



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

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micah@mtn.org

January 14, 1998

To: Local Dialogue Sponsors and Facilitators
National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations

From: Dick Little, Twin Cities Coordinator

Re: Record Keeping Tips and Forms

Attached are copies of the forms and guidelines NDOD is requesting we use for recording the dialogue results. You may return these to NDOD directly with a copy to me, or you can return them to me directly.

NDOD is also suggesting we arrange for a few photos to be taken at our dialogues.

Call me if there are any last minute concerns or questions concerning follow-up following your event. Congratulations and thanks to you all.

P.S., for your information, I have enclosed a copy of the press advisory sent out today to Twin Cities media organizations

National Days Of Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036

Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828

Dialogdays@aol.com

January 13, 1998

To: National Days of Dialogue Organizers
From: Theo Brown, Project Coordinator
Re: Record Keeping During the Dialogues

This is a brief note to remind you about the importance of careful record keeping during the dialogues that will take place in the next few days. Please make sure that all facilitators understand the importance of using the forms that are at the back of the Facilitator's Manual and that they also have copies of the new Action Ideas form that was mailed to you a few days ago. Its also important to make sure that facilitators have enough copies of the forms they plan to hand out to dialogue participants. Having an accurate record of who attended the dialogues, the key ideas that emerged, and evaluations from participants will be a big help as we prepare a report on what happened during the National Days of Dialogue.

One other thing. **It would be a good idea to arrange for a few photos to be taken at one or more of the dialogues in your community.** Pictures of diverse groups of people talking together would be useful for newsletters or other publications you might produce and we also may want to use some of them in our report. If you do take pictures, please send us copies of the best ones when you send in your report forms.

Again, thanks for all you are doing to help make National Days of Dialogue a big success. Best of luck during the next few days and please contact us if you need our help in any way.

NATIONAL DAYS OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS RECORDING DIALOGUE RESULTS

Using the Forms in the Facilitator's Manual

There are three forms attached to the back of the facilitator's manual and all of them are necessary to build an accurate record of each dialogue.

The Sign In Sheet--Ask each person who attends to sign in as they arrive or at some point early in the dialogue. This gives a record of those who participate and allows us to contact them about future activities.

The Action Priorities/Evaluation Form--This two sided form should be copied and given out near the end of the dialogue. It allows participants to react to specific ideas about how to improve race relations and also give an evaluation of the dialogue.

The Facilitator's Report Form--This form should be filled out by each dialogue facilitator soon after the dialogue. Responses should be based on the facilitator's observation of the dialogue as well as the comments participants make on their evaluation forms. **The Facilitator's Report Form should be sent to the National Days of Dialogue organizing office along with copies of all other forms.**

Using the Form Enclosed With This Letter

Enclosed with this letter is an additional form that you may want to use to get feedback from the dialogue. This form asks two open ended questions about what needs to be done to improve race relations and provides an opportunity for participants to make any suggestions they have about what should be done in their community. It is recommended that this form be passed out with the Action Priorities/Evaluation Form and completed at the same time. However, it could also be used earlier in the dialogue as a way to stimulate discussion. One approach is to pass out this form sometime during Part III when the dialogue has turned to the question of "Where do we want to go?" Participants could be asked to take a moment and fill out this form as a way of stimulating discussion. No matter how it is used, it should be returned to the National Days of Dialogue organizing office along with the other forms.

Other Ways To Get Recorded Feedback

In some situations, facilitators may find it helpful to use other methods to get feedback from dialogue participants. If it is not possible to make copies of the forms that are provided, responses can also be generated by asking participants to give their views on blank sheets of paper. If this approach is used, it is best for facilitators to read questions that are similar (or identical) to the ones given on the forms.

Another way to get a sense of the views of the group is to ask participants for a show of hands (or poll) in response to specific questions. Such an approach may be necessary if time is extremely short or if, for some reason, adequate writing materials are not available. This method of gathering data is particularly effective on a series of suggestions such as those listed on the Action Priorities form. If this approach is used, it is important to give clear instructions at the beginning so that participants are clear about how to indicate their preferences.

FACILITATOR REPORT FORM

Facilitator's Name _____ Phone _____

Date of Dialogue _____ Number of Participants _____

Location _____

1. What do you think was the most successful aspect of the dialogue?

2. How would you describe the climate that prevailed during the dialogue?

3. What should have been different? _____

4. Which questions or other discussion starters generated the most interesting responses? _____

5. Did the participants indicate a desire for further dialogue with each other?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please indicate how participants said they might continue the dialogue? _____

6. Did the group identify any specific ideas for future action? If so, which ones? _____

7. Other Comments: _____

Please return to:
NDOD
1322 18TH Street NW, Suite #26
Washington, DC 20036

**NATIONAL DAYS OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS
EVALUATION FORM**

Location of Dialogue Session _____

Please use the following scale to indicate your feelings about items 1-4:

Strongly Disagree
1

Disagree
2

Agree
3

Strongly Agree
4

1. I felt comfortable participating in the discussion. _____
2. The dialogue gave me new insight about how to improve race relations. _____
3. The dialogue was positive and maintained a respectful climate. _____
4. Overall, the dialogue was a valuable experience. _____
5. What was the best thing that happened in your session? _____

6. How could the dialogue have been improved? _____

7. Would you like to participate in future dialogue session? _____ Yes ___ No
If yes, please provide: Name _____
Address _____
City, State & Zip _____
Daytime Telephone _____
8. Additional Comments: _____

*Please Return to National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations:
1322 18th Street, NW #26, Washington, D.C. 20036*

Thank you for your participation

ACTION PRIORITIES

Listed below are a variety of actions that individuals and groups can take to increase understanding and cooperative action between people of different races and ethnic backgrounds. Look through the list, decide which 3-5 things you believe are most important and mark an X by each of them. If you think of something (or more than one thing) that isn't listed, write it in one of the blank space at the bottom and mark it as one of your priorities.

-
- _____ Initiate a public education campaign in the community that stresses the importance of understanding people of different races and cultures.
- _____ Encourage all schools in the community to promote open discussion of racial and ethnic issues.
- _____ Organize intentionally integrated community groups which get together for socializing and discussion of current issues.
- _____ Promote trainings for offices and businesses which help employees learn how to better work with people from different backgrounds.
- _____ Create multi-ethnic citizen groups that work together to fight crime.
- _____ Encourage partnerships between churches (or other groups with a similar purpose) that have members who are predominately of different races or ethnic backgrounds.
- _____ Organize neighborhood or community wide festivals which highlight the different races, cultures and ethnic groups in your city.
- _____ Create programs in which prominent business people and business groups make special efforts to train and employ minority youth.
- _____ Ask media representatives to join together to consider ways to improve their coverage of racial issues in the community.
- _____ Get the city government to promote and encourage dialogues on race relations in neighborhoods across the city.
- _____ (Other, please specify)
- _____

Which of these suggestions would you be interested in helping to implement?

ACTION IDEAS

Name (optional) _____ Date _____

Dialogue Location _____

In many cities, groups have formed (or are forming) which bring concerned citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds together for dialogue/action groups which seek to improve race relations. What are the 2-3 most important things that a group like that should do in your community? Please make your suggestions as specific as possible.

What other comments do you have about what needs to happen to increase understanding and cooperative action between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds in your local area?

NATIONAL DAYS OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS
SIGN-IN SHEET

CITY: _____ LOCATION: _____

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AREA CODE & PHONE NUMBER</u>	<u>STREET ADDRESS, CITY&ZIP</u>
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____
16.	_____	_____
17.	_____	_____
18.	_____	_____
19.	_____	_____
20.	_____	_____

National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations Minneapolis and St. Paul Area

Local Organizer: Education and Housing Equity Project, Dick Little, Executive Director

Courage Center, Staff Dialogue on Race Relations (Golden Valley)

January 19, 1998, 12 noon-1 p.m. Courage Center
3915 Golden Valley Rd.
Contact: Maria Morino (612) 520-0223/Fax 520-0577

East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC), Dialogue on Race and Community (St. Paul)

Time and place to be announced
Contact: Petey Mitchell (612) 771-1152 (x19)/Fax 771-7739

Family and Children Services, Dialogue on Undoing Racism (Minneapolis)

Time and place to be announced
Contact: Neva Walker (612) 341-1650/Fax 339-9150

Interfaith Action, Convocation and Dialogue on Racial Segregation, Concentrations of Poverty and Urban Sprawl (Minneapolis)

January 18, 1998, 2-4:30 p.m. St. Joan of Arc Church
4537 3rd Avenue South
Contacts: Jay Schmitt (612) 729-3220
Jim Maurer (612) 823-7028/Fax 825-7028

Minneapolis Mediation Program, Dialogue on Race Relations (Minneapolis)

Time and place to be announced
Contact: Kathy Cortes (612) 871-0639/Fax 370-3879

Richfield Community Dialogue – Sponsored by Richfield Public Schools and Richfield Community Council (Richfield)

January 15, 1998, 7-9:30 p.m. Richfield City Council Chambers
6700 Portland Ave. So.
Contacts: Barbara Devlin (612) 798-6010/Fax 798-6057
Camillo DeSantos (612) 866-5171

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, Dialogue on Race Issues (Minneapolis)

January 14th 5-7:30 p.m. Habitat for Humanity Office
3001 Fourth Street S.E.
Contact: Steve Clemens 331-4090 (x611)/Fax 331-1540

Education and Housing Equity Project

122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 310

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404

(612) 871-2519 / fax (612) 871-8984

PRESS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 14, 1998

Minneapolis / St. Paul and Metro Communities Talk About Race

Cities Across the Country Embrace the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations

Minneapolis / St. Paul and surrounding communities are joining more than 55 cities around the country for the National days of Dialogue on Race Relations, an unprecedented effort bringing together tens of thousands of Americans to talk about race during the week of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, January 14th - 19th, 1998.

Set against the backdrop of President Clinton's call for a national conversation on race, the National Days of Dialogue (NDOD) is the only nationwide grassroots effort of its kind. Tens of thousands of Americans will gather in churches, synagogues, living rooms, board rooms, and community centers to discuss race relations from a personal perspective. Since its launch more than two months ago, support for the National days of Dialogue has grown dramatically with endorsements from the League of Cities, several major national organizations, and the support of more than two dozen Members of Congress.

Local efforts include, but are not limited to:

Courage Center - "Staff Dialogue on Race Relations"

Golden Valley 3915 Golden Valley Road

January 19th 12-1 p.m.

Contact: Mario Morino (612) 520-0223

Family and Children Services - "Dialogue on Undoing Racism"

Minneapolis time and place to be announced

Contact: Neva Walker (612) 341-1650

Richfield Public Schools & Richfield Community Council - "Richfield Community Dialogue"

Richfield Richfield City Hall, City Council Chambers

6700 Portland Avenue South

January 15th 7-9:30 p.m.

Contacts: Barbara Devlin (612) 798-6010

Camillo De Santos (612) 866-5171

East Side Neighborhood Development Co. (ESNDC) - "Dialogue on Race and Community"

St. Paul time and place to be announced

Contact: Perry Mitchell (612) 771-1152 (x19)

Minneapolis Mediation Program - "Dialogue on Race Relations"

Minneapolis time and place to be announced

Contact: Kathy Cortes (612) 871-0639

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity - "Dialogue on Race Issues"

Minneapolis Habitat for Humanity Office

3001 Fourth Street S.E.

January 14th 5-7:30 p.m.

Contact: Steve Clemens (612) 331-4090 (x611)

"The time has come to replace stereotypes with understanding and accusations with cooperation," said Dick Little, Executive Director of the **Education and Housing Equity Project**. "The overwhelming support by the people of Minneapolis / St. Paul and surrounding communities is more than encouraging. It suggests that people are looking for ways to bridge differences and build a better future."

The National Days of Dialogue were created to strengthen inter-racial dialogue efforts that already exist; improve relationships between key leaders of different races and ethnicity's; generate ideas for specific action projects; and involve more citizens in ongoing cooperative efforts. These dialogues are not intended to be the end, but a first step in an ongoing enterprise. Records will be kept of the insights and suggestions that emerge from each dialogue and, following this historic week, organizers will share results, develop action projects, and encourage ongoing dialogue.

**National Days Of
Dialogue On Race Relations**

*1322 18th St. NW, Washington DC 20036
Phone (202) 822-6343, fax (202) 822-9828
Dialogdays@aol.com*

PRESS ADDENDUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 5, 1998

CONTACT: Tracy Zimmerman, Eric Hauser
(202) 518-8047

Americans Embrace Days of Dialogue

**Dozens of Cities, Thousands of Citizens, Members of Congress, and National Organizations Support the
National days of Dialogue on Race Relations**

WASHINGTON, DC – National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations, an unprecedented nationwide grass-roots initiative to get Americans talking about race and ethnicity, has grown dramatically since it was launched two months ago. More than 55 cities and towns are now planning dialogues between January 14-19, the days leading up to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. This rapid growth has been fueled by endorsements from the League of Cities, several major national organizations, and the support of more than two dozen Members of Congress.

From New haven to Los Angeles, tens of thousands of people will participate in small group facilitated dialogues in schools, churches, offices, community centers, and living rooms.
For example:

- In Birmingham, AL, city public schools will host students from local private schools and neighboring counties for a week-long series of dialogues.
- In Rochester, NY the League of Women Voters, the Urban League, and the Greater Rochester Community of Churches are organizing several dialogues for community leaders.
- In Pittsburgh, PA, numerous events are planned, including a youth town hall meeting sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews.
- In Los Angeles, more than 160 dialogues are planned throughout the metropolitan area.
- In Dallas, Miami, Fresno, Savannah, and several other cities, Members of Congress are hosting dialogues with constituents.

Co-Chaired by former Senator Bill Bradley and Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas, the National Days of Dialogue will bring citizens together for structured conversations that seek to increase understanding and cooperative action across racial and ethnic lines. Dialogue participants will be asked to examine race relations in their communities by focusing on three basic questions: 1) Who are we? 2) Where are we? 3) Where do we want to go?

These dialogues are not intended to be the end, but the first step in an ongoing enterprise. Records will be kept of the insights and suggestions that emerge from each dialogue and , following this historic week, organizers will share results, develop action projects, and encourage ongoing dialogue.

