



In this Issue

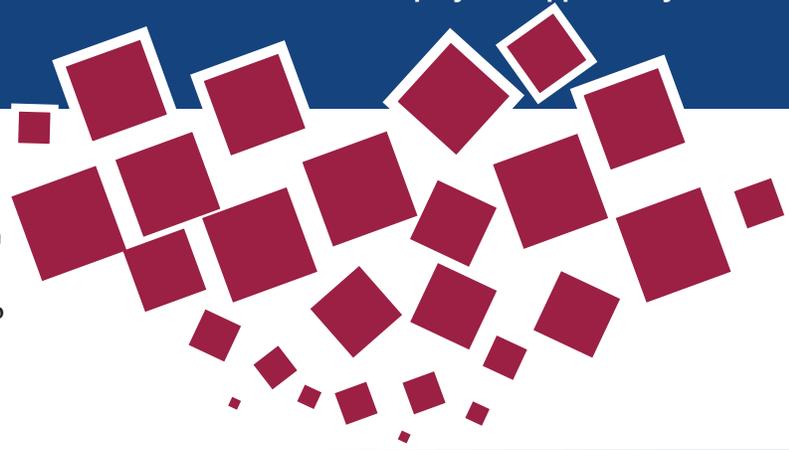


Micha Fialka-Feldman

Youth Alumni Graduate receives Certificate in Disability Studies at Syracuse University, N.Y.



Statewide Coalition Engages In Healing Stories. Working to create open, public spaces for sharing and shaping statewide narratives.



Spring 2015 Newsletter

Friends,

As I travel about our communities and follow the news, I am struck by the unnecessary police beating of Floyd Dent in Inkster, the unabashed disdain voiced toward our Muslim neighbors, the discussion about denying basic civil rights to our neighbors who are gay and the tragic news of Wayne County Treasurer Wojtowicz preparing to foreclose on 37,000 occupied homes affecting nearly 100,000 people in Detroit. I am reminded of the words of our former board chair Reuben Munday, who once said “if the Roundtable didn’t exist, it would have to be invented.” As you will read in this newsletter and experience at our upcoming programs, we are busy working with you to address challenges like these through educational sessions, leadership development, story-telling, convening law enforcement and citizens and helping to inform the community about housing segregation through our “We Don t Want Them” Housing Exhibit, now seen by well over 250,000 people. While we receive some very generous grants, hold fundraising events and provide fee for service programs, your financial support allows us to help make the places we work and live become places where all people are welcome and treated fairly.



Since our last newsletter, we lost a new friend in Huntington Bank’s Mike Fezzey and our former President and CEO, the Rev. Dr. Dan Krichbaum. While there have been some very nice tributes penned about Mike, I will cherish sitting with him at our event with Judge Keith in December and over lunch in February when we discussed how we might help Mike serve all his Huntington employees. Please note an article written by myself, current board member Bob Bruttell and past board member Rev. Dr. Oscar King, III is included in this newsletter. Our prayers go out to Suzy Fezzey, Susan Krichbaum and their families, while we seek to pass on Mike and Dan’s commitment to serving all the people of Michigan.

I look forward to seeing you at one of our events or at an event co-sponsored by one of our many partners, who join us in this most challenging work. For now, please know of the gratitude my colleagues and I have for your support!

Steve Spreitzer
President & CEO

Moving Towards A Deeper Conversation

Cultural Competency & Organizational Development (CCOD)

In the recent past, there have been numerous national news stories that seem to point to our need for a different and deeper conversation on race:

The Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) fraternity at the University of Oklahoma, the racist video they made and the subsequent closing of their fraternity indicate the consequences racist behaviors can reap. The video allegedly shows members of the fraternity enthusiastically taking part in an explicitly racist chant using a slur for Black people and referencing lynching.

The Ferguson shooting which resulted in job losses in the police department including the Ferguson’s police chief and the city manager. The top court clerk was fired for sending racist emails to the White House.

The tragic death of Freddie Gray at the hands of Baltimore police department.

An August 2014 USA Today article stated that “nearly two times a week in the United States, a white police officer killed a black person during a seven-year period ending in 2012, according to the most recent accounts of justifiable homicide reported to the FBI”. The reports suggested that...

