

# COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON DIVERSITY

FALL 2008

# Ames

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## How Can We Build A Stronger Ames That Includes Me?

### **We need to talk.**

This is why Ames Community Conversations on Diversity (CCDC), a volunteer coalition has come together to address serious racial, class and ethnic tensions in Ames. Our goal is to bring people in our community together to talk, think, and work towards solving local problems. To start, we are inviting Ames residents from all walks of life to participate in a series of facilitated community conversations to be held in October and November of 2008, concluding with a city-wide Action Forum.

### **Why do we need to discuss racial and social differences?**

Within the last 24 months Ames has experienced an increase in racial and social tension. Long term residents of Ames have expressed dismay and anger that newcomers to the community, often identified as African-Americans “from Chicago” and immigrants from outside the U.S., are causing the crime rate to rise and the quality of life to decline. Others are concerned that outsiders are bringing in problems that Ames is not equipped to handle. New residents are wondering just what kind of a place they have moved to.

Ames Community Conversations on Diversity extends a great thanks for being able to adapt materials originally created by **Everyday Democracy** (formerly the Study Circles Resource Center). **Everyday Democracy** is a national organization that helps local communities find ways for all kinds of people to think, talk and work together to solve problems. Created in 1989 by The Paul J. Aicher Foundation, **Everyday Democracy** has worked with more than 550 community groups across the United States on many different public issues. We are proud to add Ames to the list. Learn more at [www.everyday-democracy.org](http://www.everyday-democracy.org).

#### **Ames CCDC Committee and Supporters**

Greta Anderson, David Andrews, Carol Barrick, Jan Beran, Linda Butler, Jerry Chase, Chuck Cychosz, Jim Davis, Denise Denton, Brian Eslinger, Cornelia Flora, Francesca Galarraga, Connie Hargrave, Jessica Heath, Anne Kinzel, Mary Kitchell, Robert Knight, Debbie Lee, Selva Lehman, Mary Jo Mattila, Chris Rehmann, Sheryl Rippke, Keith Schrag, Lois Smidt, Jeanne Warning, Alesia Whitney-Knight, Crystal Williams, Barbara Woods

Ames CCDC is pleased to make this Community Conversations Guide freely available to communities and individuals as they embark on the journey of creating meaningful community dialogue. We ask only two things: 1) That you acknowledge your use of the guide in publications you may author (The title is “Ames Iowa Community Conversations on Diversity, Fall 2008” and the author is “Ames CCDC”) and 2) Please let us know that you have used the guide to prepare your own document. Our name is Ames CCDC and our email address is [xstory@iastate.edu](mailto:xstory@iastate.edu). Please let us know a little bit about your dialogue project.

## How can we stop making hurtful assumptions about Ames residents based on race, ethnicity or social status?

**Anger and Fear.** Emotions exploded at a community meeting on November 27, 2007. Some residents said they fear for their safety because of crime caused by new arrivals “from Chicago.” Others were angry that immigrants are bringing complex problems and consuming excessive local resources— without having made positive contributions to the community.

Some new residents express anger as they believe they are singled out by the police and others as suspicious and potentially dangerous persons because of their race, ethnicity or lack of social status.

**But this is Iowa.** Ames is a long way from Rodney King’s LA or New Orleans’ chaos, but the bottom line is that new and established residents alike often distrust each other and have rushed to using stereotypes in assigning blame for social problems.

**It is a college town.** Few opportunities exist for people to get to know each other in Ames. With almost half the population

made up of Iowa State students, most of whom who are passing through before moving on with their lives, Ames can be a bit— transient. No matter, everyone who lives here deserves a community that is safe and full of opportunities to grow as individuals and families.

**Dialogue is hard, but healing.** If we want to build a stronger Ames that values all of us, we need to confront racism and other social issues— within ourselves and within our community. Dialogue can provide us with the opportunity to promote healing and growth in our city.

**This guide is a tool for you.** We believe this guide will be critical in helping you feel welcome as a pioneer in the effort to use community level dialogue to bring positive change to Ames. We encourage you to look through it after you attend your first conversation and to bring it with you to all subsequent conversations.

### Ames CCDC

Ames CCDC gives a special thanks to Barbara Woods, Mary-Jo Mattila, Selva Lehman, and Anne Kinzel for the preparation of this Guide.

Together we can build a stronger Ames that works for all of us.

### A Successful Dialogue-to-Change Program Ames, Iowa

- ✓ Has been organized by a diverse group of people.
- ✓ Includes a large number of people from all walks of life.
- ✓ Has easy-to-use, fair-minded discussion materials.
- ✓ Uses trained facilitators who understand Ames.
- ✓ Can move our community to action when the conversations conclude.