“The tremendous interest generated by these National Days of Dialogue clearly shows that large numbers of Americans want to be more engaged in efforts to improve race relations,” said Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas. “More and more people are learning that facilitated dialogue is an excellent way to do that. National Days of Dialogue will strengthen interracial efforts across the country and hopefully, help create a dialogue movement that can become a powerful force for racial healing.”

- MORE -

Sponsoring Organizations

Anti-Defamation League
Faith and Politics Institute
Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics
Los Angeles Days of Dialogue
National Association for
Community Mediation

National Civic League
National Council of La Raza
National Urban League
Project Victory
Society for Professionals in
Dispute Resolution

Additional Groups Supporting the National Days of Dialogue

Alliance of Baptists
American Counseling Association
American Jewish Congress

League of Cities
National Coalition Building Institute
Organization of Chinese Americans

Cities Where Dialogues Will Take Place

Akron, OH
Albany, NY
Allentown, PA
Arcata, CA
Arlington, VA
Asheville, NC
Atlanta, GA
Baltimore, MD
Birmingham, AL
Bremerton, WA
Chadron, NE
Chehalis, WA
Dallas, TX
Denver, CO
Detroit, MI
Fort Lauderdale, FL
Fresno, CA
Goshen, NY
Grand Rapids, MI
Greenfield, MA
Gresham, OR
Ithaca, NY
Kailua-Kina, HI
Las Cruces, NM
Lincoln/Omaha, NE
Los Angeles, CA
Miami, FL

Milwaukee, WI
Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
Monterey, CA
New Brunswick, NJ
New Haven, CT
New York, NY
Oakland, CA
Park Forest, IL
Pensacola, FL
Phoenix, AZ
Pittsburgh, PA
Portland, OR
Poughkeepsie, NY
Rochester, NY
San Antonio, TX
San Diego, CA
San Francisco, CA
Santa Fe, NM
Seattle, WA
Tallahassee, FL
Trenton, NJ
Tucson, AZ
Vancouver, Canada
Vancouver, WA
Washington, DC
Wilmington, NC

###

Debate and Dialogue

TRACK I	TRACK II
DEBATE	DIALOGUE
❖ Assuming that there is a right answer, and you have it	❖ Assuming that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they craft a new solution
❖ Combative: participants attempt to prove the other side wrong	❖ Collaborative: participants work together toward common understanding
❖ About winning	❖ About exploring common ground
❖ Listening to find flaws and make counter-arguments	❖ Listening to understand, find meaning and agreement
❖ Defending assumptions as truth	❖ Revealing assumptions for re-evaluation
❖ Critiquing the other side's position	❖ Re-examining all positions
❖ Defending one's own views against those of others	❖ Admitting that others' thinking can improve on one's own
❖ Searching for flaws and weaknesses in other positions	❖ Searching for strengths and value in others' positions
❖ Seeking a conclusion or vote that ratifies your position	❖ Discovering new options, not seeking closure

**NATIONAL DAYS OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS
EVALUATION FORM**

Location of Dialogue Session _____

Please use the following scale to indicate your feelings about items 1-4:

Strongly Disagree
1

Disagree
2

Agree
3

Strongly Agree
4

1. I felt comfortable participating in the discussion. _____
2. The dialogue gave me new insight about how to improve race relations. _____
3. The dialogue was positive and maintained a respectful climate. _____
4. Overall, the dialogue was a valuable experience. _____
5. What was the best thing that happened in your session? _____

6. How could the dialogue have been improved? _____

7. Would you like to participate in future dialogue session? _____ Yes ___ No
If yes, please provide: Name _____
Address _____
City, State & Zip _____
Daytime Telephone _____
8. Additional Comments: _____

*Please Return to National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations:
1322 18th Street, NW #26, Washington, D.C. 20036*

Thank you for your participation

ACTION PRIORITIES

Listed below are a variety of actions that individuals and groups can take to increase understanding and cooperative action between people of different races and ethnic backgrounds. Look through the list, decide which 3-5 things you believe are most important and mark an X by each of them. If you think of something (or more than one thing) that isn't listed, write it in one of the blank space at the bottom and mark it as one of your priorities.

- Initiate a public education campaign in the community that stresses the importance of understanding people of different races and cultures.

 - Encourage all schools in the community to promote open discussion of racial and ethnic issues.

 - Organize intentionally integrated community groups which get together for socializing and discussion of current issues.

 - Promote trainings for offices and businesses which help employees learn how to better work with people from different backgrounds.

 - Create multi-ethnic citizen groups that work together to fight crime.

 - Encourage partnerships between churches (or other groups with a similar purpose) that have members who are predominately of different races or ethnic backgrounds.

 - Organize neighborhood or community wide festivals which highlight the different races, cultures and ethnic groups in your city.

 - Create programs in which prominent business people and business groups make special efforts to train and employ minority youth.

 - Ask media representatives to join together to consider ways to improve their coverage of racial issues in the community.

 - Get the city government to promote and encourage dialogues on race relations in neighborhoods across the city.

 - (Other, please specify)
-
-
-
-

Which of these suggestions would you be interested in helping to implement?

ACTION IDEAS

Name (optional) _____ Date _____

Dialogue Location _____

In many cities, groups have formed (or are forming) which bring concerned citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds together for dialogue/action groups which seek to improve race relations. What are the 2-3 most important things that a group like that should do in your community? Please make your suggestions as specific as possible.

What other comments do you have about what needs to happen to increase understanding and cooperative action between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds in your local area?

FOREWORD

Issues of racism and race relations are critical in our country and in our communities. Today, a growing number of people are recognizing the importance of public dialogue as a critical step in making progress on those issues.

This discussion guide is designed to help you organize and facilitate the kind of dialogue about racism and race relations that can make a difference in your community. In study circles — small-group, democratic, participatory discussions — people have the chance to get to know one another, consider different points of view, explore disagreements, and discover common ground. In communities where study circles are ongoing and widespread, they are a way for people to work together democratically to actively address the issues they are facing.

In these community-wide study circle programs, in every region of the country, study circle organizers are showing the power of combining dialogue and action. As a result of sustained, interracial, democratic dialogue, thousands of people from all races and ethnicities are working together to make strides on some of the toughest race-related issues we face — bias crime, community-police relations, race relations among young people, diversity issues, connecting citizens to governance, and more.

This third edition incorporates many of the learnings from those programs. The final session of this guide — “How can we move from words to action in our community?” — demonstrates the kinds of actions that are coming out of study circles. This is a powerful testimony to what people can do when they have the opportunity to come together for democratic dialogue and action on questions of race.

But the work that must be done to address the challenge of racism and race relations has only begun. We urge you not just to read this guide, but to USE IT. Put study circles to work in your community, and adapt them to your needs. Contact us at the Study Circles Resource Center for assistance. We can share the lessons that other communities are learning, and put you in touch with others who are organizing similar programs. We also want to learn from you, so that we can more fully document the ways in which communities are using democratic dialogue to meet one of the most important challenges our country is facing.

Study Circles on Race Connect Talk with Action

Today, people all over the nation are looking for ways to address race relations in a constructive way. *Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations* is designed to help you organize and facilitate dialogue and action that can make a real difference in your community.

Study circles – small-group, democratic, participatory discussions that take place across a community – offer everyday people the chance to get to know one another, consider different points of view, explore disagreements, find common ground, and work together to take action on the issues they care about.

Community-wide study circles on race relations can lead to:

- greater understanding and awareness;
- new interracial friendships and networks;
- new perceptions of community problems; and, most important,
- new collaborative approaches to solving those problems.

As a result of the sustained, interracial, democratic dialogue that study circles make possible, thousands of people from all races and ethnicities are already working together at the grass roots. They are making strides on some of today's toughest issues — including bias crime, community-police relations, gang violence, and more.

What Does This Guide Offer?

- step-by-step guidelines for organizing a community-wide study circle program;
- advice on organizing and facilitating study circles;
- five compelling discussion sessions;
- strategies for moving to action;
- detailed examples of action steps taken by study circle participants around the country;
- a new, expanded resource list.

The Discussion Sessions

1. *Race relations and racism: Experiences, perceptions, and beliefs*
 2. *Dealing with race: What is the nature of the problem?*
 3. *What should we do to make progress on race relations?*
 4. *What kinds of public policies will help us deal with race relations?*
 5. *How can we move from words to action in our community?*
-

Ordering Information

___ *Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations: Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities*. 60 pp. \$5.00 each, \$3.00 each for ten or more.

___ *The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations*, the abbreviated companion booklet that is designed as a handout for study circle participants, is priced at \$1.00.

___ Add \$2.00 for shipping and handling.

Please prepay for orders under \$20.00.

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Send to: SCRC
P.O. Box 203
Pomfret, CT 06258
phone (860) 928-2616
fax (860) 928-3713
scrc@neca.com

The Study Circles Resource Center is a project of the Topsfield Foundation, Inc. (TFI), a nonprofit, nonpartisan foundation dedicated to advancing deliberative democracy and improving the quality of public life in the United States.

SCRC makes its materials and advice available free of charge to organizers of large-scale study circle programs. Contact SCRC for more information about how to make study circles happen in your community.

Action: dealing with matters of race in your community

What can individuals, organizations and communities do to deal constructively with racial issues and attitudes in the Twin Cities region? Here are several suggestions that came up in discussions that *Community Matters* had with 29 people.

Find concrete projects to work on.

Many people emphasized that discussions of race, culture or ethnicity are best done in the context of a tangible, common goal.

"One of the primary ways we form relations is along race lines," said Mike Anderson, Executive Director of the East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC). "Trust can only be built through personal relationships. You have to create activities and events that bring people together (across racial lines) to develop trust. That means concrete projects."

For example, last summer ESNDC sponsored a block home improvement project on Cook Avenue, and used volunteers. "It was fun to see these elderly Hmong ladies who were helping paint garages alongside people from a synagogue in Minnetonka and others from the neighborhood," Anderson said.

"What we've done is form block clubs where people get to know each other in non-threatening ways," said Saint Paul City Councilmember Jerry Blakey about activities in Ward One. "You need to allow time for people to get to know each other. One of the biggest problems is people coming to community meetings with ready-made positions, and they don't know the other people they're dealing with. Then they get locked into their positions."

Vigitt Ramchandani, Senior Consultant at the Wilder Foundation, says that

there are two basic ways for disparate groups to work together: unite against a common enemy or unite around a common vision. Finding a common enemy can work for the short-term, "but it doesn't sustain itself," he said. "Once the 'enemy' is beaten, the groups start fighting again. Politics shows countless examples of this." By contrast, a common vision, such as a concrete community improvement project, is more likely to build trust for a longer time.

Use arts and stories as an avenue for exploring issues of race.

"If people in a neighborhood are interested in talking about issues of race, I think it might be useful to have an ongoing reading group using bibliographies well-laced with fiction," suggests Bart Schneider, Editor of the *Hungry Mind Review*. "And it may help to have a trained facilitator to make everybody feel welcome at the table. Because I think this is potentially very combustible material, and it's fairly brave to explore it with people you may not know that well."

Exploring racial dynamics with virtual strangers is an experience the Wilder Foundation's Lupe Serrano has had. She recalls a time when she sat in a room with three other women of color she didn't know. Each was from a different racial and ethnic background, and they'd been brought together by a mutual friend in hopes of helping improve cross-racial dialogue. They did not have a facilitator.

At first, she admits, it was a bit awkward. "We sat there talking about if we really wanted to do this, but in the end we were talking about ourselves and finding the common threads that linked us." They eventually broadened their experience, bringing together 60 women of color from four cultures for two days.

"We shared our histories, our personal struggles, and stereotypes we had of each other, which was really taking a

Personal stories and views: Healing differences

"In the Hmong ways, we believe in certain traditional (healing) practices that don't have to invade the body. In one case I dealt with, a child's mosquito bite became infected.

The hospital was going to operate and said they might have to amputate later. Of course the parents would not allow that. They believed in using (Hmong) traditional medicine. So they took their child out of the hospital, and the infection went away. But in the meantime, the hospital got a court order against the parents and took the child away from them. The parents obtained a second opinion from a doctor who said no further treatment was necessary because the infection was getting better.

I encourage (inter-cultural) education for hospitals and doctors. And actually most of the time, if the Hmong practice doesn't cure, at least it doesn't do any harm. So I encourage doctors to allow Hmong to do certain practices that don't do any harm to anybody — let them do a ritual and perhaps put water on top of the infected area. At the same time, I encourage letting Western medicine treat the patient according its methods."

— William Yang, Executive Director, Hmong-American Partnership



continued on next page

big risk. But it was about trust and about us as women of color. And it was wonderful." They called the gathering "Minding Our Own Business," and—in keeping with the spirit of that title—wrote a report which they kept private, agreeing to share it only with each other.

Sharing personal stories across racial backgrounds will soon take place consciously on Saint Paul's East Side. "We're starting something called 'Better Together,'" said ESND's Mike Anderson, "We'll pull together about 15 people from different racial groups—all committed to a multi-cultural neighborhood—just to share informal stories. It's based on a concept of 'learning our cultural centers,' and it's meant to begin forming a web of personal relationships."

Plug into community discussions. Another kind of organized dialogue is also taking place across the region. Last spring, 25 small groups of five to 15 people each completed the first round of "Choices for Community," billed as a "regional conversation about the challenges of education, housing and segregation in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area." (See page 21)

"The idea is to bring people together across boundaries and backgrounds" to discuss the impacts of racial attitudes on living patterns, according to Dick Little, Executive Director of the Education and Housing Equity Project and Coordinator of the Community Circle Collaborative. "We want to promote more urban-suburban dialogue and more multi-cultural interaction."

Key components of the process include focusing the discussions on concrete issues and using trained facilitators. "We start with issues most people can commonly identify with (housing and education opportunities) and we move toward discussing an issue that tends to divide us (race)," Little said. "And the facilitator is critical. This is based on a discussion model called National Issues Forums where people are able to move from personal, raw opinions toward collective, informed judgment."

