



**COLUMBUS, GEORGIA
*MOVING FORWARD
TOGETHER INITIATIVE***

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF
THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY, INC.

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Note: The consultants of the Moving Forward Together Initiative are solely responsible for any errors in this report.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

PROJECT SUMMARY

THE CENTRAL QUESTIONS:

Do race and ethnicity impact opportunities for residents of Columbus?

If so, then how should you respond as an individual?

How should we respond as a community?

If race and ethnicity impact opportunities for residents in Columbus, whether in:

- the relations between different races and ethnicities, and/or
- the voices at the table for community decision-making, and/or
- the access to jobs, education, housing, services, and quality of life,

Then how should the Columbus community respond in an effective way? What can we learn from other communities?

WHAT IS MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER?

Moving Forward Together has been initiated by the Community Foundation to convene the community around a central issue that it believes is of critical importance. The goal is to support our community in ensuring that every resident, regardless of race and ethnicity, will have access to all opportunities and a positive quality of life.

The effort is a two-phase, multiyear project that is not *owned* by the Community Foundation. Rather, *Moving Forward Together*, its resulting activities and any progress it generates will be owned by the people of Columbus.

Phase One

Employ nationally recognized consultants who specialize in race relations and community inclusiveness to work with the Community Foundation to:

- Listen to residents about their concerns and hopes for Columbus;
- Examine data, trends and opinions compiled by the Community Assets and Critical Issues Assessment (currently being implemented by the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government);
- Identify current efforts that are making a positive difference;
- Identify a list of "promising programs" from around the country that the community can consider implementing to maximize progress;
- Communicate the results of the report, which will include examples of positive current efforts and a list of promising practices used by other communities.

Phase Two

- Engage residents and organizations, including the faith community, in reviewing the recommendations of Phase One, implementing those best-suited to our community, and guiding the community to a new way of thinking about and relating to each other.
- Create a way for individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations to effectively support new efforts, as well as current programs, through a designated fund at the Community Foundation. The *Moving Forward Together* Fund will be administered by the Community Foundation.

WHY NOW?

- Our city has made many enormous strides over the years and has generated a number of success stories. A number of individuals and organizations are doing good work to break down barriers. However, we need to accelerate these efforts as our diversity increases; to be sure we are creating the same opportunities for all of our residents. A comprehensive, collaborative effort can insure maximum effectiveness.
- Discussions and events have taken place over the last two years that make this an ideal time to initiate a comprehensive effort. While we as a community are not proud of all that's been done or said, we recognize that an atmosphere of crisis creates a climate of opportunity. People are more willing to listen to new ideas, and to each other, now than ever before.
- Communities working to be more inclusive must begin to build their capacity to develop a deeper understanding of differences, welcome new and diverse voices, and assess whether policies and services are beneficial to all residents. To what extent does Columbus have that capacity? Where are the gaps?

WHY THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION?

- The Community Foundation is uniquely suited to be the convener of this initiative because its mission is “to strengthen our diverse community for present and future generations,” in part “by serving as a trustworthy partner and leader in shaping effective responses to community needs and opportunities.”
- Rather than having been organized to promote a specific course of action or cause, the Community Foundation is a vehicle and partner for supporting residents as they improve our community.
- Because of its unique responsibility to help the community address long-term challenges as well as immediate needs, it is independently funding Phase One and is prepared to play a leadership role in identifying funding for Phase Two.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE PROJECT?

Phase One will conclude when the consultants share the results of the report, the positive current efforts and the list of promising programs with the community.

Phase Two will begin immediately after the results of Phase One are shared and will continue as specific goals are set, programs are implemented and evaluated, and the community “Moves Forward Together.”

“It is more important today to create a racially united America than it ever has been. In the first place, the world has gotten much smaller and our nation has grown more racially diverse . . . Our ability to exist as a responsible and unified society in the future is going to depend on how well we avoid a stratification of our citizenry based on race . . . How far we think we have come in race relations depends largely on where we stand. Most white people think we have come further than most black people think we have. But what we can agree on is the proposition that we must provide an opportunity to every person, regardless of race or class, to secure a competitive education that will lead to a more rewarding economic future – and that racism, in whatever form, must be considered outside the bounds of acceptable conduct in our society.”

-William F. Winter, Former Governor of Mississippi

INTRODUCTION

The Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley, Inc. (Community Foundation) must first be commended for being the catalyst for the community to address the issue of race relations and access. The residents who participated in the focus groups and interviews and completed the Community Survey were generous with their time and very helpful in sharing their experiences and perspectives of their community. There are already a number of residents, programs, and organizations addressing race and ethnicity issues in Columbus, and they need to be applauded for their work thus far.

This project speaks to the culture of the community. Columbus, its residents and leaders, have consistently looked toward the future to identify strengths, gaps, and challenges, whereas many other communities are content living with the status quo. In each conversation with Columbus residents we heard many express their sense of pride. Some residents continued to want to set the bar higher and talk about the challenges the community faces, and there were some who felt things were relatively good and that there was no need for improvement. Though many communities might talk about appreciation for diversity, respect for others, and ensuring quality of life for all, they do not all implement a process to match those visionary goals. Columbus has had some recent situations in which race was a front burner issue: the one-cent tax vote on school funding and the Kenneth Walker incident. Yet Columbus is part of a growing trend of communities across the United States that are working to ensure that race and ethnicity are not barriers to a good quality of life.

The information in this report is based on conversations with residents, community reports, and news articles. Though the framing of the issues will be unique to Columbus, the issues are not. Across the U.S., other communities face some of the same challenges Columbus does:

- Racial disparities in education, housing, and economic development.
- Elections and tax referendum voting reflect the differences of opinions and perspective based on race.
- The aftermath of a police shooting and the subsequent controversies among residents on how to respond.
- The changing demographics with new residents of different ethnicities, languages, cultures, and religions.

During our first visit to Columbus in September 2004, we were given a tour of the community by several community leaders including city council members. We met with the Community Foundation's board as well as a group of residents who were in management roles in different sectors of the community. They shared with us some of the issues and helped us prepare for our "listening" visit. In February 2005, we facilitated ten focus groups representing different sectors of the community (110 individuals participated): business, citizen groups, community initiatives, education faith community, human resources, human relation, media, public safety, and young professionals. Each participant was asked to complete a focus group survey. We also interviewed 13 individuals who were leaders in their sectors or areas of expertise. After our visit we interviewed five additional people. We were fortunate to have two residents, David Ebron and Wanda Jenkins, facilitate three sessions at the Dare to Dream Summit to learn the viewpoints of high-school-age youth on race relations. A community survey was distributed to several faith communities, businesses, and city hall. Individuals were also invited to complete the survey online at the Community Foundation's Web site. We received 208 community surveys over a three week period.

Our focus was on listening to residents and analyzing and synthesizing what they shared with us in meetings and the survey, specifically about race relations and access issues. The objective of this report is to share residents' observations, opinions and ideas, share current programs to be strengthened, and identify promising practices to address some of Columbus' challenges. Though it would have been helpful to speak with more people in the community, this report provides a starting base for the community to continue the discussion. This report is not about pointing fingers, but candidly sharing what we heard, learned, and observed. Communities willing to hold up the mirror and take inventory of their strengths and challenges are more apt to be successful as they constantly reach for being their best. The motivation to continue to set the bar higher is part of the culture of Columbus.

The impact of this report rests mostly with the residents. The Community Foundation is serving as a catalyst and providing the initial support. The residents will need to speak up about what they think the priorities of this effort should be, and many will need to be willing to invest time and share skills if the *Moving Forward Together* Initiative is to move from concept to reality. To address some of the critical issues shared by residents, organizations and individuals will also need to be generous in providing resources to support this effort. Each of the community members may have different reasons for joining in this effort:

- There are a few who believe that to have an economically healthy community in this global economy, a community must address its racial and ethnic inequities;
- There are many who believe, either based on their faith and/or their moral values, that one must treat another person with respect no matter what the race or ethnicity and believe in the importance of building relationships across racial lines; and
- There are others that believe, if we learn about each other's culture, understand the complexities of racial injustices, and increase our awareness of the racial history of this region and community; we will be able to address these challenging issues together as a community.

We hope you will read and discuss the report with your family, neighbors, friends and colleagues. There will probably be areas in the report, including comments by your fellow residents, that you will agree with and some you will disagree with. We hope this will lead you to think about your vision and hope for Columbus. How do we ensure that every resident, no matter his or her race and ethnicity, has the same quality of life? We hope you will consider what role you might want to play with the *Moving Forward Together Initiative*.

This Introduction section includes some statistical information and shares strengths and challenges in the community. The report is then divided into five sections:

1. *What We Learned*: Includes residents' views on the state of race relations and the four major themes that emerged from the focus groups and interviews: Macon Road, the Kenneth Walker Incident, Growing Diversity, and Leadership and Decision-Making.
2. *Equitable Access*: Includes statistics from the community and focus group surveys about incidents of discrimination in several settings and describes the issues of four major sectors in which many residents believe issue of access, disparities and/or discrimination need to be addressed: Education, Business, Public Safety, and Media.
3. *Phase Two*: Includes ideas from residents on next steps and recommendations for Phase Two.
4. *Columbus' Programs*: Includes a listing of several local programs with descriptions and recommendations to strengthen their impact in the community.
5. *Promising Practices*: A sampling of ideas for programs in several different areas, including building the community's capacity to address these issues and a sampling of comprehensive community initiatives on race.
6. *Appendix*: Focus Groups Questions, Community Survey questions, Consultant Team's Bios.

Throughout this report, we share actual quotes from individuals we spoke with, and comments from the community or focus group surveys which represent residents' differing emotions and points of view. Part of moving forward together is being candid, listening to fellow resident's stories and perceptions, and beginning to work to understand why those perceptions exist. Through candid conversations in which understanding is sought, tensions can lessen. Relationships can develop across racial lines, which will continue to reinforce Columbus' efforts to face its challenges as a community.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Columbus is identified as one of the Knight Foundation communities, which means it participated in a Community Indicators Project. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation promote excellence in journalism worldwide and invest in the vitality of 26 U.S. communities.¹ Through their research in the past few years, they learned:

- The level of community involvement has remained relatively stable over the past three years. More than six in 10 residents volunteered for a community organization in the past year.
- In contrast to a strong sense of personal efficacy and a substantial amount of community involvement, there is a great degree of social distrust expressed by residents. Sixty-three percent of Columbus residents surveyed agreed, "you can't be too careful in dealing with people."
- Columbus residents have become more optimistic about the future of race relations in their community, even as concern about racial and ethnic tension has increased. The percentage of residents who think race relations in their community will improve over the next five years is significant at 41%.²

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government's Research and Policy Division at the University of Georgia has been working the past nine months to conduct a critical needs assessment of eight counties, including Muscogee County. The process included four town hall meetings, 60 individual surveys, and a telephone survey. One thousand high school students participated in classroom discussions. There was no need to replicate this level of research in our process of collecting information. There are several statistics from that study that we believe are important to highlight:

¹ The Knight Foundation communities are: Aberdeen, SD; Akron, OH; Biloxi, MS.; Boca Raton, FL.; Boulder, CO.; Bradenton, FL.; Charlotte, NC; Columbia, SC; Columbus, GA.; Detroit, MI; Duluth, MN; Fort Wayne, IN; Gary, IN; Grand Forks, ND; Lexington, KY; Long Beach, CA; Macon, GA; Miami, FL; Milledgeville, GA; Myrtle Beach, SC; Philadelphia, PA; St. Paul, MN; San Jose, CA; State College, PA; Tallahassee, FL; and Wichita, KS.

² Princeton Survey Research Associates, *An Update of Public Opinion on Local Issues in Columbus, GA*, (Miami, FL: John L. and James S. Knight Foundation, 2003), pp.4-5.

- The Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia has projected that both Muscogee and Harris counties will be in the top tier of counties in Georgia with respect to per capita personal income by 2007, with average projected per capita personal income in both counties exceeding \$32,800.
- 57.7% of Muscogee residents surveyed believe that community leaders need to spend more time dealing with race relations issues.
- 48.8% of Muscogee County residents characterize race relations as fair or poor.
- Using Census 2000 housing data, the Knight Foundation counted Muscogee County as one of the eight Knight Foundation communities with very high levels of segregation between blacks and whites, and identified it as one of the seven most-segregated Knight Foundation communities for children under 18.
- Of the total firms with paid employees in Muscogee County, just over 5% had black owners in 1997. Compared to the percentage of black residents in Muscogee County in 2002, 43.7%, blacks are significantly underrepresented in the business community. Hispanics fare somewhat better with respect to representation from the area's total population. In 2000, over 4% of Muscogee County residents identified as Hispanic or of Hispanic origin, and more than 3.5% of firms are owned by Hispanics, a number that more accurately mirrors the presence of Hispanics in the overall population.³

Though race relations was determined as one of the community challenges based on surveys of residents of Muscogee County, the researchers in the Community Assessment process also had another conclusion:

"... while much of this data indicates that there is significant work to be done in this area, analysis of all the data leads also to the conclusion that the frequency with which this topic was discussed is indicative of residents' willingness to address this issue."⁴

"We live in a region that has remade itself in the last 50 years. The civil rights revolution, led by Southerners whose ancestors were brought to these shores in chains, destroyed the regime of Jim Crow and white supremacy. In the process, it freed us all, black and white alike. It also played a part in the great economic transformation that has turned the Cotton Belt into what we now call the Sun Belt. ... Yet, for all that, we still live in a region burdened by seemingly intractable problems of poverty and racial inequality. We built a new South, sure enough, but one that has too often stressed the development of place over people ... We must embrace the tradition of community organizing left to us by the civil rights movement – a tradition that emphasizes building relationships, that respects collective leadership, that seeks change from the bottom up, and that understands the importance of addressing local issues. But we must also learn from one another and struggle to overcome the isolation that too often keeps us ignorant of our neighbors' triumphs and failures. This charge is especially important in the context of today's globalizing economy ..."

-Dr. James Leloudis, Interim Director of the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill⁵

³ Carl Vinson Institute of Government, *Community Needs Assessment of the Chattahoochee Valley Region, Executive Report, - 2005, Muscogee County Report*, (Athens, GA: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2005) p. 97.

⁴Ibid, p. 93.

⁵ Jessie Ball DuPont Fund, *Unfinished Business: Creating a New Southern Agenda*, Number Seven, Summer, 1999. pp 23-24.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF COLUMBUS

The *Moving Forward Together Initiative* is not the first time the community has addressed race relations. One of the early efforts happened after the summer of 1971, when Columbus had a series of fights and fire-bombings that had racial undertones. A biracial committee was formed, and former Mayor J.R. Allen asked it to develop a strategy “that would foster greater communication between Columbus as a whole – black and white.”⁶ This committee concluded that a “feeling of alienation and hopelessness in economic development and employment for opportunities” was undergirding the tension.⁷ The major accomplishment of this group was inviting the National Urban League to create an affiliate chapter. This move was endorsed by the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and Columbus City Council. This piece of history speaks to the community’s effort to address this difficult issue.

Columbus is definitely on the move, though some would say it was slow starting in making progress, with Interstate 185 not being built until 1979. Even so, it rapidly progressed to becoming an attractive community in which to live and work, and the envy of other communities of similar and even larger size, especially in its success of creating public-private partnerships.

One of the early catalysts for Columbus’ transformation from a mill town to its current character was the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer’s* United Beyond 2000 effort in the mid-1980s. Many of the ideas from the United Beyond 2000 initiative have been realized. This was a major risk for the *Ledger-Enquirer*, and some have said that since that time, the newspaper has not found a balance between being a community partner, a business, and a news organization. This was the first type of community engagement process for the residents. The newspaper, specifically then-executive editor Jack Swift, was the catalyst and facilitator of this effort. This initiative included more people in a community planning processes than ever before, and shook up the typical decision-making process, in which the founding families made or influenced key decisions.

Members of the community have stepped forward to create several public and private partnerships that have led to positive and significant growth. It has been said that these public-private relationships evolved after a Chamber of Commerce retreat that featured some motivating remarks from the late Frank Morast, who challenged the business sector about its role in the community.⁸ From that experience and from several key leaders’ work, Columbus residents can now boast about the River Center for Performing Arts, the Total Systems Campus, the Columbus Civic Center, the Chattahoochee Riverwalk, the South Columbus Softball Complex, the Coca-Cola Space Science Center, and the new library on Macon Road. Though the public and private partnerships have created many new resources for the residents of Columbus, some have mentioned that it is typically the “usual suspects” who are involved in these initiatives, and that many members of the community do not feel included, nor does the process allow for their input. Though the “usual suspects” have become more diverse over the years, some residents say this still is a barrier.

In a fall 2004 survey by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, 81.3% of Muscogee County residents ranked the Chattahoochee Valley Region as an “excellent” or “good” place to live. The number-one strength shared during this process was “the people and the community.” During each focus group and interview, we also asked Columbus residents, “What do you see as the strengths and challenges of your community?” The following comments represent some consistent themes in residents’ answers:

Strengths

- Big city with a small-town atmosphere.

⁶ Metro Columbus Urban League, Historical Sketch, Columbus State University Archives.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ “Partners in Progress”, *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, Billy Winn, 2 January 2000.

- Economic growth.
- Relationship with Fort Benning.
- Willingness to work together.
- Great public safety team.
- Public and private partnerships.
- Accessibility to other cities.
- Diversity of the people.
- Good place to raise a family.
- Pride in the community.
- Willingness and openness to address issues.
- Business support and individuals willing to contribute to the community.
- Community leadership.

Challenges

- Polarization between North and South Columbus.
- Not enough activities for young people.
- Job opportunities are limited and the rate of pay is not competitive with other cities.
- To get away from “it’s all about me” mentality.
- We are controlled by a certain few.
- We are divided into the haves and have-nots.
- Education is not equal for all students.
- Move away from the “insider mindset” and be trusting and open to outsiders.
- Lack of understanding of different cultures.
- Average citizen looks down on law enforcement.
- We need to communicate better to solve these issues.
- Keep Columbus’ talent in Columbus.
- There are underlying racial tensions.
- We only talk to people in our comfort zones.

“The results of this widespread community effort are starting to be recognized across the state and throughout the Southeast, as other communities look to Columbus for ideas. Columbus is well-known for its successful public-private partnerships and is viewed as a leader in many areas. People appear to appreciate living in the community and are willing to acknowledge the challenges and issues that need to be addressed ... needs to continue to ‘set the bar high.’ On statistical comparisons, the State of Georgia average should not be the goal, but rather the starting point. ... This role has been and must continue to be synergistic rather than paternalistic, and one that seeks out collaborative opportunities at every possible point.”

⁹ Carl Vinson Institute of Government, *Community Needs Assessment of the Chattahoochee Valley Region, Executive Report,- 2005, Muscogee County Report*, (Athens, GA: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2005) p. 101

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

STATE OF RACE RELATIONS IN COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

One question was posed to each focus group and interviewee, and included in the survey: “Over the past five years, would you say race relations have gotten better, gotten worse or stayed the same in Columbus?” In the survey, 32% felt race relations were getting worse, 30% felt race relations have stayed the same, and 27% felt race relations were getting better. Though there is no definitive response to this question, all people have their own views of their community and their own personal experiences with people of different races and ethnicities. Each of the focus groups were predominately individuals composed of those who identified as Black or White; there were very few Hispanic, Asian-American, or Native American participants. Throughout this report, issues are described predominately in the context of the Black-White paradigm, which is not to minimize the struggles or issues of Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans, but our understanding of those issues are limited based on the level of participation.