# A Brief Note For Ames Community Conversation Participants

From the Community Conversations on Diversity Committee

Preparing this guide has been tough and has caused us to think carefully about what it means to discuss racial and social tensions at the community level. We have been careful not to turn away from controversy.

We realize the guide may cause you to confront some of the long-term beliefs, personal fears and anger you may have regarding racial and social tensions. We offer this guide in the hope that all of us can grow in our own understanding of the forces affecting our community.

**Taking Chances.** These community-wide conversations will challenge everyone who has the courage to participate. It is difficult for many of us to talk about racism and other social ills, especially with people we don't know. If we participate in CCDC, our efforts will be rewarded, but only if we are committed to success and willing to take some personal risk.

**Who is the CCDC?** We are a collaborative volunteer effort whose reason for being is helping Ames residents create a stronger, more welcoming community that works for all of us. We believe that together, we can become a community that proves honest listening and sharing can lead to significant change—for individuals, organizations and the larger community.

**A Few Words About Language.** Finding good language to talk about tough social issues isn't easy. What are the best words and phrases for promoting productive

dialogue? Should we use the words "race" or "class"? How should we name or describe different groups of people? Should we use the terms "people of color," "minorities," "cultural groups," or "ethnic groups," "white privilege," or "the poor"?

**The Challenge of Being Inclusive.** Our goal has been for people from all walks of life to believe their voice belongs in these conversations. We believe our recruitment process is sound. But simply recruiting good people will not guarantee productive dialogue. Participants have to commit to the conversation process; first by showing up, and then by engaging their hearts and minds.

**A Promise.** Our commitment to you is that this guide, modeled on successful programs that have taken place across the country, but personalized for Ames, represents our best efforts to help you come together and talk about our different views of Ames.

**Nothing Good Is Ever Achieved Alone.** CCDC has benefited from the expertise and the assistance of **Everyday Democracy** in creating this guide. In addition we have received financial assistance from the **City of Ames**, the **Ames Morning and Noon Rotary Clubs**, the **Kiwanis**, and **ISU Extension**. Their generous support has allowed us to create this tool to help all of us engage in these community-wide conversations for change. **Don't just read it. Use it!**

CCDC Committee & Supporters

# AMES COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Session 1

**ESTABLISHING IDENTITY: WHO ARE YOU? WHO AM I?**

Session 2

**MY VIEW OF AMES, YOUR VIEW OF AMES**

Session 3

**WHAT STOPS US FROM UNDERSTANDING THE GAPS BETWEEN US?**

Session 4

**WHAT IS MY PART IN A STRONGER AMES? IN MAKING THING  
“DIFFERENT.”**

November 19, 2008

**ACTION FORUM**

## Overview of the Dialogue Process

How can we come together and build a stronger, more inclusive Ames? We can do this by using proven techniques to bring people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds together so they can:

### **Listen respectfully to one another.**

Through dialogue, Ames residents can share experiences and concerns, and rethink stereotypes. They can understand one another better, and build relationships that help them work together.

### **Look at different sides of an issue and explore common concerns.**

When residents learn more about public problems and explore disagreements, they begin to find common concerns. Then, they learn they can solve problems together.

### **Come up with practical ways to address difficult social problems.**

Through dialogue, people in Ames can develop new community networks and new ideas for action and change. Positive community-based organizing can help them work to connect their talk to action.

### **Move to action.**

Community-level dialogue can lead to democratic problem solving on many local issues— education, community-police relations, poverty, and others. Some communities may even join others— in their state — to come up with regional solutions.

A growing number of communities are creating ongoing democratic dialogue and action on racism. They are finding ways to involve people from all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, all political beliefs, all faiths, all education levels, all income levels, and all walks of life. These communities are finding ways to move from dialogue to individual change and collective action.

## Dialogue Mechanics

### **How will the conversations work?**

Each conversation group will be led by a trained facilitator. The conversation group will be comprised of 8 to 12 diverse individuals. In some cases, the individuals will be from

**It's important to look at racism as being much more than a black-white issue, and social class as about more than how much money you have.**

local organizations (such as a faith group, service group, or workplace) which have been paired to bring together people from diverse backgrounds. In other cases, the group may be an assembly of people who registered individually.

### **What's My Commitment?**

Each group is going to meet for about 8 hours total. These hours will be divided into several sessions of different length, but no more than 2 hours per session.

Your biggest commitment is to talk openly and honestly about the issues, and to listen to others as they do the same; to respect others in your group even if you disagree with them.

