



Race & Cultural Relations Report

October 2008

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable...Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Foreword

Our community is suffering. Recently Sarasota Police Chief Peter Abbott shared a poignant story about a young man, Delvis Fernandez, just discharged from the military. The Chief was introduced to him just two weeks ago and they talked about his intention to join the police force. On Friday, October 24th he was shot and killed. I read about this tragedy in the local paper.

Our community is suffering. What I was not aware of was that this is the sixth murder in the past six weeks. I learned this at a Monday evening meeting at the Robert Taylor Center. Intended to be an update on the City of Sarasota's New Beginnings in Newtown, this meeting became a rallying point for righteous outrage that reasonably attends the pain of loss. It was neighbors turning to each other wanting to take back their community and looking for help.

The victims do not live down the street from me. The families are not a part of my social circle. Nevertheless, together we are citizens of this community and citizens take actions and make decisions based upon their belief that what they do matters.

When suffering is a part of this community it insinuates itself into everyone's life. The call for help, the plea for change is not the responsibility of government alone, or of one place or neighborhood. It is a cry that is louder and more powerful when it comes from the lips of the many. Can we find the broad community voice that also screams with passion for the fallen and for the future?

Being aware of this new and historical suffering makes it impossible to go back to the illusion that these murders are relevant only to some other distant place. What response has the power to transform us? What barriers need to be dismantled to decrease the suffering?

One member of the crowd on Monday said that he plans to call his fellow African-American fathers to conjoin their energy in new ways. Another voice asked that the power of the pulpit and the force of local congregations turn their attention to changing the future of the community.

The ideas that came from the community meeting on Monday night were also directed at the broader community struggle that includes jobs and the fatigue of entrenched and institutional racism. The entire Sarasota County community has a stake in raising its level of ownership.

We can see this struggle taking place in our community and throughout America. The national political scene has heightened our sensitivity to all issues about race and difference. We have never before been confronted with such a palpable opportunity to reveal how our thoughts about race are translated into the act of voting. In this local and national context the following report about race and cultural relations in Sarasota County is being released.

There were multiple engagement initiatives for the hundreds of participants in this study. The learning that emerged from this work includes:

- A clear powerful difference in quality of life measures is based upon both race and income. These measures need to be visible reminders so that they can impact decisions in the moment.
- Community transformation related to race and diversity is more likely to occur in the community when diversity is less the focus of a community effort but is incorporated into all realms of life (business, government, housing, education, etc.). That is, differences matter and in all areas of life diverse participants should be engaged in the multiple scales that effect decisions and change.
- Racism and bias are related to power and privilege and often assumed rather than directly declared.
- Sarasota County is segregated by both race and income.

Recent research shows that ethnic diversity (internationally and locally) is increasing and is likely to generate long-term cultural, economic and development benefits. However in the short-run it tends to reduce solidarity and creates withdrawal from bridging relationships.

Specific recommendations revolve around ongoing efforts to work with youth, encourage personal exploration around the principle of privilege and decrease disparities through specific initiatives that address income, education and health.

The report provides few answers. Rather, it attempts to heighten our understanding of this community and the challenges we have to overcome.



Tim Dutton
Executive Director

October 31, 2008

Part 1: Introduction

Based on input from a broad based issue selection process, SCOPE began an initiative on an important community topic labeled ‘Race & Cultural Relations’. SCOPE’s mission is to *connect and inspire citizens to create a better community*.

This report shares the experiences, research and lessons learned. It would be presumptuous to assert that this report is a road map to harmony and equality for community race and cultural relations. Rather, it is an attempt to frame the complex issue in a way that citizens from diverse perspectives can have a common language for discussing how we address race and cultural relations as a community.

Setting the Context for Community Race & Cultural Relations in the US and Sarasota County

Sarasota County is similar to most US communities in that it experiences race-based inequities, tensions and hate crimes. While race-based issues often dominate the dialogue there are also many issues surrounding the spectrum of human diversity including differences of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, class, sexual orientation and disability. While sharing many similarities to other places, our community is also unique in its make-up and its social and economic history. It is with this mix of common issues and unique circumstances that Sarasota County attempts, along with communities across the nation, to develop creative and effective methods to address inequalities and build communities that are inclusive and that value diversity.