The recent Kenneth Walker incident has placed race on the radar screen of most people who live in Columbus. When an incident of this magnitude occurs, the discourse of race begins to change, especially if the community did not typically include race in its public policy discussions. Many of the people in our focus groups commented that this kind of discussion does not typically happen, and appreciated having the space to have a facilitated conversation across racial lines. There were many Blacks and Whites who mentioned that they believed people of their respective identity communities are treated unequally. For the White respondents, the focus was on affirmative action, social programs, and in general the perception of “giving up power.” For African-American respondents, the issue seems to relate to lack of access to resources that affect their quality of life: good-paying jobs, quality education, etc., and the belief that this is due to their racial identity.

In the survey there were several comments from whites who expressed a level of frustration with how things currently are in their community, such as:

- “Many African-American people believe that they are constantly being discriminated against in one form or another. White people are sick to death of being treated like racists for not believing that because you are African-American you are entitled to special treatment or that the rules do not apply to them.”
- “Blacks in our community frequently make disparaging statements about the white community that would not be tolerated if the roles were reversed.”
- “The ‘African-American community,’ along with local, state, and federal government and the media are constantly promoting inequality through affirmative action programs, government housing programs, television programs, loans, schools, organizations, parades, marches and demonstrations designed for one race only.”

Indeed, though not to minimize individual frustration with the current state of race relations, in many ways the feelings being expressed by Whites are quite natural because they show how the status quo – the way things work within the community – is evolving. Conversely, African-Americans expressed their frustration at how things are in the community:

- “The workplace is still the place where you find discrimination against African-American men and women and people will not deal with the problem, just move it around hoping it will work itself out.”
- “No matter how much money a Black man might make, there are still places in Columbus that he would be shunned from or made miserable if he tried to move there. There are still restaurants that

employ racist people and know that these people are racist, but don't care. The bottom line is, racism will not change overnight.”

- “Still so many African-Americans being given the highest interest rates on homes and cars, still African-Americans being turned down for jobs more than whites.”
- “Neighborhoods are still segregated. School systems are very segregated and the quality of education differs greatly. My son goes to Spencer and he does not have books for all classes.”

Following the crisis of the recent Kenneth Walker incident, the community's discourse about race is evolving. There is now an opportunity for a different conversation, to discuss past racial situations that were under the surface but not typically shared between people of different races, and to start a discussion on how to address these challenges. Though these discussions may be uncomfortable, awkward, and emotional, this is a significant crossroads for Columbus. Through the process of dialogue the community can create a common language and understanding about race including using different terms: prejudice, bigotry, discrimination, and individual and institutional racism to describe their experience. There are many who are working to create better race relations, but there is still some finger-pointing, and people are struggling to understand the issues. It is important for residents to have a historic context of race relations in their community, and an understanding of how different local, state, and federal programs came to be and their relevance.

Determining a Community's Inclusiveness

It might be helpful for Columbus residents to have some context for understanding the current state of race relations. The Inclusive Community Assessment Tool provides a process whereby a community can determine its stage of inclusivity. By understanding the process of community change when it comes to race relations and racial injustices, residents can determine how to respond. Columbus has some of the characteristics of the “Awareness” stage and is beginning to show some characteristics of the “Disequilibrium” stage. Here are some characteristics of the “Awareness” stage:

- One trap that may develop in this stage concerns the “pie of resources.” The “pie” has been divided for a long time between whites and people of color; each group continues to pursue only its area of the resources, instead of coming together and using its energy to create a bigger pie with more resources for everyone.
- Typically, whites see people of color in power and may assume that they are all singing from the same hymnal, thus missing the diversity within the community of color and misreading the conflicts that occur.
- This is the stage at which many communities remain. It is comfortable; there is acknowledgement of the presence of people of color, there may be a few programs or events to celebrate culture, there are a few community sectors that include diversity in their programs, and there are a few leaders of color.
- This is the first of many struggles for the community – deciding if the community's racial climate and quality of life is satisfactory and if there is a need to make it a priority. On the part of the white community, at this stage there continues to be awkwardness in dealing with the issues and interacting with people of color.

In the Disequilibrium stage, struggles and conflicts increase. Characteristics of this stage include:

- There is more awareness of the exclusivity inherent in the community's decision-making process. This stage may be marked by an increase in conflicts: People are struggling with changing the community's decision-making process, institutional practices and racial disparities are subject to greater scrutiny, and people comfortable with the status quo are coming into increasing conflict with those who advocate change.

- Members of the traditional power structure will struggle with the idea of power redistribution. The way the community responds to these different kinds of conflict will determine how long it remains in this stage. This stage has the potential to include some setbacks.
- Leaders face a balancing act: acknowledging racial disparities and people's pain, while supporting people who are feeling overwhelmed by change. Actions may still be based on the way organizations or individuals are perceived rather than on the value of creating an inclusive community.
- Another variable influencing how the community responds will be the number of people of color who fill key positions. An increase in the numbers of people of color in organizations or civic roles should be celebrated.
- At this stage, there is still significant resistance within the white community to continuing to raise the issue of race and, specifically, disparities attributable to race. Part of the resistance is due to fear; a common sentiment may be, "If we focus on correcting racial disparities, what will my child or family lose?" This is a reasonable question. For many whites who left challenging city school systems across the country and enrolled their child in private schools, it became an immediate band-aid for a much larger problem.
- To some, the process of redress will still imply that for every winner there is a loser, and not that the process must be a win-win situation. It is a major culture shift when community residents understand that their responses and actions regarding civic and policy issues affect others and not just their immediate family.¹⁰

It is important to share some other residents' comments we heard about the state of race relations to provide a full view of different people's perspectives.

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

- I think it's been good and getting better in the last five years. There are so many good people in any race. Columbus is a friendly town and has good leadership. There will always be problems and people always trying to solve them, but I think it's always getting better.
- I see the extremes in black/white relations. There is an old mindset that goes back to the family ... Whites are not on board. We still have those that are upset about having a Black History month.
- Each camp believes they have all the information and there is little discussion. We move away from discussion since we are uncertain of how to answer the problem. We want to do right; we're just not sure how to get there.
- Fifteen years ago this focus group never would have happened. Most people think about the issues, but they are not discussed.
- Whites say to get over it, move on. Heal. We didn't recognize the depth of the wounds. It's not for us to tell people when it is time to heal.
- Positive steps by individuals are being offset by a negative mindset of those in power in many corporate and government entities.
- The racial topic is openly discussed and boundaries are beginning to deteriorate. Our region is becoming more diverse and this creates more opportunities for us as a community to learn from one another.
- In the last five years, there really has not been a real dedicated combined effort to make race relations better – there are a lot of different groups working on this issue with each of them having their own agenda. It would be nice to have all of these groups working together to enhance the race relations

¹⁰ Maggie Potapchuk, *Assessing your Community's Inclusiveness*, (Washington D.C.: National League of Cities, 2003), pp 29-30 and 34-35.

for Columbus and remove the invisible line that separates North Columbus and South Columbus. We can be a true “One Columbus.”

- Issues have not been addressed. Race is downplayed as an issue and rarely acknowledged. Not that race is the prime motive for a lot of what happens, it is the factor. Whites either do not understand the concept of race or have convinced themselves that race is not ever a factor in one’s decisions, while blacks because of conditioning of past experiences and refusal to acknowledge race/racism by whites, tend to overreact to any confrontations involving the races. So we are caught in a conundrum with no solution in sight.

“Diversity is not about taking opportunities or resources from one side of the line and redistributing them to a select group. Rather, it is about adding to the sum of a community’s livability where we all benefit because we have maximized the contributions of each of our citizens.”

-Glenda E. Hood, Former Mayor, Orlando, Florida

MACON ROAD – PERCEPTION OR REALITY?

There is a Macon Road in many communities in the United States. Though they may have different names, the description is similar – one part of the community is perceived as the “have-nots” and is typically predominately African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American, and Native American, with some Whites. The other side of the dividing line is perceived as the “haves” and is typically predominately White, with only some racial and ethnic diversity. There are many reasons why this section of town exists in communities across the United States. It is important to look at systemic issues that have produced disparities in education, economic development, and even public decision-making, rather than seeing these issues as individual choices. There are some who may perceive this part of the community as receiving lots of resources and programs, but if we look deeper, many of these efforts would be considered “band-aid” solutions to some very complex issues.

In Columbus, the north side of Macon Road has variety of better stores, restaurants, shopping malls, and is perceived as safe. The south side of Macon Road is lacking the same variety of stores and restaurants and is perceived to be less safe, especially at night. The residents of South Columbus were asked two years ago at the beginning of the South Columbus Revitalization Effort, “what is not working well in South Columbus, what needs to be improved?”

- Abandoned homes.
- Strip clubs not helping the city’s reputation.
- Street repairs are not being taken care of in a timely fashion.
- Limited public transportation – lack of Sunday bus service and evening service.
- Wide public perception needs improvement.
- Lack of minority owned and operated businesses.
- Chamber of Commerce needs to put forth more effort to channel businesses to South Columbus.¹¹

South Columbus was the center of Columbus and its earlier residents were predominately white. Columbus is consistent with resident housing patterns across the country, when individuals in a lower income bracket, who many times are predominately people of color, move into a neighborhood, those in higher income bracket, who are predominately white, leave the area. Though this area may have been thriving, with the tax

¹¹ “Public’s input Helps for Focus for New Task Force,” *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, Chuck Williams, 16 September 2003.

base moving north it became neglected. The residents who stay become invisible and there is a sense of alienation from the broader community.

We did not look at hard data such as crime statistics, numbers and types of businesses, length of time for city departments to respond, etc. It is very important to consider the perceptions and feelings of residents that believe their neighborhood has been neglected for a number of years. Though it is important to review statistics and to address disparities, the question to be addressed by the community is “What is the community’s responsibility to ensure resources are fully shared with all residents?” Some of these perceptions described to us were caused by the stories that are passed on, as well as how the news media reports on crime and issues in South Columbus.¹² This dividing line is also exacerbated by perceptions of differences in resource allotment and the quality of facilities in North Columbus schools versus South Columbus schools. There is a strong perception that schools on the north side receive more experienced teachers, more money, and, since the population is growing north, newer schools.

Things are beginning to improve in South Columbus with the recent Columbus South Revitalization Effort, though only some of the people we spoke with were aware of the project and its potential impact. This speaks to the importance of communicating the plan to address perceptions versus reality. The neighborhood is on City Hall’s radar screen and seems to be a top priority. The process engaged the residents in this area, who participated in the forums and task force (75 people). Their esteem for their neighborhood has been lifted by the investment, the interest, and hope that the 27 action items will become reality in the short term. Those 27 items address economic development, housing, education, physical environment, and community involvement issues. One of the interesting stories we read about this process is that the task force not only did a good job obtaining community input, it also began a dialogue between some influential citizens who became unlikely allies.¹³ It is possible that these beginning dialogues can be sustained into longer discussions about Columbus as a whole. Moving this from an “effort” to nonprofit status is hopefully an assurance that this is an investment and a commitment to share resources throughout Columbus.

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

- The North/South Columbus issue becomes bigger because we want it to be divided rather than created together. In talking about the school board, there are districts, “MY” districts, not the district at large. Not “our” but “my.”
- We need big corporations to come into South Columbus so that other businesses and restaurants come too.
- There are a couple of companies that advertise on TV. All the programs emphasize the lovely new homes in N. Columbus. The realtors steer new people to N. Columbus. The southern end is talked down.
- South Columbus is perceived as not safe. There was a survey done that shows N. Columbus has more crime than S. Columbus. The perception is not backed up.
- The way Columbus Council votes on certain issues and resident voting shows the tension between North and South.
- Macon Rd. is a perception. If you got money, you can live anywhere you want; it just so happens that once upon a time, most white folks lived in South Columbus, as things grew, people moved away. It’s not about race, it’s about money.
- People in South Columbus are angry about the new mall in North Columbus. It’s a long way for them to have to drive and then, when they get there, they can’t afford anything. It’s like all the nice

¹² “Ledger-Enquirer Roundtable: South Columbus Sense of Place,” *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, 31 October 2004.

¹³ “South Columbus Task Force Unlikely Pairings Start Dialogue Influential Citizens Discuss Plans for South Columbus”, *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, Chuck Williams, 21 September 2003.

housing is going north. Why can't we put nice affordable housing in South Columbus? People in South Columbus can't afford to live in the North. Just as much potential there as there is in the North.

- I have an issue with safety in South Columbus. It has gotten a bad reputation for having a lot of crime and such. There is a lot of there, too. I think they should just demolish all those clubs where the drugs are. It's not going to get better until we make it better.

“Any attempt to change a situation either politically or otherwise should be based on the transformation of our own consciousness ... You have to understand yourself to some extent, and to the people in the communities, to their deepest desires, their suffering. That kind of deep looking will bring about more understanding of self and of the community ... You learn to look not with individual eyes, but with the community eyes. Because the collective insight is always deeper than individual insight.”

-Thich Nhat Hanh, Renowned Vietnamese Buddhist monk

KENNETH WALKER INCIDENT AND ITS IMPACT UPON THE COMMUNITY

On December 10, 2003, Columbus resident Kenneth Walker was shot and killed by then-Muscogee County Sheriff's Deputy David Glisson in the midst of a drug-related traffic stop along Interstate 185. The death of Mr. Walker ignited a community response that would leave the community questioning old assumptions about race and searching for a means to discover how to unite and heal itself.

Whenever a life is lost, there is an effect upon any community because the community can no longer benefit from the talents of its member. When a life is lost during a law enforcement operation where questions remain unanswered, or parts of a community feel a sense that its concerns are invisible, polarization is possible. A community can be deeply divided without a sense of how to manage the sentiments and demands placed upon it. Our civic and political leaders are expected to devise solutions that will work for the benefit of all and help the community down the path of healing.

Regardless of how Kenneth Walker's death is viewed by various community members, it has brought the community to a place to examine where it is on issues of race and to question previously held assumptions. Some see Kenneth Walker's death, while tragic, as a wake-up call that race relations are not where they thought they were and thus there is an opportunity to bridge that divide. Others see the incident, and the subsequent community reaction, as an opportunity for many to capitalize upon a tragic event. Still others view it as a continuation of a sort of indifference about the value of African-American life.

Kenneth Walker's death has put the issue of race, police operations, and policing in general in neighborhoods of color squarely before the community. And although there have been strong reactions from all parts of the community from different points of view, Columbus, unlike many communities that have experienced the death of a community member by a law enforcement officer, did not erupt into violence. Perhaps this says something about community leaders who have been working to address issues of race and race relations in the community. Perhaps it attests to the level of consciousness this community has developed to seek alternate solutions to its problems.

In terms of how best to help the community move forward, we heard different answers from residents about what that would take. Residents held very different ideas about how the judicial system should respond as well as how the community should respond. These included the idea that a second grand jury should be

requested to hearing that the matter had been settled and the community needs to accept that. Lingering concerns remain in the aftermath of the grand jury proceedings.

Residents shared with us how the Kenneth Walker incident affected race relations in the community. As anticipated, the responses varied greatly:

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

- The Walker incident has polarized the community. I am sick and tired of whites blaming the victim!
- With the death of Mr. Kenneth Walker relations in the city of Columbus have gotten worse. All the progress we had made over the years has been greatly damaged by this incident. The city needs to work to make our city back on an even keel and keep working to make it a place for all citizens to feel equal. The color of our skin should not be an issue.
- A lot of the feelings that were kept under the surface, if you will, are now coming to the surface in light of the Kenneth Walker incident and other incidents like it that have happened in Columbus in recent years.
- The Kenneth Walker incident has stirred up a lot of racial tension. All Blacks do not believe the incident was racially motivated. All Whites do not believe that race was not a factor in the incident. Unfortunately, when the respective “leaders” or “speakers” of the Black and White communities voice their opinions, the entire community oftentimes mistakenly perceives the opinions as being that of all of the respective race.
- People like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton get an invitation to come here and stir up trouble!
- Race relations are better but not where they need to be. If there was not communication between the races the Kenny Walker shooting would have been a powder bag. In many cities violence would have occurred. Many in the white community are not satisfied with how this was addressed.
- In all reality, accidents happen. Kenny’s death is an accident. The community won’t accept the verdict. The community has to learn to live with what the law, or a jury finds. They need to forgive and forget.
- Many people think it’s [the social protest afterwards] a way for their voice to be heard, whether or not it’s a racial issue.
- Walker could have been any of us. If it had been a thug black kid, it wouldn’t have been a big deal.
- I think it’s kind of reverse discrimination. You know if it had been a white person it wouldn’t have carried on this long.
- Kenny Walker case was not about racism, it was about one gung-ho cop who overstepped his boundary.
- Since the Walker case, I believe there are black church leaders who perpetuate the problem by intentionally dividing people.

“The tolerance and understanding necessary to heal must come from each and everyone of us, arising out of everyday conduct, until decency reaches a flood tide.”

-Muhammad Ali, 1996

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF GROWING DIVERSITY

Columbus, like most growing cities, is attracting more and more diverse residents. A number of newly arrived residents told us they were drawn to the community because of its warmth, its southern hospitality, or opportunities for employment.

The Asian and Hispanic populations are close to two percent and five percent, respectively.¹⁴ These groups are by no means monolithic. Within the Asian community in Columbus there are Koreans, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, Indians, U.S. Samoans, and Vietnamese, while the Hispanic community is represented mainly by Mexicans and Columbians. Many are also from Guatemala. When asked how the community is meeting the challenge of this diversity, participants spoke in terms of how some faith institutions were reaching out to conduct bilingual services; a number of corporations provide cultural competency training, although some are just beginning; the city government offers diversity training; the health agencies use bilingual translators; and housing agencies are addressing the issue of diversity as well. Some people mentioned there is some resentment by longer-term residents about forms being translated and institutions offering bilingual services. The resentment stems from feelings that these extra services were not available to them, yet “these people” are entitled to them.

We were told a major concern is the need for translators, transportation services, and access to services. Many residents who come from different cultural traditions don’t understand the process of accessing services in this country. Nor do they possess the knowledge of what law enforcement expects of them when it comes to procedures. Some immigrant groups have started associations to offer support and provide services. There were a few places mentioned that serve as gathering places for food and socialization. There was a sense that very little existed for middle-income immigrants and presents a challenge.

If the community is to benefit from this growing increase in diversity, efforts must be made to include not only cultural and social awareness opportunities for all residents, but to ensure that the voice of these diverse groups are incorporated into the public decision-making process as well. This is especially critical with the increase in diversity that the 5th Brigade to Ft. Benning, will bring to the community.

