



Summary of selected evaluation questions from Diversity Circle and Action Forum Evaluations

From September 2003 through April 2005 approximately 142 people participated in Diversity Circles

This included 12 community circles, a teen circle, a children's circle, a tri-campus circle with Marian College, UW Fond du Lac and MPTC students, and a one-credit class at UW Fond du Lac.

Circles have been located at UW Fond du Lac, Fahey Community Center, Fond du Lac Public Library, Mercury Marine, Salvation Army, St. Paul's Cathedral, Fond du Lac High School, and City of Fond du Lac Police Department.

Those in the community circles who replied to the survey indicated the following:

76% - Increased ability to openly discuss race related issues

83% - Increased understanding of your own attitudes and beliefs on race

90% - Increased understanding of others' attitudes and beliefs on race

88% - Increased understanding of racial issues

70% - Increased ability to communicate more effectively

82% - Increased awareness of the richness that diversity brings to a community

Some comments about what participants liked about the program are:

- Open discussion from the group
- The opportunity to learn more, awareness, involvement
- It gave each the opportunity to be heard – Sometimes it was very difficult to release past wounds and forgive – let go.
- Meeting people and understanding more about race relations
- Hearing others' thoughts and sharing my own.
- The openness and the wide variety of viewpoints and experiences everyone brought to the table.
- Meeting new people who share a concern for accepting diversity.
- Comfortable, safe environment; Openness and feeling of being accepted
- New-found friendship – skilled people with resolve and the ambition to enact resolve.
- Our group seemed very open in discussions and it was also good to listen to viewpoints of people of color who have not lived in the U.S. for any length of time.
- Opened my eyes. Didn't realize racism was so pervasive in Fond du Lac.
- It provided me with a better understanding of the minority viewpoint
- The commitment and honesty of the other participants, the facilitation

Participants at the Action Forum responded to “What impact has Diversity Circles had on you?”

- Increased my resolve and sharpened my focus on issues (diversity related) that I can do something about. I'm not as willing to let the “little” things get by or just ignore them.
- The circle opened up race relation dialogue with diverse cultures. Usually such dialogue had taken place only with others of my own culture.
- Able to better understand the issues and lessen fears I've had.
- I have been looking for a place where the celebration of diversity can be discussed, and where the hurts can be addressed in a healing manner. I think the study circles can be this avenue for the people of the Fond du Lac area.
- Provided me with an opportunity to hear how others feel about race issues, as well as better understand what actions participants would like to take in the future.
- I learned the real history about discrimination in America through the people who attended the circle.
- This experience has reinforced and deepened my growing realization that change happens person to person and within groups like this, and that having the kind of community I would like depends on my willingness to be involved and work with others. This gives me a deeper sense of belonging that I have had before.
- To me participation in Diversity Circles represents the beginning of learning how I can make a difference in the people I meet and being able to stand with someone I feel is not treated fairly.
- I became more aware of the difficulties Hispanics faced in our area. I had had thought racism was mainly an African-American issue. I also became more aware of subtle remarks made by people. I will feel more confident speaking, having been in a circle.
- Diversity Circles was an eye opener for me. I had no idea how much we are all alike until we began to talk. I came away from my circle with a new sense of awareness.
- Well I met a couple new people and learned a lot of new interesting things. My perspective on everything is greatly different to what it used to be. We told stories which some were very shocking, and I brought up some memories I really never told anyone. I am grateful for this experience.
- I was simply amazing to see how many people feel as passionately about our society needing to be brought together and accept the differences that are in us all. I am no longer afraid to stick up for what I believe in. This experience has been truly inspiring.

What has happened because of Diversity Circles and the follow-up Action Forum?

- A list serve, newsletter and web site have been started to better communicate among those interested in diversity issues
- New facilitators have been trained to expand the possibility of more community persons being able to participate in circles. To-date, twenty-three people have been trained as facilitators.
- A teen circle was conducted at Fond du Lac High School and a children's circle was conducted at Riverside Elementary
- New people have become involved with United for Diversity
- The business groups from Diversity Circles, United for Diversity and The Reporter have joined forces for greater impact on a “We Welcome Diversity” project.
- Diversity Circles and United for Diversity collaborated with Opening of the Heart/ Compassionate Listening to provide a Diversity workshop attended by 20 people in Sept. '04

- Participants have contacted a family in the community that was harassed for racial reasons, and they have expressed their support for that family living in the community.
- The Education Community provided impetus for the Fond du Lac Reads first book reading, with the selected reading of “To Kill A Mockingbird”.
- Diversity Circle participants have set up informational displays at programs at the college, elementary school, high school music program, and shopping mall
- The evaluation group is in the process of forming an evaluation to determine what Diversity Circles participants have done differently, or how they have acted differently since their Participation
- Numerous presentations have been given to community groups to inform them about Diversity Circles to encourage their members to be involved.
- Six presentations have been given outside the county to educate others on the circle concept and provide them with information on how to get started with their own circles.

Participant Data from those who chose to respond

Ethnic, racial or cultural background

- 9 - Black (not of Hispanic Origin)
- 0 - Asian or Pacific Islands
- 0 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 6 - Hispanic
- 52 - White (not Hispanic)

Level of education

- 1 - Some High School
- 5 - High School Graduate
- 19 - Some College
- 27 - College Graduate
- 24 - Graduate School (advanced degree)

Gender

- 24 - Male
- 55 - Female

Age group

- 2 - Under 18
- 11 - 18-29
- 22 - 30-44
- 27 - 45-64
- 14 - 65 & Over