Golden Valley's Mayor Mary Anderson participated in one of the

groups and was especially interested in the project's central concept of dialogue as opposed to debate or discussion. In a debate, she explained, "you come in with a position and do whatever you can to defend it. In a discussion, you are willing to listen to someone else's opinion, but are still in the mode of thinking your approach is right. But in a dialogue, you see if other opinions can either be incorporated into yours or perhaps combined to find a third truth. It's very important in this process not to be judgmental—just because you don't agree with another position doesn't mean it's not valid. And that is not always easy."

Partner with groups of other cultures in what they want to do. An influx of new residents into an a neighborhood may cause confusion or resentment among long-time residents, especially if the newcomers are different racially or ethnically. In those cases, observers say, it's important to build bridges. But how?

"First, pay attention to changes, going on in the neighborhood," said Sam Grant, who runs Ujima Creations Consulting. "Often people are in denial (about change) for a long time. Then, if you have bridge builders, let them play a pro-active welcoming role." He said it is especially important "to identify culturally specific issues" that are important to the new community and support them.

Mike Anderson echoed that advice. "Those of us in the dominant culture," he said, "when we try to develop partnerships (with new groups), often come in and say: 'Here, come join us in our endeavor!' The more fruitful approach is going to the new community and saying: 'We will partner with you on what you want to do.'"

That way, the focus of the partnership is driven by a culturally specific organization rather than a mainstream group. That builds trust, Anderson said, and can lead to including members of the new community on more traditional, mainstream boards in the neighborhood.

"Taking initiative and stepping forward to help someone else is a big part of acknowledging and appreciating difference," said Ramchandani. "It means setting aside your own agenda for the sake of good will. But you can't wait—you have to do it if you are interested in building community."

Use housing audits to assess potential discrimination. "Housing is probably the single most important factor to having a racial mix in a neighborhood," said City Councilmember Jerry Blakey. "You need housing that's decent and affordable."

continued on next page

Personal stories and views: Social isolation



"I've had my burn-out phase (learning how to live among Minnesotans). There were times when I felt like I was sitting in a room for months—I'd just go to work and come home. And there were only a few of us (black women) in an environment, so you feel very isolated. Then you have the Minnesota cultural issue that people don't readily invite you to their homes the way they may in the south or east.

So when newcomers (of whatever race) move here I tell them: 'You might spend 20 or 30 percent more of your time alone than in major urban areas back east,' and that's pretty true. I think especially for communities of color who have that collective behavioral style—you're just left floating out here.

And I think the isolation breeds paranoia and you gravitate towards other folks like you. You spend a lot of thinking: 'What is wrong with me?' You have to get over that."

— Stacey Mills, Principal, The Mills Group and a Minnesota resident for eight years

Personal stories and views:

Condo sale in Ramsey Hill

"I live in a Ramsey Hill condo with six owners. It's had some turnover, and we never have any trouble selling to people. A couple of moves ago, I came out of my unit and met the Realtor talking with the person selling their condo. I said: 'By the way, I think you need to know that we will welcome any person who wants the condo who can pay their mortgage. In fact, we would welcome people of color.' She replied: 'Oh, I'm so glad you told me that.' Now, she couldn't ask about it, because that's against the law, but I'm sure it was a given in her mind that those condos were white only. And that was not lost on me."

— Betty Pat Leach, *Toward Tomorrow Together*

But how can one know if a neighborhood is really offering decent, affordable housing to all qualified potential buyers?

"Instead of assuming anything," said Sam Grant, "contact the Minnesota Fair Housing Center to do a fair housing audit. Then do an assessment of housing policy in that community. Is the policy written or implicit?" He noted that in both real estate and rental markets, agents and landlords can often make unilateral decisions that — intentionally or unintentionally — have the effect of excluding certain groups of people from a neighborhood.

But some say that merely avoiding exclusion is not enough: neighborhoods need to actively promote inclusion. Rich Nymoen, at the Saint Paul Department of Human Rights, participated in a Community Circle discussion group on issues of segregation and housing. One of his group's conclusions: "Neighborhoods need to take a proactive stand and say, 'We deliberately want people who are different from us to live here. That is a good thing that we want to promote.'"

In low-income neighborhoods, look for ways to build local assets.

Race and poverty are often intertwined, and some people favor strategies that encourage local residents to build their own assets.

"Take the Phillips neighborhood in Minneapolis," said Sam Grant. "As opposed to attracting more middle-income people to move here, I'd rather help the people who are here build their asset base: to become

homeowners." That, he said, helps the residents and the neighborhood as a whole, but it avoids "gentrification" — where newly arrived middle-income homeowners displace the people who call the area their home.

To help people in Phillips build their assets, the Wendell Phillips Community Development Federal Credit Union is starting a pilot project. Offering individual development accounts (IDAs), the credit union hopes to help 50 people in the coming year build long-term savings toward a specific goal such as buying a home or starting a business.

Right now, they are using a four-to-one matching grant: for every dollar a customer puts in, the credit union adds four dollars. So, people who can save as much as \$1,000 will have that amount raised to \$5,000 — enough for a down payment on a home or the beginnings of a micro business.

Saint Paul's Frogtown has also been building assets for local residents in a different way. Shem Shakir of the Frogtown Action Alliance, praises the micro entrepreneur program available through his organization with help from the Neighborhood Development Center. "In the last three years of micro entrepreneur classes, we (the Action Alliance) graduated 70 students," he said. "Thirty-six of them are in business today, creating 115 jobs. That's success."

But building local assets doesn't necessarily mean a neighborhood should ignore attracting some middle income homeowners, according to Mike Anderson. "Attracting the middle class into a neighborhood is fine," he

said, "but only if it's part of a larger strategy, not a strategy in itself."

Undertake diversity or anti-racism training.

Two points here: first, "diversity training" is not necessarily the same as "counter-racism" or "dismantling racism" training. Secondly, neither kind of training does much good if it's just a one-time workshop. People must make it a long-term commitment.

Some point out that diversity training does not really change any race-based power structures, and thus does little good or even more harm than good.

"The word 'diversity' is a buzz word because it's more palatable than 'racism,'" said Nadine R.H. Addington, Co-Associate of Naja Associates and Co-Director of the TCC of Minnesota, Greater Minneapolis and Saint Paul Area Councils of Churches. "Racism is a power dynamic in our society that disempowers people of color. Diversity is more about how to get along with people from other cultures. That's not necessarily dealing with racism. You just add some color to your table, but you don't change the system, the power dynamics, or the decision-making processes."

She said that her organization's education and training focuses on changing systems, examining how racism both disempowers some people and provides privilege to others, and how we are all socialized to be racists and victims of racism. She emphasizes that many White people readily see how racism hurts people of color but have a very difficult time recognizing how it benefits White and light-skinned people.

Sam L. Myers, Jr., Roy Wilkins Professor of Human Relations and Social Justice at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, says that too often talk of "diversity" avoids the underlying issue of racism. In his recent article entitled "Why Diversity is a Smoke Screen for Affirmative Action" (in the journal *Change*, July/August, 1997) he writes:

continued on next page

Personal stories and views:

Questions of identity

"I'm one who is still getting used to and comfortable with notion of seeing myself as a person of color. I had struggled because I was looking for a 'camp' so to speak. So I joined the 'conscious-immigrant' camp. I am an immigrant — I came here about 18 years ago — and began to see myself that way. I never saw myself as White but am one who, for one reason or another, didn't find difficulty in assimilating. The person-of-color mantle only arose in about the last five years, and I began realizing I was being put in that camp. I resisted it only to discover that in some cases it fit.

I felt that way, and it was OK and to a point I began feeling OK about claiming my person of colorhood. But I wasn't rising to it as the be-all of my identity."

— Vigit Ramchandani, Senior Consultant, Wilder Foundation

"There is a trend in some places toward the creation of dialogues, sensitivity training, and cultural awareness: Can we all just get along? These initiatives play on the guilt of liberals who are offended by old-style racist words and deeds . . . These initiatives . . . do little to narrow the gap in earnings, to improve home ownership, to eliminate guns and violence from our inner-city neighborhoods, or to redistribute educational opportunities. In short, diversity training is all talk and no play."

Some people we talked to did not make this distinction between diversity and anti-racism training. But many did caution against looking to any kind of race-issues training as a quick fix.

"Put a person in a diversity seminar with some consultant and you expect to change 26 years of behavior in an eight-hour course?" asked Tyrone Terrill, Director of the Saint Paul Department of Human Rights. "No consultant is that good. It can't be a one-day discussion; it's got to be ongoing to a point where we can be comfortable enough with one another to want to have the discussion."

"In our culture we want fast answers, the quick fix," said Doroth Mayer of Change Architects. "Any organizational change doesn't happen over night."

Seek out the elders for advice.

When asked what she would suggest to communities wanting to deal with issues of race, Francis Hart, Elders

Program Director, Earthstar Project, Inc. replied simply: "I would go to the elders and ask. The way I was brought up, these are elder issues and that is their role. I have many diverse friends, we all talk of these things, and one thing we agree on is if we don't use our elders for their experience and their culture, we are not going to know where we all came from. That especially applies to our youth."

Encourage community leadership.

Many people we talked to emphasized the importance of strong community leadership in facing these issues, and several cited local examples.

"I think in the Minneapolis Public School system, we're beginning to see some strong leaders," said Stacey Mills, Principal of The Mills Group. "And I love working with the community groups in Saint Paul (because of their leadership). I'm talking about the Frogtown Action Alliance especially."

"The West Side (of Saint Paul) has conditions that are just as challenging as some other neighborhoods that are economically depressed," said Gabriel Strong, Executive Director of Ain Dah Yung. "But for some reason there is a spirit of community there that I think needs examining — in its policing, its beautification, its youth development."

Lee Pao Xiong, former Executive Director of the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, pointed to an

incident in Eau Claire. "There had been a racial incident in the area involving a Hmong and a European American student," he said. To deal with the incident community leaders used a simple, time-honored method to bring people together. "They pulled people together around food. They had an open house, talked about issues, formed committees. Eventually, they began teaching diversity in the classrooms."

Wilder Foundation Senior Consultant, Lupe Serrano notes that effective leadership can only happen if all major segments of the local community feel represented. "Diverse leadership acting collectively is harder for any segment of the population to ignore," she said. "If you have allied folks of diverse cultures taking a position on an issue, then definitely people need to pay attention." ●

—DH

• Resources •

Videos

America in Black and White

Moderated by Ted Koppel

True Colors

Ending Racism

Free Indeed

These videos are available from the Tri-Council Coordinating Commission of the Minnesota Council of Churches at 871-0229 or the Region 3 Office at 649-0621.

Training Materials

Introduction to Southeast Asian Cultures

An overview of histories and cultures of the Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese peoples.

Working Across Cultures

Knowledge and skills for multi-cultural work settings.

These presentations/workshops are offered by Community Services Group, Wilder Foundation. Call Somly Sithisay at 659-6017 or Yorn Yan at 642-2051 for more information.

Resources

Editor's Note: This list is not meant to be comprehensive. It is a compilation of materials that we used to put together the Fall 1997 issue of Community Matters.

American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass.

Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. Harvard University Press. 1993.

American Indians & Home Ownership.

A report prepared by The American Indian Research and Policy Institute in association with Hamline University and The Roy Wilkins Center, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute, the University of Minnesota, and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. Research Assistant Andriana Abariotes under the supervision of John Popuart and Dr. Samuel Meyers. For more information call 644-1728.

An Organizational Assessment and Status Report 1995-1996.

A study conducted by Michael Hohmann and Co. for the Minnesota State Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans. December, 1995.

Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in the City of Minneapolis.

A report prepared by Kristan Nalenzy, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute under the supervision of the Minnesota Fair Housing Center. February 1996.

Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice.

City of Saint Paul Grants Management Staff, Planning and Economic Development Department. April, 1996.

Biennium Report Submitted to the Governor and Minnesota State Legislature.

The Minnesota State Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans. November, 1996.

Braided Lives: An Anthology of Multicultural American Writing.

Minnesota Humanities Commission and the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English. 1991. For more information, call Burgess Publishing at 612-820-4560.

Can We Talk? It's Time for a New Conversation on Race in America.

Andrea Ayvazian and Beverly Daniel Tatum. Sojourners Magazine. January-February 1996, Vol. 25, No. 1.

Chicano/Latino Task Force Report on Discrimination.

Report to the Commissioner of Human Rights. May 1994.

Choices for Community: A Regional Conversation about the Challenges of Education, Housing and Segregation in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

Metropolitan Council. November, 1992. Publication No. 310-92-116. For more information, telephone: Dick Little, 871-8980; fax, 871-8984; or e-mail, MICA@MTN.ORG

Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race.

Anthony Appiah et al. Princeton University Press. 1996.

Community Currents: Social Indicators of Diversity and Discrimination.

United Way of Minneapolis. 1997.

Dismantling Racism: A Challenge to White America.

Joseph Barndt. Augsburg Fortress Publishing. 1991.

Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education, and Persistent Segregation.

Executive Summary. A Report to the McKnight Foundation. The Institute on Race and Poverty. June 1997. For more information, telephone: 612-625-1580; Fax: 612-624-8890; email: irp@gold.tc.umn.edu

Inclusive Curriculum: Race, Class, and Gender.

"Teaching New Ways to think about Race, Class, and Gender." Martha E. Thompson. American Sociological Resources for Teaching. 1987, pp. 7-12.

Minority Population Trends in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

Michael Munson. Metropolitan Council and the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. October 1993.

Open minds: Understanding our growing diversity.

The Minneapolis Foundation. 1997.

Profiles Of Change: Communities of Color in the Twin Cities Area.

The Urban Coalition Census Project. August 1993. For more information, call Alan Malkis, 348-8550.

Publication No. 620-93-085. For more information, call 291-6331.

Race and Poverty: A New Focus for Legal Services.

jon a. powell. Clearinghouse Review Special Issue. 1993.

Race Matters.

Cornel West. Vintage Books. 1994.

Race Rules: Navigating the Color Line.

Michael Eric Dyson. Addison-Wesley. 1997.

Reflections on Race. The League of Women Voters of Minneapolis. 1991.

Ten Ways You And Your Family Can Learn More About Other Cultures.

The Minneapolis Foundation. Call 672-3869 for more information.

