg.edu

Actual Location: East Hall
25th & 8th st.
AVE

DICK LITTLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kesha Tanabe, outgoing intern

Amy Rodquist, incoming intern



EDUCATION AND HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

COMMUNITY CIRCLE COLLABORATIVE

FACT SHEET

WHAT?

The *Community Circle* groups have begun a conversation about race and class in America, and the Twin Cities area in particular. These groups are discussing the questions, "How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities families and children?" and "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?"

Each *Community Circle* is convened by a local sponsor group, and includes 5-15 participants moderated by a trained facilitator using a specially prepared *Discussion Guide*.

Each circle is as economically, racially, ethnically, politically and geographically as diverse as possible, or is paired with other circles to assure diversity of perspectives.

Each *Community Circle*:

- 1) Explores and discusses the extent of housing, job, and school segregation by both race and income in the Twin Cities area.
- 2) Discusses the factors that increase segregation and investigates our individual and collective responsibility.
- 3) Explores the relationship between housing and school segregation, and its implications for student achievement at all school levels, as well as for life opportunities (jobs, income, etc.).
- 4) Explores the effect on children and families of a society increasingly characterized by segregation and economic disparities.
- 5) Examines different policy choices and ideological perspectives for addressing inequity.
- 6) Strives to develop a shared vision of what citizens want their community to be like for their children's generation.

WHO?

The *Community Circles Collaborative* is a partnership of about 20 organizations, coordinated by the Education and Housing Equity Project, with funding from the Otto Bremer, Bush, and Cowles Media Foundations and in-kind support from various project partners. The Collaborative includes organizing, resource, funding and media partners (see other side), and provides facilitator training and preparation of the *Discussion Guide*.

Discussion groups have been formed by churches and synagogues, school districts, housing agencies, human rights commissions, cities, neighborhood groups, block clubs, and other community-based groups such as the League of Women Voters. Over 300 citizens have already engaged in *Community Circle* discussions.

WHY?

The *Community Circles* project brings together people with different backgrounds and perspectives to talk about a common theme: the impact of segregation – particularly in housing, employment and transportation – on education and alternative ways that the community and the public can address these impacts.

The partners have come together with a shared belief in the need for civil, informed dialogue and analysis – across political, geographic, economic and racial lines. Their intent is to build understanding and produce practical recommendations for actions that individuals, organizations, and policy makers can take with respect to difficult issues.

Some of the purposes and hoped-for outcomes of this dialogue include:

- 1) To begin an open, honest, and civil conversation about some of the most difficult but important issues facing our communities, and to develop new ways to talk about those issues.
- 2) To provide citizens an opportunity to get to know a cross-section of fellow community members and become more aware of differing ideas and perspectives.
- 3) To provide an opportunity for people to learn more about their own biases and prejudices and to honestly examine their own experiences and actions.
- 4) To explore more deeply what we truly believe about equality of opportunity.
- 5) To use public deliberation as a way to develop valuable ideas for future action on a local and regional basis, and to more clearly define both our individual and collective responsibilities for the future well-being of our community.
- 6) To find "common ground" among metropolitan citizens and develop an informed "public voice" to help guide public decision makers.
- 7) To identify and agree upon specific steps that can be taken at the personal, neighborhood, municipal, metropolitan and state policy levels.

WHERE?

Locations of the *Community Circles* are as diverse as the locations of the sponsoring organizations and the *Community Circle* participants. The sponsor is responsible for convening the first meeting. Times and places for subsequent meetings are determined by each *Community Circle* group and its facilitator and recorder.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

- December, 1995 – Present; Community Circle Collaborative and “Choices for Community” Project
Lead Partner: Education and Housing Equity Project

Organizing Partners:

Citizens League; City of Minneapolis, Office of Mayor; Institute on Race and Poverty; 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 Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Saint Paul Area Councils of Churches; Minnesota Fair Housing Center; Minnesota Meeting; People's Institute - 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; Cowles Media Foundation; General Mills Foundation; Norwest Bank of Maple Grove; Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches

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

- December 10, 1996; Community Circle Dialogue, “Beyond Busing” Kick-off – 100+ participants at St. Louis Park City Hall.
- February 15 & 20, 1997; Facilitator Training at Augsburg College – 85 volunteers participated in 4 hours of facilitator preparation for Community Circles.
- March – June, 1997; 25 Community Circles involving over 300 participants convened throughout the metro area.

Sponsors included: Ascension Catholic Church; Black History Committee of Golden Valley with the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, Golden Valley Human Rights Commission; and City of Golden Valley; Champlin Community Library; CommonBond Communities; Edina Human Relations Commission and Edina Public Schools; First Universalist Church of Minneapolis / Metro Stability Task Force; Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association; Hennepin County Children & Family Services; Holy Trinity Lutheran Church; Longfellow United for Youth & Families; Hopkins Human Rights Commission and Hopkins School District 270; Jewish Community Center of St. Paul; Maple Grove Community;

Minnesota Fair Housing Center with Phillips Neighborhood and Project Foundation; The Newman Center/University of Minnesota; Richfield Public Schools with the Richfield League of Women Voters and the Richfield Community Council; Sabathani Community Center; St. Joan of Arc Interfaith Action; St. Louis Park Public Schools with the City of St. Louis Park; Southside Neighborhood Housing Services; Southwest Area Roundtable / Fulton Neighborhood; Seward-Matthews Community Center and Minneapolis Community Education; Stillwater/Bayport Communities; Waite Park Community Council & Community School.

- May, 1997; Community Circle Discussion Guide *Choices for Community* and Resource Bibliography printed and distributed.
- May 29, 1997; “Coming Together” Forum – 154 registered representatives from Community Circles and invited guests participated at Macalester College in a regional dialogue addressing the challenges of education, housing and segregation in the metro area.
- June, 1997; Resource Bibliography expanded.
- July - August, 1997; Community Circle Survey & Summary Reports compiled and Summary Analysis prepared.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- September and October, 1997; Renew existing collaborative partnerships and recruit committed and new Sponsors for Round II of Community Circle Discussions; convene a “Blue Ribbon” Committee to review the efforts of Round I and advise Community Circle Collaborative on efforts for Round II Discussions.
- October, 1997; Complete & distribute Report of Round I Community Circle Discussions; Blue Ribbon Committee assists Collaborative in making Round II more “action / solution” oriented. Discussion Guide revised where necessary.
- November, 1997; Round II Kick-off Events
- December, 1997 – February, 1998; Community Circle Deliberations Round II.
- February, 1998; Compile Reports form Round II Community Circle Discussions.
- March, 1998; Citizens Summit with Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio.
- Results of Round I and II will be used to guide the NAACP mediation process, the Minnesota Milestones for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the Holman settlement, and the work of the Minnesota State Legislature and State Board of Education.

A Word from the Project Coordinator ...

Please contact us if you have any questions or if you need additional information. We look forward to supporting you in implementing the Twin Cities region's most ambitious citizen dialogue to date.

Dick Little, Coordinator

Community Circle Collaborative / Education and Housing Equity Project
122 West Franklin Avenue, #310, Minneapolis, MN 55404
Phone (612) 871-8980; Fax: (612) 871-8984

THE COMMUNITY CIRCLE COLLABORATIVE

SUMMARY

The Community Circle Collaborative is a metro-wide dialogue project being undertaken by a growing number of organizations and individuals throughout the Twin Cities area for early 1997. We envision a program in which at least 200 people from all walks of life join together - 5-15 at a time - in "community circles" held throughout the metro area to discuss the question: "How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities?"

The partners that make up the Collaborative are coming together with a shared belief in the need for civil, informed dialogue and collective analysis - across all racial, economic, and political lines - about the trends and changes taking place in the communities and schools of the Twin Cities metro area today. It is our hope that bringing together such groups will both build understanding and produce practical recommendations for actions that organizations, policy makers, and individuals can take. Our inspiration comes from successful, large-scale programs already launched in a number of communities around the country.

Project Goals

1. To discuss how the community in which we live and our personal experiences as members of that community affect children's education.
2. To educate participants about other communities' perspectives and experiences.
3. To examine the challenges that housing segregation pose for our educational system.
4. To develop and implement strategies to overcome these challenges.

Community Circle Structure

Community circles are small, highly participatory discussion groups that engage people in controversial, political, thought-provoking topics. The community circles model combines the small-group discussion groups known as "study circles" with a model developed by the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, which stresses providing information and research services to the groups, the cooperative development of strategies by the groups, and subsequent community forums organized by the groups.

A typical community circle will include 5-15 members. Each community circle will be as economically, ethnically, racially, and politically diverse as possible. Each group will meet for approximately 10 hours and be led by a trained facilitator. A common *Discussion Guide* that includes readings, presentations of a range of viewpoints, and discussion questions will be used by all the groups. Beyond these base materials, however, each group is encouraged to set the framework for subsequent circle discussion and request research on specific topics. The community circle approach provides a framework for dialogue that allows participants to address an issue, examine different views on both the problem and possible remedies, and pursue concerns and solutions that interest and motivate them toward action.

Levels of Organizational Involvement

Critical to the success of the project is the effective mobilization of the different organizations that make up the collaborative. To facilitate involvement, the collaborative has identified a specific process and structure. The structure identifies the roles and responsibilities of the project's partners as follows:

Project Coordinators will manage the project by providing the necessary staff support, fundraising, conducting research, and implementing the project evaluation. Organizations that agree to be Project Coordinators will sign a *Pledge of Participation* outlining their roles and responsibilities in the project.

Resource Partners will play an advisory role regarding project design, fundraising, future projects, information/research, in-kind contributions, and/or technical assistance. Resource partners will sign a *Pledge of Participation* outlining their roles and responsibilities.

Sponsors will sponsor community circles by recruiting community members, facilitating community circles, and providing a location for community circle meetings, child-care, and transportation. Sponsors will sign a *Pledge of Participation* outlining their roles and responsibilities in the project.

Timeline

The project intends to kick off in December, 1996 with a forum for potential sponsors. Facilitators will be trained in January 1997. The community circles themselves will begin shortly thereafter. A final conference for all participants - where community circles share their ideas and solutions - will take place in Spring, 1997.

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 Minneapolis, Minnesota, and

St. Paul Area Councils of Churches

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

COWLES Media Foundation

National Partners

Study Circles Resource Center

Kettering Foundation / National Issues Forums

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.

1998 Community Circle Partners

Faith-based

SPEAC
Catholic Office of Social Justice
Jewish Community Action
Unitarian-Universalist Metro Stability
Project
Interfaith Action

Housing

MICAH
MN Fair Housing Center
Jobs and Affordable Housing Campaign
MN Housing Partnership
MN Coalition for Affordable Housing
Housing Discrimination Law Project,
Legal Aide Society of Minneapolis
Simpson Housing Services
Southside Neighborhood Housing
Services
Community Stabilization Project

Education

MMEP
Mpls. Public Schools
HHH Center for School Change,
Twin Cities Charter School Initiative
Pacer Center
WMEP
Achievement Plus
Seed Academy/Harvest Prep School
Summit Academy/OIC

Community-Focused

Urban Coalition
Mpls Urban League
Mpls. NAACP
Communities of Color Institute

Social Service

Ramsey Action Programs
Hennepin County Children and Family
Services
Family and Children Services
Greater Mpls Day Care Assoc.
Northwest Hennepin Human Services
Council

Metropolitan

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

Transportation

Transit for Livable Communities

Civic

League of Women Voters
Citizens League

Labor

United Auto Workers, Ford Plant Local

Business

MN Center for Corporate Responsibility

Media

MPR Civic Journalism Initiative
MN Journalism Center
Minnesota Citizens Forum
Hungry Mind Review
KMOJ and KFAI

Academic

Institute on Race and Poverty
Active Citizenship School
Humphrey Center for Citizenship and
Democracy
Humphrey Forum
CURA

Human RightsEden Prairie Human Rights Comm.

Mpls and St. Paul Civil Rights Comm.

Municipal and Neighborhood

Mpls NRP
Mayor's Groups

Facilitation/Mediation

Society of Professionals in Dispute
Resolution (SPDR)
Minnesota Facilitators Network (MFN)

Anti-Racism

Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative
Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism

National

Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC)

StarTribune Editorial

Our perspective

Community circles

Support talks on housing, education

In many cultures, most notably Native American, the circle is an important symbol. It can stand for beginning and ending; it can represent the cycle of birth, life and death. Or it can simply be the way people organize themselves to discuss issues, solve problems or protect one another.

That symbolism is at the heart of a local effort to get folks thinking and talking about education, race and housing. A coalition of more than 20 Twin Cities partners, the Community Circle Collaborative, is wisely promoting a metrowide series of small group discussions on this question: How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities?

The idea is to get at least 200 people (five to 15 at a time) actively involved in study circles. Ideally, each group will be as diverse as possible across racial, ethnic, economic, age and political lines. They will be urban and suburban, work from a common discussion/information guide and will meet several times for two to three hours. Sessions will take place early next year.

Among the organizing partner groups are the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism, the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, the Minneapolis, Edina and St. Louis Park public schools, the Institute on Race & Poverty and the Minnesota Fair Housing Center.

Do the organizers have an agenda? You bet. They start from the basic belief that racism and segregation hurt everyone. They know that many students who perform poorly in school

come from deep pockets of segregated, low-income housing. And they rightly agree these housing, family and economic questions must be addressed to help improve educational outcomes.

The Collaborative has a direction, but it doesn't have all the answers. And so, the small circles are designed to get civil, informed dialogue and analysis bubbling up from citizens. The questions and solutions will then be used to guide policies and practices of government, school boards, nonprofits, foundations, businesses and grass-roots groups. Community circles have been used successfully in other cities around the country to help form public policy and build public awareness and consensus.

All metro-area residents are huge stakeholders in this issue. Parents and singles alike pay for public schools, police, courts and prisons. Both the young and the old want safe neighborhoods and good housing. Whether you are black or white, rich or poor, well-educated children eventually help fuel a stronger economy and higher quality of life for everyone.

With help from the Bush and Bremer foundations, the Collaborative will provide recorders and train facilitators for each circle. For more details, attend the kick-off/information session on Tuesday, 9-11:30 a.m., at the St. Louis Park City Council Chambers, 5005 Minnetonka Blvd. Or call Dick Little, at the Education & Housing Equity Project, 871-8980.

Join the circle of those who want better housing and education opportunities in the Twin Cities.

Star Tribune Editorial

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Join the circle of those who want better housing and education opportunities in the Twin Cities.



SCRC asks you to take part in

Beyond Busing

the first community-wide study circle program in
the Twin Cities area

Study circles in the Twin Cities

The study circle process has been used for small-group deliberation in many Twin Cities projects over the last ten years. Programs like "Minnesota's Talking," the Minneapolis Quality Schools Study, and the Minnesota Study Circle Network were among the first in the nation to use the study circle format as a way of involving citizens in addressing public issues.