### **Some Inspiration for Action**

Sometimes it helps to know that others have succeeded. Our neighbors to the south in Columbia Missouri have been involved in

"LET'S TALK, COLUMBIA!" since 2000. This effort has focused on involving citizens in dialogues on diversity. More than 530 persons have participated and over 91% of participants surveyed reported that their understanding of other's attitudes and beliefs had increased as a result of their participation in the dialogue sessions. Here is what some participants had to say about their dialogue experience:

"Hearing the experiences of participants in my circle opened my mind to think of 'others' no as 'others' anymore, but as people just like me in many ways."

"Most of the time you hear about people in other groups, but you don't have an opportunity to associate a person or face with that group. This is a window of opportunity."

"I am now more interested in opening my eyes, ears, and senses to the thoughts, feelings and concerns of others in the community."

## **THE ROLE OF RACISM IN OUR NATIONAL HISTORY**

It is no wonder that race is a hot topic today. Racism has played a key role throughout America's history. It has worked against our founding principles of equality and justice. Our nation's history has included:

- ✓ Wars against Native American tribes and discrimination against native peoples;
- ✓ The enslavement of Africans and the oppression of African-Americans once slavery became illegal;
- ✓ The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II; and
- ✓ Ongoing discrimination against immigrants.

All this, and more, comes from the belief that people are inferior or superior based on their ethnicity or the color of their skin.

Individual and collective struggles have resulted in many positive changes in Iowa and beyond. The American civil rights movement has been a beacon for democratic movements. Despite much progress, racism and lack of economic opportunity continue to plague Americans, emerging in new and complex ways. A growing number of people recognize that racism and its effects are still imbedded in our institutions, our practices, and our culture, preventing us from fully experiencing the kind of country and communities so many of us want.

# Together, We Can Advance Change

## Each Ames Dialogue ...

- will feature a small, diverse group of 8 to 12 people.
- will meet together for several sessions or about 8 total hours.
- sets its own ground rules. This helps the group share responsibility for the quality of the discussion.
- is led by an impartial facilitator who helps manage the discussion. He or she is not there to teach the group about the issue.
- starts with personal stories, then helps the group look at an Ames issue from multiple points of view. Next, the group explores potential solutions. Finally, the members make plans for action.

## Moving Forward in Ames

As our community moves ahead with this challenging work, we will find ways to honor the ideals of equity and justice. Together, we can build a stronger Ames where everyone has a voice.

This guide is full of tools and features that will help us:

- ★ Create ways for people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds to speak honestly and listen to each other.
- ★ Create ways for participants to see and understand the “invisible” effects of racism and social class divisions.

- ★ Have conversations that are meaningful to “beginners” and to those who have worked on these issues for a long time.
- ★ Look at the national situation and see how it influences what is happening in Ames.
- ★ Take stock of Ames’ challenges and assets, and create plans for positive change.

## Examples of Dialogue Outcomes – Your Hard Work Can Pay Off

<b>Changes in Individual Behavior and Attitudes</b>	Many people have begun to speak out against negative stereotypes. People are more likely to interrupt or question actions that are hurtful to others.
<b>New Relationships and Networks</b>	The City of Fayetteville, North Carolina, Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville Technical Community College, and the school district partnered to create a new firehouse and a new fire sciences program. Their goal is to bring more people of color into the city’s fire department.
<b>Institutional Changes</b>	Based on ideas and relationships from dialogues, Springfield, Illinois, changed its hiring practices and is working to create a more diverse city work force.
<b>Changes in Public Policy</b>	Vermont passed a statewide anti-harassment law. Calls of support from many program participants, from all walks of life, helped make this possible.
<b>Changes in Community Dynamics</b>	Since 1996, in Aurora, Illinois, at least 4,000 people have taken part in dialogue and action on issues of racism and diversity. The city and many public officials have taken the lead to help create a community where people of different races now mix more easily. Bullying is decreasing in the schools where students, from middle school on up, are involved in dialogue. And neighborhood groups have resolved a range of issues.

## Session 1

### ESTABLISHING IDENTITY: WHO ARE YOU? WHO AM I?

**Today's Goal:** First, we are going to set the stage for our 5 dialogue sessions. Then, we will share information about ourselves and our views. The important thing is to share what feels comfortable to you.

For many of us, it is not easy to talk about our views of race and class. Today we have some activities which will help us get a little more comfortable and get the dialogue started.

For some of you, talk is just that and you are ready to act - now. We understand that itch, and the time will come to act, but right now the action is in conversation. Remember, our goal is to engage in dialogue over 5 sessions so we can build toward action and change in Ames.

#### **PART 1: MAKING CONNECTIONS: OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS AND SETTING GUIDELINES (20 minutes)**

Before we begin we will spend a few minutes talking about the dialogue process. To help us be productive, we need to agree about how we are going to talk. We need to develop guidelines that we can use throughout the sessions. We can use the following to start us thinking about the guidelines each conversation group will adopt.

- Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- Share “air time.” One person speaks at a time.
- Speak for yourself, not for others.
- If you are offended or upset, say so, and say why.
- You will disagree, but don't make it personal. Stick to the issue. No name-calling, no put-downs.
- Everyone helps the facilitator keep us moving and on track.
- Personal stories stay in the dialogue unless the group decides it's OK to tell them to other people.

#### **FACILITATOR NOTE**

Introduce yourself as the facilitator. Explain that your job is to help group members have a conversation that makes room for all voices. Make it clear that you will not share your own views or stories, or try to push an agenda.

Help the group members make a list of guidelines for a respectful, productive dialogue. Use the sample guidelines to help the group create some rules.

Get some newsprint and the list of guidelines on the easel for the group. Keep them, as they will be used in each session!

## Session 1, cont.

### **PART 2: INTRODUCTION – WHO AM I? WHO ARE YOU?** (20 minutes)

The group will split into pairs. The members of the pair will interview each other using the attached **interview cards**.

We use interview cards so you will ask each other the same interview questions. When each pair has finished the interview questions, the entire group will come together. Each member of the interview pairs will report what they learned about their partner to the entire group in a brief summary.

The interview process should take no more than 10 minutes— five minutes per interview.

### **PART 3: OUR HOPES AND CONCERNS AS WE BEGIN OUR COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS** (20 minutes)

It's important that we begin to understand why participating in these events is important to us.

- ★ What are your hopes as our dialogues get started?
- ★ What are your concerns regarding the dialogues?

### **PART 4: CLOSING: WHERE HAVE WE BEEN AND WHERE ARE WE GOING** (15 minutes)

Ask yourself:

- ★ How is it going so far?
- ★ What have you heard that:
  - ▶ Surprised you?
  - ▶ Inspired you?
  - ▶ Concerned you?
- ★ **Did you hear any common themes?**

Now turn to your neighbor and discuss how the session went. Focus on:

- ★ How did it feel to take part in this conversation?

#### FOR NEXT TIME

Listen to what people are saying around you about race, class, and poverty...How does what you hear make you feel... Reflect on your feelings.

## Session 2.

# MY VIEW OF AMES, YOUR VIEW OF AMES

**Today's Goal:** In this session, group members will focus on the important values that they share with other Ames' residents. They will learn the different ways others perceive the experience of living in Ames.

### PART 1: MAKING CONNECTIONS (10 minutes)

Before we begin we will spend a few minutes reviewing the dialogue guidelines from our last session. Do we need to modify anything based on our experiences in Session 1? Remember:

- ★ Everyone gets a fair hearing.

Can anyone share what they have heard discussed around them concerning race, class, and poverty, during the last week?

### PART 2. MY VIEWS OF AMES (30 Minutes)

Over the next 30 minutes we will be discussing these questions which are designed to help us understand how residents in our community view Ames.

- ★ How would I describe Ames?
- ★ What are the important values that I share with others living in Ames?
- ★ How has Ames changed since you arrived?
- ★ What kinds of things would make me feel more connected to this community?

### PART 3: CASE STUDIES. (45 minutes)

The case studies on the next page will help us talk about how racial and ethnic tensions play themselves out at the community level. Read the list and the group will choose a few to discuss. As you read these case studies think about the following questions:

- ★ Which cases stand out for you? Why do you think people acted the way they did?
- ★ Do the same things go on in Ames and central Iowa?
- ★ Have you ever experienced this kind of situation, either yourself directly or as an observer?

# Case Studies

## Case Study 1.

In a local neighborhood, families are struggling to make ends meet. Recently arrived Immigrants from other countries move in. They get lots of positive attention and help from the community. The long-time neighbors are angry because despite all their hard work, their own needs aren't being met.

## Case Study 2.

A white person who wants to be on the police force is not hired. A person of color with the same scores on the test gets the job. An applicant wonders if he should fight the result.

## Case Study 3.

An African American couple tells their children to be extra careful at the shopping mall. They remind the children to stay together. They also tell them to keep receipts for everything they buy.

## Case Study 4.

A campus department has a picnic. The main dish is pork tenderloin. A new professor and several graduate students do not eat pork due to dietary religious laws. They leave the gathering early saying they are going to go eat at a local ethnic restaurant. At their dinner the talk is how insulted and left out they felt.

## Case Study 5.

A loan officer at a local bank often refuses to make loans to people of color. This happens even when they have good credit ratings.

## Case Study 6.

A white couple is walking to their car after seeing a late movie. They see a group of young black men coming toward them. The couple crosses the street. The next day they tell a friend how afraid they were of getting robbed by those gangbangers from Chicago.

