

**TROY ETHNIC ISSUES ADVISORY BOARD  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2006  
TROY CITY HALL - CONFERENCE ROOM C**

I. **Call to Order** 7:05 p.m.

II. **Roll Call:**

Present:

Padma Kuppa  
Mayada Fakhouri  
Reuben Ellis  
Michelle Haight  
Anju Brodbine

Cindy Stewart, City Liaison  
Lulu Guo, Student Rep.  
Helen Yang, Student Rep.  
Kelly Jones  
Tony Haddad

Absent:

Malini Sarma  
Gladson Remos

Guests: Cathy Francois  
Barbara Ford

Kevin Yan  
Deb Williamson, NCCJ

III. **Approval of Minutes**

Motion by: Reuben Ellis, seconded by: Padma Kuppa to approve the October 3, 2006 minutes. Approved unanimously with the following corrections: Page 2 – ethnic not ethic.

IV. **Correspondence/ Articles**

Interfaith Events to Celebrate Diversity: Free Press 10-27-06

Troy Area Emerging as Center of Religious Diversity: Free Press 10-26-06

Growing Indian-America Community Makes Its Mark: Oak Press 10-22-06

Affirmative Action: Does it Help or Hurt? - Free Press 10-17-06

Businesses Know Value of Diversity; State Should Too: Free Press 10-17-06

Leaders Take Up Challenge of Racial Unity: Free Press 10-9-06

## V. New Business

NCCJ - Deb Williamson

September 2005, Deb gave a presentation re: bringing in the Leadership LINC Academy program to Troy Schools. Grant from National City Foundation was awarded and 50 students from Athens and 50 from Troy High participated.

Bridging the Racial Divide took place on September 26, 2006. We had 60-65 community residents and Michelle, Padma, and Cindy from EIA Board also attended.

NCCJ now known as MI Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion is a Non Profit human relations organization that seeks to reduce discrimination and racism by working proactively across racial, ethnic and other cultural boundaries.

Troy identified as one of 8 communities in Southeastern MI to take part in Bridging the Racial Divide Program founded by Emery King

September 26 was the first of four programs scheduled. Future production schedules are unknown at this time.

Troy is the only group who said we're not done, we want to continue on with this kind of training.

Survey results from Bridging the Racial Divide program were handed out. The intention was to have this program be the start of a dialogue between community residents to build a trust level. Last question of the survey was would you be interested in continuing on with this discussion/program. Majority responded yes.

M. Haight: Very encouraged from the group wanting to continue and take part in organized programs/discussions

R. Ellis: What do you think the reason was related to people wanting to continue this dialogue? Because we were in Troy? Was it a Black-White issue?

D. Williamson: Timing was right for Troy. But the 8 areas of the Metro Detroit area also felt this same way - wanting to continue the dialogue. Need to find some things that transcend race in order to move past racism and segregation. Increasingly more groups coming together on self-reflection.

At the high school, they began with the 2-day retreat in the Spring. This Sat, Nov. 18, LINC will hold a Student Diversity Summit at Berkley High School, with skill building workshops.

Helen and Lulu had a concern how students were chosen for the spring retreat in Troy. Some students said it was only a way to get out of school.

D. Williamson said they're meeting with school administrators to continue the program and tweak the process. They will recommend doing a school climate survey.

A. Brodbine: This seems like a breakdown for a very worthwhile and expensive program. How effective is the entire program if there was this initial breakdown?

D. Williamson: 2005 was our pilot year for Leadership Academy. Most impact was when districts did one school at a time, students developed an action plan and carried them out together. Need to figure out a better process of choosing students.

### Retreat

- Team Building
- Trust Building
- Become aware of the process of stereotyping
- Become aware of the collective effects of prejudice
- Identify elements of an inclusive community and work together to create a common vision of an inclusive community
- Begin an action plan to create a respectful, inclusive community

Troy Schools Action Plan: plan a diversity week; respect week; Individual goals - meet new people, plant a community garden, bring new people into their circles.