"Beyond Busing" and the Community Circle Collaborative

The Community Circle Collaborative (CCC), a multi-sector coalition of over 20 Twin Cities organizations, is poised to take Minnesota's study circle tradition one step further. Over the last year, the CCC has been planning and organizing a community-wide study circle program on the challenges of segregation in the metropolitan area. The CCC is now enlisting individuals and organizations to serve as sponsors, facilitators, or participants in "Beyond Busing: A Metrowide Dialogue on the Challenges of Education and Housing Segregation." See the attached newsletter for information on how you can get involved.

What is a community circle?

Many study circle organizers actually use different names for their small-group process than "study circle" – citizen circle, dialogue circle, and reader roundtable are some examples. The CCC is using the term community circle. Whatever the name, the process is the same:

- A community circle is comprised of 10-15 people who meet regularly over a period of weeks or months to address a critical public issue in a democratic and collaborative way.
- A community circle is facilitated by a person who is there not to act as an expert on the issue, but to serve the group by keeping the discussion focused, helping the group consider a variety of views, and asking difficult questions.
- A community circle examines many perspectives. The way in which study circle facilitators are trained and discussion materials are written helps the group explore areas of common ground.
- A community circle progresses from a session on personal experience ("how does the issue affect me?") to sessions providing a broader perspective ("what are others saying about the issue?") to a session on action ("what can we do about the issue here?").

What is a community-wide study circle program?

The "Beyond Busing" project reflects what SCRC has learned from study circle organizers around the country. Study circles can take place within organizations, such as schools, unions, or government agencies. They have their greatest reach and impact, however, when organizations across a community work together to create large-scale programs. These community-wide programs engage large numbers of citizens in a community – in some cases thousands – in study

circles on a public issue such as race relations, crime and violence, or education. Broad sponsoring coalitions result in strong, diverse community participation. People participate in the study circles because they see that it provides an opportunity to make an impact on an issue they care about.

How do community-wide study circle programs come into being?

Typically, a single organization such as a mayor's office, a school board, or a human relations commission spearheads and staffs the project. In most communities, the organizing begins when the initiating organization approaches other key organizations to build a sponsoring coalition. Most community-wide programs have 10-30 organizations as sponsors or endorsers. Grassroots organizations such as churches, neighborhood associations, businesses, schools, and clubs often take part.

What are the outcomes of community-wide study circle programs?

By participating in study circles, citizens gain "ownership" of the issues, discover a connection between personal experiences and public policies, and gain a deeper understanding of their own and others' perspectives and concerns. They discover common ground and a greater desire and ability to work collaboratively to solve local problems – as individuals, as members of small groups, and as members of large organizations in the community. Community-wide study circle programs foster new connections among community members that lead to new levels of community action. They also create new connections between citizens and government, both at an institutional level and at the level of parents and teachers, community members and social service providers, residents and police officers.

Where are community-wide study circle programs going on?

In 1992, Lima, Ohio, became the first city to create a community-wide study circle program. Since then, 26 communities have followed Lima's lead, ranging in size from Orford, New Hampshire, to Los Angeles, California. Over 100 other communities are in various stages of planning and organizing community-wide programs; the actual study circle phase of most of these programs will begin within the next year. SCRC also collaborates with a number of national organizations that are working with the community-wide study circle model, including the National Crime Prevention Council, the YWCA of the USA, the League of Women Voters, the Education Commission of the States, the National Association of Human Rights Workers, the National Council of Churches, and the Alliance for National Renewal.



Opportunities for Civic Involvement

R E S O U R C E G U I D E

March 1997

The Minneapolis Foundation

A200 Foshay Tower
821 Marquette Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55402

612.339.7343

telephone

612.672.3846

fax

612.672.3870

fax on demand

The *United Way of Minneapolis Volunteer Center* provides a computerized clearinghouse of more than 5,000 volunteer opportunities in nonprofit organizations in the Twin Cities area. Information referral specialists are on duty from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. For information contact:

United Way of Minneapolis Volunteer Center
404 South 8th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404
340-7621; in St. Paul call 644-2044

The *Minneapolis Urban League* is a multi-service organization that promotes equal opportunities for African Americans and other minorities in employment, education, housing and health, and that works towards healthy race relations throughout our community. The League sponsors candidate forums, voter registration drives and a range of Get Out the Vote activities.

The Minneapolis Urban League North Office
2000 Plymouth Avenue North
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411
302-3100

REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Some of the major issues our community now faces are regional. If these interest you, there are ample opportunities for involvement in organizations dealing with regional issues and in metropolitan government. Examples include:

The *Alliance for Metropolitan Stability* is a coalition of 15 religious, civil rights, housing and environmental groups dedicated to increasing citizen participation in regional issues including deconcentration of poverty, affordable housing, desegregation and transportation. For more information contact:

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
2105 1st Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404
870-3443

The *Community Circles Project* uses small discussion groups around the metropolitan area to discuss the question "How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities families and children?" Each "community circle" is convened by a local sponsor group and is moderated by a trained facilitator using a prepared discussion guide. An additional goal is to produce a set of practical

recommendations for actions that individuals, organizations and policy makers can take with respect to difficult issues facing our communities. Interested sponsors and group participants are welcome. New groups will be starting in April and May. Community Circles is a partnership of many organizations, coordinated by the Education and Housing Equity Project.

The Community Circles Project
c/o Education and Housing Equity Project
122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 320
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404
871-8980

The *Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH)* is a coalition of nearly 100 Protestant, Catholic and Jewish congregations dedicated to the belief that every Minnesotan should have decent, safe and affordable housing. One of MICAH's current major initiatives is the Common Ground-Suburban Housing Initiative aimed at creating urban-suburban alliances around the issue of affordable housing. For more information contact:

Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH)
122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 320
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404
871-8980

The *Citizens League* promotes the public interest in Minnesota by involving citizens in identifying and framing critical public policy choices, forging recommendations and advocating their adoption. Current projects include mind opener breakfasts and the development of a legislative network. For more information contact:

Citizens League
708 South 3rd Street, Suite 500
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415
338-0791

The *Metropolitan Council* coordinates regional planning and guides development in our seven-county area. It operates some regional services, establishes policies and provides planning, technical assistance to area communities for airports, regional parks, transportation, sewers, air/water quality, land use and affordable housing. Residents of the seven-county region can become involved in one of six different advisory committees to the Council dealing with: 1) accessible transportation for people with disabilities, 2) parks and open space, 3) affordable housing, 4) transportation and transit, 5) land use

"Beyond Busing"
Metro-wide Dialogue on Housing, Schools and Desegregation
Scheduled for Winter and Spring 1997

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

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

These are some of the questions driving an MIAR-initiated collaborative of 20 civic and community-based organizations and public agencies to organize a metro-wide dialogue project for the Winter of 1996-97. The collaborative will bring at least 200 citizens from all walks of life to join together, 5 to 15 at a time, in "community circles" to discuss the question: How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities for our children? Each Circle will also examine and deliberate on alternative policy choices for housing and schools in the metropolitan area.

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

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

The project will be launched with a forum for community sponsors in December. Beginning in January, the community circles will be convened by the sponsoring

organizations and will meet for about 10 hours (3 to 5 meetings) over the next few months. Each group will include 5-15 members and will be as economically, ethnically, racially and regionally diverse as possible. The circles will be moderated by trained facilitators and will have a recorder. A discussion guide is being prepared for use by all participants; however, each group will be encouraged to set its own agenda for subsequent circle discussion and request research on specific topics. A "charge" will be given to the community circles to deliberate on possible responses to the issues of race, housing and education currently vexing public officials and to find common ground. Following the community circle discussions, a second forum will be held in the Spring of 1997 to bring together the "voices" and share the findings and conclusions with the larger Twin Cities community, elected officials, the MIAR Leadership Board, and the boards of the other collaborating partner organizations.

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

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

THE COMMUNITY CIRCLE COLLABORATIVE

PLEDGE OF PARTICIPATION FOR: SPONSORS

Responsibilities of the Working Group:

1. Form partnerships with public officials, organizations, and individuals working to address housing, education, employment, and racism issues, and seek their support.
2. Recruit a broad group of Resource Partners and Sponsors to carry out the program.
3. Promote and publicize the project through the media and through Sponsor organizations.
4. Work with Resource Partners to prepare a *Discussion Guide* for the community circles and provide research support to the community circles.
5. Work with Sponsors as they recruit participants, identify meeting sites, and arrange for the details of individual community circles. When necessary, pair homogenous groups of participants to create diverse study circles.
6. Work with Resource Partners and Sponsors to organize Community Forums I and II.
7. Coordinate fundraising for the project.
8. Train community circle facilitators.
9. Draw on feedback from the community circles to prepare a report for the community.
10. Evaluate the community circles and other components of the project.

Responsibilities of Sponsors:

1. Become a well-informed spokesperson for the program by participating in a pilot study circle, or at least by reading through the Discussion Guide.
2. Establish one or more study circles in collaboration with the Working Group and facilitator(s).
3. Recruit between 8 and 15 people for each community circle.
4. Arrange a site for each community circle and a meeting time convenient for participants and facilitators.
5. Distribute discussion materials prior to each community circle's first session.
6. Recommend possible facilitators and recorders.
7. Promote the program by any means possible, including bulletins, newsletters, and personal contacts.
8. Participate in presentation of results of each community circle at Community Forum II.
9. Where possible, provide in-kind contributions such as child care, meeting space, and transportation (see below).

Name of sponsoring organization or agency that you represent:	
Your name:	
Your address:	
Your telephone & fax:	
Your e-mail (if applicable):	

I understand the responsibilities of Sponsors and commit my organization to this project. This commitment is based on approval from our Board of Directors, Executive Director, or other appropriate authority.

In addition, my organization can provide the following if necessary:

Child care Refreshments Transportation (specify: _____)
 Meeting space Facilitator training Translator(s) Recorder(s)
 Media equipment Volunteers for Community Forums Other: _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Return to:
 Dick Little
 Education & Housing Equity Project, c/o MICAH
 122 W Franklin Ave #320
 Minneapolis MN 55404
 tel: (612) 871-8980 fax: (612) 871-8984

Beyond Busing:

A Metrowide Dialogue on the Challenges of
Education and Housing Segregation

Facilitator Training

Saturday, February 15, 1997

8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Marshall Room, Christenson Center, Augsburg College

OR

Thursday, February 20, 1997

6:00 - 9:30 PM

Marshall Room, Christenson Center, Augsburg College

The Beyond Busing Facilitator Training is for individuals that will be facilitating one of the many community circles that will be taking place across the metro area this March and April. Facilitators can be representatives of organizations that will be sponsoring a community circle or citizens that would like to participate in the Beyond Busing project by leading a group.

Facilitator Training Registration Form

Please complete the following registration and return it by February 12th to:

Bruce Vandal

Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc.

2211 Riverside Ave. S.

Minneapolis, MN 55454

Phone (612) 330-1509 / Fax (612) 330-1510 / E-mail Vandal@Augsburg.edu

Name _____ Phone _____ Fax _____ e-mail _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Sponsoring Organization (if applicable): _____

Check which session you will attend: _____ Sat. February 15th _____ Thurs. February 20th

Please Check All Apply:

- I am representing a sponsor organization and have a group that I will be facilitating.
- I would like to facilitate a group, please assign me to a group that needs a facilitator.
- I consider myself an experienced group facilitator.
- I would be interested in attending a second training session where I can practice my facilitation skills.

BEYOND BUSING
COMMUNITY CIRCLE TRAINING WORKSHOP
FOR CONVENORS AND FACILITATORS
February 20, 1997
Marshall Room, Christenson Center, Augsburg College

I. Introduction

- A. Introduction to the Project - Dick Little
 - 1. What is the "charge" of each community circle?
 - 2. Responsibilities of being a convenor/facilitator
- B. Facilitator Conferencing Service offered by Twin Cities Freenet - Nolan Venkatrathnam
- C. Introduction to the 'Community Circle Discussion Model' - Bruce Vandell
 - 1. Overview of the differences between Dialogue and Debate, between deliberative discussion and unfocused discussion
 - 2. Developing Ground Rules - small group exercise & large group debriefing

II. Issue Framing and Analysis

- A. Introduction to the issues and review of the Discussion Guide & Worksheet critiquing policy options - Darcy Seaver and Kristy Greenwalt
- B. Issue Analysis Process - Roy Taylor

III. Deliberation

- A. Deliberation Process & Techniques - Roy Taylor
- B. Cross Cultural Communication - Karima Bushnell

Break

- C. Role Play - small group exercise & debriefing with large group

IV. Public Voice

- A. Developing "Public Voice" - Roy Taylor
- B. Model Group Demonstration - followed by questions and discussion

V. Action Steps

"How does my participation make a difference?" An exploration of possible action outcomes - Jim McDonough

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

The Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism

Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton

The St. Paul Human Rights Commission & Department

Minnesota Public Radio, Civic Journalism Initiative

The Education & Housing Equity Project

The Minnesota Minority Education Partnership

The Urban Coalition

The Minneapolis Public Schools

The Edina Public Schools

The St. Louis Park Public Schools

The St. Louis Park Housing Redevelopment Authority

The Suburban Hennepin Anti-Racism Coalition

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

The Institute on Race & Poverty

The Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH)

Alliance Works/ Alliance of the Streets

The Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods

The MN Fair Housing Center

Southside Neighborhood Housing Services

For more information about the Collaborative, contact:

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

Welcome!

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



Kick-Off Forum

December 10, 1996

9:00-11:30 a.m.

St. Louis Park City Council Chambers

5005 Minnetonka Boulevard

St. Louis Park

Program

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

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

What: An introduction to a metro-wide dialogue project in which at least 200 people from all walks of life join together - 5-15 at a time - in study circles held throughout the metro area to discuss the question: "How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities?"

A typical community circle will include 5-15 members. Each community circle will be as economically, ethnically, racially, and politically diverse as possible. Each group will meet for a total of 10 hours and be led by a trained facilitator. A common *Discussion Guide* that includes presentations of a range of viewpoints and discussion questions will help move the discussion forward.

Who: As a Sponsor, you will join a growing collaboration of community-based organizations, public staff and officials, and individuals working in a variety of fields, including anti-racism, housing, education, social justice, religion, law, and social research. A sampling of our partners is listed on the back of this invitation.

Why: The partners that make up the Collaborative are coming together with a shared belief in the need for **civil, informed dialogue and collective analysis** - across all racial, economic, and political lines - about the challenges we face in our metro-area communities and schools. Our inspiration comes from successful, large-scale programs that have taken place around the country.

What would my role be?

To reach across the entire metro area, we need the help of a broad range of organizations and individuals who share our belief that - despite our many different opinions and perspectives - we can all benefit from participating in true dialogue and shared deliberation on these issues. As a Sponsor, you would help in five ways:

1. Help organize one or more study circles.
2. Recruit between 4 and 10 people for each community circle.
3. Arrange a site and meeting time for each community circle.
4. Recommend possible facilitators and recorders.
5. Help promote the program, including through bulletins, newsletters, and personal contacts.