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

- We have a more diverse population today and people understand one another better.
- I think we need to do more for our Hispanic and Asian populations.
- Columbus is a reflection of America. We’re never had to come to grips with other cultures. We’re trying; we have to rethink concepts we’ve know all our lives.
- With Fort Benning here, we do a good job of welcoming the new. It does a better job than other communities.
- Some Hispanics come to feel like there is not really a Hispanic culture anymore. There isn’t a common language. Even slang is different across Hispanic cultures and it’s hard to appreciate differences.
- Columbus is a melting pot now. Fort Benning helped us change. There are couples that are different races and nationalities, etc. If you love somebody, you love somebody. Other people just have to learn to deal with it. You have to look at the person, it’s not black or white anymore. There are different ideas and you have to learn different ways.

¹⁴ *Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce, Demographics, Muscogee County/1999 Georgia County Guide*, Demographics USA, County Edition, 1999.

- Many churches have services in Spanish now.
- We act like all people are Christians.
- The best cultural “Bridger” is the River Center. It’s a cultural breeding ground for diversity.
- I hope to see diversity in the community and that we can communicate. I don’t want to combine cultures.
- Diversity is important. We can learn from each other. The culture might be different, but it is not better or worse. Learn from it.
- It is not always about black and white ... we have to adjust to Indian culture.

“It is fairer, and certainly right, to compare American practice with America’s ideals, and American life with America’s dreams. The continuing controversy ... is about values and vision. What does America want to see in the mirror? What kind of communities do we want for our children? What dreams will nourish the spirits of the least among us? We have a history of division, but for the most part it is division based on perspectives, not our dreams.”

-Christopher Edley, Jr., former member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission

LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

Columbus Beyond 2000, a project of the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, was an important initiative in the late 1980s that provided the community a process, a different way of making decisions and talking about community issues. There are different points of view about the impact of this initiative and much disappointment in the *Ledger-Enquirer* for suddenly stopping this project. Though this effort was a shift for the community, the pattern of engaging residents in community discussions did not continue consistently. Two other major initiatives did use a significant community engagement process.¹⁵ The first happened in 1998: “One Community ... One Vision,” a planning process to develop a community vision for 2005. Many parts of this action plan support the premise of the *Moving Forward Together Initiative*. The South Columbus Revitalization Effort recently completed its plan and is moving into the implementation stage by creating a nonprofit organization. In the focus groups, we heard several comments from participants questioning who was making the decisions in their community and many had concerns about leadership.

There is a perception – and some would say a reality – of a small group of people who care deeply about the community, but who meet behind closed doors to make community decisions to strategically move the community forward. Even if this group is diverse, it is still on its face a provincial process. This was also observed by the researchers who conducted the community assessment report.¹⁶ It will be important for Columbus to use community engagement as a regular practice in problem-solving and policy discussion, rather than just for major initiatives. The promising practice section offers several examples of communities that are doing just that.

We heard about tensions that run deep between individuals and organizations, some involving high-profile stakeholders or key community institutions. Constructive conflict is part of the democratic process and should be encouraged. When tensions become barriers to getting things done for the good of the city, then a

¹⁵ “Some Talking Points for 2000 and Beyond,” *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, Dusty Nix, 19 May 2002. “Public’s Input Helps Form Focus for New Task Force,” *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, Chuck Williams 16 September 2003.

¹⁶ Carl Vinson Institute of Government, *Community Needs Assessment of the Chattahoochee Valley Region, Executive Report, - 2005, Muscogee County Report, (Athens, GA: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2005) p. 101.*
Muscogee County Report, (Athens, GA: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2005) p. 101.

different response is needed. Some of the tensions we heard about were between: the school board and city council, the city council and the Columbus police, the NAACP and the Urban League, and some business leaders and the school board. When a conflict is at a point where people have minimal communication, then it can become a barrier to community business. These conflicts can sometimes be far-reaching, possibly impacting the community in terms of citizen safety, management effectiveness, or tax dollars. Whether it is about racial relations or economic development, the mantra that many residents expressed needs to be heard more regularly: “What is best for ALL Columbus residents?” Organizations and leaders must not assume they know what’s best, but should instead enter into community dialogue and constructively address their differences. It will be important to find common ground, to identify common visions, to understand others’ approaches and to think about ways to leverage others’ approach. Leaders need to model collaboration and working through their conflicts of approaches.¹⁷

We asked people how many years they had lived in Columbus. Many of those who had lived there 12-15 years or less still felt like outsiders. This may have to do with the culture and the norms of community processes and community organizations, but also may have to do with how the community can build its capacity to engage the public and conduct effective outreach activities. Some felt that whites relied on a select few people of color to serve on boards and planning committees and that some of those individuals then felt they were spokespersons for their identity community. And some felt those who were chosen to be on boards and committees gained their positions through family connections and social circles.

We asked residents who the “bridge-builders”¹⁸ are, and though several names came up regularly, people also remarked that these individuals were getting on in years, and that they did not see any younger individuals on the horizon to fill those big shoes. The community has three major leadership programs, Cunningham Leadership Institute, Leadership Columbus, and Servant Leadership Program. How will these groups help address this perceived challenge? How are the elders mentoring and how are the organizations doing succession planning? The community currently has a basic infrastructure in place to address racial issues, though there are developed relationships among leaders of different races. There are also individuals and organizations that have some strong differences of opinion about the approach to be taken to resolve different challenges. It is important to have key messengers and leaders publicly discuss the importance of coming together to create a plan to address the Community Foundation’s question: How should the Columbus community respond in an effective way to ensure race and ethnicity does not impact opportunities for all residents?¹⁹

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

- When all of the key decision makers of the community are predominately of one particular race and class, why wouldn’t I be skeptical of change, especially when now their children of “like mind” are beginning to assume power?
- The new people are not invited. We are segregated in our groups – It’s not “Oh let me go out and get someone to bring along.” That doesn’t happen much.
- We need something in place for the young to express their desires for Columbus.

¹⁷ Potapchuk, Maggie, *Cultivating Interdependence: A Guide for Race Relations and Racial Justice Organizations*, (Washington D.C.: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies), 2005.

¹⁸ In the book, *Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground: New Dimensions on Race in America*, by Angela Glover Blackwell, Stewart Kwoh, and Manuel Pastor refer to a conversation with Craig McGarvey, program officer at the James Irvine foundation who described Border Bridgers as those who speak to and for their constituents while earning the respect of constituents of others. They are leaders who “move with integrity outside their own circles, always seeking a circle that is broader. They find common ground by setting difference aside and focusing on interests that can be shared.” p. 202.

¹⁹ Opportunities include: the relations between different races and ethnicities, voices at the table for community decision-making, and the access to jobs, education, housing, services, and quality of life.

- The times of meetings are not convenient – the average employee can't leave work for a 10 a.m. meeting.
- Explore and discover the problems and suggest solutions, but publish these findings and allow others to give their input before a decision is made. You will still get negative feedback from some people, but attempt to answer their concerns so others will feel they are more involved.
- Breakdown of the stranglehold of “Old Money” families on the distribution of resources within the Columbus/Muscogee County and surrounding areas.
- I hope people in all communities think this is a good place to live. Trust that people are there for them, not just for a few. We need to challenge our leaders to be more involved.
- My hope is that people will put aside their anger and be constructive to move us in the right direction. I hope we listen to each other and hear the different opinions.
- It is up to the preachers to put the unity back into the community.
- I would like the foundation to present or offer a WORKABLE plan to the city leaders and private businesses and industry that would help the citizens more comfortably embrace the ideas of diversity.

“It is not the power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who held it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it.”

-Aung San Suukyi, Nobel Prize Winner

EQUITABLE ACCESS

We received 304 community and focus group surveys.²⁰ Of those, 38% were completed by African-Americans, 1.6% by Asian-Americans, 6.8% by Hispanics/Latinos, 0.98% by Multiracial people, 0.65% were completed by Native Americans, and 1.6% identified themselves as Other. Fifty-two percent were completed by those who identified as White/Caucasian.

Overwhelmingly, across races, *work* was the number one place where individuals had the most interaction with people of different racial backgrounds. (Individuals could choose from *work*, *faith community*, *school*, *volunteer activities* or *other*.) The second most common place for interaction for Whites was *Other*, which included shopping, neighborhood, and entertainment centers. The second highest place of interaction for African-Americans, Hispanic, Native American, and Multiracial individuals was *volunteer activities*. For Asian-Americans, the second highest place of interaction was within the faith community.

When asked how many friends they have from different racial backgrounds, answers varied across race as well. The question did not define what *friend* means, so answers were based on individual interpretations of friendship. If there were more specifics given for this question, the answers may have varied. Those who identify as Multiracial said they had a *couple* of friends who were of a different race, those who identify as Asian-American said they mostly had *several* friends, and those who identify as African-American, Hispanic-American, White/Caucasian or Native American said they had *many* friends.

The next question asked, *In the past three years, have you experienced racial discrimination or are you aware of incidents of racial discrimination in Columbus, GA in any of the following settings: retail stores/restaurants, social service agencies, clinics/hospitals, buying, renting, leasing a home/apartment, city and government offices, local news coverage, workplace, schools, law enforcement, recreation (museums, parks or theater)?* Across race, the settings in which the highest numbers of racial discrimination incidents were reported by survey respondents are (in descending order): local news coverage, law enforcement, workplace, retail stores and restaurants, schools, and city and government offices. Clinics/hospitals, recreation, and social service agencies are the settings which respondents most frequently described as “*never*” being the sites of incidents of racial discrimination. Though clinics/hospitals came out looking extremely good in the survey – as places where incidents of discrimination almost never occur – some individuals mentioned that the most difficult group to reach for involvement in community activities was doctors.

It is important to look for patterns based on racial groups. Though we received few surveys from those who identified as Multiracial, Native American or Asian-American, it is still important to report those who shared their experiences in Columbus. Among those who identified as Native American, retail stores was the setting which was most likely to be marked *frequently* as the site of incidents of discrimination. Asian-Americans’ highest ranking was *occasionally* for the workplace setting, and the highest *never* ratings were clinics/hospitals, buying, renting, leasing a home or apartment, and city and government offices. Those who identified as Multiracial rated law enforcement and buying, renting, leasing a home or apartment with the highest degree of incidence (*frequently/occasionally*) and recreation received the highest *never* rating.

Hispanics/Latinos were most likely to rate clinics/hospitals, local news coverage, retail stores/restaurants, and recreation as *frequently/occasionally* being the sites of incidents of discrimination; recreation received the most *never* ratings among this group.

²⁰ The Focus Group Survey only included the first three questions and the final two questions of the Community Survey. Please see Appendix.

The settings that received the highest number of *frequently/occasionally* ratings among African-Americans were law enforcement, schools, retail stores/restaurants, local news coverage, and workplace. Among this group, clinics/hospitals received the most *never* ratings.

Among Whites/Caucasians, the greatest numbers of *frequently/occasionally* ratings were given to local news coverage and law enforcement. Recreation and clinics/hospitals were given the highest number of *never* ratings. With law enforcement receiving a *frequent* rating by a few groups, it would have been helpful to have a follow-up question on whether people were referring to the recent Kenneth Walker incident and/or if they were referring to a pattern of behavior.

The survey did have a follow-up question regarding the incidents of discrimination that were experienced or witnessed: *Some incidents of discrimination are a result of an individual person's behavior toward another person, while some discrimination happens because the rules or the culture of an organization caused it to happen. Please choose three settings in which you experienced or are aware of frequent or occasional discrimination, and then check whether you believe the discrimination was based on an individual or organizational cause.* Across race, those settings that received the most votes for an *individual* cause were: law enforcement, retail stores/restaurants, workplace, and city and government offices. Those settings in which discrimination was most held to be based on *organizational* causes were: local news coverage, law enforcement, schools, and city and government offices.

Those who identified themselves as Multiracial felt law enforcement incidents were attributable to *organizational* causes, and that incidents at social service agencies and clinics and hospitals were attributable to *individual* causes.

Hispanics/Latinos identified the incidents of discrimination had *organizational* causes in the following settings: city and government offices, local news coverage, clinics/hospitals, and workplace. The settings in which this group was most likely to attribute incidents of discrimination to *individual* causes were recreation, retail stores/restaurants, social service agencies, clinics/hospitals, buying, renting, leasing a home or apartment, schools, and law enforcement.

Whites/Caucasians overwhelmingly attributed discrimination in local news coverage to *organizational* causes. Some of the comments that accompanied this rating included:

- “They are racially-biased and look for the action or dramatics for their stories.”
- “They don’t want to get it right, they want to get it first, and an example is typically they go into poor black neighborhoods to show poverty but more whites live in poverty in this area.”
- “They are anti-Caucasian and pro-black.”

Whites rated retail stores/restaurants and law enforcement as the settings in which discrimination was most attributable to *individual* causes. African-Americans said discrimination in schools, law enforcement, and local news coverage had *organizational* causes. African-Americans ranked retail stores/restaurants, law enforcement, and workplace as the places most likely to have discrimination attributable to *individual* causes.

BUSINESS

Columbus has a strong business community with leaders who are active in the community. The Community Assessment report describes the sector as follows: “Muscookee County’s economy is truly a regional one which crosses state, national, and international lines. The county benefits from AFLAC, Synovus, and other corporate headquarters and is an insurance center for the state ... it is a diverse economy with inherent strengths that the community can build upon.”²¹ Some of the major corporations have recently established diversity programs that offer training and mentoring programs. The community is very fortunate to have Fort Benning, not only for its resources and diversity, but because it has a long-established program to ensure equal opportunity. Though Fort Benning’s context may be different because the military personnel on the base must take orders, there are still significant lessons that can be learned. In our research, we asked about compilations of data on the diversity of corporate boards and among senior officers, comparisons of salaries by position and race, and a listing of diversity programs’ components and outcomes. There was some anecdotal information available, but it will be important to better track this information to celebrate progress and to identify gaps and next steps.

In the community and focus group survey, the workplace was listed, across racial lines, as a setting where individuals experienced “occasional” or “frequent” discrimination. The survey asked if incidents of discrimination resulted from individuals’ behavior toward others, or if the causes were more systemic. In other words, did the rules or cultures of the organizations cause or allow the incidents to happen? People commented that there are different rules depending on one’s race, there are derogatory comments (sometimes from supervisors), there is a lack of consistent opportunities for advancement, and limited staff diversity. Across racial lines, the workplace received the highest “individual cause” rating, though these examples point more to organizational causes. African-Americans rated individual causes as most prevalent; Hispanic Americans rated organizational causes highest. Though this collection of data was limited, it raised a red flag about the need for organizations to provide cultural competency and diversity training, assess their policies, practices, and procedures to ensure an inclusive welcoming environment for their customers and employees, and to heighten their commitment to eliminate discriminatory practices.

Another theme we heard from residents is the need to diversify employment opportunities and increase wages. Several people mentioned that the wages are some of the lowest in the state. The unemployment rate is currently at 5%, though as in many communities, this statistic does not speak to those who are underemployed. According to the Community Assessment Report, “... residents noted a lack of progressive jobs or opportunities for advancement in many sectors of the community’s economy ... Further diversification of the economy and targeted business attraction for living wage jobs are areas that residents discussed in detail ... Small and independent business development could also prove to be a strength for the community.”²²

In almost every focus group, residents remarked how the youth are leaving Columbus and not returning. Though part of this is a rite of passage that many youth experience, it is also important to understand the reasons why, and how Columbus can be more supportive for youth and attractive to young professionals. At the Dare to Dream²³ workshop, groups of youths representing all of the Columbus high schools answered a set of questions about their community. The thoughts they shared:

²¹ Carl Vinson Institute of Government, *Community Needs Assessment of the Chattahoochee Valley Region, Executive Report, - 2005, Muscookee County Report*, (Athens, GA: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2005) p. 95.

²² Carl Vinson Institute of Government, *Community Needs Assessment of the Chattahoochee Valley Region, Executive Report,- 2005, Muscookee County Report*, (Athens, GA: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2005) p. 101

²³ Dare to Dream is an annual event sponsored by Leadership Columbus Alumni and One Columbus. Each high school is asked to select 6-8 students (sophomores and juniors). The focus is to help young people grow into productive citizens with high self esteem and valuing and respecting the differences of others.

What do you like about Columbus?

- Not too large, not too small
- Restaurants
- Friends and family
- Night life
- Malls, sports, schools
- Weather
- Low crime rate
- Enough fast food places for jobs

What do you dislike about Columbus?

- Lots of segregation
- Too far from Atlanta
- Too much discrimination and prejudice
- No safe places to go for entertainment
- Not enough activities
- Too many old people
- The way people respond to biracial relationships
- Not a large university
- Better businesses on north side

How many of you plan to stay in Columbus after graduating? How many are moving back?

- Majority wants to leave
- No job opportunities and industry
- Too small
- Have a broader range of jobs outside of banking, not just AFLAC, CB&T
- Don't like the southern atmosphere; don't like rednecks [*comment by a white student*]
- Want to see something different
- Will return upon retirement

Of all things, what's most important?

- Racial diversity
- Respect for one another; older folks need to respect the opinions of younger generations
- More activities where you can interact and attract a diverse group
- Everything is split based on location; there should be activities in the middle
- Schools getting input from kids

It will be important to conduct a comprehensive survey to learn the thoughts of high school, college-age students and young professionals, especially regarding what assets they are looking for to consider staying in the community. Other communities have experienced similar "brain drains," and the Chamber of Commerce

may want to explore how these communities addressed the issue.²⁴ Many people were concerned there were not enough young people to be leaders, or enough of them who are ready to step in to key positions in the community. Organizations will need to be more intentional about including youth in their decision-making bodies and planning committees. The Youth Advisory Council (a partnership between City of Columbus and Muscogee County School District) is a very important group for the community. The next step is to ensure that young voices are integrated into many of the community processes and not marginalized. One resource on youth engagement summed up the importance of this relationship: “When young people participate in decision-making (as equals) with adults, mobilize and create or change public policy, and take influential leadership roles in organizations and institutions, the benefits accrue to adults, organizations and communities as well as contributing to the positive development of youth themselves.”²⁵

We heard several comments from focus group participants about the business community and Muscogee County School System, but people’s perceptions differed significantly, and so we encourage people from these institutions to discuss these issues further. Without a doubt, Partnership in Education received significant kudos for the companies’ generosity, not only with resources but also volunteer time in the schools. The first item that needs continued exploration—based on several people’s comments—is the racial makeup of schools. Since many of the schools are predominately African-American or predominately White, how does this affect the students as they enter a more diverse and global workplace? A second issue concerns the role of businesses. Though businesses are partners in providing resources to schools, is there a more active role for this sector to play? Some individuals suggested that the business community could share its expertise in management and budgeting. Another issue raised was the need for an open discussion about the curriculum, to ensure that students graduating are ready to enter the workforce and are aware of career choices, especially in Columbus. The Community Assessment Report commented: “While workforce efforts are clearly being tailored to some of the community’s most pressing needs, many participants were concerned about the community’s ability to meet business needs, particularly in the area of skilled labor.”²⁶

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

- Setting the tone starts with leadership. Is the Chamber the one to set the tone? It’s all white males. How do they sell South Columbus? There hasn’t been one black president at the Chamber.
- If you look at the demographics, they show that we take care of the wealthy and the poor very well. The middle class is squeezed. The youth, after finishing college, are not coming back to Columbus.
- There is resistance to [diversity] training. It’s not overt or obvious, but it is inaction. A manager comes to training, but he doesn’t buy into it. He knows how to play the game. He is careful not to hinder himself in his business. He doesn’t want to be accused of being racist; he tries not to be labeled.
- Some of the schools have no diversity (some are all black or all white); life revolves around the school and home. There is no outer contact. Then they come to work. That creates problems. The kids don’t know how to deal with other ethnicities.
- Being overlooked on your job with percentage raises when you have the education and work experience that would give you more money. Being paid only 89% of your salary and not 100%.