Moving Towards A Deeper Conversation

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justifiable homicides among black males are not an isolated event in American policing. The reports provided to the FBI by local police “show that 18% of the blacks killed during those seven years were under age 21, compared to 8.7% of whites”.

Is this an opportunity for a deeper conversation about a local and national consciousness that is ripe for consistent demonstrations of behaviors that are not consistent with an “espoused” value of Liberty and Justice for all, perpetuated by those “in service” to others? What do you think?

Youth Intern Alumni Spotlight



Micah Fialka-Feldman

Micah is a student, national speaker, and pioneer who fights for disability-pride, justice, and inclusion. He is part of the first wave of adults with intellectual disabilities attending college and has been fully included in school and community. Micah moved to Syracuse N.Y. in 2012. He is receiving his Certificate in Disability Studies at Syracuse University in May 2015. He is working in the Marketing Department at the School of Education. In addition, he was a peer trainer for the University's Peer-to-Peer Program which connected students with disabilities to students without disabilities to help support each other academically and socially. In May of 2014, Micah was appointed by President Obama to the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities.

When asked about his internship, Micah said “I learned a lot from being a part of the Michigan Roundtable, and it was very cool to teach other people about disabilities and social justice and to learn about other social justice movements. I am very happy that every time I come home, I have a place to visit. Each time I speak at an event, I am very happy to share what I did at the Michigan Roundtable during my internship.” To learn more about Micah, visit his webpage at www.throughthesamedoor.com.

Robert Reid IV

Since I've graduated I have a better knowledge of what goes on day to day that other people wouldn't pay attention to. I have matured as a person and I now have a better perspective of who I am. The Roundtable is definitely a place I would recommend to everyone. Every since I've graduated from Roundtable, I know that everyone is genuine in their own way, so that helps when it comes to raising my daughter Phoenix. She is seven months and whatever she wants to do I'll support her fully.



On April 18th, 2015, the Michigan Roundtable's Youth Program held our 62nd Annual Spring Conference, the Youth Justice & Leadership Exhibition (#2015YJLE) and it was a great success! Hosted by the Lear Corporation, the #2015YJLE was an opportunity for youth to come together from across Metro Detroit and the State of Michigan. As both learners and teachers, youth shared the social justice strategies they have created and the social justice issues that are important to them. The #2015YJLE featured 11 workshops, 15 table presentations and two theatre pieces, all of which were designed, created, and facilitated by young people with the support of their adult allies. Over a dozen youth performed during the Open Mic for an audience that accepted them and celebrated their amazing talents. The Exhibition was attended by over 150 people of all ages. Thanks to our host, the Lear Corporation and our sponsors the DTE Energy Foundation and the Community Foundation for

Southeast Michigan for making the event possible! Youth-led space that fosters authentic youth engagement and adult allyship is a core principle of the Roundtable's Youth Programs. We are proud of the ways that the #2015YJLE was able to embody those principles. Here are reflections from Cheryl Birks, Finance Manager, on the event:

“When it comes to young people, it's an adult's natural inclination to take charge when it comes to event planning. After all, we have the experience, right? Maybe it's not just events. Maybe it's simply because we are the adults – period, right? All the skills we have acquired over the years – longevity trumps youth. Saturday's Youth Justice & Leadership Exhibition was proof that our youth know how to execute a great plan. Even though I had an assignment, it was hard to not look around and ask “who's handling this?” It was CLEAR who was running the show – our youth. So, I asked how I could help and gladly did what I was told. We ALL have a voice. The Exhibition was a safe place for our youth to be the stars of the show. As adults, how often do we misunderstand because we do not listen; because we know it all; been there done that? The Exhibition was an opportunity for adults to look at life through the eyes of our youth; be an adult ally. They deserve to be heard. Encourage them; lift them up, because our youth are our future.”

We are looking forward to the #2016YJLE!



Statewide Coalition Engages in Healing Stories

Healing Stories Flint MI



In late 2014, Race2Equity began work in Flint, Benton Harbor, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and Detroit with a focus of building a statewide racial equity network. Through generous support from the Kellogg Foundation, we joined with local community members, organizers and organizations to continue using "story for strategy" to affect racial inequity in Michigan. In March and April 2015 The Healing Stories Project hosted 3 sessions on racial inequity in Flint, Benton Harbor and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community in Baraga, MI.