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



CHOICES FOR COMMUNITY

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

COVER - 26 PAGE DISCUSSION
AND ISSUES GUIDE

SPONSORED BY

THE COMMUNITY CIRCLE COLLABORATIVE
AND
THE EDUCATION AND HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

SPRING, 1997

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 Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Saint Paul Area Councils of Churches
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

Syl Jones (writer)
Kristy Greenwalt (writing and research)
Sharon Rodning Bash (editing, graphics and design)
Shafer and Feld, Inc. (printing)

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

Beyond Busing

A Metrowide Dialogue on the Challenges of Education and Housing Segregation

News from the Community Circle Project

Update #1

February, 1997

Community Circle Dialogue, 'Beyond Busing,' kicks-off December 10, now moves to next stage

The Community Circle Collaborative officially "kicked off" December 10, 1996 with an inspiring event that filled the St. Louis Park City Council chambers with more than 100 people. This "Call to Action" to potential Sponsors drew representatives from a wide variety of organizations—including churches, advocacy groups, academia, and public agencies—as well as individual citizens who learned of the event through a supportive editorial in the *Star Tribune*.

After a warm greeting from St. Louis Park Mayor Gail Dorfman, the morning began with speeches by former St. Paul Mayor George Latimer and education expert Dr. Josie Johnson, both of whom exhorted the group to sponsor *Community*



Circles as a way of "moving our community."

"We must learn to *listen* to each other," emphasized Dr. Johnson.

The next two speakers—Curt Johnson, chair of the Metropolitan Council, and Yusef Mgeni, President of the Urban Coalition—went into detail about why

our region needs to confront and link the issues of housing and education.

"Our metro area faces serious challenges in growing to meet its housing and education needs," Mr. Johnson explained. "Its ability to do so equitably is hampered by fear and ignorance."

Mr. Mgeni's presentation, telling the story of urban communities that are increasingly isolated and poor, also spoke to the need for renewed dialogue, understanding, and hope.

Following these presentations, individuals representing the State Legislature, an outer-ring suburban church, an inner-ring suburban school, a nonprofit housing developer, the media, and the Minneapolis mayor's office all described why they plan to participate in a *Community Circle*.

They urged their peers to join them in sponsoring and supporting the dialogues. The event concluded with an explanation of the "nuts and bolts" of sponsoring or convening a *Community Circle*. Participants learned how *Community Circles* work, the "charge" to be given to the circles, and the project's timetable.

As the event concluded, many new Sponsors submitted their "Pledge of Participation" and began the important work of organizing a *Community Circle*.

To new Sponsors and others who attended the kick-off, "thank you!"

Copies of the " Sponsor Packets" handed out at the kick-off are available.

In addition, a summary video of the event, produced by Minneapolis Telecommunications Network, will be available. For additional information, contact coordinator Dick Little at 871-8980 (fax: 871-8984).

A Word from the Project Coordinator...

We are pleased to issue our first newsletter to participating and potential partners of the *Community Circles Collaborative*. This is the first formal update since the Kick-Off Forum in December. Since the Kick-Off, many new participants have volunteered to serve as facilitators, sponsors, resource partners and discussion participants. We welcome your ideas as the project proceeds.

This newsletter is intended to give you the information you need to proceed with your part in this metrowide dialogue project. Articles cover the upcoming facilitator training sessions, highlights of the forthcoming *Discussion Guide*, a timeline of activities, and news from project sponsors. We still need to receive pledges of participation. Sponsors also should identify facilitators who they want invited to the facilitator training.

Please contact us if you still have questions or if you need additional information. We look forward to supporting you in implementing what may prove to be the Twin Cities region's most ambitious citizen dialogue to date.

Dick Little, Coordinator

Community Circle Collaborative/Education and Housing Equity Project

122 West Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404

Phone: (612) 871-8980 Fax: (612) 871-8984

Training

Facilitator Training Dates Set for February 15 and also February 20

Two *Community Circle* Facilitator Training Sessions have been scheduled to prepare facilitators for leading *Community Circles* during the months of March and April.

Trainings will take place on Saturday February 15, 1997 from 8:30 AM-12:30 PM and Thursday February 20, 1997 from 6:00-9:30 PM.

Both sessions will take place in the Marshall Room of the Christenson Center on the campus of Augsburg College. People who will be facilitating community circles are strongly urged to attend one of these sessions.

See insert for additional details, map, and registration form.

For more information contact Bruce Vandal at the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc. Phone: (612) 330-1509. e-mail: vandal@augsborg.edu

This newsletter is published by the *Community Circle Collaborative* to update sponsors, participants, facilitators and other interested parties.

For additional information, or to get on the mailing list, contact:

Dick Little, Coordinator
Education and Housing Equity Project
122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 320
Minneapolis, MN 55404
Phone: (612) 871-8980
Fax: (612) 871-8984
Newsletter Production:
Steve Share/
Community Media Services

Discussion Guide: Sneak Preview

The *Community Circle Discussion Guide*, now in the final stages of preparation, will offer a framework for thinking and deliberating on the issues of segregation.

Modeled after the format that the National Issues Forum uses in their discussion guides, the *Discussion Guide* will begin with a Forward that will explain the purpose of the project and "the charge" that is to be presented to the *Community Circles*.

All Circles or discussion groups will be discussing these two questions:

■ *What are the impacts of existing patterns of job and residential segregation on educational achievements and life opportunities for families and children in the Twin Cities area?*

■ *What can or what should we, as individuals and as a community, do to enhance the educational, economic and life opportunities for all children?*

Next, the *Discussion Guide* will present an introduction to the issues of housing and education and highlight why and how these issues are connected.

In the final sections, the *Discussion Guide* will present three different, but not mutually exclusive perspectives on

The Community Circle Discussion Guide



A Resource Guide for 'Beyond Busing: a Metrowide Dialogue on the Challenges of Education and Housing Segregation'

dealing with the problems of economic and racial segregation. These "policy alternatives" will serve as a beginning point for the public deliberation by each *Community Circle* discussion group.

The three "choices" are tentatively described as: 1) "Enrichment: Helping to Build

Existing Communities;" 2) "Personal Responsibility: a Return to Traditional Community Values;" 3) "Mobility: Creating More Choices."

The booklet will describe each option in terms of its diagnosis of the problem, prescribed programs to pursue, why this course of action merits support, and what its critics say.

The guide will conclude with a bibliography of additional sources and readings.

If you can recommend materials for use in this project and in the study guide, please contact Kristi Greenwalt, principal writer for the *Community Circle Discussion Guide*, via e-mail: kgreenwalt@hhh.umn.edu

Or, write or fax: Kristi Greenwalt
c/o Education and Housing Equity Project, 122 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 320, Minneapolis, MN 55404. Fax number: 871-8984.

Some of the Partners who originally helped to organize the "Beyond Busing" Community Circle Dialogue include:

The Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing, The Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism, The Minneapolis Public Schools, The Minneapolis Telecommunications Network, The Minnesota Council of Churches Anti-Racism Initiative, The Minnesota Fair Housing Center, The Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, The Minnesota Public Radio Civic Journalism Project, Twin Cities Free-Net, The University of Minnesota Law School's Institute on Race and Poverty, The Urban Coalition.

National Partners include:

The Kettering Foundation/National Issues Forum, The Study Circles Resource Center.

News from Sponsors

Look Who's Joining the Growing List of Sponsors for the Community Circle Dialogue!

The growing list of *Community Circle* sponsors now includes churches from Minneapolis to Burnsville, school districts (including school board members and superintendents), housing authorities, human rights commissions, municipalities (including mayors and city council members), local chambers of commerce, neighborhood associations and a variety of community-based organizations.

In **Richfield**, for example, the School District is collaborating with the Richfield Community Council and the local chapter of the League of Women Voters to convene and co-facilitate at least two study circles.

The **City of Golden Valley** is jointly sponsoring *Community Circle* discussion groups with its Black History Month Advisory Committee, the Twin West Chamber of Commerce and the Hopkins School District.

Other partners, such as the University of Minnesota's **Newman Center** are sponsoring a speaker series on housing and segregation.

Following these presentations, the partners will extend an invitation to participants

to form a *Community Circle*.

Members of **Ascension Church** in north Minneapolis are sponsoring a *Community Circle* that will include citizens of African-American, Latino/Chicano and European/Caucasian heritage from Minneapolis, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center and Maple Grove.

Meanwhile, the Interfaith Action Core Team of **St. Joan of Arc Church**, a metropolitan parish in south Minneapolis, is also forming a study circle.

Also in south Minneapolis, the Sabathani Community Center is sponsoring a circle jointly with the Central Neighborhood Improvement Association.

In cyberspace, the Twin Cities Free-Net is proposing two on-line conferencing projects in support of the *Community Circle* project.

Other groups and organizations who have "signed on" or are about to join include:

Edina Public Schools and Human Rights Commission; Minneapolis Community Education; Southside Neighborhood Housing Services; Presbyterian Church of the Apostles, Burnsville; First Universalist Church of Minneapolis; St. Louis Park Pub-

lic Schools, Housing Authority, Human Rights Commission and Office of the Mayor; Seward Neighborhood Group; Field-Regina-Northrup Neighborhood Association; Grace University Lutheran Church; Panorama Consulting and Training; Saint Paul Public Schools and Human Rights Department; Family and Children's Service, Hennepin County; Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association; St. David's School, Minnetonka; Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Minneapolis; Whittier Alliance (Housing Committee); West Metro Education Program; United Way of the Minneapolis Area; Mediation Services (Anoka County), and City of Eden Prairie, Office of the Mayor (pending).

Individuals representing many more organizations attended the Kick-Off forum and are "part of the network."

To get involved, please sign and return the *Participation Pledge Form* on the reverse side of this page. Or, if you need more information before making a commitment, send in the form below. We look forward to hearing from you!

Join the Community Circle Discussions!

We would be interested in sponsoring or convening a *Community Circle* discussion group!

Please send more information.

Name of Sponsoring Organization: _____

Address: _____

Name of Contact Person: _____ Phone: _____

Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

We will co-sponsor a *Community Circle* with the following organization: _____

We would like our *Community Circle* to be paired with a circle from another organization!

Note: If you plan to provide your own facilitators, please include their names, addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers below. They will be invited to attend one of two training sessions scheduled for February 15 and February 20 (see story, page 2).

Here is a facilitator from our organization! Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please match a facilitator or co-facilitator with our organization.

Return ASAP to:

Dick Little, Community Circle Collaborative, 122 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 320, Minneapolis, MN 55404. Fax: 871-8984.

The Community Circle Dialogue: What, Who, Why, Where, When

WHAT?

Community Circles, formed around the metropolitan area, will discuss the question "How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities families and children?"

Each community circle will be convened by a local sponsor group, will include 5-15 participants, and will be moderated by a trained facilitator or co-facilitators using a *Discussion Guide* specifically prepared for this topic.

The *Community Circles* are part of a metrowide dialogue that will bring together people from all walks of life. Each circle will be as economically, racially, ethnically, politically and geographically as diverse as possible, or be paired with other circles to assure a diversity of perspectives.

The *Community Circle* groups will begin a conversation about race and class in America, and the Twin Cities area in particular, and hopefully will discover some shared ground across these boundaries on issues of housing, jobs, and education.

Each *Community Circle* will:

- 1) Explore and discuss the extent of housing, job and school segregation in the Twin Cities area, with particular attention to socioeconomic as well as racial segregation.
- 2) Discuss the factors that drive the trend toward increasing segregation and begin to investigate our own individual and collective responsibility.
- 3) Explore the interrelationship between housing and school segregation, and the implications for academic achievement for elementary and secondary school students, as well as for life opportunities (jobs, etc.).
- 4) Explore the consequences, especially for children and families, of a society increasingly characterized by segregation and socioeconomic disparities.
- 5) Examine and deliberate on possible policy alternatives and differing ideologi-

cal perspectives for addressing these concerns.

- 6) Strive to develop a shared vision of what citizens want their community to be like for their children's generation.

WHO?

The *Community Circles Collaborative* is a partnership of some 15 to 20 organizations, coordinated by the Education and Housing Equity Project, with funding from the Otto Bremer and Bush Foundations and in-kind support from the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. The Collaborative includes organizing, resource, funding and media partners. Facilitator training and preparation of the *Discussion Guide* are among the services being provided by the Collaborative.

Discussion groups are being formed by sponsors including churches and synagogues, school districts, housing agencies, human rights commissions, cities, neighborhood groups, block clubs, and other community-based groups and civic groups such as the League of Women Voters. An estimated 100 sponsor groups have committed to participating in this project and more groups are expected to participate. Based on the high level of community interest shown since the Sponsor Kick-Off event at the St Louis Park City Council Chambers in December, as many as 1,000 citizens may be participating in the *Community Circle* discussion groups.

WHY?

The partners in this project have come together with a shared belief in the need for civil, informed dialogue and analysis—across political, geographic, economic and racial lines—about trends and changes taking place in the communities and schools of the Twin Cities metro area today. We hope that bringing together diverse groups will build understanding and produce practical recommendations for actions that individuals, organizations and policy makers can take with respect to difficult issues facing our communities.

The *Community Circles* project is an opportunity to bring together people from different backgrounds and with diverse perspectives to talk about a common theme: the impact of segregation—*particularly in housing, employment and transportation*—on education. Participants will have the opportunity to explore issues affecting educational achievement, housing choices and job opportunities for Twin Cities citizens, and the relationships between these issues. Participants also will deliberate on alternative ways that the community and the public can address these issues.

Some of the purposes and hoped-for outcomes of this dialogue include:

- 1) To begin an open, honest, and civil conversation about some of the most difficult but important issues facing our communities, and to develop some new ways of talking about and through those issues.
- 2) To provide citizens an opportunity to get to know a cross-section of fellow community members and become more aware of differing ideas and perspectives on important issues that affect all of us.
- 3) To provide an opportunity for people to learn more about their own biases and prejudices and to honestly examine their own experiences in relation to the theme.
- 4) To explore more deeply what we truly believe about equality of opportunity.
- 5) To use public deliberation as a way to arrive at and develop valuable ideas for future action on a local and regional basis, and to more clearly define our responsibility, both individually and collectively, for the future well-being of our community.
- 6) To find "common ground" among metropolitan citizens and develop an informed "public judgement" or "public voice" that can help guide public policy and decision makers in finding solutions to complex and difficult issues.
- 7) For those so inclined, to begin to identify and agree on specific steps that they can take—at the personal, neighborhood, municipal, metropolitan and state policy levels—and to outline plans of action including, but not limited to, a legislative agenda, community organizing, and formation of coalitions around key issues.

(continued next page)

(continued from previous page)

WHERE?

Locations of the *Community Circles* will be as diverse as the locations of the sponsoring organizations and the *Community Circle* participants. The sponsor will be responsible for convening the first meeting. Times and places for subsequent meetings will be determined by each *Community Circle* group and its facilitator and recorder.

WHEN?