Current events in our nation have thrust us to examine race and culture in America. For the first time in American history we had a woman, Senator Hillary Clinton, and an African American man, Senator Barack Obama, running for President of the United States of America. Race and gender take center stage and prompt dialogue and debate over racial and gender issues facing our nation. Matters of age have also crept into the Presidential

debate with negative comments about Senator John McCain’s ‘older’ age and Senator Barack Obama’s ‘younger’ age. As Thomas Tryon asserted in an article focusing on age-based stereotypes, “there are enough differences between the candidates that this campaign...need not focus on age, race or gender.” (*Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, 6/8/08) Parallels can be drawn between this national dialogue and our local conversation in Sarasota County. These events highlight the importance of addressing how we as a community think about race, culture and difference.

Why is the study of race and culture important to our community? Are there benefits that come along with diversity? Diversity has shown to benefit companies by “strengthening organizational and human capital” while at the same time leading to increased adaptability, broader service range, variety of view points, and more effective execution. (European Commission, 2003; Greenberg, 2004) Moreover, diversity in group thinking and problem solving has shown to lead to better results. In Scott E. Page’s book *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies*, he asserts, “the benefits of diversity do exist...we’ll find better solutions to our problems...we’ll make better predictions...we’ll live in a better place.” (Page, 335) Living in a community that recognizes and embraces its internal differences can lead to greater benefits for the whole of the community. By first opening up dialogue about the tensions around race and culture in Sarasota we can begin to address the issues that have led to inequalities and injustices in our community.

This report contains:

- A **brief overview** of the activities SCOPE sponsored in the community along with illustrations of the guiding principles of Asset-Based Community Development, Social Capital and thoughts on how to have old conversations in a new way.
- **Lessons learned:** What has been learned that will take us to a new place? What capacity do we need to build?

- **Analysis:** Some lessons learned on specific topics such as the history of racism, race and economics, art and civic dialogue and hate crimes.
- **Data:** What does our community look like? What are the demographic trends? What disparities do data show?
- **Resources:** Who is carrying the torch now in our community? Included is a guide and directory of collaborations, associations, organizations and other community assets that are working on the common goal of addressing diversity.

Community Race Relations in a Historical Perspective

How can Sarasota County become a leader among US communities in addressing inequalities and building a community that is inclusive and that values diversity?

Race and cultural relations in Sarasota County are within the context of race and racism in the US. Our nation and its wealth are founded on the displacement of entire nations of indigenous people of North America and the simultaneous forcible removal and enslavement of tens of millions people from Africa. As history progressed, surviving Native Americans saw the evolution from genocide to reservations and African Americans experienced the evolution from slavery to apartheid. Through this time there was struggle usually led by people of color and often joined by whites.

While the US has been called a ‘melting pot,’ each cultural, ethnic and religious group immigrating to the US has faced stigma, bigotry and resulting hardship. Over time, women won more rights and the civil rights movement of the 1960’s ended the system of official US apartheid just five decades ago. While the Civil Rights Act has fairly recently granted new rights to many, the institutions and communities of our society did not change overnight. In fact, progress has been slow since the 1960’s. The 1990’s witnessed major race riots and media frenzy around such high profile stories as the Rodney King beating. It isn’t surprising that we still face the challenge of dismantling a system that advantages privileged classes (e.g. whites, males, and upper-class) and disadvantages people of color, different ethnicities and those with lower income.

Parity within many indicators is far from the reality. For example, if the high school graduation gap between blacks and whites continues at the same rate it has in the forty years since the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, parity will not be realized until 2018. Similarly, it will be 2087 for college graduation parity, and if poverty continues to escalate at its current rate, the disparity in income will persist for another 634 years. (*40 Years Later: The Unrealized American Dream* by Dedrick Muhammad, Institute for Policy Studies.)

“There is a virus buried deep in all violence that is contagious, that inspires an equally brutal and mindless response. You can choose not to be part of the destructive cycle, and that choice not to participate is the first step toward peace. We can begin to cultivate acts of compassion right now.” (Thomas Moore, from the foreword *Buddha and the Terrorist*.)

Part 2: Overview of the Process

A Problem

In Sarasota County, like everywhere else, there is bigotry, hate crimes, racial disparities (educational, economic, political, health, etc.), institutionalized racism, stress from a brutal racial history, lack of conceptual clarity around the complex issues of community human relations, and a population with a wide spectrum of experiences and views on race/differences.