The Flint Strong Stones grassroots community group emerged due to our work on the ground in Flint with the support of local community organizer, Debra Taylor. On March 21, 2015 twelve story sharers lined the stage at the Flint Youth Theater to share stories and experiences of racial inequity in housing, water and criminal justice issues. The collective repeated before each story sharer "You have the right to remain silent" and each sharer responded with "I waive my right". For 2 hours they shared their heart wrenching experiences with racism, classism and inequity in a healing and affirming way. The session ended with MaMaSol, a nationally acclaimed, local social justice rapper and poet.

On April 11, 2015 Monica Lewis-Patrick, our community organizer in Benton Harbor, led the Benton Harbor Bold and Brave community group through a similar experience of community story sharing. The issues in Benton Harbor around systemic racism is deeply seated in how government interacts with residents, educational disparities and the experience of racial microaggressions that are supported through the norms in the broader region. Participants spent several hours listening to and sharing their own stories of inequity while working to build trusting relationships with like minded community members representing multiracial perspectives.

Our model of change is rooted in building relationships and members of all the communities joined to support and show solidarity. This included On April 24-26, Race2Equity taking a bus load of folks from Detroit and Flint to the L'Anse Reservation of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community in Baraga. Here we spent the weekend learning of the structural and interpersonal racism experienced by Native Americans in Michigan. The stories shared experiences of racism, inequity and healing but also began to shape a statewide narrative on what racial equity should look like in all communities. The local community organizer, Cecelia LaPointe noted of the work, "racial justice sets a precedence for healing, empowerment, self determination, pride of self, culture, heritage and traditions". It is an honor for the Michigan Roundtable to be an ally with the Native American community in the Upper Peninsula and make visible the experiences with racism and racial inequity.



Healing Stories Flint Michigan

Inclusive of all three sessions and community groups, youth were present to lead their community to share stories of inequity. Youth voice is imperative to this work and as we share stories together as a collective we will continue to work to address inequity across the state modeling inclusive youth leadership and voice. Please mark your calendar for the Detroit Healing Stories Session on Racial Inequity in Housing, Water Issues, Criminal Justice and Education to take place on June 13, 2015 from 1-4pm location TBA.

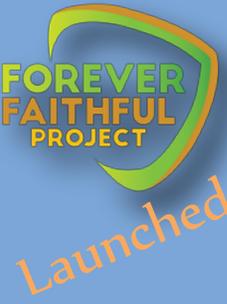
RECI to host Community Asset Mapping!



The Riverfront East Congregational Initiative, (RECI) developed the 'Luv D Eastside' campaign to identify, utilize and support businesses and organizations in their community who are assets in building a strong local economy and vibrant neighborhoods. The Community Asset Map, created by RECI, lists some of those assets that share the values and ideals of RECI and they deserve our support! The RECI community is full of these business assets and this spring we are organizing to identify and support them by adding to our Community Asset Map. We will be working with the Boggs School "Mentor It Forward" Club to do just that. Join us on Saturday, June 27th at Church of the Messiah, 231 E. Grand Blvd. Detroit, as we share food, fellowship and intergenerational dialogue about assets in our community at the community "People's Festival".



Boggs School Students Crusing for Assets with RECI



After many months of planning and with close collaboration with our community partner Detroit based KICK Community Center – we are happy to announce the official launch of the Forever Faithful Project.

Available immediately are opportunities for individual Clergy and Lay Leader meetings. These sessions are designed to evaluate the current status of the LGBT Welcome at your Congregation and provide ongoing resources to assist in the welcome process. The Forever Faithful Project is designed to support the traditional black church community in learning ways to create dialogue, deepening relationships throughout the congregation rather than sparking debate and division.

For additional information, please contact us at walk2gether@miroundtable.org.

Serving as a catalyst for change, we develop, organize, and empower individuals and communities to advance equity and opportunity for all.



Upcoming Events

Race2Equity
Detroit Healing
Stories Session

*Saturday
June 13, 2015*

25th Annual
Holy Strokes
Golf Classic

*Monday
July 27, 2015*

Regional Youth
Internship Graduation
& Summer Showcase

*Friday
August 7, 2015*

68th Annual
Humanitarian
Tribute

*Wednesday
November 4, 2015*

For more information on any of our events or programs, please call our office or email us at walk2gether@miroundtable.org

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