The timeline of scheduled activities follows:

December 10: "Beyond Busing" Kick-Off Forum for sponsors. This event has occurred and was attended by more than 100 people representing different organizations (see page 1).

February 15 (Saturday), 8:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. and February 20 (Thursday), 6:00 P.M.-9:30 P.M.: Training and informational sessions for individuals who will serve as discussion group facilitators. Location: Augsburg College, in the Marshall Room of the Christensen Center (see map). *Choose one of two dates to attend—all facilitators are expected to participate.*

Before March 1: The *Discussion Guide* will be made available to all sponsors and *Community Circle* participants. Sponsors are asked to identify the number of partici-

pants in their *Community Circle(s)*—this information may be faxed to us at 871-8984. All sponsors also should sign and return their *Participation Pledge Forms* (see insert). Sponsors should identify a heterogeneous mix of participants, including both homeowners and renters, and individuals from various age groups, occupations, and socio-economic, racial, ethnic and cultural and political perspectives. To achieve diversity goals, we encourage groups to combine with other groups if necessary. Please notify us if you need assistance in pairing with another group.

First week of March: Sponsors are encouraged to conduct a "kick off" meeting of discussion groups or participants. This meeting can be a "get to know you" and introductory event before the *Community Circle* group or groups convene their first session(s). By this time, facilitators and recorders should be assigned to their *Community Circles*.

First week of March to first week of May: Each *Community Circle* discussion group will hold meetings at times and location desired by the group. Groups of 5 to 15 people will schedule from 3 to 5 meetings (approximately 2 hours each, meeting for a total of up to 10 hours) over this nine week period. All groups will be moderated by trained facilitators and use the common *Discussion Guide*. The *Discussion Guide* will include an introduction to the topic, presentations of a range of viewpoints, questions for discussion, and a bibliography of suggested readings (see page 2).

Late April: Each *Community Circle*

discussion group recorder will prepare and submit a summary report of the group's discussions to Circle participants for their review. Each *Community Circle* group and the sponsor organization may want to schedule an opportunity to share the findings and conclusions of the group with the local community.

May 8 (Thursday), 6:30-9:00 P.M. (location yet to be determined): a *Community-wide Forum* is being planned. This event will be a metrowide meeting to share the results of the *Community Circle* project. This event will be modeled after the smaller *Community Circles*. We are pleased to announce that George Latimer, former Mayor of Saint Paul and Assistant Secretary of HUD, and Vivian Jenkins Nelsen, President and CEO of INTER-RACE at Augsburg College, have agreed to serve as the co-facilitators. Each *Community Circle* will select representatives from their group to participate in this event and share the results of their circle's deliberations. Results of this forum will be shared with all project participants.

May 20, 21 or 22: the Minnesota Meeting, Minnesota Public Radio, the Minneapolis Foundation and, hopefully, a sister foundation in Saint Paul (all partners in this project) plan to co-sponsor a concluding event with public, community and business leaders to enable us to share the results of this project with the larger metropolitan community and, possibly, a national audience. *Community Circle* participants will be invited to this event, which would include a luncheon and noteworthy guest speaker.



The Community Circle Collaborative
c/o MICAH
122 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 320
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Address Correction Requested

'Re-build the City' plans summer work weeks with MICAH support in St. Paul's East Side neighborhood

Homes along a two-block stretch of Cook Avenue in St. Paul's East Side will get a facelift this summer, thanks to a developing collaboration between MICAH, local congregations, East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC), and the District 5 Planning Council.

A total of \$45,000 is available to the project from both charitable and public sources. MICAH is providing \$25,000 from our Jubilee Fund and the City of St. Paul STAR program is providing \$20,000.

Along with neighborhood congregations, ESNDC will deploy volunteers to help make exterior improvements to homes in this target area during two designated "work weeks" this summer.

The work weeks will run July 13-20

and August 14-24 and will help launch "Rebuild the City: the Ezra Nehemiah Project."

"This new initiative aims to involve East Side congregations more directly in neighborhood improvement efforts," said Mike Anderson, MICAH's former executive director, now executive director at ESNDC. Avodah B'Yachad/Service Together will recruit metro-wide volunteers from the Jewish community (see page 3).

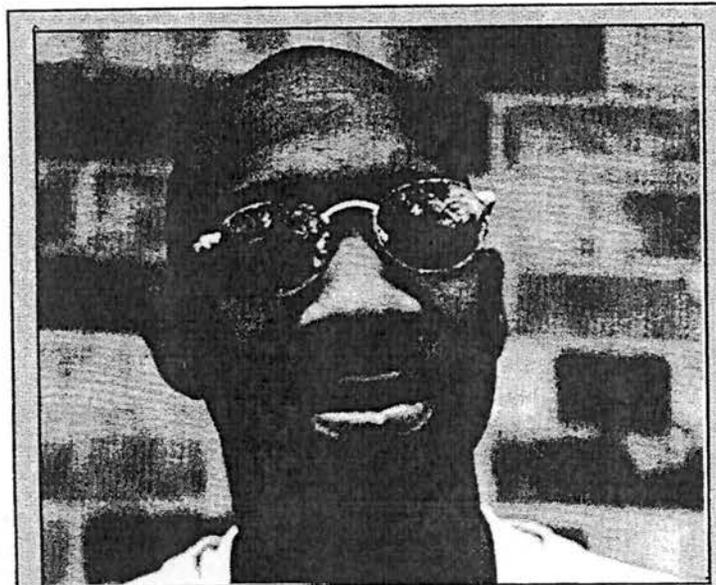
"It's an opportunity to involve a lot of people in doing something for the community," said Chuck Eversman, an ESNDC board member who also is the pastor at Peace United Church of Christ. "Hopefully, the work will give people a chance to meet one another and to join

together in a common effort."

Along Cook Avenue, the project hopes to upgrade the exterior of 15-20 homes. Up to \$2,000 per home will be available for materials. Homeowners who receive assistance must contribute up to 20 hours in sweat equity towards completion of the work, working alongside congregational and community volunteers.

"We're interested in good housing as well as the spiritual side of things," noted Vern Anderson, Senior Pastor of Arlington Hills Lutheran Church, the host of planning meetings for the work weeks.

For more information about "Rebuild the City: the Ezra Nehemiah Project," contact ESNDC at 771-1152 or MICAH at 871-8980. Volunteers will be needed!



MICAH will spin-off homeless family programs, bids 'farewell' to John Ruffin

John Ruffin, who helped MICAH launch the Metropolitan Homeless Family Initiative, leaves MICAH's staff as the programs he helped build move to the St. Paul Area Council of Churches. We salute John and the many churches and volunteers who contributed to the success of this service! See page 2.

Community Circles meet in metro-wide dialogue

Representing study groups from Stillwater and Bayport on the east, to Minnetonka on the west, and from Eagan and Apple Valley on the south, to Champlin on the north, participants in the Community Circle project met at Weyerhaeuser Chapel at St. Paul's Macalester College May 29 for an evening's discussion about the challenges of education, housing and racial segregation.

The evening drew a multi-racial crowd of 122 people, including both Community Circle participants and invited guests. George Latimer, former mayor of St. Paul, and Vivian Jenkins Nelsen, director of INTER-RACE, moderated the event.

"I think we had a very good discussion about segregation and about race," said Community Circle coordinator Dick Little. "That was a breakthrough." Little added: "there was honesty that evening. We got past Minnesota Nice."

MICAH is a sponsor of the Community Circle project, which seeks to bring a diversity of metro residents together to examine the impacts of segregation on housing and children and to propose solutions.

The project has published a study guide which examines the scope of the problem and outlines policy options.

A second round of Community Circle study groups will begin this fall, building on the lessons learned this spring.

To participate, or to get more information, contact Dick Little, executive director of the Education and Housing Equity Project: 871-8980.

COMMUNITY CIRCLE COLLABORATIVE

EVENT ALERT !!!

National Leadership Summit "Race Relations and America's Schools" A National and Twin Cities Event Not to be Missed !!!

Where: Richard R. Green Central Park Middle School
3416 - 4th Avenue South
Minneapolis
(Please enter from parking lot at 3rd Avenue and 35th Street)

Central High School
275 North Lexington Parkway
St. Paul

When: Saturday, September 27, 1997
9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Schedule: Teleconference and Local Events

9:30 a.m. The Days that Changed Little Rock and America in September, 1957

10:30 a.m. Downlink of Roundtable Discussion with national education experts

12:00 noon Local Town Meeting: Bringing the historical perspective home
(facilitated discussions in cooperation with the Community Circle Collaborative)

2:30 p.m. National Town Meeting: *In Search of America's Promise*

4:30 p.m. Closing remarks and reflections—John Hope Franklin/ Sanford Cloud Jr.
(Please see enclosed brochure for further details)

Why: The National Conference has *very recently* received a major national grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to do a four year initiative of leadership summits that look at four major societal institutions (education, the economy and workplace, governance and public policy, and the faith community) and their role in building an inclusive nation.

The first year of this effort begins with a summit and town meeting to explore *Race Relations and America's Public Education System*. This summit is taking place as part of the 40th anniversary commemoration of the desegregation of Little Rock's Central High School. This anniversary will serve as a point of departure for national and local conversations about the historic and future role of public education in moving America's young people to effective participation in a multicultural nation.

Partners and participants in the Twin Cities' Community Circles which have addressed the challenges of schools, housing and segregation are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in this event.

(For further information contact Dick Little or Jim McDonough, or one of the other local co-sponsors)

Education and Housing Equity Project
122 West Franklin Avenue South, Suite 320
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404
(612) 871-8980 / fax (612) 871-8984

A partial list of participants in the Community Circle Project

Participating Communities

Arden Hills
Bayport/Stillwater
Brooklyn Park
Brooklyn Center
Burnsville
Champlin
Eagan
Eden Prairie
Edina
Golden Valley
Hopkins
Maple Grove
Minneapolis
Minnetonka
Oakdale
Richfield
St. Louis Park
St. Paul
West St. Paul
Woodbury

Participating Organizations

Ascension Catholic Church
Bahai Faith Community
Cathedral of St. Mark
Central Neighborhood Improvement
Association
Church of St. John Neuman
CommonBond Communities
Edina Human Relations Commission
Edina Public Schools
First Congregational Church
First Universalist Church, Minneapolis
Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce
Golden Valley Black History Month
Committee
Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association
Hennepin County Anti-Violence Initiative
Hennepin County Childrens and Family
Services
Hiawatha/Blaisdell YMCA
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Hopkins School District
Jewish Community Action
Jewish Community Center of St. Paul
Longfellow United for Youth and Families
Minneapolis Urban League
Minnesota Fair Housing Center
Minnesota Tenants Union

MRA Twin Cities
Newman Center, University of Minnesota
Presbyterian Church of the Apostles
Project Foundation, Inc.
Ramsey International Fine Arts School
Richfield Community Council
Richfield League of Women Voters
Richfield Public Schools
St. David's School for Child Development
St. Cecelia's Catholic Church
St. Joan of Arc Parish
St. Louis Park Public Schools
Sabathani Community Center
Self-Sufficiency Center
Seward School/Matthews Community Center
Southside Neighborhood Housing Services
Southwest Roundtable
Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity
University of St. Thomas
United Way of Minneapolis Area
Waite Park Community Council
Waite Park Community School
Whittier Alliance

Community Circle Partners

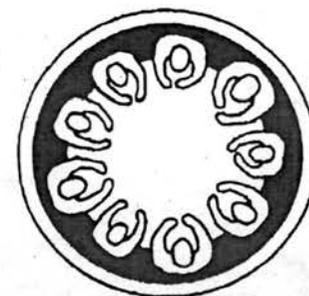
Citizens League
City of Minneapolis, Office of the Mayor
Education and Housing Equity Project
Institute on Race and Poverty, University of MN
INTER-RACE, Augsburg College
Kettering Foundation/National Issues Forum
Macalester College Department of Urban Studies
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable 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 Minneapolis, Minnesota and St. Paul Area
Councils of Churches
Minnesota Facilitators Network
Minnesota Fair Housing Center
Minnesota Meeting
People's Institute—North
Southside Neighborhood Housing Services
Study Circles Resource Center
Twin Cities Free-Net
Urban Coalition
West Metro Education Project

Welcome!

COMING TOGETHER

A Regional Conversation Addressing the Challenges of Education, Housing and Segregation

*A Metro-Wide Gathering of the
Community Circle Study Groups
and Invited Guests*



Thursday, May 29, 1997

6:30-9:00 p.m.

**Weyerhaeuser Memorial Chapel
Macalester College
St. Paul**

CO-SPONSORS:

- The Community Circle Collaborative
and the Education and Housing Equity Project
- The Department of Urban Studies, Macalester College

We welcome all Community Circle participants, facilitators and sponsors to come together for an evening of dialogue with each other and with public policy leaders as we share, learn, plan...

WHAT

A metropolitan forum bringing together the Community Circles to publicly share the results of their deliberations and to reach collective conclusions about future actions in response to two central questions facing the Twin Cities area (*see program, next page*).

WHO

■ Citizens who have participated in one of some 50 Community Circle conversations throughout the Twin Cities metro area discussing the challenges of education, housing and segregation.

■ Public, business and community leaders, interested citizens and the press—will join us to listen and strategize.

WHY

The forum will serve as an opportunity to share the results, findings and conclusions of the work of the Community Circles that have met over the past weeks and months.

HOW

Through a facilitated conversation in which participants will share the work of their Community Circles, learn from each other, and discuss future actions.

This project is supported by grants from the Otto Bremer Foundation, the Bush Foundation, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, the Minneapolis Foundation, and the St. Paul Foundation.

Program

6:30 Registration
7:00 – 9:00 Forum

■ Greetings and Introduction

Master of Ceremonies:

Dick Little

Coordinator, Community Circle Collaborative/Education and Housing Equity Project

■ Introduction to the Conversation: The National Perspective

Special Guest:

Martha McCoy

Executive Director, Study Circles Resource Center

■ The Conversation

Part One:

“Framing the Issues”

Moderator:

Vivian Jenkins Nelsen

President and CEO, INTER-RACE,
Augsburg College

Question 1:

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?

Part Two:

“Framing the Solutions”

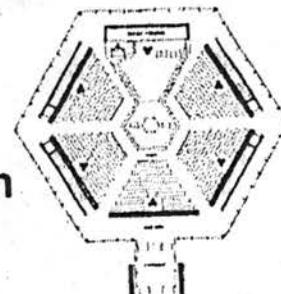
Moderator:

George Latimer

Professor of Urban Studies,
Macalester College

Question 2:

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



• Work in Progress •

Saint Paul Neighborhood News

Choices for Community: A Regional Conversation on Housing, Schools and Race

By Dick Little, Executive Director, Education and Housing Equity Project

During the first half of 1997, over 500 citizens from 35 different communities participated in public discussions focused on the challenges of school achievement, racial equity and housing segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. These discussions included locally sponsored 'community circles', a metropolitan citizens' forum held at Macalester College in May, and town meetings held in Minneapolis and St. Paul schools in September.