The End of Racism.

Dinesh DiSouza. New York: The Free Press. 1995.

The Myth of Race/The Reality of Racism: A Critical Essay.

Mahmoud El-Kati. Stairstep Foundation and Challenge Productions Inc. 1993.

The Promise of Diversity: Over 40 Voices Discuss Strategies for Eliminating Discrimination in Organizations.

Co-editors: Elsie Y. Cross, Judith H. Katz, Frederick A. Miller, and Edith Whitfield Seashore. Irwin Professional Publishing and NTL Institute. 1994.

RACEFILE. A bi-monthly magazine presenting critical assessment of reporting on racial issues in both the established and community press. A project of the Applied Research Center, Oakland, California.

Transcultural Leadership: Empowering the Diverse Workforce.

George F. Simons, Carmen Vasquez, and Philip R. Harris. Gulf Publishing Company. 1993. (Part of The MCD Series, Managing Cultural Differences)

Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress.

A Metropolitan Council staff report prepared for the 1992 State of the Region event. November, 1992. For more information, call 291-6359.

Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work For Social Justice.

Paul Kivel. New Society Publishers. 1995.

Voices & Visions: Snapshots of the Southeast Asian Communities in the Twin Cities.

Bicultural Training Partnership. July, 1996. For more information, call Vijit Ramchandran at 642-2067.

What Happens to the Myth-Makers When the Myths are Found to Be Untrue?

Joan Lester, Ed.D. Equity Institute. November, 1987.

What is Racism?

Thomas Jackson. American Renaissance. Vol. 2, No. 8.

White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race.

Ian F. Haney Lopez. New York University Press. 1998.

Why Diversity Is a Smoke Screen for Affirmative Action.

Samuel L. Meyers, Jr. Change. July/August 1997.



Racial healing from the grass roots up

Forget partisan politics, focus on community



California's Proposition 209. Stirring passions that will make it hard to bridge the racial divide

BY CHRISTOPHER EDLEY JR.

Around the country, evidence mounts that racial healing depends on shared understanding. But the complexity of race makes it ill-suited for today's politics, especially as waged through the media. Campaigns are about my being right and your being wrong, period. The designer hot buttons—like “racial preference”—tap into prejudice instead of building community.

Take California's newly passed Proposition 209, which bans affirmative action in the public sector for education, employment and contracting, whether based on gender, ethnicity or race.

Proponents said affirmative action deepens the racial divide because it amounts to quota-like “preferences” that are unfair to white men, stigmatize the beneficiaries and sacrifice merit.

Opponents said quotas are already illegal, that flexible consideration of race or gender isn't always discriminatory, that stigma is a small price for opportu-

nity and that diversity can contribute to excellence.

Wiping out affirmative action, they warned, will be more racially divisive than the tool itself. The fight over Proposition 209 has borne this out, and now the battle will spread.

Bridge of talk. Angela Glover Blackwell, senior vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation, has found some 200 communities where people have an alternative strategy for healing. Their idea is that by tackling differences in perceptions and values, Americans can bridge the racial divide.

Margaret Tyndall heads the Greater Pittsburgh chapter of the YWCA. For a generation, the national organization has been committed to combatting racism, calling the effort One Imperative. Tyndall decided last year that the only way to fulfill the mandate is at the grass roots.

Using a method of the Study Circle Resource Center in Pomfret, Conn., Tyndall's chapter works with small, multiracial groups, where people answer hard questions about their own experiences, views and hopes. That kind

of talk changes many people because the engagement across racial lines challenges stereotypes—that whites hold of brooding young blacks, say, or that African-Americans harbor about angry redneck whites.

Many of Blackwell's examples use the same approach, but few take the next step to action. In Brattleboro, Vt., Frances Moore Lappé and Paul Du Bois

direct the Center for Living Democracy. The New Age title belies their pragmatic search for bottom-up solutions to community problems. They are compiling a catalog that includes cross-racial success stories.

The emerging idea is that shared enterprise through action is the best way to build tolerance and a sense of community. Whether it's an assault on an inept school board or a drive to clean up a toxic dump, creating a common purpose matters more than the specific agenda.

While these efforts are no miracle cure, addressing American divisions about racial justice begins with recognizing that much of the conflict is about values. And it's especially hard to change values about race without changing demarcations of community—who's us, not

them. The scorn expressed on the Texaco tapes is only the latest example.

In theory, politics should be the means to hash all this out. Legislative debate and ballot initiatives are meant to democratize subjects otherwise left to bureaucrats, courts and elites. But majority rule carries the risk of majority tyranny—money-driven politics replicating the tyranny of the market. Either way, minorities lose and have grounds to question whether the battlefield is level.

The challenge is to improve the politics of race. The way to do that is to improve talk about values by creating experiences that build bridges. There's a role for national leadership, but people shouldn't wait for Bill Clinton, Colin Powell or Ted Koppel to lead a national conversation about race. Ultimately, grass-roots ventures will make the difference. ■

Christopher Edley Jr., a professor at Harvard Law School, is author of the new book Not All Black and White: Affirmative Action and American Values.

National Days Of Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036

Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828

Dialogdays@aol.com

December 15, 1997

Dear Friend:

I am writing to invite you to participate in the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations (NDOD). NDOD is a coalition effort of national and local organizations to encourage people to join in community dialogues on race relations in the five days leading up to Martin Luther King Day. NDOD hope to bring individuals of different races and backgrounds together in order to increase understanding and cooperative action in local communities.

National Days of Dialogue seeks to build on the successful community circle and town hall meetings we held in Minneapolis and St. Paul this past year by furthering the dialogue and looking ahead to what steps of action can be taken. Many communities, schools, churches, and synagogues across the country are organizing dialogues and discussions at this time. NDOD is working to help coordinate, highlight, and support these efforts. Their goal is to assist individuals, organizations, city officials, and others in sponsoring successful dialogues and in "amplifying" these local efforts to inspire a national initiative.

As an individual who has shown an interest in improving race relations through open dialogue, you may be wondering how you can participate. There is still time to organize dialogues, which may range from large forums to intimate neighborhood or Sunday School class discussions. Also, many groups still need experienced facilitators. We can help match facilitators with organizations wishing to host dialogues. **The idea is to have as many people as possible participate in this effort.**

If you are interested in participating in or hosting a dialogue aimed at increasing racial understanding in your community, either call or fax me at the Education and Housing Equity Project at (612) 871-2519/8984, or call Brandi Fisher, the field coordinator for Minneapolis/St. Paul at the National Days of Dialogue Office, at (202) 822-6343. We can send you further materials and put you in touch with other interested people in your area. I look forward to working with you to further our open dialogue on race relations.

Sincerely,

Dick Little
Executive Director,
Education and Housing Equity Project

Enclosure: Can We Talk? Flyer

National Days Of Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036

Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828

Dialogdays@aol.com

November 25, 1997

Mr. Dick Little
Executive Director
Education & Housing Equity Project
122 W. Franklin Avenue
Suite 310
Minneapolis, MN 55404

12-9-97
TO: DENISE TOLBERT
MIAR/MAYOR'S OFFICE
FROM: DICK LITTLE
Phone - 871-2519
Fax - 871-8984

RE: NATIONAL DAYS OF
DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS
(7 PAGES) NOTE: DATES!
P.S. I have several "kits"

Dear Mr. Little:

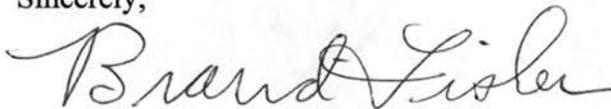
Thank you for the faxed overview you sent. It looks like you are doing great things in Minneapolis! I went ahead and sent a copy of our organizing kit although it sounds like you already have the organizing groundwork well in place. I also included several copies of our brochure. This should give you a good idea of our organization and how we can assist community dialogues in your city.

I am really looking forward to working with you to "amplify" and coordinate dialogues in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. With the strong coalition and network you already have, the Twin Cities could really be a highlight of the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations.

Please let me know of any way we can help and if you could still send me a list of interested individuals and coalition organizations I would like to make contact with them as well. Keep me posted on the status of organizing efforts for the Martin Luther King holiday. I will be in touch with you the first part of December.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,



Brandi Fisher

National Days Of Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036
Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828
Dialogdays@aol.com

November 18, 1997

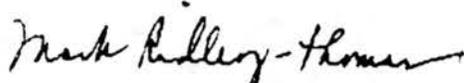
Dear Friends:

We are pleased that you are interested in participating in the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations taking place January 14-19, 1998. The events organized around this week will provide an opportunity for individuals and organizations to highlight the efforts that are already underway in communities across America and to broaden the community of people committed to race relations.

In a world that is more and more frequently dividing along ethnic and racial fault-lines, the inherent diversity of American society is one of our greatest strengths. But that diversity also challenges us every day to find common ground as we interact with one another. By participating in the National Days of Dialogue, you will be joining tens of thousands of other Americans in building a broader dialogue on the universal values that unite us.

Thank you for your commitment to join this effort and for your leadership in taking this important step to increase understanding and cooperative action across racial and ethnic lines.

Best wishes,



Mark Ridley-Thomas
National Co-Chair



Bill Bradley
National Co-Chair

Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism

"breaking the cycle of racial misunderstanding, prejudice and racism..."

MEMORANDUM

TO: Richard Little, Member
Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism

FROM: Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton, Chair *SSB*

DATE: December 17, 1997

RE: Status of Future Events

The purpose of this memo is to update you on the planning and status of future events to be held by Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism.

Per our last board meeting of October 20, we agreed that in lieu of board meetings we would complete our retreating processes and proceed from there. Linnea Tweed, Rich Wargo, Kenyari Bellfield and P. Denise Tolbert, will be meeting the week of December 15 to plan the next series of retreats, and will notify you as to when they will take place. Suffice it to say that they will not take place until January 1998. In the interim, please continue to meet as committees, and continue to perform committee work, and we will catch up in January.

On a separate matter, Dick Little has apprised me of a satellite program taking place around the country on January 14-19, 1998 called the "National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations." It is an opportunity for communities to "amplify" efforts already underway in our communities. The purpose of which is "to seek and increase in understanding and cooperative action in our local communities. I know that the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) has endorsed the project, and that information is enclosed. Dick would like MIAR to get involved in the project so I am sending out information on the project to each of you to see who would like to become involved. If you are interested, please contact Dick Little at 871-2519.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact P. Denise Tolbert of my staff at 673-2112.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT
NATIONAL DAYS OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS
JANUARY 14-19, 1998**

What is the purpose of National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations?

National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations is a coordinated effort by several national organizations to invite people throughout America to join in community dialogues on race relations in the five days preceding the Martin Luther King Holiday in January of 1998. The overall purpose of the event is to bring citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds together for dialogues which seek to increase understanding and cooperative action in local communities.

Why is it so important to have dialogues between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds?

Dialogue is an essential ingredient in our nation's ongoing endeavor to improve race relations. Respectful dialogue that emphasizes listening and seeks to identify areas of agreement is one of the most effective ways to bridge the divide that separates Americans of different races and ethnic backgrounds. Dialogue creates understanding that can serve as the foundation for personal relationships. Dialogue changes people because it informs and sensitizes them to other points of view. Dialogue can also change communities---and our nation---if the common concerns that are identified become the basis for cooperative action.

In addition to increasing understanding and cooperation, dialogue creates a context in which people can develop empathy and compassion for each other. At the heart of dialogue is the ethic of the Golden Rule which compels us to treat each person the way we would like to be treated. Dialogue helps people to see each other as unique individual---not just as someone who is a particular color, race, or creed.

What will actually happen during the Days of Dialogue?

From Wednesday, January 14 to Monday, January 19, 1998, hundreds of facilitated dialogues on how to improve race relations will take place in schools, churches, homes, businesses, and community organizations in cities throughout America. Most dialogues will be between two and three hours in length and they will be structured around a basic format that emphasizes listening, mutual respect, sharing time equitably, and the importance of focusing on common ground. Each dialogue will also have a facilitator who makes sure the dialogue ground rules are followed and that the group stays focused on its purpose.

What will people talk about in these dialogues?

Dialogues will focus on local issues and concerns and will undoubtedly cover a range of topics. At the same time, all participants will be asked to discuss a central question that is at the heart of the National Days of Dialogue. That question is:

"How can we increase understanding and cooperative action between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds in our community?"

Citizens will be encouraged to talk openly about what is happening in their city and to share ideas about what could be done to improve race relations. Records will be kept of the insights and suggestions that are identified, and a report will be produced on each dialogue.

What is the intended result of all of these community dialogues?

These National Days of Dialogue are not intended as a "one shot deal" which gets attention and then fades away. On the contrary, the purpose is to help lay the groundwork for the ongoing cooperation that is needed to solve difficult problems that exist in our local communities. The Days of Dialogue can do this by producing four specific results.

1. A greatly increased understanding of the importance of inter-racial dialogue and cooperative action;
2. Improved relationships between key leaders of different races and ethnic backgrounds;
3. Ideas for specific action projects which address common problems; and
4. Identification of a network of people who are committed to ongoing efforts to increase understanding and cooperation

Who is organizing the National Days of Dialogue?

The plan for these National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations has grown out of numerous successful community dialogue campaigns that have taken place during the past few years. Several of the national groups that have helped to organize these local efforts are now working to create dialogues simultaneously in cities across the country. Groups cooperating to organize these Days of Dialogue include: the Faith and Politics Institute, Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP), Los Angeles Days of Dialogue, National Association for Community Mediation, National Council of La Raza, National Urban League, Project Victory, and Society for Professional in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR). In addition, many other national organizations are assisting the organizing effort by sharing information with members across the country.

The national co-chairs of the Days of Dialogue are Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas and former Senator Bill Bradley. Many other prominent individuals throughout the country are also actively supporting this effort.

National Days Of Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036

Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9823

Dialogdays@aol.com

November 18, 1997

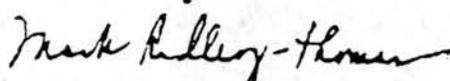
Dear Friends:

We are pleased that you are interested in participating in the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations taking place January 14-19, 1998. The events organized around this week will provide an opportunity for individuals and organizations to highlight the efforts that are already underway in communities across America and to broaden the community of people committed to race relations.

