

Newsletter *May 2018*



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and more...



From the desk of the CEO



Earlier this month we celebrated our 4th Annual Champions of Diversity and Inclusion breakfast where we addressed the value of the Roundtable through a summary of our work and powerful testimony from those we serve. Please note the enclosed invitation to participate in our Spring Appeal, which asks for your continued support to help us meet the increasing demand to accomplish our mission. I trust this newsletter and our refreshed website will better acquaint you with the work of the 77 year-old Roundtable. Here are a few of the activities since we last wrote you in January:

- We have been called to communities like Livonia and Rochester to help them honor the diverse people who live, work and visit their community. ([click here to read statement “A Shooting and a Teaching Moment”](#))
- On April 3rd we worked with the ACLU of Michigan, Welcoming Michigan and the Interfaith Leadership Council to host a “Stand With Your Muslim Neighbor” event at the Islamic Center of America in Dearborn as the Muslim community dealt with the “Punish a Muslim Day.” ([click here to read statement](#))
- On April 6 we returned to the site of Dr. King’s 1968 address at Grosse Pointe South High School for our First Friday Forum to discuss the work of Dr. King and the Poor People’s Campaign.
- Thanks to a generous grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Roundtable staff helped launch the Anishinaabe Racial Justice Conference in Baraga on the snowy weekend of April 16-18, bringing several hundred people together from across the state to better understand the challenges faced by our indigenous sisters and brothers.
- On April 26th we held a Healing Stories event with a program titled “Decoding the Black Panther,” which allowed participants to take a deeper dive on this provocative film.
- On April 28th we hosted youth from across the state for our 65th Annual Youth Justice Leadership Conference.

In February we hosted our Healing Stories event in community partnership with Marygrove College and FORCE Detroit. The themes for the discussions were Violence, Housing, Water access, Policing and Immigration and its impact on Detroit residents. At the core of our Healing Stories events, we seek to contribute to paradigm shifts by not only uplifting the voices of those who are oppressed, exploited and discriminated against but also positioning them as the experts in the room, and we continue to learn from each Healing Story event. The stories of the people will make us laugh, cry, sad, angry; but, more importantly, push us to action to create a world that is more humane.

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Thanks for your support and please don’t hesitate to call if we can journey with you in helping to make the places you work and live become places where all people are welcome and treated fairly.

Steve Spreitzer
President & CEO

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“We Dont Want Them” Traveling Exhibit



The “We Dont Want Them:” Race and Housing in Metro Detroit Traveling Exhibit has continued to be active in the first few months of 2018. From re-appearing at events like the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Day programing at Martin Luther King Jr. Senior High School or Central Michigan University’s Diversity and Inclusion Office, to being hosted in new sites like PCSU Bank and MASCO, the exhibit continues to raise awareness and start conversations about the role structural racism played in shaping our metropolitan region. Most recently, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission hosted the exhibit at 3 locations, The Federal Building, Eastern District of Michigan US Attorney General’s office, and Veterans Assistance Medical Center, to share our housing history to neighboring departments and the general public they have contact with. All 3 events were well received and sparked many conversations and memories of viewers.

Board Spotlight



Karl Bell
Board Chair/MRDI

Karl Bell has left Invest Detroit for a job leading GAA Manufacturing and Supply Chain Management’s new investing arm for real estate and job creation. GAA, a company owned by entrepreneur William Pickard headquartered in southwest Detroit, created a new business unit late last year called GAA New Ventures LLC to invest in civic-minded economic development —

outside its usual manufacturing and logistics operations. Bell joined the global manufacturing and logistics provider as managing director of its GAA New Ventures at the start of the year. He left his position as senior vice president at Invest Detroit, focusing on economic revitalization and job creation, in the end of December. “It really gives me an opportunity to continue what I was doing with Invest Detroit,” he said. “Doing it on a more private basis and in a larger geography.”



In this image Regional Youth Intern Kennedy Taylor appearing on CW50 Street Beat.



Misha Stallworth and Danielle Carin Davis guests of our ongoing partnership with CW50 Detroit discussing Diversity & Inclusion as it relates to Detroit.



65th Annual Regional Youth Justice Leadership Conference “STARTING FROM OUR ROOTS”



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Healing Stories

On April 4th a group of folks who attended the Healing Stories in February returned to debrief what they heard. Listening is a key component of healing and hearing stories. In this session, the attendees used the process of Head, Heart and Feet to debrief what they heard, how they felt or were impacted and what they will do. Commitments were made to institute implicit bias tests, be present to peoples stories and even help form a future Healing Stories Class with Marygrove and MRDI.