The Community Circle Collaborative process reflects a conscientious effort to recapture the benefits of a town-hall forum while also insuring all voices are heard.

The Community Circle Collaborative is a metro-wide dialogue project that engages citizens from all walks of life, in deliberative discussions about the future of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. A partnership between the Education and Housing Equity Project and dozens of other regional and community-based organizations, the Collaborative has sponsored community circles charged with discussing two central 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 educational success and housing and economic opportunities for all children in the Twin Cities area?**

In the spring of 1997, citizens met as many as five or six times to deliberate



these issues. With the help of foundation funding and trained facilitators, the community circles identified issues related to housing and educational equity that fell into four distinct groups. Running through all of these groups were questions of individual and institutional racism. These included:

- Issues related to regional growth and equity, such as public and private investment in development, employment, social relations (e.g., media stereotypes and crime) and services (e.g., transit)
- Systemic issues related to housing and neighborhood quality, social isolation and segregation (e.g., transience, concentrations of poverty, and exclusionary regulations)
- Systemic issues related to education — those that focus on the school as an educational institution — and those that focus on the school as a member of the larger community
- Issues related to individuals, such as substance abuse, lack of self-esteem, dysfunctional families, prejudice and discrimination.

Some of the findings are best expressed in the words of community circle and forum participants:

"We are in deep denial. We believe we aren't like Detroit, but we are; it's just happening more slowly here."

"It's important to get the advantaged to understand how they're affected by [the] plight of low-income minorities."

"Describing the problem of the inner city as a result of abstract 'racism' is not helpful because fighting 'racism' seems a futile exercise."

"Suburbanites like to have the benefits of the city but do not like to pay for them."

"More affluent neighborhoods [have] essentially accepted socioeconomic redlining"

"You can't learn if you are hungry."

Recommendations for action may be found in EHEP's report on the first round of the Community Circle Collaborative initiative, available by the end of the year. A second round of discussions is planned for 1998, which will culminate with a Citizens' Summit co-sponsored by the Collaborative, the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio's Civic Journalism Initiative. Conclusions will then be shared with public, private and non-profit sector leaders.

For more information or copies of the EHEP report or discussion guide call the Education and Housing Equity Project at 612/871-2519, or e-mail: micah@mtn.org. ●

CHOICES FOR COMMUNITY: A REGIONAL CONVERSATION ON HOUSING, SCHOOLS AND RACE

During the first half of 1997, over 500 citizens from 35 different communities participated in public discussions focused on the challenges of school achievement, racial equity and housing segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. These discussions included locally sponsored 'community circles', a metropolitan citizens' forum held at Macalester College in May, and town meetings held in Minneapolis and St. Paul schools in September. The town meetings were held in conjunction with the National Summit on Race Relations and America's Public Schools, co-sponsored by the President's Commission on Race and the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

The following excerpts are from the report summarizing the findings, conclusions and suggested actions generated by the discussions:

In the early years of American democracy, communities tended to be small and homogeneous. Citizens could readily hold town meetings or convene informally to discuss issues of the day. Yet these forums made no place for the less "important" voices in the community: women, slaves, Native Americans, poor families, recent immigrants.

The Community Circle Collaborative process reflects a conscientious effort to recapture the benefits of the town-hall forum of old while also making sure all voices are heard. It uses the study circle model of discussion, a well-tested, practical method for educating adults and fostering social change.

The Community Circle Collaborative is a metro-wide dialogue project that engages citizens from all walks of life, 5-15 at a time, in deliberative discussions about the future of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. A partnership between the Education and Housing Equity Project and dozens of other regional, community-based and multicultural organizations, the Collaborative has sponsored community circles charged with discussing two central 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 educational success and housing and economic opportunities for all children in the Twin Cities area?*

With the help of foundation funding, a discussion guide, trained facilitators and sponsoring organizations, small groups of suburban and central city residents met as many as five or six times over a three-month period to deliberate on these questions and seek common ground. 25 "circles" completed their deliberations.

During the discussions in spring of 1997, the community circles identified issues related to housing and educational equity that fell into four distinct groupings:

- Issues related to regional growth and equity, such as disparities in investment and development, employment (living wage jobs and income), social relations (e.g., media stereotypes and crime) and services (e.g., transit and child care)
- Systemic issues related to housing and neighborhood quality, social isolation and segregation (e.g., lack of investment, transience, concentrations of poverty, inflexible, inappropriate or exclusionary regulations [zoning], real estate "steering" and various forms of "red-lining")
- Systemic issues related to education -- those that focus on the school as an educational institution (e.g., teachers who don't live in the community where they teach, insufficient counselors or counseling, need for attention to cultural and learning style differences, low expectations of certain students based on stereotypes) -- and those that focus on the school as a member of the larger community (e.g., need for stronger connections with parents and community, children carrying weapons, poor nutrition)
- Issues related to individuals, such as substance abuse, lack of self-esteem, dysfunctional families, prejudice and discrimination.

Running through all of these groupings were questions of individual and institutional racism.

Some of the findings are best expressed in the words of community circle and forum participants:

- “We are in deep denial. We believe we aren’t like Detroit, but we are; it’s just happening more slowly here.”
- “It’s important to get the advantaged to understand how they’re affected by [the] plight of low-income minorities.”
- “Describing the problem of the inner city as a result of abstract ‘racism’ is not helpful because fighting ‘racism’ seems a futile exercise.”
- “Suburbanites like to have the benefits of the city but do not like to pay for them.”
- “More affluent neighborhoods [have] essentially accepted socioeconomic redlining”
- “You can’t learn if you are hungry.”

The discussions generated many ideas for change. The following example illustrates *an idea for generating regional funds for affordable housing*:

“It is common practice for utility companies in Minnesota and other cold-weather states to request donations in support of energy programs that help low income residents pay their energy bills (for example, *HeatShare*). The same concept could be applied to all mortgages collected within the Twin Cities metropolitan area to create a fund for affordable housing. Voluntary contributions of as little as \$5 per month would generate a substantial amount of money, especially when used to leverage other resources. These funds could be applied toward affordable housing in ways that existing subsidy programs do not -- to wit:

- to provide money for down payments and/or loan write-downs; and
- to provide funds for physical maintenance of low-cost housing.”

Additional recommendations for action may be found in EHEP’s report on the first round of the Community Circle Collaborative initiative, which will be available for public distribution by the end of the year. A second round of discussions is planned for 1998, which will culminate with a Citizens’ Summit co-sponsored by the Collaborative, the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio’s Civic Journalism Initiative. Although participants feel that discussion “across boundaries” is itself significant, their collective findings and conclusions will be shared with public, private and non-profit sector leaders. The results of the conversations have already been used to inform public and community decision-making in the Twin Cities area. The project is also monitoring citizen action initiatives that result from the discussions.

Additional information about this project or copies of the report or discussion guide may be obtained by contacting the **Education and Housing Equity Project (Dick Little, Executive Director) at 122 West Franklin Ave, Suite 310, Minneapolis, MN 55404 (fax-612/871-8984, phone-612/871-2519, or e-mail-micah@mtn.org).**

**EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT
'CHOICES FOR COMMUNITY'
COMMUNITY CIRCLES PROJECT
1997 REPORT**

During 1997, EHEP established the Community Circle Collaborative, a metro-wide dialogue project that engaged over 500 citizens from 35 different municipalities in informed public conversations focused on the challenges of school achievement, housing integration and racial/economic equity in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

These discussions included:

- 1) Twenty-five 'community circles,' each composed of 5-20 participants meeting between three and six times (approximately two hours for each meeting) during the months of March through June. These circles were sponsored by a wide variety of organizations and were convened in central city, suburban and outlying communities. Approximately 25% of the 350 or so participants were people of color.
- 2) A Metropolitan Citizens Forum held at Macalester College Chapel in May moderated by George Latimer and Vivian Jenkins Nelsen, two noted facilitators and leaders on issues of race relations and segregation. Martha McCoy, director of the Study Circles Resource Center, offered a national commentary. 125 citizens and public community leaders, including representatives of community circles who shared the results of their circle deliberations attended the forum.
- 3) A set of town meetings in Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools in September held in conjunction with the National Summit on Race Relations and America's Public Schools and co-sponsored with the President's Commission on Race and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Approximately 50 adults and youth participated in facilitated, nominal group discussions.

EHEP and its Community Circle Collaborative partners accomplished these dialogues through a sequence of organizing and supporting activities, including the following:

- 1) A sponsor kick-off event *Beyond Busing: A Metrowide Dialogue on the Challenges of Education and Housing Segregation* held in December 1996 at the St. Louis Park City Council Chambers. Over 100 citizens representing nearly as many organizations attended the forum, which introduced the project and provided an overview of the issues. The forum included presentations by 10 civic and government leaders. A sponsor's packet was provided to each participant. Following the forum, approximately 50 different groups (school districts, churches and synagogues, libraries, neighborhood councils, community-based non-profits, housing groups, human rights commissions, chambers of commerce and municipalities) signed pledges of participation, agreeing to sponsor or convene at least one community circle.

- 2) Publication of a newsletter "*Beyond Busing*" in January 1997 to draw attention to the project, announce upcoming activities, provide forms for sponsor, facilitator and participant sign-up, and to cover the "who, what, why, where, how and when" of the project. The newsletter was mailed out to approximately 500 interested individuals and organizations.
- 3) Facilitator training workshops held in February at Augsburg College. Approximately 85 people with backgrounds or experience in facilitating small groups were recruited and received training on the issues and process to be used in the community circles discussions. A team representing the lead partners of the Community Circle Collaborative delivered the training. A facilitator's packet was provided to each participant. Each volunteer moderator/facilitator signed a pledge of participation. Facilitators were subsequently matched with community circles convened by the sponsors. The Community Circle Collaborative worked with the Minnesota Facilitators Network to identify and recruit moderator/facilitators. In addition, many of the sponsor/conveners provided their own experienced facilitators. To facilitate communication between community circle study groups, e-mail services were offered to facilitators at no cost by the Twin Cities Free Net.
- 4) Research and preparation of an issues/discussion guide *Choices for Community: A Regional Conversation about the Challenges of Education, Housing and Segregation in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area*. In the preparation of this document, the Education and Housing Equity Project was assisted by a review team representing the Collaborative; staff of the Study Circles Resource Center; a CURA-funded graduate intern from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs; and by noted journalist, editorial writer and playwright Syl Jones.
- 5) The Collaborative also produced a resource bibliography that includes over 125 publications and articles to help inform the public discussions. The Librarians for Social Responsibility offered to assist in making these resources available for community circle use at branch county libraries. In addition, the Collaborative supplied resource experts who were available to meet with community circles upon request. Community circle participants were also invited to local conferences and seminars, such as the Institute on Race and Poverty's Spring Conference on housing, education and persistent segregation, to augment their inquiry and knowledge of the issues they were discussing.
- 6) A concluding forum *Coming Together: A Regional Conversation on Schools, Housing and Segregation*, co-sponsored with the Macalester College Department of Urban Studies, the Study Circles Resource Center and the Minnesota Public Radio Civic Journalism Initiative (described above). This event brought together community circle representatives, interested citizens and invited community leaders to achieve a metro-wide conversation and share the results of the individual community conversations.

- 7) An evaluation survey of the community circle sponsors, facilitators, reporters and participants to learn what worked well and what needs to be changed before a second round of community conversations is held. All participating circles completed the survey, and a summary report of the results has been prepared. A focus group meeting with community circle representatives will be held in the near future.
- 8) A summary report of the community circles' findings, conclusions and recommendations to be made available for public distribution in early 1998. At the conclusion of their deliberations, the community circles submitted over 100 pages of reports. The substance of these reports, along with the results of the fall town meetings at Minneapolis and Saint Paul Schools, are being synthesized and integrated into a summary report. The final document will report on the substance of the conversations, but will also include a critique of the discussions and process recommendations for a second round of discussions and action steps in 1998.
- 9) Video and audio documentation of the project, which was provided by a community circle partner, the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Project.
- 10) The project network directory, which now includes over 1,000 participants and interested citizens.

The results of the community circle conversations are already being used and have had some impact on the Twin Cities civic community:

1. The Project was a major contributor to the winter 1997 edition of Wilder Foundation's *Community Matters*. The entire issue is devoted to "Race and Community." The Project has also received media coverage by:
 - The *Star Tribune of the Twin Cities*
 - The *U.S. News & World Report*
 - Minnesota Public Radio's Midday Program (KNOW-FM)
 - Community Radio Station KFAI in Minneapolis
 - Minneapolis Community Television Network, Channel 34
 - A radio program of the Black Leadership Forum (Yvonne Scruggs) in Washington, D.C.
 - The national newsletter of the Study Circles Resource Center
 - Several Twin Cities-based neighborhood and suburban newspapers

We have also received a request from NBC News for coverage of the second round of conversations in 1998. Our project will also be the subject of a major display at the Minneapolis Public Library in January and February 1998.

2. Project staff and participants were invited to be contributors to two other public conversations in September 1997: The Peoples Summit, broadcast by KTCA as part of its Block by Block television series, and the Metropolitan Initiatives Forum, cosponsored by several Twin Cities foundations and the Citizens League.

3. Several new community-wide discussion initiatives have begun which are inspired by or modeled after the community circle discussions we initiated. One prominent example is the dialogue and action project begun by Interfaith Action, a social justice ministry of church congregations in the greater Minneapolis area. EHEP assisted them in convening metro interfaith forums on jobs, housing, sprawl, race and poverty. Their discussion guide and "issues map" are taken directly from the Community Circles project. The chief organizers, planners and resource speakers of the Interfaith Dialogues were participants, sponsors or facilitators in the Community Circles project. Partly in response to our initiative, education and segregation issues have been added to their agenda.
4. Following completion of the first round of community circle conversations, EHEP board members and staff, and community circle partners, were invited to:
 - Make presentations to the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership at its annual conference, and the West Metropolitan Education Program (consortium of nine suburban school districts and the Minneapolis school district) at one of its quarterly board/superintendent meetings;
 - Meet with and provide input to the mediation consulting team (CMI) for the NAACP v. State of Minnesota educational adequacy law suit;
 - Participate in updating the Minnesota Milestones measures for state and metropolitan outcomes in education, housing and multicultural diversity; and
 - Develop strategies at the Metropolitan Housing Summit cosponsored by the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing.

EHEP staff and board members have also participated in and helped lead discussions at various conferences focusing on housing and education issues (e.g., the DFL Education Foundation's conference on closing the income gap and the Institute on Race and Poverty's conference on overcoming spatial barriers to welfare reform).

5. EHEP has been contacted by National Days of Dialogue to help promote conversations on race relations in the Twin Cities. The National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations is a coalition effort of national organizations to encourage and highlight dialogue on race relations during the week leading up to Martin Luther King Day. We have also been contacted by the St. Paul Pioneer Press to advise and assist them in establishing a series of community discussions that that would be tied to a newspaper series they will be running on welfare reform and poverty in the Twin Cities.
6. Some of the community circles continue to meet (e.g., the Golden Valley Circle sponsored by the Black History Month Committee of the Human Rights Commission, working with the Twin West Chamber of Commerce and Hopkins School District).