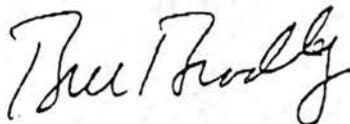
In a world that is more and more frequently dividing along ethnic and racial fault-lines, the inherent diversity of American society is one of our greatest strengths. But that diversity also challenges us every day to find common ground as we interact with one another. By participating in the National Days of Dialogue, you will be joining tens of thousands of other Americans in building a broader dialogue on the universal values that unite us.

Thank you for your commitment to join this effort and for your leadership in taking this important step to increase understanding and cooperative action across racial and ethnic lines.

Best wishes,



Mark Ridley-Thomas
National Co-Chair



Bill Bradley
National Co-Chair

We Need to Talk, And Listen, And Work Together, Our Country's Health and Vitality Depend on it!

From January 14th through 19th, 1998, the five days preceding the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, thousands of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds will come together for the first **National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations.**

In small groups, in their own communities, these concerned citizens will take time to:

- Increase understanding between citizens of different racial and ethnic groups.
- Strengthen personal relationships with others who are committed to improving race relations, and
- Identify specific ways to work together.

Each dialogue will be tailored to meet local needs, yet they'll all have certain things in common:

- They will be structured conversations that emphasize respect, listening and the importance of common ground.
- The dialogues will take place in small groups, which will allow every voice to be heard.
- An experienced facilitator will create a "safe space" for participants to talk openly.

How will these dialogues lead to real change in the long run?

National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations will not be a "one time deal." As participants move through their experience of dialogue, the following question will be at the center of the conversation:

"How can we increase understanding and cooperative action between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds in our community?"



Dialogue facilitators will keep careful records of the answers that their groups develop. Then, using the answers from each group, concerned citizens and community leaders can begin developing specific action plans. Action stimulated through community dialogue, or a series of dialogues, is much more likely to have united community support.

Who's organizing this national program?

During the past few years, numerous organizations throughout the country have been working to improve interracial communication. For National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations, many of these groups are uniting to issue a joint call for meaningful dialogue. The Days of Dialogue offer an opportunity to build on what has already been done and to invite others to join in these ongoing efforts.

Groups cooperating to help organize the **National Days of Dialogue of Race Relations** include:

- Faith and Politics Institute
- Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP)
- Los Angeles Days of Dialogue
- National Association for Community Mediation
- Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPADR)
- Project Victory
- National Council Of La Raza
- National Urban League

Here's How You Can Help!

The National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations can be the start of real positive change in communities across our nation. Here are some steps you can take to ensure the project's initial success and continuing impact in your area.

You can:

- Participate in a dialogue in your community.
- Tell others about the National Days of Dialogue.
- Help organize local dialogues.
- Make a donation to support this national organizing effort.
- Make a personal commitment to participate in ongoing dialogue and cooperative action in your community.

Want to get involved?
Need more information?

Contact the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations organizing office in Washington, DC:

National Days of Dialogue
1322 18th St. NW #26
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-6343
Dialogdays@aol.com

Dec 9 1997 2:09 PM MICH

No. 1178 P. 4/7



Fax Cover Sheet

To: DENISE TOLBERT

From: DICK LITTLE

Company: MAYOR'S OFFICE, MPLS.
Fax Number: 673 - 2305

Company: EDUCATION & HOUSING EQUITY
PROJECT, COMM. CIRCLE
Fax Number: COLLABORATIVE
877-8984
Phone → 871-2519

Message:

FYI -

Here is a letter I have prepared inviting participation in NDOD (any group can do it, any where, any place, any time - ideally during the days leading up to and including MLK Day) (Just let us know about it, so we can "amplify" it).

Also forwarded is a copy of the National League of Cities Resolution supporting NDOD (note - NDOD is not an organization - it's an initiative and an "event" being supported by many organizations)

MIAR, like NDOD, transcends organizational particulars, and ideally gets us to focus on the heart of what matters, and gets us to do what is needed and what is right. I am pleased to hear that the Mayor is sending out a special letter letting people know about this newest initiative, a timely way to spend our time over the MLK "holiday."

National Days Of Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036

Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828

Dialogdays@aol.com

December 15, 1997

Dear Friend:

I am writing to invite you to participate in the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations (NDOD). NDOD is a coalition effort of national and local organizations to encourage people to join in community dialogues on race relations in the five days leading up to Martin Luther King Day. NDOD hopes to bring individuals of different races and backgrounds together in order to increase understanding and cooperative action in local communities.

National Days of Dialogue seeks to build on the successful community circle and town hall meetings we held in Minneapolis and St. Paul this past year by furthering the dialogue and looking ahead to what steps of action can be taken. Many communities, schools, churches, and synagogues across the country are organizing dialogues and discussions at this time. NDOD is working to help coordinate, highlight, and support these efforts. Their goal is to assist individuals, organizations, city officials, and others in sponsoring successful dialogues and in "amplifying" these local efforts to inspire a national initiative.

As an individual who has shown an interest in improving race relations through open dialogue, you may be wondering how you can participate. There is still time to organize dialogues, which may range from large forums to intimate neighborhood or Sunday School class discussions. Also, many groups still need experienced facilitators. We can help match facilitators with organizations wishing to host dialogues. **The idea is to have as many people as possible participate in this effort.**

If you are interested in participating in or hosting a dialogue aimed at increasing racial understanding in your community, either call or fax me at the Education and Housing Equity Project, (612) 871-2519/8984, or call Brandi Fisher, the field coordinator for Minneapolis/St. Paul at the National Days of Dialogue Office, (202) 822-6343. We can send you further materials and put you in touch with other interested people in your area. I look forward to working with you to further our open dialogue on race relations.

Sincerely,

Dick Little
Executive Director,
Education and Housing Equity Project
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Enclosure: Can We Talk? Flyer

National Days Of
Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036
Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828
Dialogdays@aol.com

FAX TRANSMITTAL

TO: DICK LITTLE - Education & Housing Equity Project
FAX #: (512) 871-8984
FROM: BRANDI FISHER
FAX #: 202 822-9828

Number of pages (not counting this cover sheet) 3

MESSAGE Dick - Here are two
copies of the letter. One
on our letterhead and one
on both letterheads. ~~When~~
When I'll call you in the
next half hour to see where
we go from here.

National Days Of Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036

Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828

Dialogdays@aol.com

December 15, 1997

Dear Friend:

I am writing to invite you to participate in the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations (NDOD). NDOD is a coalition effort of national and local organizations to encourage people to join in community dialogues on race relations in the five days leading up to Martin Luther King Day. NDOD hopes to bring individuals of different races and backgrounds together in order to increase understanding and cooperative action in local communities.

National Days of Dialogue seeks to build on the successful community circle and town hall meetings we held in Minneapolis and St. Paul this past year by furthering the dialogue and looking ahead to what steps of action can be taken. Many communities, schools, churches, and synagogues across the country are organizing dialogues and discussions at this time. NDOD is working to help coordinate, highlight, and support these efforts. Their goal is to assist individuals, organizations, city officials, and others in sponsoring successful dialogues and in "amplifying" these local efforts to inspire a national initiative.

As an individual who has shown an interest in improving race relations through open dialogue, you may be wondering how you can participate. There is still time to organize dialogues, which may range from large forums to intimate neighborhood or Sunday School class discussions. Also, many groups still need experienced facilitators. We can help match facilitators with organizations wishing to host dialogues. **The idea is to have as many people as possible participate in this effort.**

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Sincerely,

Dick Little
Executive Director,
Education and Housing Equity Project
→ Minneapolis, Minnesota

Enclosure: Can We Talk? Flyer

Sincerely,

Dick Little

Dick Little
Executive Director,
Education and Housing Equity Project

Enclosure: Can We Talk? Flyer

Education and Housing
Equity Project

122 W Franklin Ave #3101
Minneapolis, MN 55404
Phone (612) 871-2519, Fax (612) 871-8984
Micah@mtn.org

Washington, DC 20036

National Days Of
Dialogue On Race Relations

Post-it® Fax Note	7671	Date	# of pages ▶
To	BRANDI FISHER	From	DICK LITTLE
Co./Dept.	NDOD/PROJ. VICTORY	Co.	EHEP
Phone	(202) 822-6343	Phone	(612) 871-2519
Fax #	(202) 822-9828	Fax #	(612) 871-8984

December 12, 1997

Dear Friend:

Make same as your letterhead (either above or below yours)

I am writing to invite ^{you to participate} ~~your participation~~ in the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations (NDOD). NDOD is a coalition effort of ~~several national~~ ^{national and local} organizations to ~~invite~~ ^{encourage} people to join in community dialogues on race relations in the five days ~~preceding~~ ^{leading up to} Martin Luther King Day. The NDOD hope ~~purpose of this initiative is~~ to bring individuals of different races and backgrounds together ~~in dialogue~~ in order to increase understanding and cooperative action in local communities.

Similar to the ~~successful discussions, study circles, and town hall meetings held in Minneapolis and St. Paul in the first part of 1997~~ ^{the successful study circles and town hall meetings were held in Minneapolis and St. Paul the past year}, National Days of Dialogue seeks to build on ~~these discussions by~~ ^{across the country} furthering the dialogue and looking ahead to what steps of action can be taken. ~~Many communities, schools, churches, and synagogues are already organizing dialogues and discussions at this time.~~ ^{across the country} The NDOD is working to help coordinate, highlight, and support ~~the efforts currently being made in cities across the country~~ ^{these}. Their goal is to assist individuals, organizations, city officials, and others ~~in sponsor~~ ^{to inspire a} to hold successful dialogues and to ~~amplify~~ ^{ing} these local efforts ~~into a national initiative.~~ ^{through open dialogue}

As an individual who has shown an interest in ~~dialogue as a means to improved race relations~~ ^{ing}, you may ~~already be organizing dialogues in your area or perhaps are wondering how you can participate.~~ ^{which may} There is still time to organize dialogues. ~~These dialogues can range from large forums to intimate neighborhood or Sunday School class discussions.~~ ^{also} Many groups ~~are organizing dialogues but still need experienced facilitators.~~ We can help match facilitators with organizations wishing to host ~~dialogues. The idea is to have as many people as possible participating in dialogues, thus this effort, providing a venue for people from all sectors of society to come together to openly discuss race relations.~~

If you are interested ~~in joining in this exciting effort to increase racial understanding in your community, contact either myself at the Education and Housing Equity Project at (612) 871-2519/8984, or call Brandi Fisher, the field coordinator for Minneapolis/St. Paul at the National Days of Dialogue Office, at (202) 822-6343.~~ ^{in participating in or hosting a dialogue aimed at increasing} We can send you further materials and put you in ~~contact~~ ^{call me or fax me} with others ~~in your area interested in joining in on this initiative.~~ ^{touch} I look forward to working with you to ~~help create open dialogue on race relations.~~ ^{Further our}

Interested people in your area.
Sincerely,

Dick Little
Executive Director, Education and Housing Equity Project

Enclosure (Can We Talk? Brochure Flyer)

National Days Of Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036

Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828

Dialogdays@aol.com

Education and Housing Equity Project

122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 310
Minneapolis, MN 55404
Phone (612) 871-2519, Fax (612) 871-8984
Micah@mtn.org

December 15, 1997

Dear Friend:

I am writing to invite you to participate in the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations (NDOD). NDOD is a coalition effort of national and local organizations to encourage people to join in community dialogues on race relations in the five days leading up to Martin Luther King Day. NDOD hope to bring individuals of different races and backgrounds together in order to increase understanding and cooperative action in local communities.

National Days of Dialogue seeks to build on the successful community circle and town hall meetings we held in Minneapolis and St. Paul this past year by furthering the dialogue and looking ahead to what steps of action can be taken. Many communities, schools, churches, and synagogues across the country are organizing dialogues and discussions at this time. NDOD is working to help coordinate, highlight, and support these efforts. Their goal is to assist individuals, organizations, city officials, and others in sponsoring successful dialogues and in "amplifying" these local efforts to inspire a national initiative.

As an individual who has shown an interest in improving race relations through open dialogue, you may be wondering how you can participate. There is still time to organize dialogues, which may range from large forums to intimate neighborhood or Sunday School class discussions. Also, many groups still need experienced facilitators. We can help match facilitators with organizations wishing to host dialogues. **The idea is to have as many people as possible participate in this effort.**

If you are interested in participating in or hosting a dialogue aimed at increasing racial understanding in your community, either call or fax me at the Education and Housing Equity Project at (612) 871-2519/8984, or call Brandi Fisher, the field coordinator for Minneapolis/St. Paul at the National Days of Dialogue Office, at (202) 822-6343. We can send you further materials and put you in touch with other interested people in your area. I look forward to working with you to further our open dialogue on race relations.

National Days Of
Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036

Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828

Dialogdays@aol.com

FAX TRANSMITTAL

TO: DICK LITTLE
FAX #: Education Housing Equity Program
FROM: BRANDI FISHER (612) 871-8984
FAX #: 202 822-9828

Number of pages (not counting this cover sheet) 1

MESSAGE Dick - Here is the
copy of the League of
Cities Resolution - Talk
to you soon.
Brandi

P.S. If I don't get you
the letter by 4⁰⁰, I'll have
it ready first thing in the
morning so you can read it,
make changes, and sign it.

FAX TRANSMITTAL

TO: Dick Little Education $\frac{1}{3}$
FAX #: (612) 871-8984 Housing Equity
FROM: Brandi Fisher Project
FAX #: 202 822-9828

Number of pages (not counting this cover sheet) 1

MESSAGE This is what I came
up, we could put it on your
letter head. I went ahead
and just wrote the letter
from you. Please make
any changes you see necessary.
I will also need your
signature.
Brandi

- Dick, I tried faxing this several
times yesterday evening but it
wouldn't go through. I'm going to try
now again before I call you.