²⁴ The Strategic Development Group launched the US National Brain Drain Survey to serve as a national resource for communities dealing with the out-migration of talented and educated residents. See www.sdg.us

²⁵ From www.youthengagementandvoice.org (accessed 4/17/05). The website includes, research guides, reports, and curriculum and training. Another resource is, “Building an Effective Citizenry Lessons Learned from Initiatives in Youth Engagement,” by the American Youth Policy Forum. For more information, www.aypf.org/pressreleases/pr21.htm or call 202-775-9731.

²⁶ Carl Vinson Institute of Government, *Community Needs Assessment of the Chattahoochee Valley Region, Executive Report,- 2005, Muscogee County Report*, (Athens, GA: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2005) p. 96

- At work, other ethnic groups are still being dishonest by judging people because of what someone else has said. It affects your work and sometimes your productivity. And I find that most Caucasians do not want to listen if they have a black supervisor or manager.
- Promotions based on race are evident only to maintain racial balance. Non-qualified selections, everyone can see that it is a joke, even in their own race. “Usually” an applicant is offered employment based on qualifications, initiative and background history regardless of race or gender. It is time to remove ourselves from attempting to be “politically correct” and grow from a level playing field.
- Business and education need to work more closely together. There are too many youngsters coming out of school with no work ethic. We need to find ways into middle schools, too, so the kids come out with a plan.

“Our Constitution and our national conscience demand that every American be accorded dignity and respect, receive the same treatment under the law, and enjoy equal opportunity.”

-General Colin Powell, 1995

EDUCATION

One sign of a vibrant community is a highly educated citizenry. The educational attainment of community members often impacts the long-term economic stability of an area. The *Critical Needs Assessment* report highlights Muscogee County as lagging behind the state and the nation in the proportion of residents who hold bachelors' and graduate degrees. There was, however a steady increase in every educational category above high school for residents from 1990 to 2000.²⁷

The Columbus region benefits from a number of universities (liberal arts and technical) as well as community colleges. High educational attainment prepares the community to compete within the growing fields of industry, service, and technology from a local, statewide, nationally, and internationally. Most residents were pleased with the level of opportunities in higher education available to them.

When it came to the primary and secondary school systems, however, residents were more critical of disparities. Some residents felt a sense of betrayal by the school board when it came to considering the needs of students in South Columbus; there was a general perception that the school board did not have a community vision for the schools, but rather a provincial one. This perception was also extended to some residents who did not have children in the school system. The controversy about the one-cent sales tax along racial and geographical lines highlighted the frustration of how the schools are funded in North and South Columbus.

Many residents talked about the need for updating facilities in South Columbus and ensuring student access to highly trained teachers as well. That the majority of poor-performing schools were predominately African-American and located in South Columbus was echoed by many of the focus group participants. This sentiment also resonated from the Critical Needs Assessment report that surveyed over 1,000 county high school students.

"All schools are not perceived as equal and are not equal in reality, so the statement that a student receives the same education no matter which school they attend is apparently false."²⁸

In the Community Survey one of the questions was, *What are the top two community issues (such as housing, employment, education, health care, law enforcement or other issues) that you feel need to change in Columbus, to ensure that race/ethnicity does not play a role in receiving equitable and quality access?* The sector that received the most votes across racial lines was education. Each racial group listed "education" as either their number-one or number-two issue.

This perception is also based on the historical facts of the public school system: Columbus schools began to be integrated in 1964 and a community conflict developed in January 1970 when the school board asked the superintendent to transfer teachers "so that the ratio of 'negro' to white teachers in each school is substantially the same as such ratio is to the teachers in the entire school system."²⁹ Dr. Virginia Causey reports from her interviews with school personnel, "Predictably, however, the needs of white schools and students took precedence. Though white teachers transferred to black schools were almost always novices, black teachers sent to white schools tended to be veterans with advanced degrees, supposedly hand-picked by

²⁷ Ibid, p. 87.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 98.

²⁹ Causey, Virginia, "The Long and Winding Road: School Desegregation in Columbus, Georgia, 1963-1997." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXXXV, No. 2, Fall, 2001, p. 406.

white principals.”³⁰ In 1997, the legal end of desegregation, Causey shared the result of this process: “Test scores in majority black schools remained the lowest in the district, falling well below the district and national averages, and continuing to decline through the 1990s. While some schools with low-income populations received supplemental federal funding, many majority black schools were not as well equipped due to the inability of their lower-income parents to support ‘booster clubs’ that provided library books and additional computers, athletic and band equipment, and other ‘extras.’ ... Perhaps the most disturbing to black parents, white teachers in majority black schools often had little cultural understanding of their children and held lower expectations for their achievement.”³¹ Unfortunately we heard these same comments from residents in the focus groups in 2005.

The *Ledger-Enquirer* reported in an earlier news article on the increasing re-segregation of Muscogee County schools, and especially within the city of Columbus, where in some instances, over 80% of the schools are one-race schools.³² Although many parents in the Muscogee School System favor neighborhood schools, most see the value in exposing children to people of different backgrounds from their own. How best to accomplish this task is an issue the community needs to address, in light of current practices of building schools that follow demographic shifts, which often lead to the creation of predominantly one-race schools. In most instances, predominantly schools of color are more likely than predominantly white schools to be financially under-resourced and educationally inferior, as measured by pupil/teacher ratio, advanced curricula, computers, laboratory equipment, etc.”³³

The schools benefit to a degree from the partnership they have with the business community through the Partners in Education program. There seem to be varying ideas on how the Muscogee County School System, in conjunction with individual schools and businesses, can best maximize this effort. Opportunities to develop and expand joint initiatives in partnership with students, parents, school officials, and the broader community should be investigated. Many residents see a quality education as the key to financial success and upward mobility. Some residents spoke about South and North Columbus in terms of a monetary divide rather than a racial one. Parents see their children as not able to move forward in life if they receive less than a quality education. We have found from a number of studies that education appears to have a major impact on the distribution, if not necessarily the extent of poverty. If schools are not equally and equitable resourced, students are then denied equal opportunity to a quality education and therefore have an increased probability of being poor. In other words, disparities in education help determine who will be poor.³⁴

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

- We need to create opportunities for parents. Parents pass on their attitudes, etc., and right now they are corrupted. Kids bond with the similar. We have to empower the parents with values and morals. The kids go home and are subjected to all this other stuff. We need to elevate the whole family.
- “No Student Left Behind” is a great program, as are the magnet programs. Now we need to concentrate on the average students. My experience shows me that the average students seem to be overlooked in these programs. More counseling, feedback on the instructors and one-on-one assistance for these students should become a priority.

³⁰ Causey, Virginia, “The Long and Winding Road: School Desegregation in Columbus, Georgia, 1963-1997.” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXXXV, No. 2, Fall, 2001, page 407-408

³¹ Causey, Virginia, “The Long and Winding Road: School Desegregation in Columbus, Georgia, 1963-1997.” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXXXV, No. 2, Fall, 2001, page 433.

³² “Mostly Separate & Still Not Equal”, Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, 27 July 2002.

³³ Carol Ascher, “The Changing Face of Racial Isolation and Desegregation in Urban Schools.” *ERIC/CUE Digest Number 91* (May 1993).

³⁴ Bradley R. Schiller, *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination* (Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2004), p.170.

- I want the people (whatever race) to be able to choose whatever school they want to go to, regardless of the black/white ratio. It was a ridiculous idea to try and make all of the schools have a 50/50, there aren't that many white kids around Kendrick, there aren't that many black kids around Columbus. If they want to go to a school that is way out of the way, that is not a problem ... but don't make them go because there aren't enough black/white kids.
- They are so quick to point out 93% of children are in public schools. That feels good. Businesses are allowed to provide monetary help but the Board runs it into a ditch. They don't listen. They take a "We know what we're doing, you don't" point of view.
- I would start with training the teachers. I think many teachers do not have an understanding of what or how to work with poor children and minority groups. I would work to help teacher have much more awareness to look at their own blind spots, and then they could be more effective in terms of teaching. There is also a lack of parental involvement. The principals and the teachers have to make the parents feel more welcomed.
- The community is only as strong as its weakest link. I want the leaders to say to the school board that they have to do something. There are kids who have to go outside in the cold to use the potty in a dangerous South Columbus neighborhood.
- Communities need to come together across the board and ask, is education fair and equal? We need to address the feeling of betrayal and really look at the issue.
- Other successful businesses need to be part of Partners in Education.
- When you look at the schools in the community that's performing poorly, the majority of them have more African-American students than whites; then when you look at the schools themselves, the facilities, the structure, the majority of those schools have been around 40-50 years. When it comes to resources in the various schools, the schools with the majority white population have more educated teachers, they have the best resources, and they have the best facilities, so they need to take hard look at that because we all know that a good facility in education goes a long way.
- The facilities and faculty should be equally divided. And I mean qualified equally. A \$5 million grant to a new school versus the same to an old, beat up school isn't fair. The older school requires more. And where equality is done, we're terrible at getting the word out about it. Allowing certain schools to have a significant drop out rate and failing students is not acceptable.
- I appreciated the respect the School Board had for each other and the process. That's not always seen. I kept thinking, aren't we lucky we're in a win-win situation because of such capable leadership. I was comfortable watching the democratic process at work. We agreed to disagree, but had respect. That's growth!
- Schools should be teaching students how to see problems solved in different ways and with different models. I see students go to other countries with American ways. They need to see that there are different approaches. It is the responsibility of the school to force them out of their comfort zone.
- From a business perspective, we doom our children by not educating them – we can't afford the uneducated. There is a 20-30% dropout rate; we all have to be involved to solve it. If it's not solved, there is no chance to get out, no change.

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

MEDIA

One area in which Columbus residents were in agreement concerns the news media. Though residents had different views about what needed to be changed, it was clear they had feedback for the news agencies on how stories are reported. In this limited assessment, we did not have the opportunity to review newspaper articles and tapes of news broadcasts to put residents' concerns into context. These comments left us with more questions than answers, especially in light of the Knight Foundation's Community Indicators Project survey results that showed that seven in 10 Columbus residents say their local news media are doing an excellent (24%) or good (49%) job serving their community. Likewise, majorities say they believe all or most of what they see on the local television news (71%) and what they read in the local daily newspaper (65%). The Knight Report also says, "Race emerges as an important influence on impressions of both local print and broadcast media, with African-American residents expressing more skeptical views of the local media in both cases than white residents."³⁵ Yet in our community and focus group surveys, whites rated news media as the number-one setting in which they have experienced racial discrimination or are aware of incidents of racial discrimination.

If a racial lens is not typically used for stories (e.g., how different racial groups view an issue, how policy impacts different race- or ethnic-identified communities, etc.), then when a racial incident does occur, such as the Kenneth Walker incident, there is discomfort within the community because race is not openly discussed in racially mixed groups. The press will look to the leaders of the most extreme points of view and of different races for quotes. For some news organizations this conflict sells stories and some citizens view this as news organizations sensationalizing the incident. It is also important to note many people mentioned individuals who are vying for media attention to escalate their agendas. Finally, there are assumptions, especially by whites, that if a person of color is quoted, that people who look like that speaker agrees with him or her; this is not always the case. The different viewpoints between the polarizing views are lost and not typically discussed, since people are reacting to the media quotes.

If race isn't typically discussed in a community, especially between people of different races and ethnicities, the media becomes the conduit. Each of the following variables can play a role in how a story is shared with the public: the organization's editorial policy, organizational culture, training of reporters, and diversity of reporters and editorial staff. The public's responsibility is to ask questions about news media organizational diversity, whether the media companies are working to create inclusive workplaces, and the level of the staff's knowledge about a community's racial history and understanding of the complexities of race in their community.³⁶ The media also has a responsibility to diversify its database of individuals to approach for commentary or quotes, and consider not using the "usual suspects" to ensure that other voices and perspectives enter the discussion.

The news media has great power and its impact can escalate conflict in a community and/or it can also open the doors for deeper discussion, especially when a community has an infrastructure in place for community dialogue. Though discussion has increased based on local reporting, many residents expressed their frustration with the media for using its power to sensationalize rather than to report the facts. Robert Giles, author of the publication, *Best Practices for Newspaper Journalists*, provided an opinion that should be relevant for TV and radio media staff: "The press is inclined to think public attitudes are influenced by such factors as diminishing interest in serious news; ... commercialization of news; blurring the line between journalism and entertainment ... and the public is upset about the 'liberal bias' in the news media rather than the full range of journalistic practices that the public defines as biased." When Giles' organization met with members of the public in communities across the country they heard a different story, and he made two points relevant to this report:

³⁵ Princeton Survey Research Associates, *An Update of Public Opinion on Local Issues in Columbus, GA*, (Miami, FL: John L. and James S. Knight Foundation, 2003), p. 8.

³⁶ Contact National Conference for Community and Justice – National Capital Area region for their publication, "Building Bridges with Reliable Information: A Quick Guide About Our Community's People." 202-822-6110 or email: nationalcapital@nccj.org

- “The press is biased – not with a liberal bias, but with a negative one. There is too much focus on what is wrong and what is in conflict, and not enough on reporting and explaining what is working and succeeding ...”
- “The press does not reflect the entire community fully and fairly. Specifically, the public is concerned that progress in coverage of minority communities is leveling off and – because there are not enough journalists of color on staff or in leadership positions – stories are not sufficiently attuned to cultural differences and nuances in an increasingly diverse society.”³⁷

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

- People have the mindset, “it must be true, and I saw it on TV” ... The media needs to tell the truth. We have to get to the root of the problem – in the home. We have to talk about the problem. Kids are not born with these problems.
- The news media is a joke and perpetuates the idea that especially government agencies discriminate against African-American people.
- Due to local incidents, people are continually talking about race as a factor in most situations and the news media and newspaper are not helping any.
- I have only lived in Georgia for six years. I see a huge difference in the attitudes and mentalities of people of all races here with regards to racial issues and relations, being they are much more extreme and negative. I feel that certain organizations (NAACP and the local media) sometimes enjoy only fueling issues that keep the community divided. White people here in the south experience a huge amount of reverse discrimination in many areas, but it seems that the only time it is a big issue or is reported is when the victims are black.
- Media should be held accountable.
- Due to local incidents, people are continually talking about race as a factor in most situations. The news media and newspaper are not helping any.
- Stop the continued coverage of subjects that have been resolved. The news media continually covers subjects and adds comments that are not factual

“We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people.”

- President John F. Kennedy

³⁷ Giles, Robert H., *Best Practices for Newspaper Journalists*, page 1-2.

PUBLIC SAFETY

At the heart of any democracy is the right of all citizens to feel safe and secure in their homes and in their community. The agencies of Public Safety exist to differing degrees to ensure that security. Public Safety agencies (EMS, law enforcement, fire, corrections), working in collaboration with the community, have the greater responsibility as public servants to develop ongoing, positive and mutual relationships with the citizens whose trust they hold.

We heard from many residents concerning their perception of Columbus's public safety agencies, of which most held high marks for EMS and the fire department; the majority of responses reflected law enforcement and how they carry out their duties. Many residents reflected upon the Kenneth Walker incident as the starting point for their comments, some felt the Walker incident simply highlighted a method of policing where law enforcement lacked the sensitivity or cultural understanding necessary to police lower economic sections of the community.

Many members of law enforcement appear to be frustrated about how best to serve the interests of the community. Many feel that when something as tragic as the Kenneth Walker incident happens, the entire department comes under a microscope unfairly. Many in law enforcement see themselves in a difficult spot: carrying out a community mandate to curb crime, without the necessary resources to do it. We heard how budgetary constraints may lead to reduction in programs aimed at bettering relations with the community. There was a perception by some that city government, specifically city council, does not understand or value what is required to conduct law enforcement operations including community policing and programs which develop better community relations

From a different perspective, many community residents feel that one of the greatest challenges of law enforcement is to develop working relations with the community, especially in South Columbus and among young males of color. A majority of comments by people who identified as Hispanic or African-American were about a lack of respect and understanding by police officers of the needs of their community or of cultural differences. The common factor we did hear from both sides of the aisle was the need to find a way to create opportunities where citizens and police could engage each other to create that respect and understanding in some part of the community and to strengthen it in others.

We were informed of programs to increase law enforcement's effectiveness and build community relations, such as meet and greet services (usually through faith institutions), opportunities for senior citizens to become familiar with law enforcement operations, free phone for bilingual officers and the new emergency 911-bilingual service. There are many law enforcement agencies across the country working to establish successful community partnerships that may be useful to the Columbus Police Department to consider in its efforts to better community-police relations in some sectors of the community (see Promising Practices section for listing of programs). Many of these programs require collaboration with local community groups in planning, development and implementation, thus not placing the burden solely at the feet of the police department. Though the Sheriff's Department is its own entity and does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Mayor's office, it may find some of these programs equally beneficial and want to collaborate with other agencies.

While the comments we heard from residents reflect the ongoing tension between the community and police, perhaps both groups can benefit by focusing on one of the principles of policing as set down by Sir Robert Peel, the founder of modern policing, as they work to strengthen how they work together,

“Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.”³⁸

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

- This issue should be given top priority. Just because I live in a certain part of town, I feel I need the same response from any Public Safety department (Police, Fire or EMS) as any citizen. My emergency is just as important as someone on the opposite side of town. The proposed cuts of personnel will affect the entire city. I feel the departments (especially the police) should revisit the structured “beat” system. I want equality for response time based on my safety concern rather than the number of calls in another area of the city. The city wants to make cuts to personnel instead of adding personnel. The city needs to discover the factors of retention of employees before they suggest abolishing other positions.
- Law enforcement in Columbus has a bad name due to the Walker shooting. I think that once we get beyond that, things will continue to get better with people trusting each other and working towards making Columbus a better place to live and raise a family.
- The morale of the city has gone to hell due to the lack of protection from the law enforcement.
- There is minority distrust of law enforcement. The average citizen looks down on law enforcement.
- Get rid of the black and white issues. You have to train people to do that. There is no profiling. The community has to get away from that.
- If you play the race card, it can get you out of trouble. It is reverse discrimination. And most incidents have to do with law enforcement. I don’t see a lot of oppression against blacks. It’s the misuse of force.
- Law enforcement has training now that deals with racial profiling.

“The truth is, something is terribly wrong in America and most of our cities, and America has just accepted it. As a nation, we have seemingly condoned the injustice, tolerated the suffering, and ignored the consequences. Unfortunately, the majority of Americans looks the other way and makes sure their security is assured. There is more than enough blame to go around. The question is who will take responsibility.”