In Monroe, MI they had a program highlighted on Oprah, "Challenge Day." Brought in facilitators to their city for one day.

Troy administrators learned a lot from the initial program. LINC is a process that will continue and we hope this program continues in the schools. Our board needs to help lay a strong foundation.

Schools with the most success have a planning committee of 20 students who hold a stakeholders meeting, choose the students, help facilitate and continue with follow through.

Trading Places Community Dialogue is a 3 part, 3-hour session, originally for adults - a next step for bridging the racial divide.

Trading Places helps because people don't really talk about issues, they talk around them.

Groups of 12-18 meet for 9 hours of intensive dialogue. Could you bring youth in? Yes. As inter-generational work, but those young people have usually had background training.

Many people report, "While I never considered myself a racist or biased, I found parts of myself that I needed to work on."

People who fear or people who are ignorant are the culprits. But do they attend these programs? No.

The program, Trading Places, normally costs \$1000. Because of the work EIA did on Bridging the Racial Divide, NCCJ will wave the fee to train us and then we can move on to be facilitators and begin inviting the community to become involved. Schedule 3 sessions in 3 consecutive weeks.

M. Haight: What does the Board think of having Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion come in and help facilitate a Trading Places for the EIA Board? Board is in agreement. Michelle would propose we begun in January or February.

Discuss at January meeting everyone's availability and room availability for February 6 and 13, Lower Level Conference Room.

## **VI. Old Business**

### **a. EthniCity - Troy Daze**

EIA Board needs to find a chairperson and co-chair for EthniCity.

Board members feel they need to be treated better by other former EthniCity volunteers and Troy Daze board members. Students were talked down to and EIA Board members were constantly apologizing for those people's attitudes.

If EIA Board is to run EthniCity, they should be allowed to run it without interference.

EthniCity is 4 components:

Booths, Posters, Flags, Children's Activities

EIA Board members will discuss this at future meetings.

### **b. International Institute Proposal - Nada Dalgamouni presented a proposal to offer classes for kids to teach understanding of other cultures at the Community Center. Biggest issue is to find sponsors or get grants. Information a bit overwhelming.**

Board agrees that she should talk to the School District and/or Parks and Recreation. This doesn't really tie in with the EIA mission statement. C. Stewart will forward on to Carol Anderson and Tim McCoy.

## **VII. Member Comment**

P. Kuppa: Very frustrating that our Troy Schools are so different. Michelle got involved at Barnard and their principal contacted Cindy for 500 Resource Listings to be sent home with all students. She also started a diversity newsletter, "Cultural Connection"

which is sent home monthly. Padma tried at Hill but no luck last year. But this year, teacher agreed to have an International Festival during Diversity Month in 2007 for 3<sup>rd</sup> grades.

Barnard's International Festival will be May 25, 2007.

Birmingham-Bloomfield Diversity Task Force contacted Padma for assistance with Hindu holidays. City calendar is very inclusive of all diverse holidays.

Notice of Troy Interfaith Group's program to celebrate Thanksgiving on Sunday, November 19, 7-8 pm at Big Beaver United Methodist Church, 3753 John R.

The program features a series of immigrant stories from our diverse community based on "American's Table: A Thanksgiving Leader".

The group is looking for a church to host the National Day of Prayer event, Thursday, May 3, 2007

Noel Night – Saturday, December 2, 2006 from 5-9:30 pm in Detroit.  
[www.midtowndetroit.org](http://www.midtowndetroit.org)

International Day of Peace- September 21

#### VIII. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Padma Kuppa, seconded by Anju Brodbine to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 pm.

RESOLVED that the Ethnic Issues Advisory Board Meeting be adjourned at 9:10 pm. Approved unanimously.

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Michelle Haight, EIA Chair

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Cindy Stewart, EIA Recording Secretary