## Case Study 7.

In a campus lab, a group of students makes racial insults about a classmate. A Sikh student heard himself described as a Ossama rag head.

## Case Study 8.

A man enters a neighborhood store. He feels that the manager, who is from a different ethnic group, is keeping an eye on him. He thinks the manager doesn't trust him.

## Case Study 9.

A long-time resident is upset that most of the newspapers at his local store are increasingly in Spanish. Why can't these people read English he tells the clerk.

## Case Study 10.

A regional manager hires a Latina. Her job is to work with the local office and the growing Latino community. Some African Americans wonder why no one has been hired to address their needs.

## Case Study 11.

A Pakistani woman, who doesn't speak English, is very ill. Her doctor thinks she may die. He asks the woman's child, who speaks Urdu and English, to tell her mother how sick she is.

★ Can you imagine any of these situations occurring in Ames?

★ Why or why not?

## Session 2, cont.

### PART 3: THE POWER OF WORDS. [20 MINUTES]

Here are some words that come up when people talk about race, ethnicity and social class.

Let's talk about what these words mean to us when we hear them and what we are saying when we use them.

- ★ Low-income
- ★ Racism
- ★ Social class
- ★ Prejudice
- ★ Section 8 Housing
- ★ Chicago
- ★ Institutional Racism
- ★ Discrimination
- ★ Social Services
- ★ Illegals
- ★ Food Stamps
- ★ Housing Vouchers
- ★ The Projects
- ★ Free Clinic
- ★ Stereotyping

### Part 4: Closing: Where Have We Been, Where Are We Going? (10 minutes)

Ask yourself:

- ★ How is it going so far?
- ★ What have you heard that:
  - Surprised you?
  - Inspired you?
  - Concerned you?
- ★ Did you hear any common themes?

Now turn to your neighbor and discuss how the session went. Focus on:

- ★ How did these case studies make you feel?

### FOR NEXT TIME

Think about the words you use over the course of the week to describe people around you. Is there something you want to change?

## Session 3.

# WHAT STOPS US FROM UNDERSTANDING THE GAPS BETWEEN US?

**Today's Goal:** We will look at how we think Ames is doing as a community.

Even though Ames has been rated as an extremely attractive place to live by a number of national and regional publications, gaps exist in our community. Before we can talk seriously about making change we have to have a common understanding of where we are today as a community. This way we will have a better understanding of the progress we want to achieve to make Ames a stronger community that works for all of us.

### **PART 1: MAKING CONNECTIONS - COMMUNITY INVENTORY (25 MINUTES)**

Let's briefly review our guidelines. Is there anything we need to modify based on our first two sessions?

On the following pages is a brief community inventory of Ames' resources and assets. The inventory is not exhaustive and we will be counting on you to help expand it. Here is what we need to do:

1. Over the next ten minutes we need you to read over the inventory and acquaint yourself with its content.
2. Discuss the inventory. We need to answer this question:

**How do these resources and assets affect the lives of people living in Ames?**

### **We Need Your Help and Knowledge!**

**We realize that the inventory provided here is limited, and we think one of the best resources to help expand it is you! We have provided some paper for you to add to the resource and asset inventory, based on your knowledge of Ames. Please help fill in the gaps by providing names of your favorite Ames' resources as well as information you think is important. If you are willing, please leave your contact information so that we may follow-up with you, if needed.**

# Do You Know These Community Resources?

Besides the assistance provided by government programs, which have State or Federal income guidelines, Ames also has a variety of programs provided by Communities of Faith and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that give guidance and or financial assistance for those that need it. Amongst them we just mention a few. Please note this is not an exhaustive list. If you know of more groups, please list them on the handout you have been received today.

## **Various Food Pantries and Clothing's Places**

Like Bethesda Food Pantry and Suited for Work Closet

## **ACCESS**

Ames Assault Care Center Domestic Violence Support Services

## **Ames Free Medical Clinic**

Provide Medical Care for the uninsured - *Walk-ins Only No Appointments*. Meets every Thursday evenings at c/o First United Methodist Church, 508 Kellogg

## **Beyond Welfare Inc.**

Helps to build circles of support for families to address systemic barriers that hold poverty in place.

## **Emergency Residence Project**

The ERP seeks to provide shelter, food, essential hygiene, referral for needs not covered by our programs and (whenever possible) intervention to prevent homelessness.

## **Food At First**

To help those who are not able to simultaneously meet their basic needs of food and shelter. Meals are currently served on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights, and Saturday midday, no matter what the weather!

## **Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance Inc.**

A centralized resource by a number of Ames' communities of Faith to provide cooperative emergency assistance in areas such as rent, utilities, food and other needs

## **Habitat for Humanity of Central Iowa**

Building houses, building hope in Story, Hamilton and Hardin Counties.

