



Statewide Racial Equity Coalition work visits the Upper Peninsula



First Friday Forums 50th Anniversary Series of the 1967 Rebellion

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



March 2017 | Newsletter
www.miroundtable.org

“Healing Metro Detroit’s Historic Divide”

A Post-Election Healing Luncheon



Thursday | March 30, 2017
Burton Manor
27777 Schoolcraft Rd.
Livonia, MI 48150

Join Metro Solutions and the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion for an interactive, facilitated dialogue on common scenarios that are causing tension among personal and business relationships.

Presenter:
Professor Peter Hammer
Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights
Wayne State University Law School

Facilitators:
Freda G. Sampson
Reanne Young

Registration 11:30 a.m.
Lunch 12:00 p.m.
Program 12:15 p.m.
Dismissal 2:00 p.m.

Cost \$20 per person

Register online:
www.metrosolutions.us
Or call
313.963.8383

Michigan Roundtable
Making the places we work
and live become places
where all people are
welcome and treated fairly.

From The Desk of The CEO



The path to inclusion and racial justice goes through the other

As you might imagine, there has been increased demand for the Roundtable’s human relations and racial justice programs since our last newsletter in December. Increased acts of discrimination against Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and people of color, and growing tension among people with different points of view about race, religion and immigration in workplaces, communities and families is becoming more and more common.

Over the past three months I have put many miles on my car traveling to meetings in Detroit, Grosse Pointe, Roseville, Troy, Dearborn, Canton, Livonia --- just to name a few. I have had difficult conversations with people on both sides of the political and experiential aisle, primarily listening as they speak of their pain and anger. I am looking forward to a collaboration with Metro Solutions on March 30th, when we will gather for lunch at the Burton Manor in Livonia to listen to insights from WSU Law School professor Peter Hammer and be led in helpful conversation by Roundtable consultants Reanne Young and Freda Sampson on how we address the new “elephant” in the workplace. Visit www.metrosolutions.us for more information.

“We Dont Want Them” Exhibit on Housing Segregation

The Michigan Roundtable’s Suburban Organizer’s calendar has been so colorful for the last couple months and continues to be moving into the near future. The “We Dont Want Them.” Race and Housing in Metropolitan Detroit Traveling Exhibit has traveled to 19 locations since January 6, 2017, and is already booked at over 10 locations over the next few months with more locations in the works. From one day events at a masjid or church to week-long viewings in corporate offices and schools, the Race2Equity team and volunteers have been hard at work to keep the exhibit moving and implementing corresponding programming with the hosts.



Exhibit set up at the Islamic Center of Detroit as part of their February 3rd event with guest speaker Mahmoud AbdulRauf.

As part of the Youth Voice Art Project, students from six different schools located throughout Detroit are showcasing their artistic creations in Community Night Art

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The path to inclusion and racial justice goes through the other

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Shows that are inspired by the history covered in the exhibit and their personal experiences. Both the Race2Equity team and partnering artists are excited to see how the Youth Voice Art Project is going to expand with the next school year. Please contact Dez Squire at 586.744.3889 for information.

Today, maybe more critically than at any other time, knowing our history helps us better understand our present day racial inequity. Recently, U.S. Congressman and civil rights icon John Lewis said, "The scars and stings of racism are still deeply embedded in American society. We cannot sweep it under some rug or in some dark corner." The path to racial healing begins by addressing the structures that led to our current racial inequities and spatial racism, and then seeing present day realities in a clearer historical light. With the 50th anniversary of the 1967 uprising taking place this July, we have joined with the Detroit Historical Society and other partners for a range of programming which we believe will enhance our current racial justice efforts.

Youth Leading

Over the past 65 years we have been convening youth from throughout the region to assist in developing leaders in the work for diversity, inclusion, and racial justice. We will continue this tradition on April 29th (more details forthcoming) where we will also provide an opportunity for youth who are interested in becoming one of our interns to learn about the work being done by our current interns. Every year, I look forward to attending this meeting and being inspired by the depth of the work of these young people. Our youth interns and fellows have also been involved in the planning and execution of our First Friday Forums (community conversations on race). I hope to see you at one of these events or at a conversation in your community and join you in helping to make the places we work and live become places where all people are welcomed and treated fairly.

