

CENTER FOR  
**DIVERSITY**  
& RECONCILIATION



Diversity Dinner Program  
Caryn Saxon and Lela Panagides

# Center for Diversity and Reconciliation Mission

**To transform, educate, and connect diverse communities in Springfield, Missouri to inspire deep understanding and profound appreciation of our differences which calls each of us to our fullest relationship with one another.**

# How to Connect with the CDR

- <http://springfieldcdr.com>
- <http://twitter.com/spfdcdr>
- <http://www.facebook.com/spfdcdr>

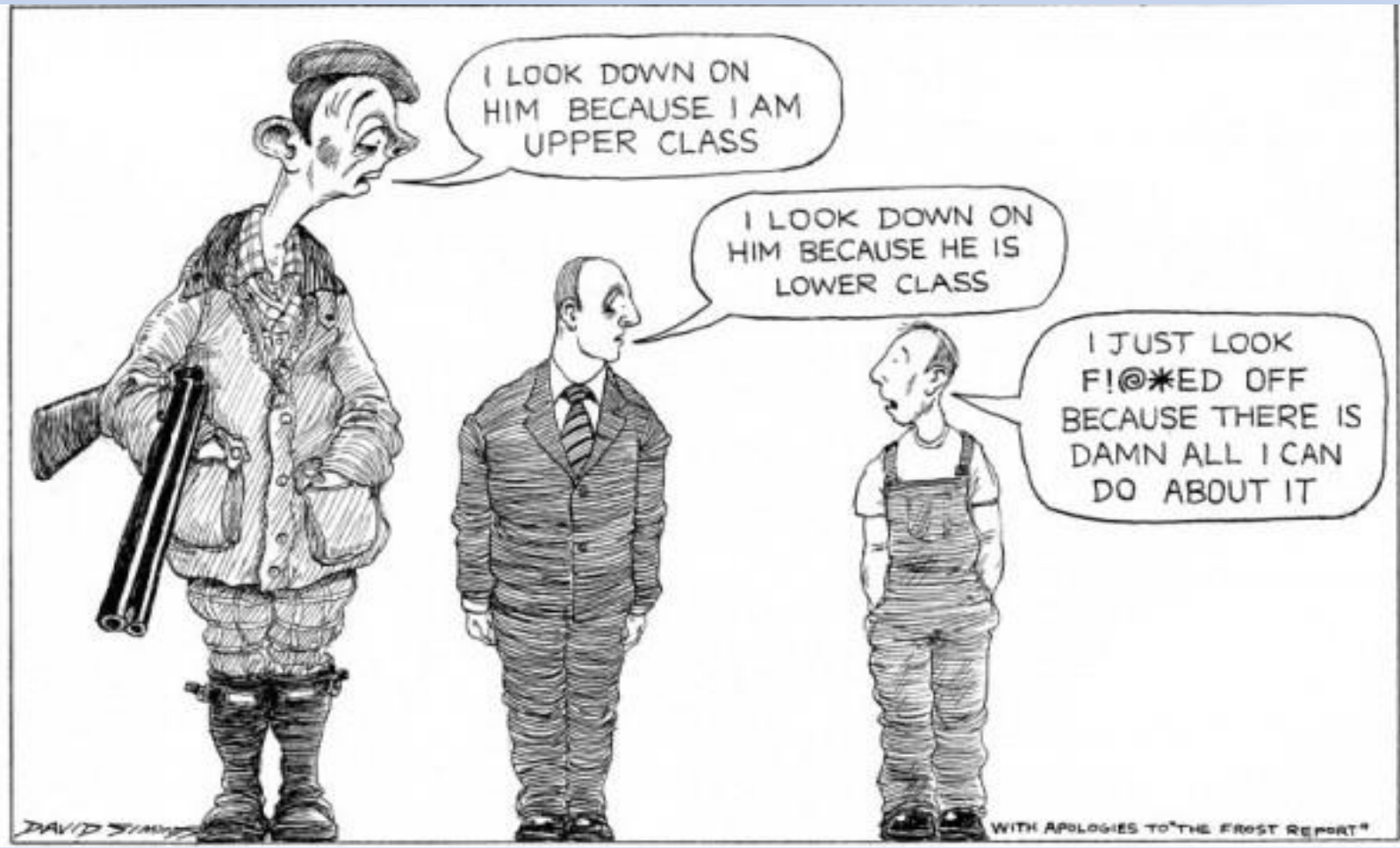




# Do You Agree?

“People tend to socialize with their own identity groups thus contributing to certain beliefs, stereotypes, and judgments of ‘other’ groups not like their own.”

*If true, what are the consequences...*



I LOOK DOWN ON HIM BECAUSE I AM UPPER CLASS

I LOOK DOWN ON HIM BECAUSE HE IS LOWER CLASS

I JUST LOOK F!@\*ED OFF BECAUSE THERE IS DAMN ALL I CAN DO ABOUT IT

DAVID SIMONS

WITH APOLOGIES TO THE FROST REPORT





# The Problem Statement



*Creating a culture of equality is hindered by the fact that we do not **consistently interact with and build meaningful relationships with people who are very different from ourselves.***

So....what can be done?

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xfv6sz\\_diversity-dinners-featured-in-m-magazine\\_news](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xfv6sz_diversity-dinners-featured-in-m-magazine_news)

# We love data!

Research in **intergroup contact** and the impact of interventions leads to positive outcomes of **prejudice reduction** and **increased social inclusion**.