-Bob Knight, former mayor of Wichita, KS

³⁸ www.newestpolice.org/peel.html, accessed May 10, 2005.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER INITIATIVE- PHASE TWO

HOW RACE RELATIONS CAN BE IMPROVED

Most respondents to the community survey agree that race relations will improve in Columbus if:

- Individuals change their attitudes, beliefs and actions.
- There is honest, open dialogue among residents seeking to understand.
- The community is educated about people of races different from themselves.
- All residents are brought together to unify Columbus, and residents and the city government, take concrete steps to address the inequalities and improve race relations.
- Most respondents want to see the city government and the faith community get involved with the initiative.

Some respondents had opposing viewpoints about how to address race relations in Columbus. Some would prefer to address it at a deeper level and look at racial issues, while others feel that the problems will go away if there are no more discussions about race. Obviously, talking about race with overtones of hate can lead people from talking about hate to acting on it. Talking about race is, in and of itself, one of the most important components of creating a healthy community. Those communities that keep race invisible are typically the types of communities that do not have an infrastructure in place to address explosive situations when they occur. The results of such situations are immediate crises.

Though the Kenneth Walker incident has not been resolved in the legal arena, it still is an open wound for parts of the community. Columbus has some infrastructure in place and there are relationships among leaders across racial lines, so even though residents' reactions involved many emotions – anger, frustration, disappointment, confusion, and sadness – the emotions did not escalate to violence. We have heard from many in the community, however, that they do not believe this incident has been resolved well, and that deeper wounds have also emerged, based on past inequities and current processes. The question becomes how the community will respond to these wounds and continue to build its capacity to address race relations and racial inequities. This speaks to the need for community leaders and organizations to begin a process together – *Moving Forward Together*.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER - PHASE TWO

In the Community and Focus Group surveys and in conversations with interviewees, a question was posed: *Please share names of organizations or individuals that you specifically believe should get involved in the Moving Forward Together Initiative.* Over 120 names were submitted, and some individuals obviously received several votes. The Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley, Inc.'s *Moving Forward Together* Committee, along with five additional people who were nominated by residents, identified individuals to invite to serve on the *Moving Forward Together* Steering Committee. Part of the identification process was to ensure that this committee represents the diversity within the City of Columbus and does not repeat the feedback that these initiatives just include the usual suspects. The diverse identity areas included: race, gender, age, faith, years living in Columbus, Zip code, education, sectors (business, education, nonprofit, government, and media), class, etc. Project Change, one of the oldest comprehensive community initiatives focused on addressing racism, gives advice on the composition of the steering committee. "A strong task force needs: people who can open doors to important institutions; people who can articulate problems facing the victims of racism; enough grassroots

members to counterbalance institutional power and resistance to change; and people who are change agents. ... It is not reasonable to expect a few individuals to represent every facet of a community or all others who share the same race or ethnic background. Task forces have learned that they need to create legitimacy through constant communication and outreach.”³⁹

The *Moving Forward Together* (MFT) Steering Committee’s role is to:

- Engage the community to determine the priorities, vision, mission and principles for the MFT Initiative.
- Serve as the coordinating body for the Initiative, including all MFT Action Teams.
- Provide leadership and serve as a messenger to the region on issues of race and ethnicity as well as access to services and opportunities for all Columbus residents.
- Provide guidance, support, and leadership to the Action Teams.
- Assess the progress of the Initiative’s work.
- Serve as a catalyst to increase collaboration to improve services and optimize resources.
- Regularly communicate the MFT Initiative’s work to the community.

Our recommendation for one of the Steering Committee’s first tasks is to plan a community event for residents to learn what’s in this report, and what residents believe are the top priorities for the *Moving Forward Together* Initiative. When communities work on improving race relations and addressing access issues, it is important to build a community’s capacity. Building capacity is about increasing residents’ awareness and knowledge of race relations issues and racial inequities, and providing opportunities for dialogue, community engagement; and increasing residents’ skills in advocacy, organizational change, and intergroup interactions. By having that foundation, the steering committee can implement an action plan that will lessen racial disparities and address systemic issues.

After the priority areas have been chosen by residents, then we recommend Action Teams be created based on these priorities. This is another opportunity for more residents to become involved in the process by participating on an Action Team. Each Action Team will review current programs in Columbus and find out more information about promising practices across the country. Prior to creating a strategic plan, the Steering Committee and Action Teams will need to discuss:

- What will success look like? What do we hope will be different in Columbus five to 10 years from now?
- What are the activities and programs that will lead to results which will add up over time to the change envisioned?

Roger Wilkins, Robinson Professor of History and American Culture at George Mason University, who served in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, believed these were the four essential elements of achieving a truly diverse community:

1. Powerful and unequivocal commitment by the top political leadership of the community.
2. A community-wide dialogue defining the problems to be tackled and solved.
3. Development of a program of specific achievable projects which enable a diverse group to establish a successful track record of working together.
4. The broadest possible involvement of effective citizens from all walks of life in the community to build myriad partnerships and identify available resources.⁴⁰

It is important to keep in mind there are no communities that one can point to that are an inclusive community or have dismantled racial disparities. Though there are no current models, there are many

³⁹ *Planning an Anti-Racism Initiative*, (Oakland, CA: Project Change), 1995. p. 5-6.

⁴⁰ *Governing Diverse Communities: A Focus on Race and Ethnic Relations*, (Washington D.C.: National League of Cities), 1997, p. 11 and 17.

promising practices, some described later in this report. There are successes: some communities are seeing racial disparities lessen, others have doubled the diversity of their boards and commissions, others communities for the first time are openly talking about race including discussing the community's violent racial history, and still others are increasing people's cultural competent skills which are impacting services and the workplace. There is no magic bullet. There is a beginning of a set of lessons learned, programs that are meeting short-term outcomes, and a better understanding on how to support residents who are at very different places in their understanding of the issues and resist such efforts.

The publication, *Tools for Creating Healthy, Productive Interracial/Multicultural Communities*, based on reviewing 14 communities' lessons learned, offered this sage advice about commitment for the long haul:

“The projects that survive and succeed in the end are the ones that follow an agreed-upon plan, keep a steady pace, monitor constantly, make midcourse adjustments and smooth transitions from phase to phase, and save up energy in reserve for the big push when it's needed. Such programs also create occasions and structures through which participants find periodic personal renewal.”⁴¹

Phase Two is not just about the *Moving Forward Together Initiative*, Steering Committee and Action Team. It is equally important for each resident to consider her/his role in supporting this effort. To be effective in ensuring that every resident has access to the same opportunities, it is important for individuals to reflect on how they interact and work with people who are different races and ethnicities. Some action steps individuals may choose to do to support this effort include:

- We can go out of our way to really get to know people of other races. The process enriches all of us.
- When people say or do things that are clearly racially biased, whether from blacks or whites, we must speak out against them.
- We can be aware of our own racial blind spots and stereotypes.
- We can participate in community efforts to reduce racial prejudice.
- We can become informed about the concerns of people of other races.
- We can visit and get to know other areas of the community and their concerns.
- We can develop within our family and circle of associates sensitivity to the importance of strengthening race relations.
- We can make a personal commitment to the elimination of racism whenever and however it exists.⁴²

“Think what we could do were this a nation, a state, a community bound together by hope, rather than cul-de-sacs organized by fear and alienated from central and inner cities by prejudice. It is time to deal with our racial fears and prejudices. No city can be a place of jobs and economic strengths unless it takes advantage of the skills and talents of all its people.”

Mayor John DeStefano, Jr., Past President of the National League of Cities

⁴¹ The Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative, *Fifteen Tools for Creating Healthy, Productive Interracial/Multicultural Communities*. (Oakland, CA: Project Change), p 31.

⁴² “Race, an Intractable Issue for our Field: The Roles and Responsibilities of Foundations on the Issue of Race,” speech by William F. Winter, former Governor of Mississippi, April 20, 1999, New Orleans, Louisiana.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FROM PROJECT CHANGE

Project Change is a consortium of four community-based anti-racism coalitions funded by the Levi Strauss Foundation (LSF). The four recently celebrated their tenth anniversaries; they are the oldest comprehensive community initiatives focused on race in the United States. They developed a set of 12 guiding principles for diverse groups working to eradicate institutional racism in their communities. While some elements may appear obvious at first glance, we have learned that neglecting any one of them can cripple efforts to get the job done.

1. Define the issue in a broad and inclusive way, so that everyone feels they have a stake in its outcomes (including whites). Make it clear that it is in everyone's best interest to eliminate racism.
2. As a group, model the behavior and commitment needed in the community. Engage in meaningful decision making and timely follow-up action, and establish a team that adequately reflects the community it seeks to represent. Be prepared to invest personal time and effort in group dialogues and meetings.
3. Recruit volunteer community leaders who have demonstrated commitment to changing the status quo, and who bring standing and expertise relative to the issues and institutions that are the focus of the change effort.
4. Require ongoing participation in anti-racism training (continuous learning), even for those individuals with years of experience in community work. Project Change has discovered that multiple trainings over time are the best way to optimize learning, personal transformation, and skill-building in anti-racism work.
5. Invest the necessary time to build trusting relations and a safe environment to work collectively with diverse allies. Do not be concerned if serious group dialogue leads to initial separation along racial/ethnic lines. It takes time for individuals to overcome fears, heal old wounds, and create constructive partnerships. Often, a skilled outside facilitator can help a group surface key issues and conflicts and move toward resolution.
6. Support the anti-racism work through the targeted use of applied research. Study the challenges and opportunities that characterize a community in relation to its particular racial dynamics. Develop reports and analyses related to: historical, attitudinal and regional factors concerning community race issues; local socioeconomic disparities based on race; and institutional policies that encourage or discourage progress. Disseminate this work broadly and use it to encourage needed community dialogue.
7. Treat both process and results as important. Acknowledge that time limitations create tensions between the two and allow for adequate time so that individuals can confront difficult issues meaningfully and fully.
8. Look inward at the need for rigorous inquiry, reflection, and healing at the individual level. Acknowledge that denial, oppression, and internalized oppression exist and that fighting racism, or any "ism," begins with oneself. This is an essential step toward modeling the behavior change agents and leaders want to see in the broader community.
9. Acknowledge that racism exists in at least four inter-related domains: the *personal* (where we hold personal attitudes, biases, prejudices, and stereotypes); the *interpersonal* (the level at which we interact with others – strongly affected by the attitudes at the personal level); the *institutional* (the group context in which policies and procedures are made and administered, dictating the way decisions are made, the way people are hired and fired, etc.); and the *cultural* (that which determines what personal/group qualities and characteristics are valued and devalued, including judgments about racial identity).
10. Acknowledge the paradox that understanding and valuing and appreciating differences are essential to achieving common ground. On the one hand, encourage homogeneous groups to meet separately so they can explore their unique challenges and opportunities. On the other hand, encourage explorations of the larger challenges and opportunities that people of diverse backgrounds face together, within a more diverse, integrated context. Both strategies are essential and can take place simultaneously.
11. Hold anti-racism work to the same high standards applied to other fields of work. Incorporate excellent planning and implementation of strategies, rigorous evaluation, and effective use of theory and evidence to document and

support statements that are purported to be factual; allocate resources sufficient to do the work; and make use of expert technical assistance.

12. Take action that inspires commitment toward institutional reform. Be explicit about the steps institutions must take to achieve intended results (e.g., advocate for changes in policy and/or practice based on informed study, and partner with leading experts on the issues).⁴³

⁴³ *Lessons Learned II, Project Change In Action*, based on an evaluation completed by the Center for Assessment and Policy Development, (Oakland, CA: Project Change, 1999), pp. 8-9.

COLUMBUS' PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The following are programs and organizations that were mentioned by participants in focus groups and by interviewees as either focused on race relations, or involved in bringing people together across racial lines. This by no means is an exhaustive list; we are sure there are others that we did not hear about. It will be important during this process to create the full list of activities, in order to further understand the gaps, build capacity and strongly encourage collaboration and communication between groups. Below is a short description of each program, and recommendations on how to build capacity and strengthen the impact of these programs and organizations on Columbus.

Program Name: Church exchange programs (Some of the churches mentioned were: First African Baptist Church, First Baptist Church, Pierce Chapel, St. Mary's Road UMC, and St. Thomas Episcopal.)

Description: In the focus groups, we heard about ministers who would give sermons at each other's churches, and at some holy events, congregants would worship together.

Recommendation: Many people mentioned that they looked toward the leaders in the faith community and city hall to take a leadership role in this effort. This is one way faith leaders can make a contribution to the process, by encouraging and leading exchange services. It is important to understand how to implement these types of programs. Programs need to be more than events. These programs should include processes for relationship-building and learning about each other's culture and perspectives.

Program Name: Diversity Programs within Organizations. (Some of the organizations mentioned were, AFLAC, Synovus, TSYS, WC Bradley, and Fort Benning)

Description: These programs vary based on content as well as length of time in operation. Some of the components are: e-learning, half-day training workshops, and/or mentoring programs

Recommendation: We met with several Human Resource staff from various organizations in Columbus. Many have a relationship with each other based on their membership in the local chapter of the Society of Human Resource Management. There are many organizations that have not started a program to create an inclusive workplace except in regards to EEO compliance. There are some organizations that are just starting and looking for resources and to increase their knowledge of similar programs. There were only a few organizations with some experience. The obvious exception is Fort Benning, which is the "elder" in the group based on the Department of Defense's commitment to these issues. We recommend that leaders of different organizations (corporate, education, government and nonprofit) gather on a regular basis to share lessons learned and find out about new programs and resources to create inclusive organizations. Organizations that are richer with resources and/or further along with their programs can play an important role in sharing and convening. (Please see Promising Practices section for an example of a program)

Program Name: Inter-city visits in Columbus

Description: Business and community leaders participate by visiting other cities to observe and learn about their best practices in the areas of economic and workforce development, education, health care, the arts, and tourism. These informative trips inspire residents to broaden our vision and our possibilities for Columbus and the Columbus region's future.

Recommendation: We heard positive things about this program from people who have been a part of the visits. The visits provided important information and lessons learned from other communities, such as the visit to San Antonio to learn about its Riverwalk. We tried to track down reports of these visits but were unsure how the lessons and information collected were shared with the general public. One way to involve more people in the public-private partnerships is to create a transparent process with structured communication with residents. We also heard leaders went on an "intra-city visit" a few years ago. This "visit" was quite successful and helped various leaders understand the challenges their own community face, and learn about successful programs firsthand.

Program Name: Leadership Programs which include: Servant Leadership program and the Cunningham Center Leadership Institute at Columbus State University, Leadership Columbus, Neighborhood Leadership Team, and Dare to Dream.

Description:

Cunningham Center Leadership Institute – Professional programs designed to develop highly motivated, well-qualified, ethical leaders for business, industry and government. Programs tailored to fit the needs of organizations and professionals and to develop leadership in the various organizations.

Dare to Dream – An annual event sponsored by Leadership Columbus Alumni and One Columbus. Each high school is asked to select six to eight students (sophomores and juniors). The focus is to help young people grow into productive citizens with high self-esteem, and to learn to value and respect the differences of others.

Leadership Columbus – A learning experience in leadership for existing and emerging leaders. This 11-month program covers important topics such as education, government, public safety, military, quality of life and economic development. This program serves as a resource to the region for future leaders to move our community forward.

Neighborhood Leadership Team – Identify leaders in a blighted neighborhood and work with them for three months to clean it up. The leaders spend time in training and with city hall personnel, and they begin to build relationships and understand how the system works.

Servant Leadership Program – a comprehensive program committed to developing future leaders who practice the servant leadership philosophy. Participants are given the opportunity to grow and develop leadership skills through leadership classes, hands-on modeling of leadership practices, increasing self-awareness with a variety of comprehensive assessment tests, and participation in challenging community service projects.

Youth Leadership Columbus – Leadership skills program for high school juniors in the Columbus area who have demonstrated leadership qualities and concern for their community.

Recommendation: Though the programs fulfill unique purposes in providing training to different audiences, offer specific curricula, and vary in their length of training time, there is some overlap. It would be helpful for the leaders of each of these groups to meet to share information, lessons learned, recruitment efforts, and identify gaps. Part of being an effective leader is to be confident and understand how to work in multiracial groups, understand different cultures, and have knowledge of the racial history of this country and of the community. Though there may be competition between programs in terms of funding and recruitment, it is helpful to have these prominent programs with high-profile leaders to model collaboration and communication. One action step to consider would be to create opportunities for *all* of the leadership program alumni to network among themselves and consider ways to address the community challenges and deepen its strengths.

Program Name: Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Description: The MLK Unity Award Breakfast serves as a platform to reinvigorate the works begun by the civil rights leader and to promote scholarship. This year's guest speaker was Dr. George Fraser, renowned motivational speaker and author.

Recommendation: We heard comments that this event is not always well-attended and is typically not a racially mixed audience. We do not have enough information about the planning process or the event itself; it will be important for the planning group to assess its communication and outreach to the full community so more can benefit from this event.

Program Name: Mayor's Commission on Unity and Diversity

Description: To promote awareness and appreciation of the diversity in our community, and to advocate equality and fair treatment of all citizens through educational and cultural programs.

Recommendation: This program and One Columbus were mentioned the most as programs working on race relations in Columbus. Having a commission from the Mayor's office sends a strong message of his commitment to this issue. In some communities, there are human relations commissions which typically have several roles – convening the community in celebrations, providing resources, being frontline groups to listen

and respond to racial incidents. As the *Moving Forward Together Initiative* evolves and the residents prioritize their needs, it will be helpful for this commission to reflect on its purpose and how it can contribute best to the community. In the next section, there are a few promising practices the Commission members may want to consider.

Program Name: NAACP

Description: The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.

Recommendation: The organization has been very vocal in demanding a just response to the Kenneth Walker incident. NAACP, working with other groups, organized one of the largest marches in Columbus to “stop the brutal killings at the hands of police officers.” National NAACP leaders and other civil rights leaders led the march. Some residents support their work, others do it quietly and still others are very upset that they invited “outsiders” and are frustrated with their approach. It will be important for all the organizations and individuals to discuss their different approaches and their visions for Columbus. It is important for race relations and racial justice organizations to work interdependently to leverage their approaches to address racism and improve race relations.

Program Name: One Columbus

Description: Organized Race Relations Breakfast for Uptown and Columbus South, Study Circles, Quarterly Prayer Breakfasts, Servant Leadership/Cultural Diversity Seminars for Law Enforcement. Collaborated with various organizations, established the Kenny Walker Scholarship Fund, conducted a public relations campaign, recruited One Columbus volunteers, and kicked off its newsletter, *Common Ground*.

Recommendation: We consistently heard about One Columbus from residents. Some mentioned the organization’s activities and others referred to it in terms of a concept. This was the number-one organization mentioned in regards to working on race relations. The programs most mentioned were Study Circles, Bridge Builders, and Race Relations Breakfasts. This is a relatively young organization with only one staff member and several very active volunteers and board members.