As we move forward I return to the words of John Lewis who recently said "We have to continue to do all we can to move us close to what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called our beloved community...we can redeem the soul of America and lay down the burden of hate, separation and division."

Thanks for your interest and support of the work of the Roundtable!



Steve Spreitzer
President & CEO

Building Police and Community Trust for 24 years

ALPACT (Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust) is one way the Roundtable addresses the challenge resulting from our history of racial segregation, leaving far too many people failing to develop relations with people from different backgrounds, putting them at risk of inappropriate behaviors in the work place, schools and other public spaces.

Participants in ALPACT spend time developing relations across race, religion and other boundaries. Community members learn about the challenges of law enforcement while the myriad levels of police learn about the challenges that come with being a member of a racial, religious or other minority community. As trust develops, participants become ambassadors for goodwill, who also work to solve problems by seeking more information and giving each other the benefit of the doubt. Over the years as tension increases nationally, our region has not seen similar problems in part due to the work of ALPACT.

The following reflection is written by Angela Willis, Roundtable Event Coordinator and Administrative Support staff person, who participated in the Simulator exercise at the Roseville Police Department as part of the February ALPACT meeting. Angela speaks of what can happen when we cross boundaries and engage the other, whoever that other person is. We do know change doesn't take place over night or as a result of one meeting, but is rather a function of time. We are grateful to play a role in helping to build trust between the police and the community and are encouraged by the growth in local police departments engaging with both ALPACT at the regional level and with the members of their local communities.

For more information about ALPACT, contact Dez Squire at the Roundtable at dsquire@miroundtable.org or co-chairs Bushra Alawie of the FBI at Bushra.alawie@ic.fbi.gov or Victor Green, Director of Community Relations at Wayne State University at victor.green@wayne.edu.

Stepping Into the Shoes of a Police Officer

By: Angela V. Willis

As a black female growing up in the Metro Detroit area, I've never really had a great deal of admiration or even respect for police officers. I've always viewed them through very dark and untrusting lenses. I know that is a disheartening statement for me to make. However, you would first need to understand my personal perspective and honestly, my stories could literally fill a book.

First Friday Forums



The Friday First Forum is a place to explore tough conversations around race, class, oppression, and exploitation and issues that impact us all. Our objective has to operate from a space of being a conduit to the intersection, which bridges our collective consciousness.

The December and January forums were centered on post election giving people an opportunity to vent and plan next steps. In December, we looked at Race and Politics in America Post Election 2016: "Where Do We Go from Here?". This conversation was held at University of Michigan Detroit Center with over 80 people in attendance and we featured 6 panelists from diverse backgrounds reflecting on the day-to-day experience of dealing with racism in America and the impact this election has had on those experiences. Professor Peter Hammer from the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights facilitated this conversation encouraging folks to think about the impact the national election continues to have in local politics.



March First Friday Forum at the Shrine of the Black Madonna

January we continued the conversation on Race and Politics in America but focused on local, grassroots resistance to systemic racism. We featured a world café model hosting 9 organizations to share the work they have already been doing to fight against systematic racism in Detroit. We also launched our 2017 Friday Forum 1967 Rebellion Anniversary Series where we will intentionally explore each topic alongside the 1967 Rebellion.

At the February forum, our Regional Youth Interns organized and facilitated a profound discussion on Race, Privilege and the Future of Detroit from a Youth Perspective. We were hosted by the Brightmoor Community Center. The March forum we received a history lesson on race, religion and labor at Shrine of the Black Madonna where 4 panelists engaged a full house in a discussion on how race and religion were impacted pre and post the 1967 Rebellion. If you are interested in learning more about our monthly forums call Yusef Shakur at 313-459-6008.