EHEP is also monitoring action initiatives that spring from local community circles (e.g., churches getting involved in fair housing initiatives).

7. EHEP formally supported and helped develop MICAH's proposal to HUD for a Fair Housing Initiatives Grant. In the category of "education and outreach – reducing suburban tensions," MICAH was one of only five non-profits in the nation to receive funding. EHEP will be a collaborating partner in this project, which will use theatre as a vehicle for engaging the public in the issues we care about. Other community and congregational organizing groups (e.g., St. Paul Ecumenical Action Council) are approaching us about collaboration in 1998.
8. We have also received requests from local communities (e.g., Maplewood Human Rights Commission) and academic institutions (e.g., Twin Cities area seminaries' joint course on "Solving Urban Problems" and the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs' Metro Urban Studies Term program) to use our discussion guide as part of their course curricula and community education and outreach initiatives.
9. Also as a result of our accomplishments in 1997, EHEP has been invited by the Minnesota Fair Housing Center to co-sponsor and provide technical assistance and policy direction in developing a comprehensive fair housing training conference for suburban planning officials in 1998.

Our major thrust at the close of 1997 is to plan and organize a second round of community circle conversations and forums in 1998. This round will be built on the results of the first round. The circle discussions will culminate with a Citizens Summit co-sponsored with the Minnesota Meeting and the Minnesota Public Radio Civic Journalism Initiative, and a public action agenda for 1999.

Proposal to the Cowles Media Foundation

A. ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

History & Mission

The Education & Housing Equity Project (EHEP) was created in early 1995 by a group of education and housing advocates who shared a belief in the pressing need to link the issue of school desegregation/integration with the broader issue of segregated housing and neighborhoods. The organization's mission is to act as a catalyst to build broad-based coalitions and engage the community in public conversations and advocacy for the purpose of promoting racially and economically inclusive communities that give families of all incomes, races, and ethnicities access to schools and housing throughout the metropolitan area.

EHEP pursues its mission through a three-part strategy:

- (1) Coalition building and advocacy;
- (2) Community education and public conversation; and
- (3) Assisting communities in becoming more inclusive and integrated.

Activities & Accomplishments

In its first year, EHEP was awarded a start-up grant to develop the organization and hire part-time staff in late 1995. Since that time, EHEP has worked to develop itself as an organization (including obtaining 501(c)(3) status and beginning a process of strategic planning) and collaborated with other organizations and individuals to determine the best strategies for making progress on these issues, which are as complex and daunting as they are immediate.

With staff time limited to a part-time Coordinator's position, EHEP has been involved in the following activities and accomplished the following over the past two years:

Coalition building. EHEP spent its first year in numerous discussions and collaborations. These have led to several specific coalition projects as well as a fuller understanding of the need for an organization that can link these two issues – housing and education – and help develop the desperately needed consensus and leadership to move forward. After several months of one-on-one interviews with a broad range of community leaders and experts in the fields of housing, education, anti-racism, and metropolitan stability, EHEP brought together over 30 organizations to begin the process of building a broad-based coalition that can work on these combined issues. EHEP has also helped expand the base and scope of existing coalitions by connecting the coalitions with related organizations and encouraging the linkage of housing and schools issues in their work. It has worked with a coalition focused on the re-drafting of the State Board of Education's desegregation rule, for example, and linked that

school issue with broader issues of housing segregation and metropolitan stability. Similarly, it has encouraged a coalition working on a fair housing testing campaign in suburban Hennepin County to frame this issue in the context of schools and broader life opportunities.

Community education & conversation. In February 1996, EHEP partnered with the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism, the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, and the Minnesota Fair Housing Center to create the Community Circle Collaborative (CCC). This is a metro-wide dialogue project in which at least 500 citizens from all walks of life have joined together - 5-15 at a time - in study circles held throughout the metro area to discuss two central 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?" and
- "What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance educational success, and housing and economic opportunities for *all* children in the Twin Cities area?"

The CCC is now a broad-based collaboration of community-based organizations, public staff and officials, and individuals working in a variety of fields, including anti-racism, housing, education, social justice, religion, law, and social research. The early partners included: the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism; Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton; Toward Tomorrow Together (a St. Paul area anti-racism coalition); the Wilder Foundation; the St. Paul Dept. of Human Rights; the MN Churches Anti-Racism Initiative (of the MN Council of Churches, the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, and St. Paul Area Council of Churches); the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA); the Suburban Hennepin Anti-Racism Coalition; and the Institute on Race & Poverty. The Collaboration has been coordinated by the Director of EHEP, Dick Little.

During its second year, the Community Circle Collaborative has expanded to include more than 20 public, civic and community-based organizations that serve as the principal partners (see attached list). Each partner contributes its unique strengths or resources to the Collaborative, assuring a broad-based and comprehensive initiative.

The "Kick-Off" conference for potential sponsor groups and conveners of Community Circle study/discussion groups was held in December, 1996. It brought together representatives of nearly 100 different organizations and was highlighted in a Star Tribune Editorial. Recruitment of facilitators began in early 1997, with the assistance of such organizations as the Minnesota Facilitators Network, and concluded with two major facilitator training seminars organized by the Collaborative in February. Approximately 75 facilitators were trained and volunteered to be "matched" with community circles. Other members of the Collaborative helped prepare and review the discussion guide, Choices for Community: A Regional Conversation About Education, Housing, and Segregation, used by the Community Circles to help inform and focus

their discussions and deliberative process. Additional resources are being provided at metro area libraries with the assistance of Librarians for Social Responsibility.

Beginning in March, 1997, sponsors convened the community circles, in some cases pairing their circles with others to maximize diversity of participants and perspectives. Most circles have included between 6 and 20 individuals and have met four to six times for periods of two hours each. The MPR Civic Journalism Housing Forum Project helped to stimulate participation in the Community Circles. Some 50 Community Circles have been or are still being convened and many groups will be meeting into the summer months.

On May 29th, a forum titled "COMING TOGETHER: A Regional Conversation on the Challenges of Education, Housing and Segregation" was held at Macalester College. This event brought together representatives of different Community Circles meeting from throughout the metropolitan area to share the results of their small group discussions and to converse with each other about the issues they were charged to address. Selected community leaders, academic and business leaders, public elected and appointed officials, and the media were invited to listen and participate in the discussion. 154 citizens registered, and 122 citizens attended the Forum. The results of the Forum conversation were discussed the following day by the moderators, George Latimer and Vivian Jenkins Nelsen, on Minnesota Public Radio's Mid-Day Program.

Many Community Circles will also be convening local forums in their communities with representatives from their sponsor organizations as well as local policy makers, educators, community leaders and other members, to discuss the results of their deliberations. Finally, each Community Circle will prepare a written report of its findings and conclusions. These reports will be synthesized into a single document summarizing the results of the first round of Community Circle conversations. In addition, the various conversations, forums, and training events are being recorded for future use and public broadcast by the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program and Office of Film and Video.

Future plans for the Community Circles project include a second, expanded round of Community Circle discussions to be held in the Fall of 1997. This round will build upon the findings of the first round of community circle discussions and will include additional groups not represented in the Spring round, such as the business community. The discussions will be resourced by metro area libraries with assistance from Librarians for Social Responsibility and will be more clearly focused on issues of building more inclusive communities and moving the discussion to issue identification and action. EHEP and the Community Circle Collaborative will also co-sponsor a Citizens Summit with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio. The Summit will use electronic key pad technology to elicit focused responses and discussion of specific issues and solutions from Community Circle participants on the best ways the metropolitan community can address issues of educational access and achievement, and housing, community and school desegregation in the Twin Cities area.

Staffing

Dick Little holds the position of coordinator, and is responsible for all aspects of the project: organizing, coalition building, administration and community education. He works under the direction of a Board of Directors. Mr. Little has an extensive background in housing, education, race relations and use of study circles.

Board of Directors

The Board of EHEP consists of:

- Matthew Little, Vice President for Education, Minneapolis Branch NAACP, former Branch President, and longtime activist for racial and social justice;
- Barbara Bearman, member Executive Committee, Minneapolis Branch NAACP, and community activist who participated in the original Minneapolis school desegregation lawsuit in the early 1970's;
- Michael Anderson, East Side Neighborhood Development Company;
- Dr. Josie Johnson, Senior Fellow, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota;
- Van D. Mueller of the University of Minnesota Department of Education Policy & Administration;
- Joy Sorensen Navarre, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing;
- Georgina Stephens, former President of the Minnesota State Board of Education;
- Jerry Timian, Director, First Call for Help, St. Paul United Way and member, St. Louis Park School Board; and
- Jim Hilbert, Co-Director of Programs, The Institute on Race & Poverty, University of Minnesota Law School.

B. PURPOSE OF GRANT

The Need

Public conversation about the possibilities for inclusive and integrated communities is rare, usually divisive and poorly informed, not conducted on a systematic or sustained basis, and with too few groups and individuals involved. We believe these adverse conditions imperil the chances of building inclusive and integrated communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The principal danger is that public discourse is fast settling into simplistic, distorted polarities - neighborhood schools versus forced busing, quality education versus desegregation, core cities versus suburbs, rich versus poor and, of course, whites versus people of color (especially African-Americans). A climate of public opinion poisoned

by these divisions inevitably limits what policy makers (and, as we've found in our initial discussions, advocates and community leaders as well) feel they are able to do; we speculate that this climate even limits what judges feel *they* are able to do. In the current environment, the issues are captured by the most extreme and negative voices, which are then amplified by the media. The public sits and listens. Few want to get involved, because of the fear of getting burned in the heated controversy and because of the not-unreasonable judgment that little will be accomplished under these conditions.

There is a need to involve many groups and the broader public in civil, informed conversations about the possibilities for integrated communities. There is a need to expand the serious discussion of these issues beyond the courtrooms and the academic halls. As many people as possible in our community should be participating in the conversation about this issue. The discourse should not be limited to the invectives of "talk radio," the well-intentioned opinions of newspaper editorials, the sociological jargon of academia or the legal technicalities of the court.

The issue is developing rapidly. The question is who will be involved in the public discourse, and how will that discourse be framed. Unfortunately, past experience shows that these issues are easily polarized - and stay polarized. We believe that this familiar yet unfortunate outcome can be averted by organizing a wide range of groups that have a potential stake in integration, by engaging broad-based public participation in informed conversations about what segregation and integration involves and by offering assistance to communities as they seek to become better integrated.

Our Response

In response to this need, and based on the experience and information we have gathered over the past two years, we propose to continue and expand our work in coalition building and public education. We want to continue to take the public conversation about racial and economic segregation and integration to neighborhood centers, public libraries, school buildings, places of business, living rooms, and backyards - the places where ordinary people live their lives and where the real task of building inclusive communities must take place. We wish to encourage and inform public conversations that will help lead people to support the principle of integrated communities and to support efforts to move toward that goal. This organization seeks to educate the public - that is, to lead people to a more informed, effective understanding of the effects of segregation, why integration is important, and how it can be accomplished. Through this process, we hope that people come to understand the value of integration for themselves, for other people, and for society as a whole.

We have no illusions that all people will be persuaded, or that all will be willing to participate. There are, after all, real conflicts of interest and conflicts of values. These will not be dissolved by a little talk. But without a concerted effort to bring people together for informed and civil conversations, the most extreme voices will remain to

frame the issue. 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.

Our Project

We propose to continue and expand our current work on three fronts:

- Supporting and linking existing coalitions that are working on these related issues,
- Solidifying a broad-based coalition that can advocate for racially and economically integrated schools and housing throughout the metropolitan area, and
- Sponsoring informed public conversations that will advance the understanding and promotion of inclusive communities.

Each of these elements reinforces the others.

(1) Supporting and linking existing coalitions and organizations. There is a wide range of groups and individuals in the Twin Cities metro area with a potential stake in the cause of inclusive and integrated communities and schools. We have begun connecting and collaborating with many such groups in our first two years, and believe much can be accomplished simply by helping to support and expand existing coalitions that already focus on housing and school issues, but do not necessarily link those two issues in their work. We propose to continue our coalition-building efforts by focusing on faith communities, elected officials (legislators, school boards, city councils, mayors, county boards), neighborhood groups, parent organizations, teacher and staff groups, professional education programs, fair housing and housing advocacy groups, labor unions, business organizations, civic groups, civil rights organizations, human rights commissions, libraries, the media, and others.

These groups all have different interests and different understandings of what integration means for them. Moreover, although we have found that many of them agree on the importance of linking school desegregation/integration with the broader issue of housing, few actively combine those two issues in their work or in their recruitment of additional coalition members.

Over the past two years we have seen – and begun to build on – a great potential for such broad coalition development and support. Yet we also appreciate that it will require a labor-intensive effort to attract the participation of these groups in ways that are appropriate to their interests and capacities. Such an effort is critically needed, however, and these groups constitute the essential infrastructure through which we can develop the broader public understanding and support for integrated communities, and a broader response to the deepening socioeconomic and racial segregation in the Twin Cities area.

(2) Solidifying a broad-based housing/education coalition. The discussions and research we have undertaken so far have convinced us that the building of a single

coalition that can advocate for more integrated schools and communities in the Twin Cities will be challenging and slow-going. We have begun to lay the foundation for such a coalition, however – by working within existing coalitions, by listening closely to both mainstream and community leaders and citizens, and by educating them about the realities and options facing us – and will work to solidify this foundation over the next year. We plan to move from dialogue to issue identification and action, working with the same broad range of organizations and individuals we have identified over the past year, as well as others. As we have found already, once groups have the information and tools they need to delve into these issues and begin to see how the issues must be linked and pursued in coalition, there is a powerful movement to work together. The challenge over the next year will be to support these groups and individuals in figuring out *how* to further efforts toward resolving these issues in a way that is equitable, manageable, and capable of attracting widespread support.

(3) Creating informed public conversation and analysis. The issues of residential and school segregation have become increasingly polarized and complex. There is a palpable sense of ambivalence about what to do about segregation, as both past and present strategies seem inadequate, flawed, or even misdirected. This is true even in those communities most affected by segregation, at every level: citizens, educators, housing advocates, community leaders, and policy makers. Our first two years of work have given us a deep appreciation of this confusion, even as it has frustrated and worried us, and convinced us of the necessity for widespread and well-informed public conversations about these issues. Without such conversations, we fear the silence and ambivalence – to say nothing of poor public policy and lack of leadership – will continue. We propose, therefore, to continue creating such opportunities for education and dialogue at several levels:

(a) The Community Circle Collaborative and the “Choices For Community” Study Circle Project. As noted above, EHEP has been a leading partner in this metro-wide collaboration. Through the Community Circle Collaborative, EHEP continues to organize and support “community circles” throughout the metropolitan region, which will meet to explore the questions of how existing patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation affect the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities area children and families, and what we can do as individuals and as a community to enhance those opportunities. Our focus in the upcoming years will be on: (1) expanding the Collaborative to include a broader range of points of view from organizations, public institutions, and individuals throughout the metropolitan region, (2) promoting and publicizing the project, (3) providing research support to the community circles, (4) fundraising, (5) continuing to recruit and train community circle sponsors and facilitators, (6) evaluating and reporting on the outcomes of community circle deliberations, forums, and subsequent actions, and (7) developing an action component.