## **Iowa 211**

Health and Human Services Referral Program. On-line referral service providing local information.

## **People Place/LSI**

Provides life-affirming programs to help family members build on their strengths and develop new strengths.

## **Story County Community Housing Corp.**

Provides opportunities for low and moderate income people to secure decent and affordable housing.

## **Youth and Shelter Services of Eastern Story County**

YSS provides a broad range of services to youth and their families.

# Do You Know These Housing Resources?

AMES SUBSIDIZED HOUSING	TYPE & NUMBER	LOCATION
<b>Hunziker Property Management</b>	Elderly/Disabled: 63-1BR Units	Regency V Apartments 3000 Regency Court
<b>Community Housing Initiatives</b>	Low-Income: 16-1 BR 32-2 BR Units 12-3 BR Units Total Units: 60	420 E. 7th Street, Suite D3 Eastwood Apartments 420 East Seventh Street
<b>Keystone Apartments</b>	Elderly/Disabled: 40-1 BR Units 15- Studio Units 1-2 BR Units Total Units= 56	3115 Roy Key Avenue
<b>Stonehaven</b>	Elderly/Disabled: 54-1 BR Units	421 Stonehaven Drive

## Additional Ames Housing Facts:\*

- ★ There are 233 privately owned/managed HUD Subsidized Housing Units.
- ★ The **City of Ames Rental Assistance Program Section 8 Voucher Program**, run by the Department of Planning & Housing Department has up to 229 vouchers in its inventory. They can only be used if funding is available
- ★ There are 462 “Project-based” and “Tenant-based” HUD subsidized Housing Units.

Additionally, as of June 30, 2008, there were 11,609 registered rental-housing units in the City of Ames; 11,525 contain all elements of a unit, and 84 fewer elements (single-rooms: sharing of common areas).

\* This information was provided by the City of Ames Planning & Housing Department, in consultation with the City of Ames Building Inspections Division, Hunziker Property Management, Keystone & Stonehaven Apartments and Community Housing Initiatives.

# Do You Know These Community Assets?

In addition to the assistance provided by government programs, which have State or Federal income guidelines, Ames also has a variety of programs provided by Communities of Faith and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that give guidance and or financial assistance for those that need it. Amongst them we just mention a few. Each of you will have different views as to what these assets mean to our community.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list. If you know of more groups, please list them on the handout you have been tonight.

## **Culture**

Art galleries, museums, ISU State Center, city and ISU libraries.

## **Education**

Iowa State University, DMACC Ames Hunziker Center and William Penn College, Public schools (6 – elementary, one –middle, one high school), private schools (2).

## **Healthcare**

Mary Greeley Medical Center, McFarland Clinic, Doran Clinic for Women, Iowa Heart Center, Wolfe Eye Clinic.

## **Housing**

Broad range of housing options.

## **Major Employers**

Iowa State University, National Animal Disease Center, Mary Greeley Medical Center, City of Ames.

## **Recreation**

Ames City Parks, Recreation Centers Bowling Alley, Golf courses/county club.

## **Religion**

Range of religious options

## **Shopping & Food**

North Grand Mall, Downtown Center Shopping, Campustown; Locally-owned and chain restaurants.

## **Transportation**

Public transportation system: CyRide: Ames city bus system that operates fixed routes and a Dial-A-Ride Service; Heartland Senior Services, Inc. HIRTA Public Transit: Dial-A-Ride public transportation for seniors and disabled persons easy access to Des Moines International Airport

## Session 3. cont.

### **PART 2: A COMMUNITY REPORT CARD** (15 minutes)

Let's look at how we think Ames is doing. Is everyone getting a fair shake in Ames? Do all our residents have fair access to services, and what makes our community special?

On the following page is a community report card we have created for you to use in assessing your thoughts about Ames. Please go over it and give our community a grade. Don't agonize over grading, just use the first impression that comes to your mind.

1. Read each statement in the Report Card. Think about what is going on Ames. Then give a grade for each statement.
2. Look at the grades. Where do we agree? Where do we disagree?
3. How did you decide which grade to give?
4. When you look at the Report Card, what success jump out?
5. When you look at the Report Card, what one or two challenges need to be taken on now?

### **PART 3: DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF AMES - THE DATA.** (30 minutes)

In many ways, we have made a lot of progress in the U.S.. At the same time, there are still people in our country who are behind in areas like education, health, and employment. Let's look at data that shows us some examples of gaps among groups in our region.

- ★ From what you have seen what are the biggest gaps among people in Ames What are the hardest gaps to overcome?
- ★ When you look at the data, do you see anything that surprises you about Ames ?
- ★ How do you think these gaps affect people in Ames?