Communication processes with an intergroup encounter reveals four factors which can be measured:

- 1) appreciating differences
- 2) engaging self
- 3) critical self-reflection
- 4) alliance building

*Source: Biren A. Nagda, University of Washington, Seattle*

# Diversity Dinners Program

# Diversity Dinner

- **Who:** all people – regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, class, ability, political orientation, etc. – interested in gaining the perspective of diverse populations.
- **What:** Diversity Dinners – a potluck style dinner that gathers people of different backgrounds to discuss, share, and learn from each other.
- **When:** Once a month – or on an as needed basis.
- **Where:** In the comfort of your (or a friend's) home
- **Why:** To promote unity, connection, and understanding amongst all people in the Springfield community.

# Pilot Program

In 2013, the CDR formed a pilot group to test out the diversity dinner format before launching the full program.

"So...a white guy, a black lady, a gay Christian, a republican, and single mother of 3 came together for dinner. What happened? There was an opportunity to hear, listen, digest, and connect." Charles A.

"The Diversity Dinners program offers a safe space where I don't have to worry about saying something wrong or asking an awkward question because we all gather with the goal of learning from one another and understanding each other's perspective." –Lola B.

Several of us met over the course of four months to break bread and discuss such topics as religion, sexuality, and aging.

# Planning and Logistics

- Theory and Purpose
  - Talking about differences is okay
  - Cultural competence
  - Food transcends all cultures
  - Humans are self-directive
- Frequency and Duration
  - 6-8 participants meet together once a month for six months
  - Each dinner lasts between 2-3 hours
  - Times, dates, meal planning organized by facilitator and agreed upon by group

# Planning and Logistics Continued

- Recruitment and Group Coordination
  - Flyers, handouts, social media, conferences
  - Networks in community to promote
  - Sign up of people who are interested
  - Groups formed/assigned by Program Coordinator
  - Facilitator training scheduled for summer 2014
- Dinner
  - Group rosters distributed to facilitators
  - At first dinner, hosts will volunteer for future dinners



# What will the first dinner look like?

- Will involve a lot of ‘getting to know you’ questions
- Establishing a circle of trust
- Sample questions:
  - Tell us about how you were raised?
  - Where are you from?
  - Who were the most influential people in your life?

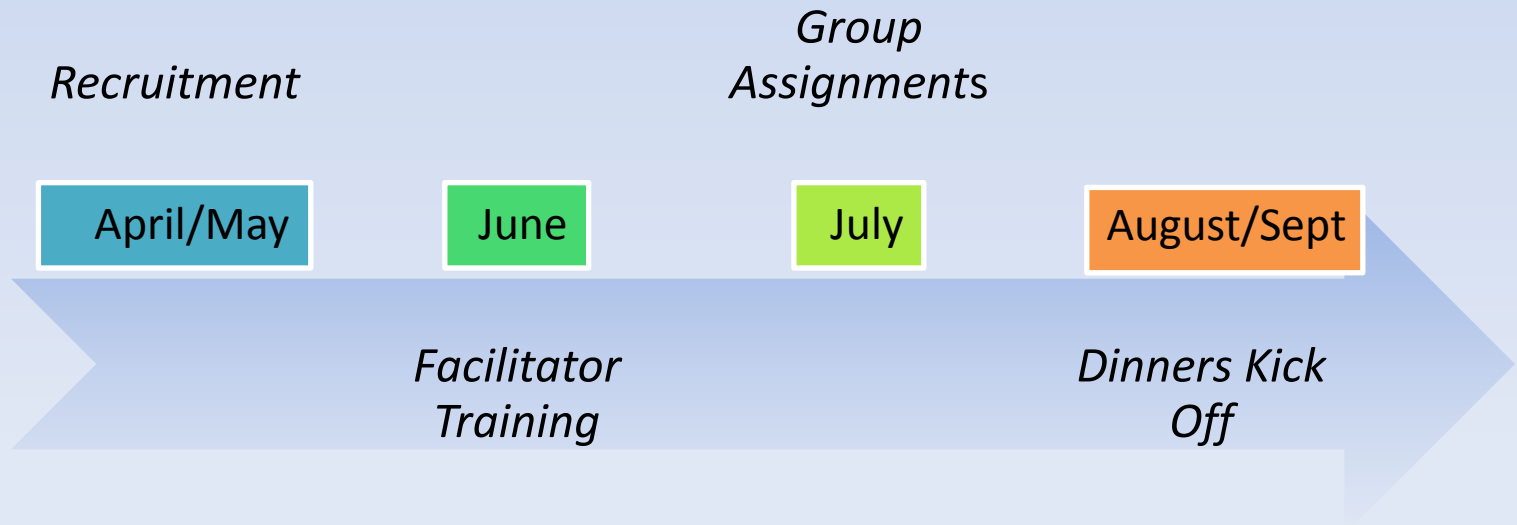
# After that, dinners will focus on ‘issue’ topics

Examples might include:

- Identity issues such as race, faith, gender, age, and sexual orientation
- Current news topics (local and global)

Group facilitators will be given facilitation guides; however, groups can also choose topics that feel relevant and meaningful to them

# Timeline



# What's next

We welcome and encourage you to join us on this journey of communication, understanding, and community-building!

- If you would like more information, please email our program coordinator: [CSaxon@MissouriState.edu](mailto:CSaxon@MissouriState.edu)
- If you would like to sign up for the program, please follow this web link and fill out our enrollment form:
- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CDRDINNERS>
- If you are interested in acting as a facilitator, please indicate that on the enrollment form and we will contact you about the upcoming facilitator's training

Thank you!

Your Questions and Comments  
and  
Raffle 😊