It’s important to build this organization’s capacity, by having paid staff members and being a first-class training, dialogue, and change agent organization with a cadre of trained facilitators. It must provide opportunities for volunteers to increase their knowledge about similar organizations, how to choose interventions within a community change process, and how to evaluate their work. One of the major components of the organization’s work is Study Circles, a process provided through a national organization, the Study Circles Resource Center that works in many cities across the U.S. It’s important to ensure that the study circle process in Columbus reflects all of the program’s components, especially the action step so people view this process as not just about talking, but about working together to address issues. (See Promising Practice section for more information about the process)

Since One Columbus is most well-known in having a mission that focuses on race relations, it means that though we heard many affirmations for its work in Columbus, residents also offered some feedback for the organization. The feedback questioned whether the organization just talks or if it is making progress; if individuals involved in the programs integrate their learning in their personal life; and the need for an organization that “boldly takes charge.” This speaks to the importance of having an evaluation process in place and choosing programs that will result in outcomes leading toward their vision.

Program Name: Urban League Center for Race and Diversity

Description: A resource center that helps local business by providing various programs: conducts climate surveys, provides guidance, and offers cultural awareness classes and diversity training.

Recommendation: This program has potential to provide support to various organizations but currently it is not well-known and has limited staffing, so it will need to build its capacity to have the impact it wants on the community.

There were other programs and organizations that are making significant contributions also mentioned by residents:

- Becoming a Loving Community workshop
- Bridging the Racial Divide Workshop
- Columbus South Revitalization Effort
- Columbus Housing Initiative (now NeighborWorks)
- Columbus Technical College
- Columbus' Youth Advisory Council
- Girl Scouts
- Habitat for Humanity
- Open Door Community House
- Rainbow Push
- United Way

“Meetings on racial justice often resemble nothing so much as a bazaar filled with peddlers offering the all-purpose answer. The reality is that the problem has no single or simple solution ... If there is one answer, it lies in recognizing how complex the issue has become and in not using that complexity as an excuse for inaction.”

-Ellis Cose, Author, *The Rage of a Privileged Class*

PROMISING PRACTICES FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Across the United States there is a growing trend of communities addressing race relations and racial justice issues. These community initiatives focused on race have been sparked by community builders, local elected officials, foundations, and/or nonprofit organizations. Some communities have looked at racial disaggregated data and become painfully aware of their racial disparities in education, housing, employment, etc. Some communities have experienced changing demographics and are aware of the tension between current residents and new residents, especially when the new residents are of a different race, religion, or speak a different language than the established residents. Some communities have responded to crises, e.g., hate crimes, police shootings, or racist remarks by prominent people.

Since communities address race from different entry points, they also choose different strategies and have different visions of what is possible. Some communities want to calm tensions and support new residents. Some communities want to prevent future racial incidents and others want to lessen racial disparities and create a good quality of life for all residents. The strategies chosen vary: from training, to dialogue groups, to community organizing and advocacy, to developing new policies or initiating community advisory groups to create an action plan. Some communities have focused on a single strategy, others use several interventions, and still others have created phased approaches.

As the previous section shows, there are already many solid programs in Columbus and probably many more that we did not hear about. Based on our limited conversations with residents, the following are some promising practices Columbus residents, leaders, and organizations may want to consider. Included in the list are a few helpful resources and publications. The promising practices focus on several community sectors: business, community development, education, faith, media, and public safety. Also there are quite a few capacity-building activities focused on changing diversity, community engagement, leadership and governance, and finally there are examples of comprehensive community initiatives on race.

A number of promising practices highlight the use of “study circles” to address a number of community issues. The study circles process model has at its core three distinct components: democratic organizing, public dialogue, and a community action phase focused on program implementation. Communities that utilize all three of these components realize a greater return on their efforts to develop understanding and trust across barriers of difference, while at the same time creating community momentum for focused change in specific issue areas.⁴⁴

The residents of Columbus will need to identify their priorities for this MFT Initiative. The second step is to consider which promising practices support the priority areas, learn how the programs were implemented, and the lessons learned. Each community, though similar in function, is very diverse in terms of norms, culture, assets, personalities, needs, and leadership. Therefore, it is important, when reviewing promising practices, to first understand your own community before assuming that a promising practice in another community can work in Columbus. In each case, ask the contact person a few questions about his or her community and the program:

- What is the size of your community? What are the demographics?
- What is your community’s experience with race relations and racial justice issues?
- How are decisions made in your community?
- What were the conditions that led to creation of the program?

⁴⁴ The Study Circles Resource Center publishes discussion guides to help communities address social and political problems in a number of areas: race, growth and development, education, community-police relation, neighborhoods, immigration, diversity, aftermath of 9-11, etc. The mission of the Center is to advance the practice of deliberative democracy in public life. For more information go to: www.studyircles.org.

- What were the key components that led to the program's success?
- What type of staff and volunteer support did you need?
- What was the role of different community leaders?
- What would you have done differently?

Though the promising practices listed next have observed some progress or change, each program's volunteers and/or staff will probably have stories about lessons learned, resistance to the program, failed attempts to address an issue, and "starts and stops." All of these issues should be explored as you consider which programs may be adopted and then modified for the Columbus community.

"Without a grand strategy, the disparate activists and groups involved in a movement do not have a common, consistent basis for planning, organizing, and evaluating their efforts and supporting each other. This leads to inefficiencies and unnecessary dissidence as groups go off in contradictory directions."

-Bill Moyer, author of *Doing Democracy*

PROMISING PRACTICES FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES ON RACE

Name of the Program: Community Building Initiative, Charlotte, NC

Description: This program is in its third phase (begun in 1999) of work to serve the community as a permanent resource for individuals, community organizations, and institutions to turn to for strategic assistance in addressing issues of racial and ethnic inclusion and equality. It has several accomplishments, including: conducted a community conference, "Something has Begun," attended by over 600 citizens; increased citizens' awareness and information about racial and ethnic issues and their impact on community life; launched citizen-led research and data collection on issues related to race and ethnicity; created data-based, citizen-driven strategies and recommendations addressing key community issues; developed a citizen-based Resource Team Model for addressing specific community issues that features collaboration with community organizations and institutions; facilitated community conversations and feedback model; and organized visible leadership in the area of race relations.

Its current strategic goals are:

Strategic Assistance for Systemic Change - Provide strategic assistance in designing, facilitating, and implementing programs in institutions and organizations to influence change around issue of racial and ethnic inclusion and equity.

Leadership Development – Develop, connect and guide diverse groups of key leaders in addressing issues of racial/ethnic inclusion and equity in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and in influencing change in their institutions and organizations.

Community Engagement and Collaboration – Convene, connect and educate the broader Charlotte-Mecklenburg community regarding racial and ethnic inclusion and equity through collaboration with institutions, organizations, and groups.

Contact: Dianne English, Executive Director, Community Building Initiative, 217 South Tryon Street, Suite 307, Charlotte, NC, 28202, 704-333-2595, denglish@fftc.org.

Name of the Program: ERASE Racism, Long Island, NY

Description: This initiative recently became a 501(c) 3 organization whose mission is to undo institutional racism – the structures, policies and behaviors that create segregation and inequality in every aspect of daily living. To achieve the mission, the staff uses education, research, and advocacy to increase public awareness of the history and effects of institutional racism and implement problem-solving activities that undo institutional racism. Strategies currently focus on housing, education, economic development and also an Organizational Assessment component. As part of its mission to inform and educate, the project provides: briefing sessions for key local leaders and elected officials; public education through television, newspapers, and other publications; identification of specific policies and practices in private and public institutions that perpetuate this form of racism; and suggestions for possible remedies.

Contact: Elaine Gross, Executive Director, ERASE Racism, 6800 Jericho Turnpike, Suite 109W, Syosset, NY 11791, 516-921-4863, www.eraseracismny.org.

Name of the Program: Facing Race, St. Paul region, MN

Description: This initiative's mission is to create a more equitable, just and open community in which everyone feels safe, valued and respected. To date the Foundation has taken the following steps: launched the Anti-Racism Assessment, which includes facilitating an open dialogue on racism and measuring the experiences and perceptions of personal and institutional racism to determine the scope of the issue in a three-county area. Proposed programs include a community engagement strategy and recognition program.

Contact: Rowzat M. Shipchandler, Facing Race Manager, St. Paul Foundation, 55 Fifth Street East, Suite 600, Saint Paul, MN 55101, 800-875-6167.

Name of the Program: Project Change – Valdosta, GA; Knoxville, TN; Albuquerque, NM; El Paso, TX

Description: Project Change was established in 1991 as an initiative of Levi Strauss & Co. through its corporate foundation. The Project addresses racial prejudice and institutional racism in four communities in the United States: Based on findings of need and opportunity, multiracial volunteer task forces came together in each participating site. Project Change's original goals included the following:

*Dismantle institutional policies and practices that promote or encourage racial discrimination

*Promote leadership by people of color in key community institutions

*Stop overt or violent acts of racial and cultural prejudice

*Ease tensions between majority and minority groups, thus reducing inter-ethnic conflicts

In Albuquerque and Valdosta, Project Change identified glaring disparities in access to economic resources between residents of color and white residents. Mortgage lenders rejected people of color two to three times as often as their white counterparts, across all income levels. In collaboration with local banks, community development organizations and the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque Project Change created the Fair Lending Center. The Center provides training, resources and technical assistance to communities of color struggling for economic justice. In 1994, Valdosta Project Change convened several local banks to form the Valdosta Banking Coalition. The coalition works to help low-income residents of color buy their first homes, increase their financial literacy and start small businesses. El Paso Project Change works with law enforcement agencies—at the federal, state, regional and local levels—on hate crimes training and curriculum development at law enforcement academies. This work is particularly critical in light of the El Paso region’s strong law enforcement presence along the US-Mexico border. Knoxville Project Change collaborates with federal and local law enforcement agencies and community groups to respond to outbreaks of hate crimes in their city and region. Together, these agencies and groups have created a Hate Crimes Working Group, which trains law enforcement officers and mobilizes the community to address hate crimes. The Hate Crimes Working Group has developed a tool to educate youth: a “traveling trunk” filled with objects that spark discussions in schools and the community about hate crimes.

Contact: Shirley Strong, Executive Director, Project Change, 4110 Redwood Rd., Ste 103, Oakland, CA 94619, (510) 482-3286, www.projectchange.org.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

After residents prioritize the major issues from this report, reflect on what are the areas to build capacity within the community to sustain an action plan. Some of the areas you may want to consider are:

- Individuals to learn more about different cultures, increase their knowledge of individual and institutional racism, and understand her/his own stereotypes and biases.
- Residents to build relationships across racial lines - to learn about each other’s cultures, build trust and work on solving problems and addressing conflicts together.
- Increasing residents’ knowledge and understanding about the different levels of racism – individual, interpersonal, institutional and structural racism, learning about Columbus’ history on racial issues, creating a common language, and increasing people’s skills in facilitating, organizing, and being change agents.

Name of the Program: Framework for the Future, Newport News, VA

Description: This program is the city’s citizen-based planning process to create community-derived consensus from diverse viewpoints to ultimately reflect the citizen’s visions on the future economic, physical and social development of their city. The process provides recommendations on policies, strategies, and methods of implementation necessary to accomplish them.

Contact: Orlando Riutort, Manager of Comprehensive Planning, 757-926-3831, ARiutort@ci.newport-new.va.us.

Name of the Program: Manchester Study Circles on Race Relations, Manchester, CT

Description: The circles are meant to help individuals deal with the persistence of racism in society, and are moderated by two facilitators who are trained to manage and encourage group discussion. Group discussions move progressively from individual understanding and perceptions of race, to cultural and institutional forces which influence race relations. At the conclusion of the project, the teams convene at an Action Forum to share experiences and recommend ways in which race relations can be improved in their area. This program has also been introduced to students entering 9th grade. Plans include making participation in the program a graduation requirement for all students.

Contact: Kenya Rutlands, Community Diversity Coordinator, 860-647-3014, kenya09@ci.manchester.ct.us.

Name of the Program: Racial Justice Program, Tucson, AZ

Description: This program is based on the belief that people want to do right but need to know themselves better and be aware of their unconscious racism before they can unlearn it. It began with a leadership registry, a data base of interested and highly qualified individuals available to ensure that all segments of the community were represented on local boards and commissions. The program evolved to touch over 15,000 individuals through community unlearning racism workshops, an Anti-Racism and Diversity Directory, a youth racial justice program and forum, a Journey to Hate Free Millennium program for middle and high school students, and It's Time to Talk community dialogues.

Contact: Janet Marcotte, ED, YWCA Tucson, 520-884-7810, info@ywcatuson.org.

Resource: *Training for Racial Equity and Inclusion: A Guide to Selected Programs*, by Ilana Shapiro

Description: This publication provides an in-depth review and comparison of 10 training programs. It describes why programs do what they do and how they believe their approaches will produce results. This Guide is intended to help communities and organizations select and support approaches that best suit their needs and goals.

Contact: Download publication at www.aspenroundtable.org, or contact Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, 281 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010, 212-677-5510.

Name of the Program: Welcoming Diversity Workshops, Duarte CA

Description: Duarte's Welcoming Diversity Workshops was a city-sponsored series of free workshops aiming to stop racial problems before they arose, and promote dialogue among residents. The city contracted with a diversity training specialist to conduct a series of four to six all-day workshops utilizing role-playing, group discussions, and case studies to help participants learn to recognize the strengths, qualities, and preferences of others, while tackling race relations proactively. The ultimate goal of the workshop series was to create a community culture that recognizes interdependence of all, while welcoming and respecting the city's tremendous diversity. Approximately 500 people participated in the workshops in a six-month period.

Contact: Karen Herrera, Assistant to City Manager, City of Duarte, 1600 Huntington Drive, Duarte, CA, 91010, 626-357-7931, herrerak@accessduarte.com.

Name of the Program: Study Circles, Fort Wayne, IN

Description: Charged with helping create equality for all residents regardless of race, gender, or disability, Fort Wayne's United Way organized study circles as part of its Diversity Initiative. Since 1998, 1,200 people have participated in the program, including community leaders, church members, high school students, and Fort Wayne Police Recruit classes. This program led to: the police academy using study circles on race relations in its cadet training program; new program for youth focusing on leadership development; and a media "watchdog" committee to foster even-handed reporting on race and diversity issues. Some congregations have conducted faith exchanges.

Contact: Tamyra Kelly, 260-422-4776, tamyrak@uwacin.org.

CHANGING DIVERSITY

With the addition of the 5th Brigade and Columbus' growth in diversity, the community must meet the challenge of incorporating the needs, views and aspirations of all its residents as part of its efforts to reduce and eliminate the disparities in services. Part of this process involves developing programs and activities to encourage active participation in community affairs. The following lists offer some ideas on becoming an inclusive community.

Name of the Program: The Bus, Collier County, FL

Description: A circulating public bus provides services to the immigrant community. The bus costs \$1 to ride and provides travel for school, employment, shopping, and other errands. It has two routes and 11 stops and runs from 8 am-6 pm.

Contact: Collier County, 941-657-2689.

Resource: *Immigrant Students and Secondary School Reform: Compendium of Best Practices*, Shelley Spaulding, Barbara Carolin, Kali-Ahset Amen

Description: This publication highlights research and programs in the education of English language learners (ELLs). Recommendations for best practices in six areas crucial to the successful inclusion of ELLs in secondary school reform.

The areas discussed are: Immigrant Students with Limited Formal Schooling, Academic Literacy, Parent Involvement, Summer Programs, Professional Development, Special Education.

Contact: Council of Chief State Officers, One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001, www.ccsso.org.

Resource: *Mapping the Immigrant Infrastructure*

Description: This report answers the question, “How can established community-based and philanthropic organizations more effectively work with emerging mutual assistance and immigrant rights organizations to address the concerns of immigrant and refugee families?”

Contact: Applied Research Center, 3781 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611, 510-653-3415, available on their website, www.arc.org.

Name of the Program: Operacion Apoyo Hispano, Clearwater, FL

Description: Created to assist in reaching recent Latino immigrants, started as a joint venture between the police department and YWCA. This program is designed to address everything from crime concerns to social and economic opportunities for Hispanics. The program includes an interpreter program to assist police officers, a victim advocacy outreach program, and a domestic violence component. The Hispanic Outreach Center expands on Operacion Apoyo by offering bilingual childcare, health and nutrition education services, and ESOL and Spanish language classes. The Center also houses the police’s Hispanic Outreach officer, the Mexican consulate, and a representative from Hidalgo, Mexico (where many of the Latino Families originated).

Contact: City Hall, City of Clearwater, 727-462-6700.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement encompasses the notion that we live under a system of government where citizens matter. We heard in the focus groups a perception that public decisions are often made by a few influential community leaders and then “offered” to the public in a collaborative arrangement, thus, parading as citizen involvement. Often when elected leaders seek the input of citizens they are dismayed that so few come out to voice their concerns; or only when there is a community crisis do we see mobilization efforts which oftentimes lead to polarization rather than any comprehensive process for citizens to become active members and decision-makers in community efforts. The following list highlights community processes used in other communities where unique and innovative approaches have led to an active engaged citizenry.

Parent Engagement and Involvement

Resource: Paterson Education Fund, Paterson, NJ

Description: The Right Question Project provides training and strategies to increase parent participation in the democratic process. It builds upon the strengths of people traditionally marginalized in the decision-making processes that affect them and their children’s education. The Paterson Education Fund has taken the training module and tailored it to build constituencies of parents and community members.

Contact: Irene Sterling, Executive Director, Paterson Education Fund, 22 Mill Street, 3rd Floor, Paterson, NJ 07501, 973-881-8914, isterling@paterson-education.org.

Program: Boston Parent Organizing Initiative, Boston, MA

Description: The network supports and advocates for the improvement of the Boston Public Schools. Every day, parents and community members are getting involved at every level, from meeting with a child’s teacher to helping shape major policy decisions. They are helping to change the culture of education in Boston into a richly diverse and democratic one.

Contact: Boston Parent Organizing Network, 21 Lake Hall, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115, 617-373-4350, info@bpon.org.

Youth Engagement

Name of Program: Diversity Circles, Racine/Kenosha, WI

Description: Diversity Circles, in the neighboring cities of Racine and Kenosha, have expanded to local and regional high schools. Organized by the Center for Community Partnership at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside in

partnership with Sustainable Racine, Diversity Circles have engaged more than 2,100 Kenosha high school students in discussions on race. Each year high school students help organize a regional Diversity in Action Conference to expose teens to diversity issues and encourage them to participate in actions that have a positive effect on their community; a local correctional facility for youth uses study circles to help inmates develop their interpersonal skills; and diversity study circles are standard practices for members of student government in one high school.

Contact: Roseann Mason, 262-595-2606, roseann.mason@uwp.edu.

Name of the Program: Good Schools for All, Buffalo, NY

Description: Project 540, created by youth educators in Providence College and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, provides a vehicle and structure for schools, including six in Buffalo. Project 540 reflects the idea that community must come full circle, 360 degrees, and then go an additional 180 degrees to further engage young people effectively.

Contact: Francesca Mesiah, Director of Community Relations, Good Schools for All, 712 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14202, 716-843-8895.

Name of the Program: San Francisco Education Fund, San Francisco, CA

Description: Creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all students is one of the biggest challenges school administrators face, particularly in comprehensive high schools. Many districts are finding that one of the most effective ways to maintain a positive school climate is to get young people engaged in peer-based activities and initiatives designed to create positive climate change. Results are already showing 80% of peer facilitators report improvement in their decision-making and problem-solving skills and 82% of the respondents feels that participating in Peer Resources helps them to contribute to their school.