#### **Check Out the Data**

**On the next page we have some data for you to look over provided by the Ames Police Department (thank you, Chief Cychosz). Look it over, think about it, what does it say about Ames? Does it say more than one thing? How can these data be used? How should they be used?**

**AMES POLICE DEPARTMENT STATISTICAL REPORT FOR 2004, 2005 & 2006  
(YTD September)**

	<b>2004 TOTALS (YTD)</b>	<b>2005 TOTALS (YTD)</b>	<b>2006 TOTALS (YTD)</b>	<b>2007 TOTALS (YTD)</b>
<b>HOMICIDE TOTAL</b>	0	0	1	0
<b>SEXUAL ASSAULTS TOTAL</b>	61	43	65	58
<b>ROBBERY TOTAL</b>	13	14	18	13
<b>ASSAULTS TOTAL</b>	320	238	341	396
<b>DOMESTIC PROBLEMS - NO VIOLENCE</b>	306	380	416	470
<b>VIOLATION NO CONTACT ORDER</b>	24	35	34	54
<b>BURGLARY</b>	395	472	297	228
<b>THEFT</b>	1124	1054	1139	1337
<b>AUTO THEFT</b>	42	24	25	40
<b>AUTO RECOVERIES</b>	39	20	16	22
<b>LIQUOR VIOLATIONS TOTAL</b>	909	753	868	1023
<b>ARSON</b>	2	1	5	2
<b>VANDALISM</b>	783	875	745	717
<b>OWI ARRESTS</b>	175	183	266	248
<b>ARRESTS - TOTAL</b>	2469	2118	2407	2582
<b>HATE/BIAS INCIDENTS</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>DRUG ARRESTS</b>	141	98	207	161
<b>DRUG INVESTIGATIONS</b>	172	154	318	199

## USE THIS GRADING SYSTEM

**A - We are doing great!**

**C - We are doing OK.**

**F- We have taken steps backward.**

**B - We are doing well.**

**D - We've had no success.**

**Q - Not sure.**

AMES COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS	CATEGORY	STATEMENT	A	B	C	D	F	Q
	<b>Education</b>	In our community, every child receives a quality education.						
	<b>Employment</b>	Everyone in our community has an equal opportunity for a good-paying job.						
	<b>Criminal Justice</b>	Our community police force reflects the diversity of our community and respects our differences.						
	<b>Leadership</b>	Our community leaders (in government, financial institutions, education, law enforcement, etc.) reflect the diversity of our city.						
	<b>Social Services</b>	The social services system in our community (e.g., welfare, job training, etc.) meets everyone's needs.						
	<b>Media</b>	Local radio, TV stations, and newspapers offer fair and full coverage about people from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.						
	<b>Health Care</b>	Our community's health care system serves the needs of all our residents.						
	<b>Public Works</b>	All areas in our community have access to public services (such as water, trash pickup, and sidewalk and road maintenance).						

## Session 3, cont.

### **PART 4 VIEWPOINTS** (40 minutes)

The viewpoints on the next page will help us talk about ethnic and racial conflicts. Read the list of cases and choose a few to discuss.

As you read these Viewpoints, ask yourselves the following questions:

- ★ Which views come closest to your way of thinking?
- ★ Which views seem most important to you?
- ★ Is there a viewpoint that is missing?
- ★ **Is there anything you don't agree with?**

### **Part 5 CLOSING: WHERE HAVE WE BEEN, WHERE ARE WE GOING? (10 minutes)**

Ask yourself:

- ★ How is it going so far?
- ★ What have you heard that:
  - Surprised you?
  - Inspired you?
  - Concerned you?
- ★ Did you hear any common themes?

Now turn to your neighbor and discuss how the session went. Focus on:

- ★ How did these case studies make you feel?

# Viewpoints

**View 1: Newcomers do not feel welcome.**

Many social and neighborhood interactions in Ames revolve around who you know. As a newcomer to Ames, a person can feel unwanted and unwelcome. No efforts are made to greet newcomers and invite them to conversation, dinner, or do things together. In Ames, many people are set in their ways with their own circle of friends, and are not willing to branch out.

**View 2: Newcomers are coming to Ames just to take advantage of our resources.**

Unlike the past, more newcomers are hearing about Ames not as a place to pursue higher education but as place that has lots of low-cost housing, healthcare and other resources. Newcomers are able to take advantage of these resources. Many of them do not want to contribute in meaningful ways, but are happy to get in line for “free” services. We do not have ways to help newcomers understand what we expect of them.