(b) **Community and Metro-wide Citizens Forums.** These forums will flow from the study circle conversations and will enable broader engagement and education of the public.

(c) **A ' Blue Ribbon ' Commission/Task Force.** This group will consist of public, business, church and community leaders selected by the Collaborative to focus on engagement and education of public policy and institutional leaders. This group, modeled after the Latimer Commission, which evaluated the implementation of the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act, will have as its major tasks:

- to use the results of the first round of Community Circle conversations to guide the second round of discussions;
- to use the results of both rounds to formulate findings and recommendations for public policy makers; and
- to develop additional strategies for educating and informing the public and "moving the community" to act collectively on needed change.

How Our Project Differs From Other Projects and Organizations

1. Its unique methodology of fostering conversation among disparate members of Twin Cities communities, not only to discuss issues and problems, but to develop action registers and common solutions that can be used by the community at large. Three discussion models for community deliberation have been combined to achieve this outcome: The Study Circles model of the Study Circles Resource Center; the National Issues Forums of the Kettering Foundation; and the Communities of Color Empowerment Model of the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership.

2. Its focus on the region as a whole and on consciously linking the issues of housing, education and employment. No other organization in the Twin Cities, nor nationally, is currently engaged in this kind of collaborative grassroots dialogue and mobilization effort linking housing and education, and race, locally and regionally.

3. Its use of a collaborative of diverse organizations, including principal organizing partners, media partners, funding partners, project coordinators, resource partners, and community circle sponsor organizations. This project brings together anti-racism organizations, along with civic and media organizations, to focus on challenging segregation in housing and education.

4. Its ability to measure success in tangible ways. These measures include the breadth and depth of participation in the study circles by local and regional citizens. Breadth and depth means diversity of participants in terms of ideas, race, place of residence, age, and economic status. It also includes number of participants and conversations. The project's impact will also be measured by having our findings and

recommendations publicly addressed by the State Legislature in its 1998 and 1999 legislative agenda.

EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

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February 20, 1998

George A. Beck, Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings
100 Washington Square, Suite 1700
Minneapolis, MN 55401-2138

COPY TO: Mary Lynne McAlonie, Rulemaking Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Dear Mr. Beck:

**RE: COMMENTS OF THE EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT
ON THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULES RELATING TO
GRADUATION STANDARDS PROFILE OF LEARNING**

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments for the public record concerning the proposed state graduation requirements (Proposed Permanent Rules Relating to Graduation Standards, Profile of Learning, Minn. Rule Parts 3501.0300 to 3501.0469).

I am Dick Little, the executive director of the Education and Housing Equity Project, a nonprofit organization focusing on the issues of education and housing segregation and racial/economic disparities in educational achievement and life opportunities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Our mission is to build broad-based collaborations that engage Twin Cities area citizens in public discussions and action to promote racially and economically inclusive communities that give families and children of all races, incomes and ethnic backgrounds access to quality schools and housing throughout the metropolitan area. The comments offered here represent the official position of the EHEP board.

We are limiting our comments on the draft standards to **Learning Area Seven (3501.0447), Subpart 2. Themes of United States History** and **Subparts 3 – 7 as they might relate to Subpart 2.** Subpart 2 spells out the areas of historical knowledge that high school students must demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of before being granted a diploma. The requirement broadly includes the major events, periods, documents, doctrines and institutions that are deemed most important in shaping American history and the kind of America we have today.

We affirm the approach taken in this subsection and the categories that are included; however, we believe that several very critical elements of American history are missing from this list and should be explicitly added to the requirement. These include:

- **The institution of slavery and its aftermath**, which so pervasively define the dilemmas and paradoxes of this country.
- **The civil rights movement of this century**, which is a defining moment in the struggle for the soul of this country and its democratic ideals.
- **The immigrant experience**, which also defines the American experience. *America is the sum of its Native American and immigrant parts. This evolving phenomenon, unique to America, must be understood.*

Slavery and the policies and practices of segregation and discrimination have enormous economic and moral consequences for the American character.

Race is America's greatest dilemma. As a nation, we don't know how to think or talk about race.

If we are to make sense of our country, we must understand the peculiar institution of white hierarchy that has spread its veil over all our lives, whether we are conscious of it or not.

The Minnesota State Constitution (Article XIII, Section 1, "Uniform System of Public Schools") states "*The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it is the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools [emphasis added].*" It is apparent, therefore, that the public schools have a duty to prepare students for public life. If we expect today's students to make sound decisions tomorrow, their basis for judgement must be built upon honest information and comprehensive knowledge. It is time to give teachers and students what they need for the task ahead.

In addition to our comments on the standards, we join the chorus of voices that suggest a delay in implementing the proposed rules. Enclosed is a copy of the report by Conflict Management, Inc. recommending mediation of the NAACP v. State of Minnesota educational adequacy lawsuit. One of the findings of this report is that parents in general and parents of students of color in particular are extremely alienated from the public school system (see pages 10 – 13). The imposition of the new language and revision of the curriculum in the proposed rules will only exacerbate this situation. What also comes through in the report is that what parents see as the solution has more to do with ending present segregation and inequality of resources than further tinkering with school standards. The lawsuit and mediation process should be allowed to proceed before adoption and implementation of new graduation standards. Mediation of the lawsuit may raise issues that need to be revisited before the graduation standards could be implemented with the full support of the community.

Sincerely,

Dick Little,
Executive Director

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February 13, 1998

George A. Beck, Administrative Law Judge
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100 Washington Square, Suite 1700
Minneapolis, MN 55401-2138

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Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

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We are limiting our comments to specifically address **Learning Area Seven (3501.0447), Subpart 2. Themes of United States History** and **Subparts 3 - 7 as they might relate to Subpart 2.** Subpart 2 spells out the areas of historical knowledge that high school students must demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of before being granted a diploma. The requirement broadly includes the major events, periods, documents, doctrines and institutions that are deemed most important in shaping American history and the kind of America we have today.

We affirm the approach taken in this subsection and the categories that are included; however, we believe that several very critical elements of American history are missing from this list that should be explicitly added to the requirement. These include:

- ***The institution of slavery and its aftermath, the 'Jim Crow' era, that have so pervasively defined the dilemmas and paradoxes this country has had to face and still must confront today.***

- *The civil rights movement of this century, which is central to an understanding of how our traditions of democracy and 'fair play' can come to terms with the "shadows" of racism, prejudice and discrimination that have been part of our history and that have so persistently dogged our steps toward realizing our democratic ideals.*

We are pleased to see that Indian Sovereignty and the Reconstruction Era are included in the requirement, as are the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution – we would especially emphasize the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments – and the Civil War. *The history of our country as a nation of both indigenous peoples and immigrants from all parts of the globe, people of many different races, ethnicities, languages and religions, becoming part of our country at different times in our history, and under different circumstances – including sale into forced bondage – should also be added to the requirement.* The issues of how we have, and have not, come together as a country with a “place at the table” for all citizens is central to our understanding of ourselves and the tasks before our citizenry today.

Our next generation of citizens cannot understand this country without understanding its heritage of slavery and white supremacy, the long shadow that heritage has cast on present-day realities, and the long struggle for social justice to rectify this part of our legacy. We believe it is essential that today’s students know much more about the legacy of slavery and its aftermath than has traditionally been taught in high school curriculums. To paraphrase one of our board associates, Dr. John Powell of the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Race and Poverty, if we are to make sense of our country, we must understand this peculiar institution and its profound aftereffects that reach into our lives to this day. The acceptance of slavery was an essential compromise, embodied in the Three-Fifths Clause of the Constitution, that allowed this country to be born, thus setting the terms for what became an abhorrent but commonly accepted American practice: the enslavement of blacks creating freedom and prosperity for a white elite. Slavery and the policies of segregation, discrimination and inequality that developed in its wake have had immense moral and economic consequences for Americans and continue to define a large part of America – not only in terms of attitudes and resources but also of life opportunities. Until we come to terms with this, there can be no serious process of healing the breach that threatens to keep us from becoming the country our history books tell us we are.

The role of public education is essential to healing this breach and to fulfilling the American Ideal. A better understanding of this part of American history will also affect how today’s students – tomorrow’s leaders – will see and implement social policy in the future. If they are able to make the connection between slavery and some of today’s serious problems, such as inner city poverty and metropolitan ‘apartheid,’ they will be more willing and better prepared to combat them. As the experience of the Holocaust reveals, knowledge does not necessarily lead to good public policy, but ignorance of the ‘underside’ of our history will surely perpetuate poor public policy, and lead us to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Sincerely,

Dick Little,
Executive Director

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I am limiting my comments on the curriculum standards to specifically address **Learning Area Seven (3501.0447), Subpart 2. Themes of United States History** and **Subparts 3 - 7 as they might relate to Subpart 2.** Subpart 2 spells out the areas of historical knowledge that high school students must demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of before being granted a diploma. The requirement broadly includes the major events, periods,

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I support the approach taken in this subsection and the categories that are included; however, I believe that several very critical elements of American history are missing from this list that should be explicitly added to the requirement. These include:

- ***The institution of slavery and its aftermath, the 'Jim Crow' era of deep seated segregation, that have so pervasively defined the dilemmas and paradoxes this country has had to face and still must confront today.***
- ***The civil rights movement of this century, which is central to an understanding of how our traditions of democracy and 'fair play' can come to terms with the "shadows" of racism, segregation, prejudice and discrimination that have been part of our history and that have so persistently dogged our steps toward realizing our democratic ideals.***

I am pleased to see that Indian Sovereignty and the Reconstruction Era are included in the requirement, as are the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution – I would especially emphasize the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments – and the Civil War. *The history of our country as a nation of both indigenous peoples and immigrants from all parts of the globe, people of many different races, ethnicities, languages and religions, becoming part of our country at different times in our history, and under different circumstances – including sale into forced bondage – should also be added to the requirement.* The issues of how we have, and have not, come together as a country with a “place at the table” for all citizens is central to our understanding of ourselves and the tasks before our citizenry today.

The essential lesson is that the past matters: who we were in the past has much to do with who we are today. Our next generation of citizens cannot understand this country without understanding its heritage of slavery, segregation and white supremacy, the long shadow that heritage has cast on present-day realities, and the long struggle for social justice to rectify this part of our legacy. I believe it is essential that today's students know much more about the legacy of slavery and its aftermath of segregation and inequality than has traditionally been taught in high school curriculums in the past. To paraphrase one of our board associates, Dr. John Powell of the University of Minnesota's Institute on Race and Poverty, if we are to make sense of our country, we must understand this peculiar institution and its profound aftereffects that reach into our lives to this day. The acceptance of slavery was an essential compromise, embodied in the Three-Fifths Clause of the Constitution, that allowed this country to be born, thus setting the terms for what became an abhorrent but commonly accepted American practice: the enslavement of blacks creating freedom and prosperity for a white elite. Slavery and the policies of segregation, discrimination and inequality that developed in its wake have had immense moral and economic consequences for Americans and continue to define a large part of America today – not only in terms of attitudes and resources but also of life opportunities. Until we come to terms with this, there can be no

serious process of healing the breach that threatens to keep us from becoming the country our history books tell us we are.

The role of public education is essential to healing this breach and to fulfilling the American Ideal. A better understanding of this part of American history will also affect how today's students – tomorrow's leaders – will see and implement social policy in the future. If they are able to make the connection between slavery and some of today's serious problems, such as inner city poverty and metropolitan 'apartheid,' they will be more willing and better prepared to combat them. As the experience of the Holocaust reveals, knowledge does not necessarily lead to good public policy, but ignorance of the 'underside' of our history will surely perpetuate bad public policy, and lead us to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Aside from my comments on the language of the proposed standards, I feel obliged to observe that the solutions to our education problems, at least in the Twin Cities metropolitan region, have much more to do with ending present-day segregation and inequality of resources than with tinkering with the graduation standards. In closing, I hope that the State Board of Education will join the growing chorus of community voices calling for a much needed and long overdue public conversation about the costly price we are paying for segregation in our communities and the public leadership that is needed to eliminate this scourge.

Sincerely,

Dick Little,
Executive Director

EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 310

Minneapolis, MN 55404-2447

(p) 871-2519 (f) 871-8984

micah@mtn.org

February 13, 1998

George A. Beck, Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings
100 Washington Square, Suite 1700
Minneapolis, MN 55401-2138

COPY TO: Mary Lynne McAlonie, Rulemaking Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Dear Mr. Beck:

**RE: COMMENTS OF THE EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT
ON THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULES RELATING TO
GRADUATION STANDARDS PROFILE OF LEARNING**

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments for the public record concerning the proposed state graduation requirements (Proposed Permanent Rules Relating to Graduation Standards, Profile of Learning, Minn. Rule Parts 3501.0300 to 3501.0469).

I am Dick Little, the executive director of the Education and Housing Equity Project, a nonprofit organization focusing on the issues of education and housing segregation and racial/economic disparities in educational achievement and life opportunities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Our mission is to build broad-based collaborations that engage Twin Cities area citizens in public discussions and action to promote racially and economically inclusive communities that give families and children of all races, incomes and ethnic backgrounds access to quality schools and housing throughout the metropolitan area. The comments offered here represent my thoughts as the executive director of EHEP, which expand upon but closely parallel the official position statement of the EHEP board that is being transmitted to you under separate cover.

I am limiting my comments on the curriculum standards to specifically address **Learning Area Seven (3501.0447), Subpart 2. Themes of United States History and Subparts 3 - 7 as they might relate to Subpart 2.** Subpart 2 spells out the areas of historical knowledge that high school students must demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of before being granted a diploma. The requirement broadly includes the major events, periods,

documents, doctrines and institutions that are deemed most important in shaping American history and the kind of America we have today.

I support the approach taken in this subsection and the categories that are included; however, I believe that several very critical elements of American history are missing from this list that should be explicitly added to the requirement. These include:

- *The institution of slavery and its aftermath, the ‘Jim Crow’ era of deep seated segregation, that have so pervasively defined the dilemmas and paradoxes this country has had to face and still must confront today.*
- *The civil rights movement of this century, which is central to an understanding of how our traditions of democracy and ‘fair play’ can come to terms with the “shadows” of racism, segregation, prejudice and discrimination that have been part of our history and that have so persistently dogged our steps toward realizing our democratic ideals.*

I am pleased to see that Indian Sovereignty and the Reconstruction Era are included in the requirement, as are the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution – I would especially emphasize the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments – and the Civil War. *The history of our country as a nation of both indigenous peoples and immigrants from all parts of the globe, people of many different races, ethnicities, languages and religions, becoming part of our country at different times in our history, and under different circumstances – including sale into forced bondage – should also be added to the requirement.* The issues of how we have, and have not, come together as a country with a “place at the table” for all citizens is central to our understanding of ourselves and the tasks before our citizenry today.