National Days Of
Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036
Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828
Dialogdays@aol.com

FAX TRANSMITTAL

TO: DICK LITTLE
FAX #: Education Housing Equity Program
FROM: Brandi Fisher (612) 871-8984
FAX #: 202 822-9828

Number of pages (not counting this cover sheet) _____

MESSAGE _____

National Days Of Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036

Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828

Dialogdays@aol.com

December 9, 1997

Dear Days of Dialogue Participant,

We are pleased that you want to participate in National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations, January 14-19, 1998. Interest in these Days of Dialogue is increasing every day and we are now working directly with individuals and groups in over fifty cities who are planning dialogues in mid-January.

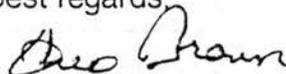
As we have previously indicated, we are preparing a Facilitator's Manual that offers some specific suggestions about how to lead dialogues on race relations and also contains a variety of other resources. The final pieces of the manual are now being put together and it will be sent to you in about ten days. This manual is suitable for use with a wide range of different groups and you should feel free to reproduce it and share it with any interested people.

Enclosed with this letter are two items which will give you a good sense of the type of dialogues which we hope will take place next month. One piece describes the basic dialogue model that we are encouraging people to use and also gives a summary of the content of the Facilitator's Manual. The other gives a suggested outline for the actual dialogues and provides examples of questions that facilitators can use. The Facilitator's Manual gives more information about the dialogue model and also suggests numerous other ways to stimulate group discussion. It will also provide forms that can be used to record the main insights and suggestions that emerge from each group.

Thank you for your efforts to promote increased understanding and cooperative action between people of different races and ethnic backgrounds. We are delighted that you will be helping to organizing dialogues to coincide with this year's celebration of the Martin Luther King Holiday and we look forward to supporting your efforts in any way we can.

As previously indicated, you will be receiving a free copy of our Facilitator's Manual in about ten days. In the meantime, please contact us directly at our office in Washington, DC if you have questions or specific requests for assistance.

Best regards,



Theo Brown
Project Coordinator

NATIONAL DAYS OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS

THE FACILITATED DIALOGUE MODEL

Purpose of National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations

National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations provides an opportunity for people of different races and ethnic backgrounds to talk together in small groups about the current state of race relations in their community. Each dialogue will emphasize the importance of learning about each other's personal experiences and the need for people to work together towards common goals.

The specific purpose of National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations is to achieve three goals: 1) to highlight and strengthen existing community efforts which encourage inter-racial dialogue, 2) to involve large numbers of new people in dialogues about race relations, and 3) to increase understanding and cooperative action across racial and ethnic lines.

Format for the Dialogues

Each dialogue will be conducted according to basic ground rules which emphasize the importance of openness, respect, listening, and sharing time equitably. A facilitator will lead the dialogue and keep participants focused on the goal and purpose of their time together. The suggested time for the dialogues is 2 1/2 hours, but some may be slightly shorter or longer.

The National Days of Dialogue Facilitator's Manual suggests an outline for the dialogues and also provides a variety of background materials, questions and dialogue exercises that can be used to guide the discussion. In addition, it gives information about other resources that are available from groups and organizations across the country. Each facilitator can decide which of these suggestions to utilize in the dialogue.

An essential aspect of the dialogues is listening with respect to different points of view and recognizing that individuals have a responsibility to help improve race relations. Each dialogue will examine a range of ideas about how to increase understanding and cooperative action. The concluding part of the dialogue will ask for brief written responses to key questions which can be used to help create a summary of the dialogue.

Topics To Be Discussed

The exact topics discussed in the dialogues will vary from community to community and even from neighborhood to neighborhood. However, those organizing and leading dialogues are encouraged to focus participants on questions which allow them to talk openly and honestly about what they see and experience in their daily lives. Topics will emphasize the personal aspects of race relations more than policy and concentrate on letting people learn from each other.

The call for inter-racial dialogue is based upon the recognition that the future of our society is dependent on the ability of our increasingly diverse population to live and work together effectively. Therefore, National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations suggests a central question which all Americans need to consider:

*"How can we increase understanding and cooperative action
between people of different races and ethnic
backgrounds in our community?"*

Content of the Facilitator's Manual

The Facilitator's Manual for National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations contains a wide variety of information, background materials, sample questions and suggested exercises to encourage discussion. The content of The Facilitator's Manual includes:

- An overview of the meaning and importance of dialogue
- An explanation of the options that facilitators have in each dialogue
- Background information which can be read before the dialogue
- Quotes, facts and polling data which can help stimulate discussion
- Tips for leading an effective dialogue
- Information on other resources that are available
- A step by step guide to leading the dialogue
- Forms which can be used to evaluate the dialogue and record its results

DIALOGUE OUTLINE

The outline that is suggested for these community dialogues on race and ethnicity has three parts and is framed by a brief Introduction and Conclusion. The Introduction states the goal of the dialogues and establishes a tone of mutual respect and open inquiry. The three different parts of the dialogue are defined by basic questions which invite people to talk together and listen to each other's views, insights, and experiences. Those three questions are: 1) Who are we? 2) Where are we? 3) Where do we want to go? The dialogues conclude with brief verbal and written responses which summarize some of the main points expressed by participants. A brief summary of the outline is given below.

Introduction and Overview

Welcome and brief statement of purpose

Introductions of all who are present

The dialogue poses three questions about race relations

Who are we?

Where are we?

Where do we want to go?

We will use basic ground rules to make our dialogue more effective

Be open to learning from each other

Show respect for each other as we talk and listen

Share time equitably

Emphasize areas of agreement whenever possible

Part I: Who Are We?

Purpose--To learn about each other as individuals and discuss how we have been influenced by our racial/ethnic origins

Sample questions--

- What are some things you would say to describe yourself and your personal interests? What things are most important to you?
- What is your racial ethnic and/or cultural background?
- What is your earliest experience related to your awareness of race and ethnicity?
- What other experiences have shaped your feelings and attitudes?

Part II: Where Are We?

Purpose: To look at our current experiences of race and ethnicity and to discuss the state of race relations in our community

Sample questions--

- How much and what kind of contact do you have with people of other races or ethnic groups? What is that like?
- Is it easier or harder than it was a few years ago to make friends of other races?
- Why is that so?
- In what ways are relationships between people of different races and ethnic backgrounds in our community getting better?
- Are there ways it is getting worse?
- How widespread is racial prejudice in our community?
- In what ways do you need to work on your own attitudes in order to be more open to those of different races and ethnic backgrounds?

Part III: Where Do We Want To Go?

Purpose--To explore a vision of improved race relations in our community and suggest specific things we can do to achieve it

Sample questions--

- In what specific ways do you wish race relations were different in our community?
- What are the main changes that need to occur in order to increase understanding and cooperative action across racial lines?
- What specific next steps can we take to make a positive difference in our area?
- How can we encourage dialogue like this throughout the community?

Conclusion

Participants fill out forms that summarize their views on some key questions

Participants are asked for closing comments about what they have learned and/or specific steps they intend to take in the future.

National Days Of Dialogue On Race Relations

1322 18th St. NW, #26, Washington DC 20036

Phone (202) 822-6343, Fax (202) 822-9828

Dialogdays@aol.com

November 18, 1997

Dear Days of Dialogue Supporter,

This Organizing Kit has been developed for those who are interested in helping to create community dialogues during National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations, January 14-19, 1997. This kit includes:

- Basic information about National Days of Dialogues on Race Relations,
- General suggestions about how to invite people to participate,
- A description of the type of dialogues we want to organize,
- Forms which you can use to plan your activities,
- Some brochures which you can use to invite people to participate, and
- A flyer with questions and answers about National Days of Dialogue that can be easily reproduced.

In addition to this Organizing Kit, we are preparing a Facilitator's Manual which can be used to lead the dialogues that will take place in January. This Facilitators Manual will provide a variety of ideas about ways for participants to discuss race relations in your community. It will also explain how to gather information about the insights and suggestions that emerge from each dialogue so that they can become the basis for future cooperative action. This Facilitators Manual will be available in mid-December and will be free of charge.

Thank you for your interest in National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations and for anything you can do to help create dialogues in your community. Please let me or others in our organizing office know if there are specific ways we can assist your efforts.

Sincerely yours,



Theo Brown
Project Coordinator

We Need to Talk, And Listen, And Work Together, Our Country's Health and Vitality Depend on it!

From January 14th through 19th, 1998, the five days preceding the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, thousands of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds will come together for the first **National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations.**

In small groups, in their own communities, these concerned citizens will take time to:

- Increase understanding between citizens of different racial and ethnic groups.
- Strengthen personal relationships with others who are committed to improving race relations, and
- Identify specific ways to work together.

Each dialogue will be tailored to meet local needs, yet they'll all have certain things in common:

- They will be structured conversations that emphasize respect, listening, and the importance of common ground.
- The dialogues will take place in small groups, which will allow every voice to be heard.
- An experienced facilitator will create a "safe space" for participants to talk openly.

How will these dialogues lead to real change in the long run?

National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations will not be a "one time deal."

As participants move through their experience of dialogue, the following question will be at the center of the conversation:

"How can we increase understanding and cooperative action between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds in our community?"



Dialogue facilitators will keep careful records of the answers that their groups develop. Then, using the answers from each group, concerned citizens and community leaders can begin developing specific action plans. Action stimulated through community dialogue, or a series of dialogues, is much more likely to have united community support.

Who's organizing this national program?

During the past few years, numerous organizations throughout the country have been working to improve interracial communication. For National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations, many of these groups are uniting to issue a joint call for meaningful dialogue. The Days of Dialogue offer an opportunity to build on what has already been done and to invite others to join in these ongoing efforts.

Groups cooperating to help organize the **National Days of Dialogue of Race Relations** include:

- Faith and Politics Institute
- Leadership Education for Asian Pacific s (LEAP)
- Los Angeles Days of Dialogue
- National Association for Community Mediation
- Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR)
- Project Victory
- National Council Of La Raza
- National Urban League

Here's How You Can Help!

The National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations can be the start of real positive change in communities across our nation. Here are some steps you can take to ensure the project's initial success and continuing impact in your area.

You can:

- Participate in a dialogue in your community,
- Tell others about the National Days of Dialogue,
- Help organize local dialogues,
- Make a donation to support this national organizing effort,
- Make a personal commitment to participate in ongoing dialogue and cooperative action in your community.

Want to get involved?
Need more information?

Contact the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations organizing office in Washington, DC:

National Days of Dialogue
1322 18th St. NW #26
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-6343
Dialogdays@aol.com

USA TODAY

NO. 1 IN THE USA . . . FIRST IN DAILY READERS

By Charisse Jones
USA TODAY

In January, community organizers in Tallahassee, Los Angeles and dozens of cities in between will embark on a hopeful enterprise.

They are betting that in a living room, a synagogue or a community center, Americans can come together to candidly talk about race, and with honest conversations, take the first step toward bridging the racial gulfs in this society.

Thousands of Americans are expected to spend five days dis-

cussing matters of color. Dubbed "The National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations," the simultaneous meetings will take place from Jan. 14-19, culminating with the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

"The main thing is getting people of different races to have a candid conversation about race," says former New Jersey senator Bill Bradley, who is co-chairing the event with Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas. "Plenty of people who are interested in racial unity can have different ideas about how

to get there."

The dialogues will come in the wake of President Clinton's call in June for such a conversation. The president's campaign has helped spur interest in the "National Days" project, organizers say. But the idea was conceived long before, modeled on dialogues that occurred in Los Angeles after the O.J. Simpson trial.

Eight national organizations are helping to mobilize people. Among them are the National Council of La Raza, a leading Hispanic civil rights group, the National Urban League and

Racial dialogues to open in dozens of cities in January

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Project Victory, which teaches conflict resolution.

But ultimately the conversations will be organized by local activists.

Rita Adrian, neighborhood coordinator for the Community Boards of San Francisco, will help organize a dialogue in the city's Visitation Valley neighborhood, a once majority white area that increasingly is becoming Chinese-American.

"I see the friction and tension at every level," she says. "If people just become a little more open-minded, a little cooler, a little calmer, that can

make a difference."

The effort will concentrate on roughly 20 cities, but conversations are expected to take place in more than 50, says national coordinator Theo Brown. Among the sites will be Akron, Ohio, which has engaged in a community-wide effort to improve race relations and is the setting for President Clinton's first national town hall meeting on race on Dec. 3.

Each session will be informal, ideally with 10 to 25 participants. Afterward, participants will list insights they gained and suggestions they

came up with to improve race relations in their communities.

"Our intention is to follow up with these folks and help them implement some of the things they've identified," says Brown.

Organizers acknowledge that talk alone is not enough to overcome the racial rifts and misunderstandings that have plagued this country for centuries. But they believe talk is the first critical step toward cooperation and understanding.

"People don't talk enough, nor do they talk constructively," says Ridley-Thomas.

"There are a lot of pent-up emotions and hidden issues and people want a neutral environment in which to air their views."

Organizers say they hope the conversations will lead to projects that bring together people of diverse backgrounds, whether gardening or a mentoring program.

"If you get people together and those relationships form, you really stop thinking about color," says Fannie Brown, one of the Akron organizers. "You start thinking about what you're doing together."

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT
NATIONAL DAYS OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS
JANUARY 14-19, 1998**

What is the purpose of National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations?

National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations is a coordinated effort by several national organizations to invite people throughout America to join in community dialogues on race relations in the five days preceding the Martin Luther King Holiday in January of 1998. The overall purpose of the event is to bring citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds together for dialogues which seek to increase understanding and cooperative action in local communities.

Why is it so important to have dialogues between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds?

Dialogue is an essential ingredient in our nation's ongoing endeavor to improve race relations. Respectful dialogue that emphasizes listening and seeks to identify areas of agreement is one of the most effective ways to bridge the divide that separates Americans of different races and ethnic backgrounds. Dialogue creates understanding that can serve as the foundation for personal relationships. Dialogue changes people because it informs and sensitizes them to other points of view. Dialogue can also change communities---and our nation---if the common concerns that are identified become the basis for cooperative action.

In addition to increasing understanding and cooperation, dialogue creates a context in which people can develop empathy and compassion for each other. At the heart of dialogue is the ethic of the Golden Rule which compels us to treat each person the way we would like to be treated. Dialogue helps people to see each other as unique individual---not just as someone who is a particular color, race, or creed.

What will actually happen during the Days of Dialogue?