First Friday Forums

The March and April First Friday Forums continued the theme of exploring “Detroit: Tale of Two Cities” by hosting an abbreviated screening of Access Denied: Food Deserts and Disability in Mississippi and delving into the last years of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Specifically, Access Denied served as a starting point to explore the intersection of disabilities and the access to transportation and food with activist and organizer Dessa Cosma. With a packed room, attendees heard from producer, activist, and scholar, Wasieka Torres’s exploration of Mississippi’s billion-dollar agribusiness in comparison to people with disabilities access to food. Attendees

then heard and shared their experiences related to access to food and transportation as a person with disabilities or a supporter of a person with disabilities here in the Metro Detroit area. This was led by advocates Ruth Johnson, Transportation Riders United, and Ava Haberkornhalm.

In April Jamon Jordan, from Black Scroll Network, presented an engaging lesson on the rise of the Poor People’s Movement in the years leading up to Dr. King’s assassination in 1968 and what continued to happen within the movement afterwards both nationally and locally. The historical conversation provided

the context for activists Carlos Santacruz and Yexania Vanegas to present on the current Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. The current movement is, in part, a resurrection of the 1967-68 campaign in that it incorporates the original “triple evils” of militarism, racism, and economic injustice, and adds ecological devastation and anti-poverty-based moral policies to the campaign. Their focus is uniting tens of thousands of people across the country to challenge the evils that continue to hold people in poverty. For more information about the Poor People’s Campaign, please visit: <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org>.

Perspective

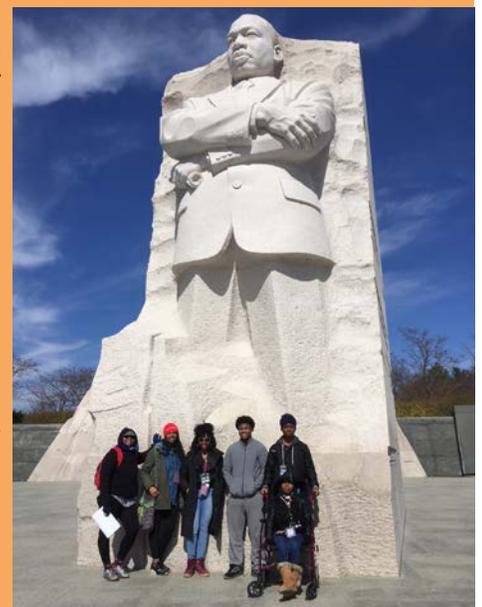
In my first quarter at the Michigan Roundtable, I have been able to do quite a bit of traveling. I am constantly reflecting on my time spent in Detroit, Washington DC, Benton Harbor, Flint, Marquette, Sault Ste. Marie, Bay Mills Indian Community, and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community these last three months. Though I have been to DC and Flint to do social justice work before, and have worked in Detroit for several years, I found myself identifying new spaces of movement and potential using the MRDI Statewide Coalition platform. The more my horizons of vision expand, the more I am impassioned to expand the horizons of others.

I’ve had the great privilege of meeting some of the most powerful youth across the state and am excited to continue building power with them. These are youth who come from historically marginalized communities across the state in Detroit, Benton Harbor, Flint, and the Upper Peninsula and must balance their transformative justice work with their difficult daily lived realities. Kayla (Flint Fellow), Lae (Detroit Fellow), Thomel and Kalicia (Benton Harbor Fellows), and I lead a storytelling workshop at the 2018 Youth Justice Leadership Conference (YJLC) on Saturday, April 28th to teach youth across the state how to use intentional storytelling to find their voice. Storytelling in the form of written reflection, poetry, spoken word, and rap can be used to

analyze injustices they’ve faced and build communities to mobilize with.

The youth remind me to continue dreaming about alternative, sustainable, and accessible socio-economic systems void of racism and oppression as if they will be our realities in this lifetime. And I’m able to teach them about what healthy adult allyship looks like, how to engage their peers in difficult but transformative conversations, how to develop wide networks full of meaningful relationships, and effective community event planning to support pathways for implementing their visions. Over the next quarter, I hope to use their learnings from the first iteration of the 9-month statewide Fellowship to build a stronger second cycle and strengthen the overall power of the four Coalition hubs around the state.

*Peace and Solidarity,
Fiana*



Save The Date



First Friday Forum

June 1, 2018 | 6-9 PM

University of Michigan-Dearborn

Room 1030 CASL (College of Arts, Sciences and Letters)
 Discussion Topic: Dear White People: What is privilege anyways?
 Panel and small group discussions



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

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