**View 3: Newcomers cause increases in crime.**

Ames has always been a place where old and young felt no need to fear for their lives and property. Crime is on the rise in Ames. It is most noticeable as African Americans from Chicago and Hispanics move in. They bring in values that are different than ours when it comes to following the law. They do not respect our values and sense of safety.

**View 4: Newcomers add richness to Ames.**

Our community has long been a community rich in diversity. Ames is made up of people moving from state-to-state, and recent immigrants. All come for a variety of reasons including work, family and education. Newcomers to our community give us many outlets to share

common interests and explore cultures and experiences different from our own.

**View 5: Problems are created when people don't speak English.**

There are parts of our community where people do not speak English. More people want information distributed in other languages. Newcomers use their languages and traditions to stay separate from the rest of the Ames community. They forget that they need to learn to communicate and participate in activities the same way we do.

**View 6: Racial and ethnic differences often are tied to economic differences.**

Some of the more recent newcomers seem to be mostly interested in making money. They do not want to or intend to be part of the community. Many of them are here only temporarily and want to go back to their own country someday. We end up with no common bonds.

**View 7: Newcomers provide a needed labor force.**

Local jobs are going unfilled because local residents are unwilling to take many of the open positions that often pay lower wages. Newcomers have filled the positions and helped fuel the local economy. Their presence makes it possible for us to have a better quality of life

**View 8: Newcomers are afraid of the police.**

A newcomer to Ames expressed this sentiment which is difficult for many long term residents to understand, “Newcomers feel that the police are not fair in their interactions with us. They single us out. We get stopped for no reason. They assume that all of us are doing something illegal.”

## Session 4

# What Is My Part In Creating A Stronger Ames That Works For All Of Us?

**Today's Goal:** We will speak from a personal perspective in addressing what we can do to make Ames a more inclusive community. We will also prepare for the upcoming public forum where all conversation group participants will come together and share what we learned from our participation in the Ames Community Conversations on Diversity.

### **PART 1: MAKING CONNECTIONS (10 MINUTES)**

Let's briefly review our guidelines. Is there anything we need to modify based on our first three sessions?

Tonight's session is going to be a little less directed than the previous sessions. We might have to work a little harder to stay on track as work on tonight's goals. But we are community conversation veterans, and no doubt up to the challenge!

### **PART 2: WHAT CAN I DO AS INDIVIDUAL? (30 MINUTES)**

Ask yourself this question:

#### ★ **What can I do to be part of the change that I want in Ames.**

In this conversation we want to hear people speaking from the "I" perspective. Are you willing to offer of yourself? Why or why not?

### **PART 3: WHAT IS STOPPING ME FROM BEING PART OF CHANGE? (30 minutes)**

Let's take a look at ourselves and our role in the community around us. Is there something stopping you from being part of change? What is it? How does it happen?

### **PART 4. THERE IS NO FEAR LIKE FEAR OF COMMITMENT! (20 MINUTES)**

We are going to brainstorm answers to two questions:

- ★ What am I willing to commit to doing to build a stronger Ames that works for all of us.
  - ✓ On my own, I can offer \_\_\_\_\_ (Make up your own list.

## Session 4. cont.

★ What are some things we can do collectively to make Ames a stronger community?  
Let's focus on three areas.

- ✓ Working with others, we can ...
- ✓ Working with institutions, we can ...
- ✓ Working with government, we can ....

### **PART 5. ACTION FORUM PREPARATION (10 MINUTES)**

Describe Forums - expectations, participant's roles. call for volunteers

Pick a spokesperson

**EVERY YEAR**

# Ames

**POP 51,557**

**ELEV 942**

## **TOGETHER WE CAN**

## AMES COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON DIVERSITY

At the end of the set, each interview pair will make an informational presentation to the entire group.

- **Facilitator** You must act as a strong time-keeper to keep the Interview and reporting formats moving along.

### Set 1: Establishing Identity: Who am I? Who are you?

Q 1. Where are you from?

Q 2. When did you arrive in Ames?

Q 3. What are the events, traditions, and people that have contributed to who you are today?

Q 4. What made you decide to come to Ames?

#### **Please Note:**

- The initial four questions should last no more than 10-12 minutes for both participants to answer all the questions.

After the first four questions, participants will move to the right and to change partners for the second set of questions.

### Set 2: What about Ames?

Q 5. How is Ames is different & how is it the same from where you came from?

Q 6. Do you feel you belong in Ames?

Q 7. How do you know if you belong in Ames or not?

#### **Please Note:**

- These questions should last no more than 8-10 minutes for both parties to answer.

### Set 3: Facilitated Group Discussion

Q 8. What important things you hear from the presentations now that you have heard from everyone?

Q 9. What, if anything, surprised you from what you heard this evening?