From Wednesday, January 14 to Monday, January 19, 1998, hundreds of facilitated dialogues on how to improve race relations will take place in schools, churches, homes, businesses, and community organizations in cities throughout America. Most dialogues will be between two and three hours in length and they will be structured around a basic format that emphasizes listening, mutual respect, sharing time equitably, and the importance of focusing on common ground. Each dialogue will also have a facilitator who makes sure the dialogue ground rules are followed and that the group stays focused on its purpose.

What will people talk about in these dialogues?

Dialogues will focus on local issues and concerns and will undoubtedly cover a range of topics. At the same time, all participants will be asked to discuss a central question that is at the heart of the National Days of Dialogue. That question is:

“How can we increase understanding and cooperative action between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds in our community?”

Citizens will be encouraged to talk openly about what is happening in their city and to share ideas about what could be done to improve race relations. Records will be kept of the insights and suggestions that are identified, and a report will be produced on each dialogue.

What is the intended result of all of these community dialogues?

These National Days of Dialogue are not intended as a “one shot deal” which gets attention and then fades away. On the contrary, the purpose is to help lay the groundwork for the ongoing cooperation that is needed to solve difficult problems that exist in our local communities. The Days of Dialogue can do this by producing four specific results.

1. A greatly increased understanding of the importance of inter-racial dialogue and cooperative action;
2. Improved relationships between key leaders of different races and ethnic backgrounds;
3. Ideas for specific action projects which address common problems; and
4. Identification of a network of people who are committed to ongoing efforts to increase understanding and cooperation

Who is organizing the National Days of Dialogue?

The plan for these National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations has grown out of numerous successful community dialogue campaigns that have taken place during the past few years. Several of the national groups that have helped to organize these local efforts are now working to create dialogues simultaneously in cities across the country. Groups cooperating to organize these Days of Dialogue include: the Faith and Politics Institute, Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP), Los Angeles Days of Dialogue, National Association for Community Mediation, National Council of La Raza, National Urban League, Project Victory, and Society for Professional in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR). In addition, many other national organizations are assisting the organizing effort by sharing information with members across the country.

The national co-chairs of the Days of Dialogue are Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas and former Senator Bill Bradley. Many other prominent individuals throughout the country are also actively supporting this effort.

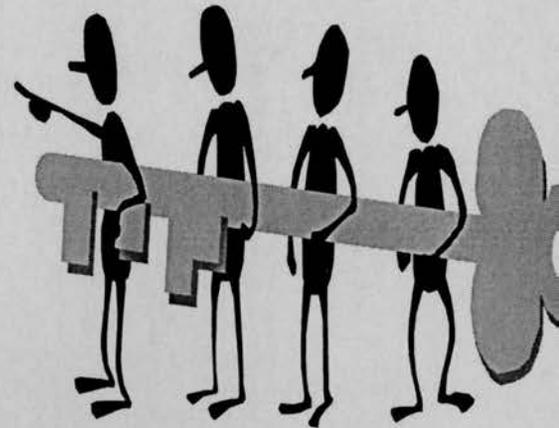
The Dialogue Model

Why Do We Need Facilitated Dialogue?

It is important to have conversations on race relations, but it is often difficult to do so. Discussions which focus on race can evoke strong emotions and many people are reluctant to take part in them. Some fear that the conversation will become heated, contentious and confrontational. Others are afraid they will say the wrong thing and be perceived as insensitive or "politically incorrect." As a result, discussions of race relations that are open, candid and respectful are far too limited.

Because of these difficulties, it is helpful to approach conversations about race with a dialogue model that helps break some of the patterns people fall into and that emphasizes the importance of talking openly with each other in a respectful manner. Dialogues that emphasize the importance of looking for ways to work together also help participants focus on what they have in common rather than what divides them.

Dialogue is the **Key** to Democracy



Values inherent in the dialogue model

The dialogue model that will be used during National Days of Dialogue is based on values that are at the heart of our democratic system. These values also reflect many of the core spiritual beliefs that are found in the worlds great spiritual traditions.

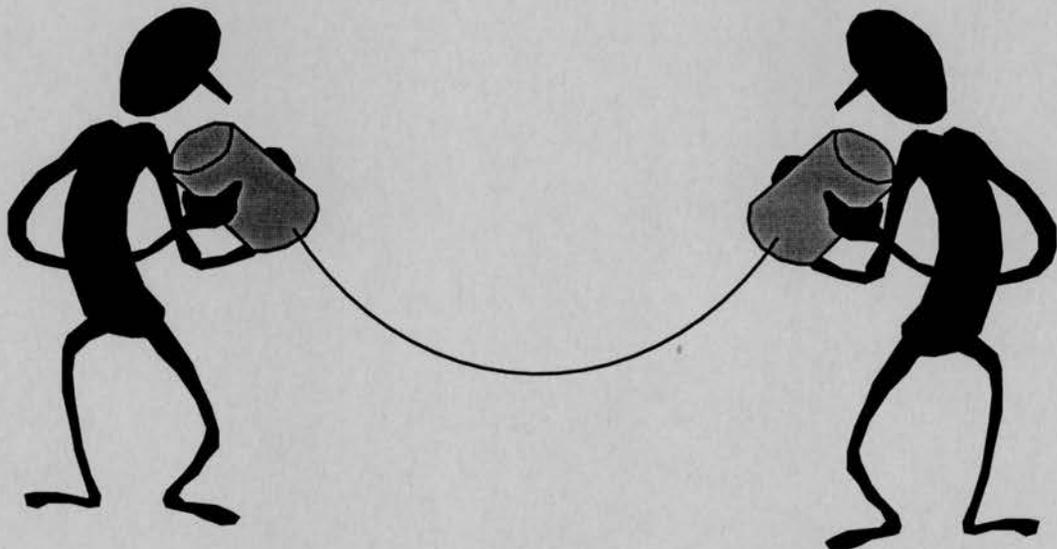
Dialogue affirms the democratic principles of our society because it emphasizes the need for each citizen to help find solutions to the problems we face and underscore the importance of every person's views. Dialogue, like democracy, is based on the premise that the decisions we make as a society are always better when an informed public is actively involved in making them.

Facilitated dialogues also embody many spiritual values. In many ways, dialogues are structured around what we often call "The Golden Rule." That is, dialogues seek to create interactions in which participants treat each other the way they would like to be treated. This important insight about how people should relate to each other is the basis for a whole range of values, including: respect, honesty, fairness, cooperation and forgiveness.

Four Characteristics of Facilitated Dialogue

There are four basic characteristics of the dialogue model that will be used during National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations. Dialogues with these characteristics have been conducted successfully in numerous cities across the country by a wide variety of organizations. In this model, the topic, format and focus may vary, but all dialogues have the following elements in common:

1. The clearly stated purpose of increasing understanding and cooperation,
2. A set of ground rules that emphasizes respect, listening, honesty and the importance of sharing time equitably,
3. A facilitator who conducts the meeting according to the ground rules and helps to keep participants focused on their purpose, and
4. The use of questions and discussion exercises to help structure the dialogue.



Dialogue Structure and Format

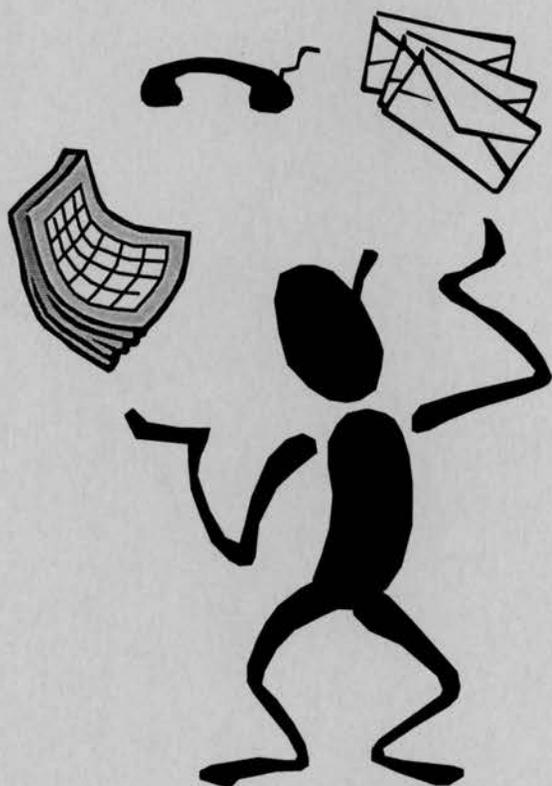
The format used for the dialogues will vary somewhat depending on the individuals and groups involved and the scope of what they hope to accomplish. Organizers of each dialogue will have to make decisions about the number of participants, the length of the dialogue, where the dialogues will be held, and whether the dialogue is a one time event or part of a series of meetings.

Facilitated dialogues on race relations generally work best when they take place in small groups of 10-25 people. In dialogues of this size, it is easier for each participant to be heard and to develop personal relationships that can be of value in many future interactions. Groups larger than 25 can also have effective dialogues, but they may want to consider a format where participants divide into smaller groups during at least some of the time they are together.

Most dialogues will vary in length from two to four hours and groups will need to decide what is appropriate and/or possible for them. Generally, two hours is the minimum time needed to get to know each other and still have adequate time to begin exploring the views of those present. Many groups will need even more time and dialogues that are closer to three hours (or maybe even longer) will usually be more successful at generating full participation and open sharing.

The location and setting for each dialogue also has a significant impact on the outcome that is achieved. Dialogues are most effective when they occur in places where participants feel comfortable and where an informal atmosphere encourages open and honest responses.

Groups participating in National Days of Dialogue also need to decide whether they want to have one dialogue or arrange a series of dialogue sessions. Some groups may know in advance what they want to do and others may not be certain until they have participated in a dialogue. For organizing purposes, it will usually be easier to get people to commit to one dialogue and those who want to do more can later arrange other sessions.



**Juggling the
Tasks & Logistics
of a Dialogue
is Easy with a Little
Structure & Planning**

Dialogue Results

Just getting concerned citizens together to talk about how to improve race relations in their communities can be of great value. A good dialogue can improve understanding and help to build relationships that can be valuable in many future situations. At the same time, **dialogues are generally more effective if they emphasize the importance of ongoing efforts to improve understanding and cooperation across racial lines.**

One of the goals of each dialogue that will take place during National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations will be to identify specific ideas about how citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds can work together in the future. In order to do this, dialogue participants need to keep records of the common insights and/or specific ideas that are identified during their time together. This can be done by asking one or two participants to keep basic notes or by getting a few volunteers to work together after the dialogue to compile a summary of the major points that were raised.

The written summaries for each dialogue will be collected by National Days of Dialogue organizers and put together with others in the same community.

The result will be a report which identifies the most common suggestions about how citizens can deepen understanding and work together in the future. These dialogue reports will be shared with local and/or national groups that have an interest in supporting ongoing cooperative action.

**NATIONAL DAYS
OF DIALOGUE
ON RACE RELATIONS**

JANUARY 14-19, 1998

ORGANIZING KIT

Overview of National Days of Dialogue On Race Relations

Purpose

National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations is a coordinated effort by several national organizations to invite people throughout America to join in community dialogues on how to improve race relations. These National Days of Dialogue will take place during the six days leading up to and including the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday in January of 1998.

The groups and individuals organizing National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations believe that race relations will not improve in our country until many more citizens take personal responsibility to make that happen. Therefore, **the primary goal of National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations is to significantly increase the number of people in communities across the country who are involved in efforts to improve understanding and cooperation between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds.**

What National Days of Dialogue Can Do

To achieve its purpose, those working to promote National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations will do three basic things:

1. Highlight and support existing community efforts to promote interracial dialogue,
2. Invite large numbers of citizens to become involved with dialogues which increase understanding and cooperative action between people of different races and ethnic backgrounds, and
3. Help dialogue participants identify specific ways they can work together in the future.



**National
Days of Dialogue
wants to help
community efforts
take off!**

Origin of National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations

The plan for these National Days of Dialogue has grown out of several successful community dialogue campaigns that have taken place during the past few years. Examples of these local efforts include the Days of Dialogue that were organized in Los Angeles after the O.J. Simpson trial and a variety of other similar dialogues organized in cities around the country by groups as varied as the National Conference, the Faith and Politics Institute, Project Victory, the Study Circles Resource Center and local chapters of the Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR).

Early in 1997, representatives of some of the groups involved in these local efforts began to talk about how to build on these endeavors and highlight opportunities for citizens across the country to participate in similar dialogues. It was suggested that the days preceding the Martin Luther King holiday would be an excellent time to conduct a nationwide effort to involve more people in dialogue and, shortly after that, the idea for National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations was born. Organizers from several different groups then began to work together to develop the plans for National Days of Dialogue and generate the resources needed to create them. By the end of August, enough support had been found to make this idea a reality and, after Labor Day, organizing began for the National Days of Dialogue.

Key Individuals and Participating Groups

The Los Angeles Days of Dialogue organization has played a central role throughout the planning process and the success of the programs they organized in the fall of 1995 has inspired much of the planning behind National Days of Dialogue. The leader of that effort, Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas, has agreed to serve as a Co-Chair for these National Days of Dialogue and he is joined in that leadership role by former Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey.

Several national organizations that have broad experience creating dialogues on race relations are also cooperating in this endeavor, including:

- Faith and Politics Institute
- Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP)
- National Association for Community Mediation
- National Council of La Raza
- National Urban League
- Project Victory
- Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR)

These organizations have created a national organizing office to support the efforts of all the groups involved and to help organize the various dialogues that will take place across the country. An organizing center has been established in the Project Victory office in Washington, D.C. and Project Victory's Executive Director, Theo Brown, is serving as Project Coordinator.

A Summary of What Will Take Place

From January 14 to 19th, 1998, thousands of individuals of different races and ethnic backgrounds will come together for small group facilitated dialogues in schools, churches, homes, businesses, and community organizations across the country. Most of these small group dialogues will be between two and four hours long and structured around a basic format that emphasizes listening, mutual respect and the importance of focusing on common ground.

The intended result of the National Days of Dialogue is to increase understanding between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds and identify specific ways that can work together in the future on issues of common concern. All invitations to participate in local programs should make it clear that this is the purpose of the dialogues and the facilitators will remind participants of that throughout their time together.