The essential lesson is that the past matters: who we were in the past has much to do with who we are today. Our next generation of citizens cannot understand this country without understanding its heritage of slavery, segregation and white supremacy, the long shadow that heritage has cast on present-day realities, and the long struggle for social justice to rectify this part of our legacy. I believe it is essential that today’s students know much more about the legacy of slavery and its aftermath of segregation and inequality than has traditionally been taught in high school curriculums in the past. To paraphrase one of our board associates, Dr. John Powell of the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Race and Poverty, if we are to make sense of our country, we must understand this peculiar institution and its profound aftereffects that reach into our lives to this day. The acceptance of slavery was an essential compromise, embodied in the Three-Fifths Clause of the Constitution, that allowed this country to be born, thus setting the terms for what became an abhorrent but commonly accepted American practice: the enslavement of blacks creating freedom and prosperity for a white elite. Slavery and the policies of segregation, discrimination and inequality that developed in its wake have had immense moral and economic consequences for Americans and continue to define a large part of America today – not only in terms of attitudes and resources but also of life opportunities. Until we come to terms with this, there can be no

serious process of healing the breach that threatens to keep us from becoming the country our history books tell us we are.

The role of public education is essential to healing this breach and to fulfilling the American Ideal. A better understanding of this part of American history will also affect how today's students – tomorrow's leaders – will see and implement social policy in the future. If they are able to make the connection between slavery and some of today's serious problems, such as inner city poverty and metropolitan 'apartheid,' they will be more willing and better prepared to combat them. As the experience of the Holocaust reveals, knowledge does not necessarily lead to good public policy, but ignorance of the 'underside' of our history will surely perpetuate bad public policy, and lead us to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Aside from my comments on the language of the proposed standards, I feel obliged to observe that the solutions to our education problems, at least in the Twin Cities metropolitan region, have much more to do with ending present-day segregation and inequality of resources than with tinkering with the graduation standards. In closing, I hope that the State Board of Education will join the growing chorus of community voices calling for a much needed and long overdue public conversation about the costly price we are paying for segregation in our communities and the public leadership that is needed to eliminate this scourge.

Sincerely,

Dick Little,
Executive Director

**MIAR TESTIMONY BEFORE THE MINNEAPOLIS SCHOOL BOARD
SUPPORTING MEDIATION OF THE NAACP EDUCATIONAL
ADEQUACY LAWSUIT**

February 24, 1998

Presented by Dick Little

As the co-chair, with Dr. Josie Johnson (who spoke with you earlier this evening), of the Education Task Force of the newly rejuvenated and reconstituted Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism (MIAR), I have been requested by the MIAR Board of Directors to present our position to the Minneapolis School Board, to the public, and to the State of Minnesota - that we [the MIAR by unanimous vote of its board] unequivocally support the proposed mediation process for resolution of the important issues raised by the NAACP v. State of Minnesota Educational Adequacy Lawsuit.

We note the many strongly felt viewpoints and commonly held concerns about how to best address the high suspension rates, the alarming drop out rates, and the unacceptably low student performance levels in our schools, especially among students of color, and we are keenly aware of the impacts of racial segregation and concentrated poverty on the success of our schools.

However, we also note the strongly held, legitimate differences of opinion about how to best resolve these critical issues. We cannot, for example, ignore the importance of strong community-family-school connections and culture-specific partnerships that have been proven to make a difference in students' success.

It is precisely because of these differences that the mediation process is so incredibly important. Mediation will allow us to have the essential public dialogue that can lead us to collective and concerted action on the most critical activity in our society: the education of our future, the education of our children.

The mediation process offers an opportunity like this community has never had before to focus on the adequacy and improvement of our schools. It gives us a viable alternative to the traditional judicial process that can so easily be “blind sided” and so easily lead to further polarization of our community on an issue that needs constructive action, consensus building, collaboration, and frankly, good ideas, in order to be resolved. Let’s go forward in a spirit of constructive problem solving that is about cooperation, listening and learning from one another, and finding common ground.

We also believe that the mediation process can result in longer run, more enduring solutions to our educational shortcomings. It recognizes that the shortcomings, and systemic racism, inherent in all of our systems – not just in schools – but in housing, jobs and economic development, public safety, family support, health care and transportation – must be addressed as part of the solution. By bringing all the players to the table, the mediation process recognizes the complex and comprehensive nature of the issues we are dealing with. If we are serious about improving public education, all of the systems and players must be involved in re-creating a positive, successful learning environment that works for all of our children.

Finally, we must acknowledge as a community the difficulties we have thinking and talking about race and institutional racism. In fact, Conflict Management, Inc. (CMI), the mediation consulting team (noted around the world from South Africa to Bosnia for its good work), in its report recommending mediation acknowledged the difficulties that this metropolitan community has in discussing issues of race. We must confront this reality and discuss racial and economic inequalities in our policies and practices openly, respectfully and honestly. The mediation process represents the best opportunity to do just that.

In closing, we would like to propose that the Minneapolis School Board adopt a resolution demanding that the State of Minnesota accept mediation. Furthermore, we would ask the School Board to talk to neighboring school districts and ask them to adopt similar resolutions addressed to the State. And we at the MIAR will join and support you, by forwarding our own resolution and by appealing to neighboring municipalities to join you and the other school districts in this pursuit of the common good. We look forward to your response to our offer.

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A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT AND INVITATION

TO: 1997 & 1998 West Metro Community Circle Participants and Friends

FROM: Dick Little, Coordinator, Community Circle Collaborative
and Executive Director, Education & Housing Equity Project

SUBJECT: Invitation and Complimentary Admission to the *Premier Performance of the Fair Housing Theatre Event, "Like Waters Rolling Down,"* at the Adath Jeshurun Congregation in Minnetonka

I am pleased to invite you to "Like Waters Rolling Down," a musical play about fair housing created and produced by the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA) and the Illusion Theatre. This event is a "first of its kind" in the Twin Cities area. Over the next year, seven performances will take place in various regional locations.

The premier performance will be on Tuesday, May 19, 1998 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Adath Jeshurun Congregation, 10500 Hillside Lane, Minnetonka (just south of I-394 and Hopkins Crossroad). If you would like more information, please give me a call, or contact MICAHA at 871-8980 (fax: 813-4501, e-mail: info@micah.org).

In last year's Community Circles, one of the biggest challenges we discussed was how to persuade our fellow citizens that affordable housing and inclusive communities are in *everyone's* best interests. How do we reduce the tensions, fear and opposition that arise when affordable housing is introduced? How can we engage those whom community leaders call the "resistance" in our conversations about making our communities welcome to all citizens?

The MICAHA Play is a creative response to this challenge. Through songs, humor and skits, it is intended to open awareness and spark discussion about fair housing issues. The performance will be followed by an open conversation in which all participants are encouraged to take part. Opportunities to get further involved, including participation in the next round of community circle discussions, will be highlighted. It is my hope that this theatre initiative will move the community to a new level of understanding and commitment in grappling with one of our region's toughest challenges.

I urge you to attend this event and invite a friend or neighbor to join you. Come early to assure yourself a good seat. I'll be there to greet you!

INCLUSIONARY HOUSING POLICY

HOME BUILDERS, DEVELOPERS

- Voluntarily commit to modest affordability targets in exchange for a combination of incentives (density bonuses, regulatory relief, fee waivers, expedited permitting process, etc.). Link *home building deregulation* to housing cost reductions.
- Participating developments contain at least **15%** overall affordability.
(Households at or below **50%** of the MFI for **home ownership units**)
(Households at or below **30%** of the MFI for **rental units**)
- Private developers are encouraged to partner with local housing agencies and nonprofit housing developers to provide housing for very low-income households.



LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

- Cities are encouraged to cooperate with developers by passing a local Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. This ordinance, based on state guidelines, offers a variety of regulatory incentives to mixed-income, affordable housing developments.
- Participating cities would receive priority status for certain state and regional funding programs (including LCA funds, park funds, sewer and MUSA line extensions, state grants, and transportation investments)



City Hall

STATE LEGISLATURE

PUBLIC POLICY

- Tie Inclusionary Housing in with strengthening the Livable Communities Act. Seek \$5 Million in increased appropriations. Utilize "Inclusionary" funds to ensure participation from local cities and to "buy down" the cost of the moderately affordable units.
- Set minimum affordability guidelines in state statute, ensure that incentives given to developers will produce meaningful results, encourage land set-asides and other innovative strategies.



INCLUSIONARY HOUSING BILL

The Inclusionary Housing Task Force looked at the current political landscape in light of the recent elections. Although it's not a pretty picture, we concluded that there was still a strong opportunity for an Inclusionary Housing proposal during the 1999 legislative session. Such a bill would have to incorporate a "voluntary, incentives-based approach." Here's how it might work:

HOME BUILDERS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

These two groups are linked together for obvious reasons: they both believe in the free market system as the primary way to create housing that is affordable to metro citizens. The builders view public regulation as the primary barrier to producing a more affordable product. Some Republican leaders (including moderates such as Rep. Jim Rhodes and Rep. Dan McElroy) might be a little leery of stripping local municipalities of *some* local codes and zoning regulations, but they're probably sympathetic to home builders complaints of excessive fees and restrictive zoning.

To win over the home builders, give them what they want: regulatory relief. In exchange for rewarding developers with higher density, more flexible zoning, reduced permit fees, SAC waivers, and an accelerated permitting process, our proposal would ask for a meaningful commitment from the builders for an increase in the number of affordable housing in a particular development. Right now we're looking for at least 10% - 15% overall affordability in any new construction development that participates in a local inclusionary housing program. Developers who achieve higher affordability percentages should be rewarded.

When we go to the Republican controlled House of Representatives, we'll sell the idea as a *Deregulation Bill*, offering real regulatory relief to the private home building sector.

LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

We'll need to find a "hook" to get cities to voluntarily participate in an Inclusionary Housing program. Tom McElveen from the Met Council believes that the only true incentive to entice local municipalities is money. We'll need to go after a significant appropriation to boost the interest of cities in cooperating with local developers. McElveen suggested \$5 million in additional funds for the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act (LCA).

Ideally, we'll want cities to voluntarily step up to the plate by passing a local ordinance. This would send the right message: our city stands ready to cooperate, in partnership, with any private builders and housing agencies and nonprofit developers to create more affordable housing. Cities that create a local Inclusionary Housing ordinance (modeled after a state statute that contains minimum "inclusionary" guidelines) would be eligible for LCA "inclusionary" incentive funds. So some of that money goes to get "buy in" from the cities, and some of it could "buy" down the price of the affordable housing created.

Other incentives should be designed to give "credit" to cities for having a local Inclusionary Housing ordinance. This would allow cities to "score" higher on RFP's for state or regional grants (think LCA, brownfields money, park funds, etc.), receive preference on new sewer line requests or MUSA extensions, or give participating cities priority status for major transportation investments (including T-21 funds). The bottom line, give participating local municipalities better access to the bundle of "goodies" that state and regional agencies provide.

SENATE

We'll pitch the bill to the Democrats as an additional tool for creating affordable housing. Sure it may not go far enough, it may not be strong enough, but it's a new political world out there. The bill will be described as a "pilot program" to get our foot in the door and to show that this relatively

new (and untested in the Midwest) idea for inclusive communities can work on a modest scale. In a couple of years, we might be in a position to expand the program to the entire region.

I met with Sen. Dick Cohen (chair of the State Government Finance committee and close to Roger Moe) recently just to practice my "pitch" on a sympathetic ear. He was very intrigued and interested in the concept. In fact, two days after our meeting he called me to deliver his "pitch" on why he could be a good author for us. The task force discussed this on November 24th, and we decided to take him up on his offer. As a chief author in the Senate, Cohen is plugged into the senior leadership and is considered a "heavy weight" at the Capitol. Sen. Cohen will take our proposal over and get it "jacketed" so it becomes an official bill. He also gave us a ton of advice and insight on how to talk about the proposal and who to work with in the Senate and House.

GOVERNOR VENTURA

The Governor-elect has consistently told people that he supports affordable housing and recognizes the link between economic development and housing. He has lauded the "public/private partnership" approach of Honeywell in Minneapolis and the Damark/Brooklyn Park enterprise. He'll favor private sector solutions for increasing the supply of housing. One potential complication: the Governor might view with suspicion any measure that robs local municipalities of their zoning and regulatory authority.

Basically, Governor Ventura is still formulating his housing policy positions, and he'll likely be open to a variety of ideas and strategies that are consistent with his own personal philosophies. The Inclusionary Housing proposal is fundamentally a "public/private partnership" approach and that's how to sell it to the new administration.

STRENGTHENING THE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ACT

The bill will likely be linked to the idea of strengthening the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act. Since the LCA has proven to be insufficient to meet its own goals, since it fails to create truly affordable housing for very low-income families, and since it relies exclusively on the private sector to deliver the housing, we need to improve it. Inclusionary Housing seeks to do this in a manner consistent with the LCA approach: voluntary, incentives based, public/private partnerships, cooperation, money. The focus is to ***fine tune the driving engine of housing development in the region*** - private sector housing accounts for about 90% of production in the metro area.

The proposal seeks to employ some creative strategies to help the developers deliver a more affordable product. No one knows for sure how "affordable" we can make a home or apartment under this approach, but I would set a target of housing that costs around \$70,000 - affordable at 50%- 55% of the MFI for home ownership. This would be the result of a combination of relaxing zoning restrictions, achieving better density, and some public subsidization (to buy down the price of the home). We're looking at townhome style housing at that level.

Rental inclusionary housing will be more complicated (partly because of the bias against rental and also because the private sector doesn't really build very affordable rental housing anymore). We need to get closer to 30% of the MFI. If we averaged 40% of the MFI for all affordable rental units produced under an Inclusionary Housing program I'd call that a big victory.

One way to deal with this is to build in an option that allows a local housing agency (like a Dakota County HRA) or a nonprofit developer to purchase a portion of the additional units produced under a density bonus. In Montgomery County, Maryland they do exactly this. The idea is to capture some units and set them aside for the lowest income groups to ensure that we serve a broad band of incomes. California encourages "Land Set-Aside," whereby land is donated to the city or a nonprofit and set aside for affordable development.

NEXT STEPS

I want to meet with each organization interested in Inclusionary Housing, at least with each staff person, to discuss endorsement of the proposal and level of involvement at the legislature. What can organizations commit to this campaign (resources, staff time, constituent support)? What role do they want to play (supporting organization, sponsoring organization, core group)? That kind of stuff.

I'll also be scheduling a number of research visits with legislators and other interest groups to find out how they stand regarding this concept.

- Russ Adams

INTERGROUP
RELATIONS
in the United States

*Programs and
Organizations*

The National Conference for Community and Justice
New York