Stepping Into the Shoes of a Police Officer

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You see, I've seen some really ugly instances of police brutality, abuse or even misuse of police authority. I've driven by young Black or Latino men pulled over to the side of the road, forced to lay face-down on the ground with their hands awkwardly cuffed behind their backs as the officer riffles through the vehicle looking for any reason to arrest them. I've watched members of the Drug Task Force and regular police officers too, steal money right out of the pockets of black men that they stop for no obvious reason other than being suspected of selling dope. I've witnessed police officers in plain clothes with their badges hanging from their necks drive through a crowd of people and brandish weapons the likes of which I've never seen to disperse peaceful groups leaving a night club or bar and these same officers appeared to be looking for any reason to "shoot a nigga."

Today, while attending an ALPACT meeting, I was placed in the shoes of an actual police officer tasked with approaching a vehicle that had been sitting for more than two hours on

a quiet cul-de-sac. Prior to beginning the simulation, Officer Spoon gave me a quick tutorial on aiming my gun and then armed me with a non-lethal training ammunition airsoft pistol. He explained that I needed to approach the vehicle and see what was going on and, with that he turned the lights down in the specially adapted room and began the simulation. Suddenly a dark truck appeared on the screen and from the distance I heard Officer Spoon's voice say you can begin now... *(a few moments later)*

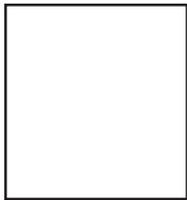
The lights in the simulation lab came on shocking me back into what should have been a joyful reality because the simulation was over. I hadn't really killed anyone in real life but it didn't end that way. I was a nervous wreck, I wanted to cry out, but I controlled myself. I had been shaken to my core in a matter of seconds. Every limb on my body quivered with fear and trepidation. My head and eye's filled with uncertainty because I literally could not tell you what had just occurred outside of me taking the precious life of another, everything had just turned into a blur.

It took me at least two hours to finally calm down from that heightened feeling of bewilderment. Honestly, if I hadn't taken that time, I would not have been able to write this story accurately. And if I were a betting person, I would bet against myself remembering every detail of the situation. My mind literally needed time to settle down before it could really remember most of everything that happened.

Don't get it twisted; I didn't magically fall in love with all police officers after the simulation and Officer Spoon's hug. My jury is still out on police officers and will probably remain so because of my personal experiences. But what the simulation did do for me was to give me pause, to at least try and better imagine how an officer may feel both before and after he or she has made the awful choice of pulling their gun and firing upon another living individual.

To read Angela's complete reflection visit our website at www.miroundtable.org and go to our "News Stories" section

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UPCOMING EVENTS

First Friday Forum

Friday | April 7, 2017

Friday | May 5, 2017

Friday | June 2, 2017

Youth Justice Leadership Conference

April 29, 2017

Champions of Inclusion Breakfast

May 5, 2017

Holy Strokes Golf Classic

Monday | July 24, 2017

Statewide Racial Equity Coalition

In an effort to share their Race2Equity Statewide Coalition work, we visited the Upper Peninsula in collaboration with tribal leaders in Manistee County. Meeting at Northern Michigan University, various tribes, organizations, and



Statewide Coalition meeting at Northern Michigan University

supporters contributed to a welcoming space to share their personal experiences of racial discrimination. Amongst laughter and testimony, the Michigan Roundtable was able to create a nonjudgmental space for healing. Looking forward, from the inspiration of this day, intending to continue this path of building relationships to crack the codes of systemic

inequities of all people. The next meeting with the community will be on March 25, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. at the University Center, Charcoal Room on the 2nd Floor University Center, W. Kaye Avenue, Marquette, MI 49855.

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

Michigan Roundtable for Diversity & Inclusion

525 New Center One

3031 West Grand Boulevard

Detroit, MI 48202-3025

PH: (313) 870-1500 | FAX: (313) 870-1501

www.miroundtable.org

