



Hopkins Race & Equity Initiative

Let's Talk about Race in Hopkins – Community Conversations Executive Summary

Overview and History

HREI is a collaborative effort creating opportunities to increase awareness and understanding of race, equity and diversity while promoting a sense of community that welcomes and values its residents. This unique partnership represents the Hopkins Police Department, Gethsemane Lutheran Church and Hopkins Public Schools.

The Hopkins Race & Equity Initiative was born out of a community conversation on race and culture sponsored by Gethsemane Lutheran Church in the summer of 2015. Many of those in attendance expressed interest in learning more about how to be a community that welcomes and values diversity. In the fall of 2015 a small and committed group of Hopkins leaders formed the Hopkins Race & Equity Initiative (HREI). The initiative team members began meeting with a national consultant to better educate themselves and help design and then build the framework for bringing guided conversations to the community.

Hopkins is a strong community with amazing racial, cultural and socio-economic diversity. We are a unique community with a heritage of quality schools, vibrant faith communities and progressive city services. For generations, this community has worked together to increase the quality of life for all of the residents. It is in this rich diversity that Hopkins finds its greatest strengths.

Initiative Team Leaders

Gethsemane Lutheran Church

Pastors Sarah Moat and John Nelson
Donna Anderson, Social Ministry Chair

Hopkins Police Department

Mike Reynolds, Chief of Police
Ann Buck, Crime Prevention Specialist
Julia Ross, Joint Community Police Partnership Liaison
Eric Husevold, Police Sergeant

Hopkins Public Schools

Stanley Brown, Equity and Inclusion Director
Katie Williams, Director of Community Education
Barb Westmoreland, Community Partnerships Coordinator

Community Consultant

Mr. Bill Wells
W. Wells & Associates, LLC
952-942-0654
Bwells2@msn.com



Community Conversation

On the evening of May 18th, 2016 the first of the HREI community conversations on race were held at the Eisenhower Community Center Cafeteria. There were over 200 persons in attendance for this 90 minute conversation. Attendees represented various cultures, ethnicities and ages from across the community. There was a definite eager and positive energy in the room as the event kicked off. Hopkins Junior and Senior High youth in partnership with members of the HREI planning team served as table hosts for the world café style conversation that was facilitated by Mr. Bill Wells, a well known National Consultant who had spent the last year educating and guiding the HREI planning team.

Katie Williams, Director of Community Education for Hopkins Public Schools started the evening off by introducing the team leads from the HREI, including Chief Michael Reynolds and Pastor John Nelson of Gethsemane Lutheran Church. Ms. Williams then introduced Mr. Wells who facilitated the discussion. Mr. Wells offered some very poignant words helping to frame the discussion as well as this quote from historian Robin D. G. Kelly, "Racism is not about how you look – it is about how people assign meaning to how you look". Mr. Wells then presented a short video clip of a Ted Talk focusing on "One Stories" to help guide the overall discussion. Once the video was completed, Mr. Wells presented the first question for discussion at the individual tables.

The following three questions were presented, with a 10 minute allotment for each question to be discussed at the individual tables.

Question #1 – What is the one perception or single story others have of you, based on your race?

Questions #2 – How do perceptions or single stories impact our community?

Question #3 - What can we DO together to get beyond these perceptions in our neighborhoods, cities, schools and faith communities?

After the discussion of each question, participants were asked to move tables and sit with others they did not know. Table hosts worked hard to note all of the comments made by community members at their tables.

At the end of the evening, after all three questions had been discussed; Mr. Bill Wells offered a summary of some of the overwhelming themes presented by those in attendance as well as a thank you with the hope that the group was inspired.

There are pages of raw data relating to very valuable individual comments made by those in attendance at the community conversation. In an effort to discover the prevailing statements, trends and themes discussed, members of the HREI planning team in partnership with Mr. Bill Wells took that overwhelming raw data and conducted a trend analysis, breaking it down into logic groups. The analysis is broken down into three parts relating to the three questions that were presented for discussion at the event. Raw data of all comments can be made available by the HREI team, however caution should be used in using raw data out of context in regards to this discussion.



The HREI planning team offers the following general summary from the first “Let’s Talk about Race in Hopkins” community conversations.

Key Findings

Question #1 – What is the one perception or single story others have of you, based on your race?

- 62 responses dealt primarily with race as a social construct citing that the respondent or someone they know was perceived as being of a certain “race” when really there was much more to their story as a person
- 40 responses went deeper relating race and privilege
- 4 responses dealt with class, 2 with gender and 1 with religion specific issues

Questions #2 – How do perceptions or single stories impact our community?

- 77 responses focused on how assumptions can lead to negative outcomes
- 56 responses dealt with how fear specifically - divides, separates, create barriers and stifles ideas
- 25 responses related to how single stories affect missed learning opportunities
- 3 responses related to socio-economic issues

Question #3 - What can we DO together to get beyond these perceptions in our neighborhoods, cities, schools and faith communities?

(Important Note: The incredible number of positive and creative individual responses to this question was absolutely amazing and clearly shows how engaged and ready for action this community is ready to take. Responses are broken down into actions to be taken in general, our neighborhoods, cities, schools and faith communities)

- General – 78 responses total. Top 5 ideas (with 7 or more commenting on the specific idea)
 1. Start talking about this at home with our own children.
 2. Listen to other person’s stories
 3. Get out of your comfort zone.
 4. Don’t be afraid of others with differences
 5. Intentionally notice those around that are different (wave, say hello, reach out)
- Neighborhoods – 43 responses total. Top 5 ideas *(listed in order by most mentioned)
 1. Make more natural ways to get to know others who are different than I am (across all ages and cultures) – share music, art, literature, poetry, plays
 2. Share a meal - food makes people come together
 3. Share our own stories, be relatable
 4. Create opportunities to build connections through our children, all people love their children
 5. Get involved with groups like the Blake Road Corridor



- Cities – 43 responses total. Top 5 ideas *(listed in order by most mentioned)
 1. 13 responses, more than any other in any other category, dealt specifically with having fun and celebrating our diversity either at current festivals/events or by creating a new international festival
 2. Have more diversity at community meetings like this one
 3. Continue to have more forums like this one
 4. Create and maintain more diversity in jobs, councils, commissions, etc.
 5. Embrace and celebrate Hopkins as an International City (not just represented by raspberries)

- Schools – 30 responses total. Top 5 ideas *(listed in order by most mentioned)
 1. The top ranking response dealt with enriching the school classroom and curriculum (6 responses), specifically with bringing diverse speakers to classrooms, start having race conversation with youth in elementary school, history taught by persons of varying ethnicities to be more comprehensive
 2. Use art, music, science (music is a common language)
 3. CLR Cultural Linguistic Relevant teaching (bias may be first thought but not the last)
 4. Develop more clubs/classes about race, cultures, religions, refugees, etc for youth at school as well as the entire community (Community Ed)
 5. Simplify systems for school programs, enrollment, registrations, etc.

- Faith Community – 9 responses total. Top 3 ideas
 1. Facilitate dinners with persons of other faiths (Christianity, Judaism, Islam for example)
 2. Create sharing opportunities by visiting other churches – create sister churches
 3. Continue to offer after school classes & tutoring opportunities for youth at various churches

Moving Forward

HREI continues to move from education to understanding and talk to action as the community is committed to creating opportunities to increase awareness and understanding of race, equity and diversity while promoting a sense of community that welcomes and values its residents.

Additional information on HREI and upcoming events can be found on the City of Hopkins website at this link <http://www.hopkinsmn.com/police/equity/>