Contact: Kathy Turner, Executive Director, San Francisco Education Fund, 47 Kearney St. Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94108 415-912-2223, Kathy@sfedfund.org, www.sfedfund.org.

Resource: Youth Civic Engagement Series

Description: This series includes: “Youth: An Overlooked Resource,” “The Vision,” “Guiding Principles,” and “Hampton, Virginia: A Model of Youth Civic Engagement.”

Contact: Coalition of Community Foundation for Youth, www.ccfy.org.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Residents mentioned faith leaders as well as elected officials as two groups that can play an important role in this effort. The Mayor’s office talks about this issue and has a few programs in place. These examples provide some ideas of taking the message and programs to the next level and more formally integrating the principles into policies, practices and the culture of City Hall. Also included is information about new resources and an action guide for city leaders.

Resource: *Building Inclusive Communities: An Action Guide for City Leaders*

Description: For each topic area, the publication provides information on: Why city officials should get involved, What city officials can do, Outcomes to work toward, and Recommended action steps. Some of the topics include: Bridge Language Gaps; Understand and Address Housing Needs; Encourage Economic Development; and Lead and Foster Leadership.

Contact: Go to www.lmnc.org to download this publication.

Name of the Program: Challenge 2001, St. Petersburg, FL

Description: The city launched Challenge 2001 with the mission of creating an environment in St. Petersburg where “all citizens can enjoy a quality of life that allows them to live in safe, clean neighborhoods and the opportunity to be successful in achieving whatever goals they may set.” The city pinpointed a target area where poverty levels, drop-out rates, unemployment, poverty values, and crime rates were significantly less favorable than other parts of the city. The city worked to achieve numerical targets in four categories: economic equity, community renewal, education, and public safety. In the first three years, 29 businesses were added or expanded in target area, 14,000 residents received jobs both in and out of the target area. Property values increased by at least 10 percent, the violent crime rate dropped 18% and property crime rate dropped 6.6%.

Contact: Tyna Middleton, Challenge 2001 Coordinator, 727-893-7894.

Name of the Program: Citizen's Unity Commission, Hampton, VA

Description: To respond proactively to community concerns about race relations, the city council formed the Citizen's Unity Commission (CUC) to help the community appreciate diversity. The CUC is comprised of 29 citizen representatives from various racial and ethnic groups as well as youths in the high school. A staff of two full-time and two part-time people supports the Commission. To respond reactively to racism, the city council created the Ad Hoc Leadership Group to review any incident that threatens to be divisive and to recommend action to CUC.

Contact: Julie Vaisvill, Acting director, 757-727-1379.

Name of the Program: Diversity Initiative, Durham, NC

Description: The Diversity Initiative began with a "cultural audit" that determined the extent to which diversity, sensitivity and equity were incorporated into city administrative procedures. Performed by a consulting firm, the audit concentrated on city employees for its data, using surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews as gathering tools. Based on the recommendations, task teams were formed to create Departmental Diversity Action Plans. Another was the establishment of Diversity Council in which all employees can become involved.

Contact: Angela Henderson, 919-560-4180, ahenderson@ci.durham.nc.us.

Name of the Program: Equity and Diversity Commission, Tukwila, WA

Description: Tukwila established the nine-member commission to ensure every individual in the community is treated with dignity and has equal access to resources and opportunity. The commission designed and distributed a multilingual access guide. It also adopted and promoted the "Tukwila Pledge Against Racism" by displaying the statement on posters at public events. Community members were encouraged to sign the pledge and continue the work to eliminate prejudice.

Contact: Lucy Lauterback, Legislative Coordinator, 206-433-1834, llauterbach@ci.tukwila.wa.us.

Name of the Program: Multiculturalism Training Program, Salisbury, NC

Description: The training program is for all city employees for recognizing, understanding, and appreciating one's own cultural and the culture of others. Some goals of the program are promoting a cooperative and pluralistic community, providing a platform for the discussion of race and other diversity issues, and identifying institutional racism and other forms of systemic oppression and discrimination. The program is funded by a private foundation grant.

Contact: Melissa Hasty Taylor, 704-638-5229, mtay@salisburync.org.

Name of the Program: Social Justice Task Force, Geneva, NY

Description: This committee was formed to study local race relations, create a city-wide racial profile, and interact with the community at public meetings to find out residents' opinion on race relations.

Contact: City Hall, 315-789-2603.

SECTORS

BUSINESS

Residents want inclusive workplaces. It is important for organizations to share information about their diversity programs and collect data so the sector has some basic benchmarks to see if progress is made. We also heard about the importance of creating equal and fair wages and ensuring that diversity is reflected throughout an organization's chart. Another area of concern is the need for more businesses in South Columbus, including those owned by people of color.

City: Amarillo, TX

Description: The Amarillo Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) uses incentive programs to encourage business expansion and job creation in the city. AEDC awarded grants that match incentive dollars to the wages a company brings into the community: \$10,000 for every \$12 per hour job, and more for higher paying positions. The funds are used for facilities, training, relocation, and other expenses of beginning operations within the city. If the company keeps the jobs at equal or higher level of wages for four years it does not have to pay back any of the grant. Since its inception in 1989, Amarillo has attracted 104 new business expansions and increased the average wage by 28 percent.

Contact: Richard R. "Buzz" David, President and CEO, Amarillo Economic Development Corporation, 801 South Fillmore, Suite 205, Amarillo, TX 79101, 806-379-6411, buzz@aedc.com.

Name of the Program: Civic Innovation LabCleveland, OH

Description: The lab is a project of The Cleveland Foundation and five collaborating partners. The Lab provides mentors, services and possible funding to local champions with innovative civic ideas to spark economic development in Greater Cleveland. The Lab provides a network of support for innovative projects, serving as a catalyst for opportunity and success. The Lab is not an incubator for private business, but a vehicle to connect great civic ideas with the right place in the community.

Contact: Jennifer Thomas, Director, 1422 Euclid Ave., Suite 1300, Cleveland, OH 44115, 216-861-3810, www.civicinnovationlab.org.

Name of the Program: Grow it in South Hartford, Hartford, CT

Description: This program gives cash-back incentives to businesses which create new jobs for the community. Businesses that create a targeted number of new jobs during the course of a loan can qualify for a reduction of up to 10 percent of the principal amount of their loan. The program is part of South Hartford's Commercial Development Initiative program.

Contact information: City Hall, 550 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06103, 860-543-8580.

Name of the Program: St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative, St. Louis, MO

Description: This initiative helps area companies build successful diversity programs. The initiative is made up of companies, organizations, and agencies committed to attracting and retaining talented, diverse employees and to building business with minority suppliers. Diverse workforce and robust minority supplier programs are vital to the growth of the St. Louis region and companies doing business here. This initiative also includes a Diversity Officers' Network. Senior human resource executives from member companies meet monthly to strategize about ways companies can help each other promote fully inclusive workplaces. Members share successful experiences and create action plans to help businesses formulate and execute programs for the hiring and advancement of minorities. This initiative also includes a Purchasing Officer and Minority Corporate Network.

Contact: Valerie Patton, St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative, One Metropolitan Square, Suite 1300, St. Louis, MO 63102, 314-444-1121, www.stlbizdiversity.com.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Residents expressed a great deal of concern about the economic sustainability of South Columbus. Although the city has undertaken projects to revitalize South Columbus, little knowledge of these efforts seemed apparent. When residents are actively recruited to become a part of the planning and design for their community they are more likely to value and support the outcome. The following projects were undertaken in a number of communities where resident engagement and revitalization work hand-in-hand.

Resource: Anti-Predatory Lending Toolkit

Description: This toolkit contains information on defining and recognizing the problem, building consensus in the community, the importance of a national policy, best practices, and a legal toolkit.

Contact: National Community Reinvestment Coalition (March, 2002, second edition), available at www.ncrc.org,

Name of the Program: Family Circles, Indianapolis, IN

Description: Family Circles helped residents get to know one another and work together to solve neighborhood problems. Since 2000, 780 people have participated in 92 Family Circles in 30 neighborhoods across the city. The Program led to: a new neighborhood association to help residents address a range of neighborhood issues; a youth center provides students with computers, study rooms, pool tables and video games; and residents in a public housing complex revived their resident council and launched new programs.

Contact: Alicia Barnett, 317-920-0330, ajbarnett@inrc.org.

Name of the Program: Reclaiming a Neighborhood, Tupelo, MS

Description: Tupelo renovated and remodeled existing structures, encouraged private investment, created safe and secure neighborhoods, increase home ownership, and restored the character of a historic area. These projects were accomplished through ad valorem tax exemptions, reduced permit and constructing fees, and direct citizen and property owner involvement in “front porch meetings, public hearings, and workshops.”

Contact: Zell Long, Assistant Director for Community Development, City of Tupelo, Department of Planning and Community Development, PO Box 1485, 662-841-6411, zlong@ci.tupelo.ms.us.

EDUCATION

The education sector, specifically the public school system of Muscogee County, was talked about in each focus group and interview. Most participants offered critique and feedback. One of the strong messages which emerged is: that people want to be more involved and believe this is one of the most important issues for the community. The examples chosen for this section focus mostly on communities working to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities and engaging the public to be involved in the policy decisions and providing support to schools. There is also a section for higher education institutions.

Name of the Program: Collaborative Conversations, Long Beach, CA

Description: Long Beach’s mayor, city council, and school board members meet quarterly for “collaborative conversations” to discuss issues related to the city’s youth. The city is also part of the Seamless Education Initiative, established in 1995, which brings together educators from the city’s school district, community colleges, and university to align standards, course curriculum, and assessment methods. The project’s goals are to ensure that students are well prepared to enter the next grade level and to reduce the number of students not promoted.

Contact: Diane K. Jacobus, Senior Advisor to the Mayor, City of Long Beach, Office of the Mayor, 333 West Ocean Blvd., 14th Floor, Long Beach, CA 90802, 562-570-5376, diane_jacobus@longbeach.gov.

Resource: *Communities at Work*, Public Education Network

Description: This guide is designed to build understanding of strategic interventions and create the capacity to deploy them. Each of these interventions are described, lessons learned are shared as well as examples, tool, and resources: Community Dialogue, Constituency Building, Engaging Practitioners, Collaborating with Districts, Policy Analysis, and Legal Strategies.

Contact: Public Education Network, 601 Thirteenth St. NW, Suite 900 North, Washington, D.C. 20005, 202-628-7460 www.publiceducation.org.

Name of the Program: Durham’s Covenant for Education

Description: In 2003, 62 community leaders representing Durham’s diverse population signed Durham’s Covenant for education, a community resolution to work to improve public education and close the achievement gap. The covenant represents Durham’s collective commitment to improving public education for all children and to a more holistic approach to improving student achievement through community engagement, coordination, and collaboration.

Contact: Durham Public Education Network, 4235 University Drive, CCB Building, Durham, NC 27707, 919-683-6503.

City: Martinsville, VA

Description: Martinsville retained a management consultant who specializes in strategic planning to lead a one-day retreat for city council members and school board members. The goal of the retreat was to improve communication and foster teamwork. Participants sought to understand how education and community needs are interrelated and to identify ways in which the city council and school board could improve their working relationship. Each group’s responsibility for policy, budget, and other matters were identified. Following the retreat, a brief report was produced to summarize recommendations for improved collaboration.

Contact: Susan Johnson, Executive Services Coordinator, City of Martinsville, PO Box 1112, Martinsville, VA 24114, 276-403-5182, snjohnson@ci.martinsville.va.us.

Name of the Program: Public Education and Business Coalition, Denver, CO

Description: This is a partnership of education, business, and community leaders whose goal is “To cultivate excellence in public schools so all students succeed in learning and in life.” More than 30 PEBC staff developers work directly with teachers in schools as coaches in instructional practice. Teachers report that the hands-on assistance and in-depth support enhances their sense of efficacy and increases their job satisfaction; in addition, students with teachers who received this training made gains in test scores.

Contact: Barbara Volpe, Executive Director, Public Education and Business Coalition, 1410 Grant Street, Suite A101, Denver, CO 80203, 303-861-8661, bvolpe@pebc.org, www.pebc.org.

Name of the Program: Public Schools Diversity Education Program, Newport News, VA

Description: This program focuses on improving race relations through education, training, and interaction. The program features individuals called Connection Advocates who participate in diversity training, attend workshops and conferences, disseminate topical information, and offer support and resources to other teachers regarding diversity. The School District also hosts an annual Diversity and Race Relations Conference which features high-profile speakers and small group sessions that address a number of topics like parental strategies for closing the achievement gap and disciplining students.

Contact: Eva Williams Hunt, Director of Instruction and Program Equity, 757-591-4988, elva.hunt@nn.k12.va.us.

Resource: *Quality Now!*, Public Education Network and Public Agenda

Description: With identities, long-held beliefs, and futures at stake, it is not surprising that Americans find it difficult, and even painful, to engage in open and honest conversations about education and race. The Public Education Network and Public Agenda observed the absence of this necessary dialogue. They joined forces to conduct an in-depth examination of education and race. *Quality Now!* chronicles the experiences and offers detailed recommendations for creating future conversations and an assortment of tools for helping to facilitate additional local dialogues.

Contact: Public Education Network, 601 13th St., NW, Suite 900N, Washington, D.C. 20005, 202-628-7460, www.PublicEducation.org.

Name of the Program: Schools and Community Initiative, Lincoln, NE

Description: Lincoln Public Schools Foundation collaborates with community partners to develop local capacity for a sustainable, citywide, school-linked, school-based network of community learning centers which are supported by federal and national grants. The core elements are: community organizations providing services in partnerships with schools; grassroots ownership and guidance through school neighborhood advisory committees, community-wide support through a commission of community leaders and advocates, statewide advocacy to cultivate long-term sustainability.

Contact: Barbara Bartle, Executive Director, Lincoln Public Schools Foundation, 402-436-1612, bbartle@lps.org.

Resource: *School Finance Toolkit: How to Create a Community Guide to Your School District's Budget*, Bryan C. Hassel, Ph.D.

Description: In 1997, the Public Education Network announced a Ford Foundation-funded initiative to spark community-based analyses of school budgets nationwide. For two years, pilot sites experimented with ways to inform the public about school finance and involve citizens more heavily in budgetary issues. This toolkit will help other community-based organization undertake similar effort and includes: Get Started, Engage the Public, Crunch the Numbers, and Put the Numbers to Work, Resources.

Contact: Public Education Network, 601 13th St., NW, Suite 900N, Washington, D.C. 20005, 202-628-7460, www.publiceducation.org.

Name of the Program: Tulsa Talks, Tulsa, OK

Description: Tulsa Talks is a partnership of community leaders and organizations that hosts a citywide dialogue on the area's public schools. Ten thousand Tulsa area citizens meet in study circles to offer their ideas for public education and to help guide a community-based action plan to inform the decisions of public school administrators, business leaders, and community leaders. The mayor, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa, The University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, Tulsa Community College, the YWCA, The Eastern Oklahoma Labor-Religion Council, and the National Conference for Community and Justice are all partners in the project.

Contact: Tulsa Public Schools, 3027 South New Haven Avenue, Tulsa, OK 74114, 918-594-8189, tulsatalks@osutuls.okstate.edu.

City: West Haven, CT

Description: West Haven's mayor and eight members of the city council visited a middle school to see what students had on their minds. They were joined by representatives of the school board, the chamber of commerce, and the police department. The delegation heard students' opinions on everything from the need for more parks and cleaner environment to student related concerns for better cafeteria food, new text books, and cleaner bathrooms. Prior to the officials' visit the school's civic teacher had taken the groups of students to city council meetings to see city government in action.

Contact: City Hall, City of West Haven, 355 West Main Street, West Haven, CT 06516, 203-937-3500.

HIGHER EDUCATION

We had limited contact with people from higher education institutions. The Community Assessment report spoke of the impact of these institutions in the community that has helped to increase the educational level in the county. Equity issues are spoken about by higher education institutions when it comes to student and faculty recruitment, but typically most schools (though more schools are focused on this issue in the past 10 years) do not have equity benchmarks to ensure their policies, culture, and practices do not restrict opportunity for students of color. The following are some resources to consider using.

Resource: *Diversity Blueprint*

Description: This is a how-to planning resource for administrators, faculty, and staff working to create campus diversity policies based on the following priorities: Leadership and systemic change; recruitment, retention and affirmative action; curriculum transformation; campus/community connections; and faculty, staff involvement.

Contact: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1818 R Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. www.diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/institutional_leadership/institutional_statements_plans/diversityblueprint.cfm.

Name of the Program: *Equity Scorecard*

Description: The Equity Scorecard is an ongoing initiative designed to foster institutional change in higher education. Its fundamental aim is to close the achievement gap for historically underrepresented students. The Scorecard was initially developed when it became evident that equity, while valued, is not something that is measured in relation to educational outcomes for traditionally disenfranchised students in higher education.

Contact: Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education, Waite Phillips Hall, Suite 702, Los Angeles, CA 90089, 213-740-5202, www.usc.edu/dept/education/CUE/.

Name of the Program: *Ten Ways to Fight Hate on Campus*, Southern Poverty Law Center

Description: This guide is designed primarily for student activists and advocates. Some information, however, also is well-suited for campus administrators, staff, faculty and others. Depending on the specific crisis, some chapters will be more relevant than others. And although this is designed as a crisis guide, the information and ideas here prevent bias incidents from happening.

Contact: Jennifer Holladay, Southern Poverty Law Center, Tolerance.org, 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104, 334-956-8200, www.tolerance.org/campus.

FAITH

Several residents mentioned the importance of faith community leaders being forthright and taking an active role in addressing this issue. Many believed their influence and leadership would help move the community forward, encourage reconciliation, and provide a needed voice by sharing the teachings of their faith.

Resource: “Asking Questions So a Community Thinks About Race,” Phil Latham

Description: An article describes a local editor’s process to be a catalyst for the community to discuss race relations. He created 12 questions and posed them to six white ministers and six African-American ministers and formed Racial Reconciliation Committee.

Contact: Download, www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/03-3NRfall/V57N3.pdf.

Resource: Celebration of Hope, Indianapolis, IN

Description: The program began in 1993 with two ministers who decided their churches needed to be involved in a dialogue about race. The result was Celebration of Hope, an annual citywide worship service for racial reconciliation. The organizers now offer year-round programs, such as pulpit exchanges, monthly focus groups, and prayer groups.

Contact: Bishop T. Garrott Benjamin, Light of the World Christian Church, 5640 E. 38th St., Indianapolis, IN 46218, 317, 274-2458.

Resource: *Crossing the Racial Divide: America’s Struggle for Justice and Reconciliation – A Study Guide*

Description: This is a challenging and hope-filled guide that offers a fresh look at a complex issue. This four-session resource holds up the insights from the streets and from the gospel to create powerful models for reconciliation with justice.

Contact: Sojourners Resource Center, 2401 15th St., NW, Washington DC 20009, 800-714-7474, www.sojo.net.