The Central Question

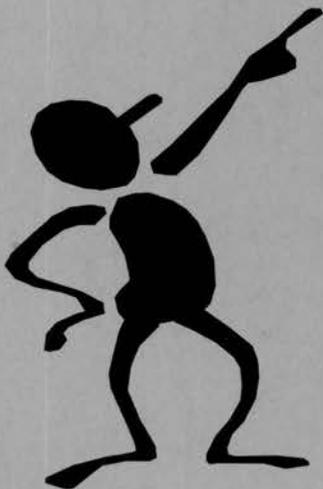
At the heart of all National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations activity is a broad question which emphasizes the purpose of this endeavor. That question is:

How can we increase understanding and cooperative action between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds in our community?

It is suggested that all groups that meet together during the Days of Dialogue consider this question. Participants will record the insights and agreements that emerge during their discussion so that the results of the dialogues can be the basis for future cooperative action.

A Vision of What These Days of Dialogue Can Accomplish

National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations is being organized to encourage individuals to be more involved in efforts to improve race relations in their communities. We hope that by bringing thousands of people together at the same time to participate in dialogues across the country, national attention will focus on the need for greater community involvement on this vital issue. In recent years, several simultaneous national activities (i.e., Earth Day, Ground Zero Week and Hands Across America) have taken place which generated tremendous nationwide publicity and marked the beginning of a new level of citizen activity on issues that are important to our country's future. Our hope is that National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations can have a similar impact and bring large numbers of new people to the ongoing effort to achieve greater understanding and cooperation across racial and ethnic lines.



**Through Dialogue
the sky
is the limit**

Organizing Days of Dialogue in Your Community

Local Organizing Efforts

In each community, those people helping to organize participation in National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations should work together to divide responsibilities in an effective manner. In some communities, a small number of people (perhaps only 2-4) will work together informally to identify potential participants and invite them to take part in the Days of Dialogue. In other places, a more formal organizing committee that works together to plan the outreach activities.

It is important for local organizers to stay in close touch with the organizing office for National Days of Dialogue in Washington, D.C. This office will have a staff person assigned to work with each of the focus cities as well as other communities where significant activity develops. The national office is a source for the basic materials needed to organize and facilitate dialogues and can also help to organize some local activities. The national office will play an important role in obtaining media coverage for programs that take place during the Days of Dialogue, therefore it is important to maintain clear communication about where and when programs are scheduled.

The Community Plan

Organizers who are working together to plan dialogues may find it helpful to develop a general plan for what they hope to create in their communities. This plan should indicate how many ongoing local projects will conduct dialogues during the January 14-19 time period and address ideas about how to reach as many new people as possible with invitations to participate.

Questions to ask in developing a local plan include:

- Who is already working to create community dialogues on race relations?
- Which groups and individuals might be interested in helping invite others to participate?
- Which invitations to participate will offer the greatest hope of reaching large numbers of people in a short period of time?
- What type of dialogues would have the largest impact in your community?

**Together --
communities
can achieve
greatness!**



Examples of Types of Dialogues That Can Be Organized

During the January 14-19 period, dialogues will take place in a variety of settings and involve a wide range of different groups and individuals. In each community, the first goal will be for groups that are already active in promoting inter-racial dialogue to schedule programs that reflect what they are doing. At the same time, local individuals who support the Days of Dialogue will work with the national organizing office to invite large numbers of new people to join in similar dialogues. Examples of some dialogues that can be organized are listed below.

1) Dialogues within existing groups

In every community in America there are literally hundreds (in some places thousands!) of groups, organizations, businesses, schools, associations and faith communities where people meet together on a regular basis. (A sample list of these is included in this kit). Many of these groups are interested in race relations and will be very open to the idea of participating in National Days of Dialogue. They should be invited to have a special program during the National Days of Dialogue or schedule a dialogue at one of their regular meetings that is close to the mid-January time period.

In most instances, these dialogues within existing groups will be most valuable if the participants are racially and/or ethnically mixed. An effort should be made to identify and reach out to those groups in your community that have the most diversity in their memberships. However, there may be some groups of people who will find it valuable to have a dialogue even though their members are all (or almost all) from one race or ethnic group.

2) Dialogues which pair two or more existing groups

Some groups, particularly those that are not very mixed racially, may prefer to pair with one (or more) other group to have a dialogue. This may be particularly appealing if the groups that get together are similar in purpose. All cities have many groups that are organized along parallel lines by race and ethnicity. For example, there may be Baptist churches that are primarily White, African American, Latino, and/or Asian American in one community. Also, many cities have Latino, Asian or Black business groups that exist along side of the local Chamber of Commerce.

3) Dialogues for ad hoc groups of community leaders

In addition to any dialogues that are organized which involve existing groups, **each community should organize at least one dialogue that brings together leaders of groups and organizations from many different segments of community life.** In some ways, these community leader dialogues are the most important part of local Days of Dialogue activities. They bring together people who represent important constituencies and provide an opportunity to create personal and organizational connections which can have important impact in the future. (A form enclosed in this kit has specific suggestions about who to invite).

Some areas may have just one community leader dialogue that brings together people from many different occupations as well as races and ethnic backgrounds. However, some communities may wish to have several dialogues that bring together leaders from specific areas such as business, religion, or education.

4) Open dialogues which invite all interested people to attend

In some communities it may be a good idea to sponsor open community (or neighborhood) dialogues where all citizens are invited to participate. These dialogues offer an opportunity for all interested people to participate and they may be the only way to reach out to those who are not involved with the groups and organizations we are contacting. At the same time, the uncertainty over who (and how many) will attend creates some planning difficulties and often makes it more difficult to recruit a racially balanced group of participants.

Dialogue Facilitators

Good facilitators are an essential element in the success of any dialogue. Fortunately, there are numerous individuals in every community who have training and/or experience facilitating dialogues like the ones that will be conducted during National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations. An important part of preparing for the Days of Dialogue in your community is making sure that enough facilitators are available to lead all of the dialogues that are arranged.

The National Days of Dialogue office in Washington, D.C. already has the names of hundreds of facilitators around the country who are available to lead dialogues and many others are also being recruited. These people are affiliated with groups like the National Association for Community Mediation, Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution, Project Victory, Search for Common Ground and similar organizations. The organizers in the national office will give you names of facilitators in your area.

Ten Step Organizing Process

1. **Identify** those individuals who might be most interested in working together to plan activities for National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations.
2. **Fill out** a key contact list for your community
 - Who are the 25-50 people who should be contacted first?
 - Refer to the list in this organizer's kit for suggestions of who to contact.
3. **Mail** brochures and invitations to all people on the key contact list.
4. **Make follow up calls** with selected key contacts.
 - Call those who are most likely to want to help.
 - Ask each person if they have ideas about who might want to have a dialogue.
5. **Plan** who to invite to participate in your community.
 - Which groups should be invited to have dialogues?
 - Which groups might want to pair with other groups for dialogue?
 - Who should be invited to the community leader dialogue(s)?
 - When and where should the community leader dialogue(s) be held?
6. **Send** invitations to groups that are listed in your organizing plan.
7. **Make follow up calls** to group representatives.
 - Call those that seem most promising.
 - Gather data on those who are interested in having a dialogue.
8. **Send** letters to those individuals you are inviting to a community leader dialogue.
9. **Review** logistics check list for each dialogue.
10. **Compile and distribute** information to press and public about the dialogues that are scheduled.

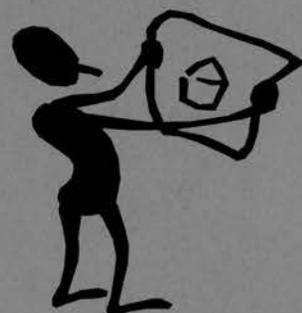
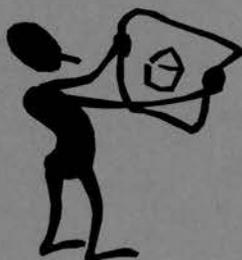
Publicity and News Coverage

The main purpose of National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations is to strengthen and expand the interracial dialogue efforts in your community. One of the best ways to do this is to obtain publicity that makes people aware of this type of dialogue and demonstrates the importance of it in the future.

A primary goal of the National Days of Dialogue organizing effort is to help you achieve good press coverage of the dialogues that will take place in your community. In order to do this, we have enlisted the services of a professional company in Washington, D.C. that specializes in publicity for public interest organizations. This group is already laying the groundwork for national press coverage of the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations and will also assist in making contacts with regional and local media---particularly in the twenty focus cities where most of our organizing will take place.

The organizers in our national office will also assist you in your efforts to obtain favorable press coverage before and during the National Days of Dialogue.

Specific suggestions about how to approach your local media are being prepared and will be sent separately to you and all others who receive this Organizer's Kit.



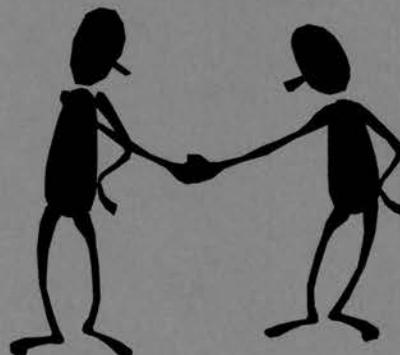
After The National Days of Dialogue: What Next?

The National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations are not an end in themselves. They are intended as a means to involve more citizens in *ongoing efforts* to increase understanding and cooperative action in their communities. The individuals and national groups who organized the National Days on Dialogue will generate many new ideas about how to improve race relations in your community and those ideas will be put into action in the days and months to come.

As a result of the National Days on Dialogue, your community may decide to continue public conversations about race relations in your town. Or you may decide to initiate new projects that bring together individuals of diverse racial and ethnic groups for cooperative action.

The national groups that are cooperating to organize the National Days on Dialogue are already engaged in discussions about how to build upon the insights and ideas that emerge from the many community dialogues. Our plan is to identify and secure the resources needed to help support activities in each of the participating communities. We hope to continue working with communities to help promote ongoing activities that result in improved race relations throughout the nation.

***After Dialogue,
New Partnerships
& Understandings
will be forged***



An Example of a Community Wide Days of Dialogue Program

An example of how different types of dialogues might fit together to form Days of Dialogue activity in a local community is given below. Many communities may not be able to organize a program that is this extensive and others may find they are able to do even more.

Tuesday, January 13

- A press statement and/or press release announces the dialogues that are scheduled.

Wednesday, January 14

- Dialogues begin in high school social studies classes.
- A dialogue is held at a lunch meeting of a local service club.
- Four dialogues are held which pair churches whose members are of different races.

Thursday, January 15

- Dialogues continue in high school social studies classes.
- Employee dialogues are held over brown bag lunches in several government offices.
- Leaders representing business groups from different ethnic backgrounds have a dialogue.
- Student government leaders and representatives of several ethnic organizations come together for a dialogue on a local campus.

Friday, January 16

- Dialogues in high school classes conclude.
- Numerous businesses have lunch time dialogues for their employees.
- A community leaders dialogue brings together twenty people from many different organizations and institutions.

Saturday, January 17

- Clergy and other representatives of faith communities meet for a dialogue.
- Representatives of several neighborhood associations have a dialogue in the morning and then work together on a community cleanup project.

Sunday, January 18

- Several churches conduct dialogues as part of their Sunday School and/or adult education programs.
- A local TV or radio station broadcasts a dialogue between prominent community leaders.

Monday, January 19

- A community wide celebration that features music, inspirational talks and small group dialogues conclude the Days of Dialogue activities.
- Local newspapers report on what happened during the various Days of Dialogue activities.

CAN WE TALK ?

**IF THE
SUBJECT
IS RACE RELATIONS
MAYBE NOT!**

WE

NEED

Participate in
Dialogue on
January

National Days of
Race Relations
14-19, 1998

TO

TALK

We Need to Talk, And Listen, And Work Together, Our Country's Health and Vitality Depend on it!

From January 14th through 19th, 1998, the five days preceding the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, thousands of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds will come together for the first **National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations.**

In small groups, in their own communities, these concerned citizens will take time to:

- Increase understanding between citizens of different racial and ethnic groups.
- Strengthen personal relationships with others who are committed to improving race relations, and
- Identify specific ways to work together.

Each dialogue will be tailored to meet local needs, yet they'll all have certain things in common:

- They will be structured conversations that emphasize respect, listening, and the importance of common ground.
- The dialogues will take place in small groups, which will allow every voice to be heard.
- An experienced facilitator will create a "safe space" for participants to talk openly.

How will these dialogues lead to real change in the long run?

National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations will not be a "one time deal."

As participants move through their experience of dialogue, the following question will be at the center of the conversation:

"How can we increase understanding and cooperative action between citizens of different races and ethnic backgrounds in our community?"



Dialogue facilitators will keep careful records of the answers that their groups develop. Then, using the answers from each group, concerned citizens and community leaders can begin developing specific action plans. Action stimulated through community dialogue, or a series of dialogues, is much more likely to have united community support.

Who's organizing this national program?

During the past few years, numerous organizations throughout the country have been working to improve interracial communication. For National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations, many of these groups are uniting to issue a joint call for meaningful dialogue. The Days of Dialogue offer an opportunity to build on what has already been done and to invite others to join in these ongoing efforts.

Groups cooperating to help organize the **National Days of Dialogue of Race Relations** include:

- Faith and Politics Institute
- Leadership Education for Asian Pacific s (LEAP)
- Los Angeles Days of Dialogue
- National Association for Community Mediation
- Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR)
- Project Victory
- National Council Of La Raza
- National Urban League

Here's How You Can Help!

The National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations can be the start of real positive change in communities across our nation. Here are some steps you can take to ensure the project's initial success and continuing impact in your area.

You can:

- Participate in a dialogue in your community,
- Tell others about the National Days of Dialogue,
- Help organize local dialogues,
- Make a donation to support this national organizing effort,
- Make a personal commitment to participate in ongoing dialogue and cooperative action in your community.

Want to get involved?
Need more information?

Contact the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations organizing office in Washington, DC:

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