Resource: *Denouncing Racism: A Resource Guide of Faith-Based Principles*, National Conference of Community and Justice

Description: This guide addresses how the concept of being actively anti-racist is documented in most faiths’ spiritual practices and policies. This unprecedented compilation of faith- and spiritually based principles lifts up the moral responsibility of each person of faith to denounce racism. Coupled with policy statements of many denominations, this guide provides the foundation as to why we all must work together in combating the divisiveness of racism.

Contact: National Conference for Community and Justice, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, 212-545-1300, www.nccj.org.

Resource: *Fulfilling the Dream: Confronting the Challenge of Racism*, Ronice Branding

Description: Specific, concrete strategies for challenging and beginning to undo racism are worth their weight in gold. She makes a strong case for the fact that the work of challenging racism is a profoundly spiritual task, one in which each of us and each one of our congregations needs to partake. The “chewable bites” consist of 13 pages of specific suggestions for action in six areas: Church Leadership, Worship, Church Context and Communication, Stewardship, Christian Education, and Engagement with the Community. This book provides a set of reflection questions which makes this a helpful study guide for groups.

Contact: www.amazon.com.

Name of Program: Pastors on Patrol, Fernandina Beach, FL

Description: Thirty churches were involved in the Ministerial Alliance (which includes African-American and white religious leaders). Seeing respected religious leaders patrolling the neighborhood with officers encourages positive behavior by residents and reduces fear. Confrontations are less volatile, and people are less likely to react with anger when a pastor is present. The strategy reduces tensions between the neighborhood and the police. It also provides an opportunity for pastors to conduct social ministry in the neighborhood.

Contact: Robert Hammond, Police Chief, 1525 Lime Street, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034, 904-277-7342.

MEDIA

Many residents spoke about their concerns about how stories are reported. It will be important for news organizations to consider how they cover issues on race, which means assessing internal policies, staffing, and procedures as well as listening to residents’ feedback on a regular basis. The following are resources that may be helpful in the assessment process and in staff development activities.

Resource: “Asking Questions So a Community Thinks About Race,” Phil Latham

Description: An article describes a local editor's process to be a catalyst for the community to discuss race relations. He created 12 questions and posed them to six white ministers and six African-American ministers and formed a Racial Reconciliation Committee.

Contact: Download, www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/03-3NRfall/V57N3.pdf.

Resource: *Delving into the Divide: A Study of Race Reporting in Forty-Five Newsrooms*, Pat Ford, produced by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, October, 2001

Description: The book shares the stories of how news organizations have tried to capture the different expectations, different perceptions and different aspirations that now often intertwine in a multicultural society. It focuses, in particular, on journalism that seemed to connect, in some way, with the community. And it tells the stories behind the stories.

Contact: Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1101 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 420, Washington DC, 20036, 202-331-3200, www.pewcenter.org.

Resource: *Managing for Excellence*

Description: The Editorial Excellence Inventory, created by the Media Management Center, chose 14 universal characteristics of editorial quality, which are: accuracy, sourcing, awareness of readers, community focus, technical/competence savvy, performance management, training, integrating information, innovation, timeliness, quality assessment, staff development, hiring, and strategic planning and awareness.

Contact: Media Management Center, 301 Fisk Hall, Northwestern University, 1845 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, IL 60208, 847-491-4900, download publication, www.mediamanagementcenter.org/publications/excellence.asp.

Resource: *News Watch: A critical look at coverage of people of color*, Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism, San Francisco State University

Description: This publication provides several tools for journalists: examination of journalistic practices that help or hinder news coverage of people of color, case studies of how journalists responded to specific news stories and issues; heart-to-heart advice about special concerns in the coverage of African-American, Asian-American, Latino and Native American communities; and tips journalists and news organizations can incorporate in their work as they address the news.

Contact: Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94132, 415-338-2083.

Resource: "What Color is the News? The Coverage of Race in America."

Description: This is a Fred Friendly Seminar taped in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, examining the issue of racial bias in news reporting. The lively panel discusses several scenarios and included John Greenman, former president and publisher of the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* and other news professionals, media faculty, a city council person, a district attorney, and a president of a university.

Contact: Fred Friendly Seminars, Inc., 2950 Broadway, New York, NY 10027, 212-854-8995, info@fredfriendly.org.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Although we held a focus group with the public safety sector (EMS/fire, law enforcement and corrections), the majority of concerns raised with the citizen groups centered on law enforcement. In addition, members of law enforcement agencies were anxious to know what community members wanted of them in terms of service, crime prevention and enforcement. Some approaches to involving citizens and the police as genuine partners in developing processes and programs for addressing concerns, building avenues for mutual trust are listed below.

Name of the Program: Citizen Police Academy, Little Rock, AR

Description: The Academy is a 10-session course in which officers and administrators present information on nearly every function of the city Police Department. Its purpose is to help officers and community members establish a rapport and better understand each other's roles and responsibilities in the community. Some of the course topics include: laws and arrest, search and seizure, crimes against persons and properties, SWAT team responses, vice crimes, street gangs and youth offenders, traffic violations and police pursuit, and community-oriented policing. Academy participants may

elect to ride along with patrol officers one night to observe first-hand his or her duties while in service. They may also tour 911 and police headquarters, as well as participate in firearms training.

Contact: Sgt. Alan Watson, City of Little Rock, Police Department, 700 West Markham, Little Rock, AR 72201, 501-399-3486.

Name of the Program: Citizen Police Academy, Fort Collins, CO

Description: The goal of this academy is to provide information for citizens on the Police Services program, getting them more involved as allies and volunteers. Each session of the academy lasts approximately 10 weeks and classes consist of presentations, discussions with the instructor, or hands-on training, such as crime scene investigation or defensive tactics. Many academy alumni volunteer with the Fort Collins Police Service, doing data entry, assisting with selection processes, and doing officer volunteer work in the District office.

Contact: Office of the Police Chief, Fort Collins Police Services, PO Box 580, Fort Collins, CO 80522, 970-221-6550.

Name of the Program: Citizen's Roundtable, Lacey, WA

Description: The Lacey Police Department's Citizen's Roundtable is held to build open relationships and promote positive dialogue and feedback. The meetings are held quarterly and feature a diverse cross-section of residents who discuss current issues and allow individuals to speak about topics of concern. Partnerships created at the roundtables are mutually beneficial and encourage understanding and unity in the community.

Contact: Dusty Pierpoint, Police Commander, City of Lacey, PO Box 3400, Lacey, WA 98509, 360-459-4333.

Name of Program: Citizen Surveys, Portland, OR

Description: Citizen surveys have been used in many public service agencies (including EMS, law enforcement and corrections) as a means of acquiring feedback from the public regarding community satisfaction and developing new ideas of improving how best to serve the needs of the community. Since 1994, the city of Portland has undertaken benchmark research to evaluate community's perception of the work performed by the Portland Police Bureau.

Contact: Go to www.portlandonline.com/police.

Resource: *Community Centered Policing: A Force of Change*

Description: This publication highlights promising community-centered policing practices throughout the country. Some examples include: collaboration with community advocates to solve neighborhood problems in Seattle; police recruitment efforts that actively elicit community input in New Haven; and neighborhood-designated advisors to assist in reviewing police practices in Portland.

Contact: Go to www.policylink.org for an executive summary and full report.

Name of the Program: Community Conversations, Owensboro, KY

Description: Following the shooting of an African-American male by a police officer, Community Conversations, Inc., organized a study circle program to address the heightened racial tension in the community. In 2002, more than 135 people participated in study circles to create better working relationships between residents and local police department. The program led to: The governor increasing the staff at a regional crime lab to help expedite police work; the police department appointing a public relations person who acts as a liaison to the media; police officers now park their cruisers at home to increase police visibility; editorials in the local newspaper commended the community and the study circle participants for starting this process and urged them to continue the effort.

Contact: Kathy Christie, 270-687-4630, deliberation@omuonline.net.

Name of the Program: Community Policing Circles, Buffalo, NY

Description: The Police Department began collaborating with the United Neighborhoods Center, an affiliate of United Way that serves Buffalo's system of block clubs, to help officers and residents work together. The result was a city-wide project that involved 600 residents, including over 250 young people, over a two-year period. In neighborhoods across the city, residents met with police officers and lieutenants, as well as other stakeholders in multiple-session small-group discussions about the challenges to public safety and ways to surmount them. After the small-group sessions had ended, participants gathered at a city-wide action forum to share their conclusions and highlight action efforts in each neighborhood.

Contact: Zoe Hollomon, 716-882-7814 ext.21, zhollomon@caoec.org.

Name of Program: Pastors on Patrol, Fernandina Beach, FL

Description: Thirty churches were involved in the Ministerial Alliance (which includes African-American and white religious leaders). Seeing respected religious leaders patrolling the neighborhood with officers encourages positive behavior by residents and reduces fear. Confrontations are less volatile, and people are less likely to react with anger when a pastor is present. The strategy reduces tensions between the neighborhood and the police. It also provides an opportunity for pastors to conduct social ministry in the neighborhood.

Contact: Robert Hammond, Police Chief, 1525 Lime Street, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034, 904-277-7342.

Name of the Program: Uniformed Sensitivity in Action, Baltimore, MD

Description: This program enhances the relationship between citizens and frontline law enforcement personnel. The program is an effort to facilitate dialogue on a wide range of issues such as racial profiling, public perception of the police, and the effect of negative police contact on children. Those officers who attend the weekly training sessions view a videotaped interview with exceptional officers who emphasize the importance of the community's role in their daily policing efforts, and hear a one-hour lecture on the meaning of cultural diversity in the United States, developed by an expert in the field. A police officer, lieutenant, or other sworn member of the department deemed capable of handling various forms of dialogue supervises each class. Community members are encouraged to attend get-togethers immediately prior to the sessions to meet the officers who live in or patrol their neighborhoods.

Contact: Joel M. Francis, Chief of Special Projects, City of Baltimore Police Department, 242 West 29th St., Baltimore, MD 21211, 410-396-2518, joel.francis@baltimore-police.org.

APPENDIX

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

COMMUNITY SURVEY

CONSULTANT TEAM BIO'S

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. With your invitation for today's focus group, you received a one-page handout about the Community Foundation, sharing information about the *Moving Forward Together* Initiative. The Foundation posed three questions for the community to consider:

- Do race and ethnicity impact opportunities for residents of Columbus?
- If so, then how should you respond as an individual?
- If so, then how should we respond as a community?

Our work, as consultants, is to talk with the residents to find out what you think about how race and ethnicity impact opportunities for the residents of Columbus. We will be asking a series of questions to learn about the state of race relations in Columbus, including what needs to change, and ideas for change. Our promise to you is confidentiality on what you say on an individual level – meaning no quotes will be attributed to you personally. We will identify issues, themes and ideas and share information in a composite form.

Having a conversation about race relations is not a typical discussion we have in many communities and we want to applaud you for taking the time and sharing your insight. Each of us comes into this room with your own set of experiences, opinions, and view of how the world works and how this community works. We want to hear your thoughts.

1. Introductions: Please share your name, your organization, how many years you lived in Columbus, and one strength of the community, along with one challenge Columbus is facing right now.
2. How has the community worked together across racial lines in the past? Currently?
3. Thinking about the past five years in Columbus, would you say race relations are getting better, getting worse or staying the same? Give an example.
4. When we look nationally at statistics, racial disparities have been identified in housing (getting a loan), health care (access to quality care), education (access to quality schools), and business (promotions, small business loans) as well as other areas. Thinking about Columbus, which sector do you perceive is working the most to address racial disparities? Which sector do you believe needs to focus more on addressing racial disparities?
5. How has the community responded to the increasing diversity of the community residents? How does your organization respond to the community's diversity?
6. What kind of support – skills, knowledge – do you think would help people work more effectively with people of different races?
7. Are you aware of any individual work, projects, or initiatives that are addressing race relations/diversity in Columbus?
8. What do you want the *Moving Forward Together Initiative* to accomplish in the next few years?

Moving Forward Together Community Survey

The Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley is establishing *Moving Forward Together*, a public initiative to convene the community around issues of race and ethnicity. The goal is to support our community in ensuring that every resident, regardless of race and ethnicity, will have access to all opportunities and a positive quality of life. **Please take a few moments and complete this survey.**

Please circle information about yourself:

Gender: Female Male
 Race/Ethnicity: African-American/Black Asian-American/Pacific Islander Hispanic/ Latino/a
 Native American White/Caucasian Multiracial
 Other (Please Specify) _____

1. In which areas of your life do you have the most interaction with people of different racial backgrounds to your own?

Work School Faith Community Volunteer Activities Other _____

2. How many friends do you have from different racial backgrounds other than your own?

None Couple Several Many

3. In the past three years, have you experienced racial discrimination or are you aware of incidents of racial discrimination, in Columbus, Georgia, in any of the following settings?

Please check the frequency for each setting:

Settings	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Retail Stores/Restaurants				
Social Service Agencies				
Clinics/Hospitals				
Buying, renting, leasing a home/apartment				
City and Government Offices				
Local News Coverage				
Workplace				
Schools				
Law Enforcement				
Recreation: e.g., museums, parks, theater				
Other _____				

3 A. Please respond to the following only if you checked "Occasionally" or "Frequently" in the above table. Some incidents of discrimination are a result of an individual person's behavior toward another person, while some discrimination happens because the rules or the culture of the organization cause it to happen. Please choose three settings in which you experienced or are aware of frequent or occasional discrimination, and then check whether you believe the discrimination was based on an individual or an organizational cause.

Setting	Individual	Organization

4. Over the past five years would you say race relations in Columbus are getting better, getting worse or staying the same? *Give an example.*

5. Are you aware of any individual work, projects, or initiatives in Columbus that are addressing race relations/diversity? Are you personally involved in this (these) effort(s)?

6. What are the top two community issues (such as housing, employment, education, health care, law enforcement or other issues) that you feel need to change in Columbus, to ensure that race/ethnicity *does not* play a role in receiving equitable and quality access and services?

7. What is one thing you believe will help improve racial relations and/or ensure equitable access to community resources in Columbus?

8. Please share the names of organizations or individuals that you specifically believe should get involved in the *Moving Forward Together Initiative*.

If you would like to be involved in the Moving Forward Together Initiative, please share your contact information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Thank you for completing the survey.

CONSULTANT TEAM BIOS

Carolyn Abdullah Vicksburg, Mississippi

Currently living in Connecticut working on her doctorate degree

Carolyn Abdullah works as an independent consultant and as Senior Associate for the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC, www.studyircles.org). As a Senior Associate for SCRC, she provides technical assistance to neighborhoods and communities that are seeking to find democratic ways of addressing local political and social issues. In that capacity she advises nonprofits, governmental agencies, business organizations, and media in strategies to increase citizen involvement in local problem solving. These efforts usually involve technical assistance in community-centered organizing. As an independent consultant Carolyn has worked with the National League of Cities on its Selma Alabama Community Improvement Initiative to address issues of race, education, governance and economic development. She has also served as consultant on other community initiatives in Louisville, KY, Cincinnati, OH, and Montgomery, AL involving issues of community-police relations and race.

In addition, Abdullah has worked with the Legal Services Corporation, where she designed and conducted “know your rights” forums for the elderly as well as forums on landlord-tenant law for low-income families in Cleveland, Mississippi. She also served in the federal sector for ten years in Washington, D.C., as a program analyst, budget analyst, and management analyst. She participated in a national assessment, sponsored jointly by the Departments of Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban Development, which was designed to ascertain the impact of social services delivery on residents who live in HUD developments.

While living in the Washington, D.C., area, Abdullah became concerned with the negative images of African-American males portrayed on television. As a volunteer with her sons’ school system, she designed an after-school program targeted to African-American youth, with special emphasis on African-American males, entitled the *Self-Esteem Educational (SEE) Program for African-Americans*. After being instituted in a Montgomery County elementary school and used in a Montgomery County Housing Development, the program was awarded the Governor of Maryland’s Volunteer Service Award and the Outstanding Volunteer Award by the Montgomery County Board of Education, and received a certificate of merit from the State of Maryland Department of Education.

Abdullah holds her Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Alcorn State University, her Master of Political Science degree from Iowa State University, a Master of Public Administration from Penn State University, and is in the writing phase of her dissertation for her doctorate from the University of Connecticut. Her research area is an exploration of public dialogue, using study circles as a community change model in the area of community police relations. As such, Abdullah has served as the lead SCRC person in developing outreach initiatives with community groups and police departments considering the study circles approach.

Maggie Potapchuk
Silver Spring, Maryland
MP Associates, Inc.

In the past 17 years, Maggie Potapchuk has designed and facilitated diversity and anti-racism training programs, provided technical assistance on change projects, created awareness and dialogue programs and tools to build the capacity of organizations and communities to address race and privilege issues. She was Senior Program Associate with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies' Network of Alliances Bridging Race and Ethnicity (NABRE) program, a national effort to facilitate communication and provide support for 185 community-based race relations and racial-justice organizations

As part of her work, Potapchuk studied the town of Clarksburg, West Virginia, and developed the "Inclusive Community Assessment Tool" which is included in the *Steps Toward an Inclusive Community* book. Her second publication, *Holding up the Mirror: Working Interdependently for Just and Inclusive Communities*, is based on the NABRE How-To Forum: *Creating Collaborative Approaches to Address Racial Injustice*. Potapchuk piloted the How-To Forum in four communities, working with local foundations to convene race relations and racial justice organizations to explore how to work interdependently on community issues. Description of the process and lessons learned are detailed in her newest publication, *Cultivating Interdependence: A Guide for Race Relations and Racial Justice Organizations*. Potapchuk working with the Center for Assessment and Policy Development, co-developed the framework and content for a new website, www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org

Maggie worked with the National League of Cities on the Selma Alabama Community Improvement Initiative to address issues of race, education, governance and economic development. With her brother William Potapchuk, she assisted in assembling a toolkit, *Building Effective Community Partnerships*, for the Institute of Educational Leadership and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. She served as technical assistance manager for the *Common Ground Fund: Investing in Racial Justice and Social Change* for the Community Foundation of the National Capital Region, a project to create opportunities for long-term and new residents to work together on neighborhood issues. Potapchuk now serves on the Fund's steering committee.

From 1995-1999, Potapchuk was Director of the Dismantling Racism Program at the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), St. Louis Region. Potapchuk co-created NCCJ's Dismantling Racism Institute and served on its faculty, providing ongoing technical assistance to 175-plus Institute graduates. The Dismantling Racism Institute was chosen as one of seven promising practices in the book, *Intergroup Relations in the United States: Seven Promising Practices*, funded by the Ford Foundation. Also, she was project director and primary author of CommUnity-St. Louis, a comprehensive community initiative to address racism, which was chosen as a promising practice by the President Clinton's Initiative on Race. Potapchuk was honored for her work by the St. Louis YWCA, which gave her its 1999 Racial Justice Award.

Potapchuk's professional experience also includes a decade of program and staff development as a student services administrator. At Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, she received a national award from the American College Personnel Association for an "Outstanding Example of Campus-Wide Collaboration to Serve Commuter Students and/or Adult Learners."

She received her B.S. in child and family community services from Bowling Green (Ohio) State University, and her M.Ed. in organizational development and applied group studies from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Note: The consultants of the Moving Forward Together Initiative are solely responsible for any errors in this report.