An Opportunity

Balancing these negatives are the opportunities of a diverse community. The core assumption of most community change processes around race and culture is to dismantle barriers, establish connections and realize the benefits (social, economic, political etc.) of a connected community with many strong bridges between different groups. Such a community can be richer and stronger if its human assets are engaged and its potential is realized.

SCOPE's Process

One way to dismantle the negatives and realize the power of a diverse community is to come together as community members and do the work of addressing inequities and creating an inclusive community that values diversity. It was Martin Luther King, Jr. who said "If not now when? If not us, who?" This sentiment was coupled with core principles of the importance of increased and stronger connections between community members (**social capital theory**) and the value and potential of the gifts of individuals, associations, and institutions within the community to address its own problems and realize its own potential (**Asset-Based Community Development**). The next two sections review the concepts of social capital and asset-based community development in greater depth.

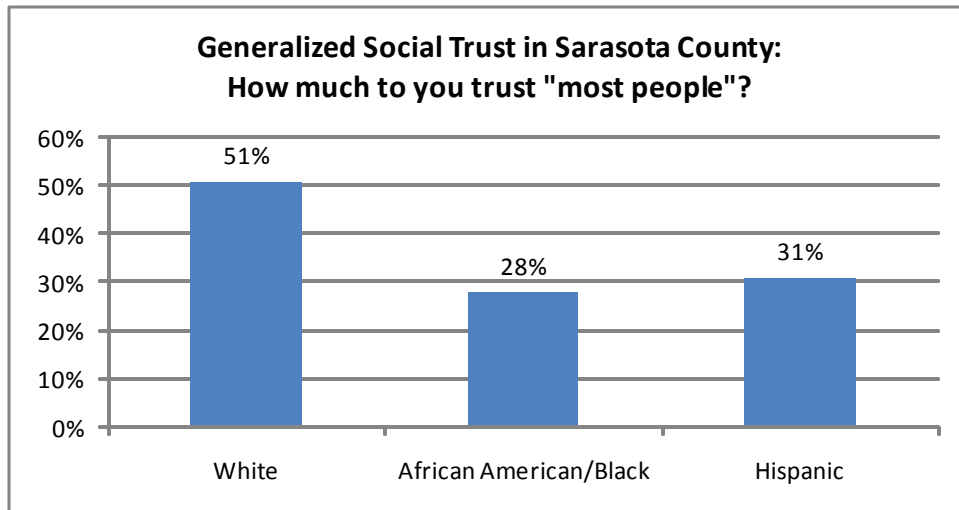
Diversity and Social Capital

Robert Putnam, author of 'Better Together', conducted a recent survey on racial and ethnic relations in the United States. Putnam is known for the term 'social capital' which refers to the social networks and associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness. His prior research has shown that in a community with more social capital children grow up healthier, safer and better educated, people live longer, happier lives, and democracy and the economy work better (Putnam 2000, Section IV). There are two types of social capital: bridging and bonding. Bonding refers to relations with people who are like you in some important way; bridging refers to relations with people who are unlike you in some important way (Putnam 2007, 143). Relationships across social difference, like race, ethnicity, class, and gender, are usually considered bridging social capital.

In Putnam's 2007 research, he explores the implications of immigration and ethnic diversity on social capital. He conducted surveys in communities across the United States asking people how much they trusted people of their own racial and ethnic group versus how much they trusted other racial and ethnic groups. He correlated their answers with the racial and ethnic diversity of their neighborhoods. He found that immigration and ethnic diversity challenge social solidarity and inhibit social capital. People who live in diverse neighborhoods have less trust for their own group and less trust for other racial and ethnic groups; he calls this the 'hunkering down' effect. In diverse communities, both bonding and bridging social capital are reduced.

In response to the study, the Wall Street Journal wrote an editorial called, 'The Death of Diversity' and suggested that the Putnam study hammers the final intellectual nail in the coffin of immigration and diversity. Indeed, even those working in communities around diversity may be disheartened by the results. However, Putnam considers the correlation of diversity and low social capital in a broader context.

This study demonstrates that many Americans are uncomfortable with diversity (Putnam 2007, 158).



Graph 1

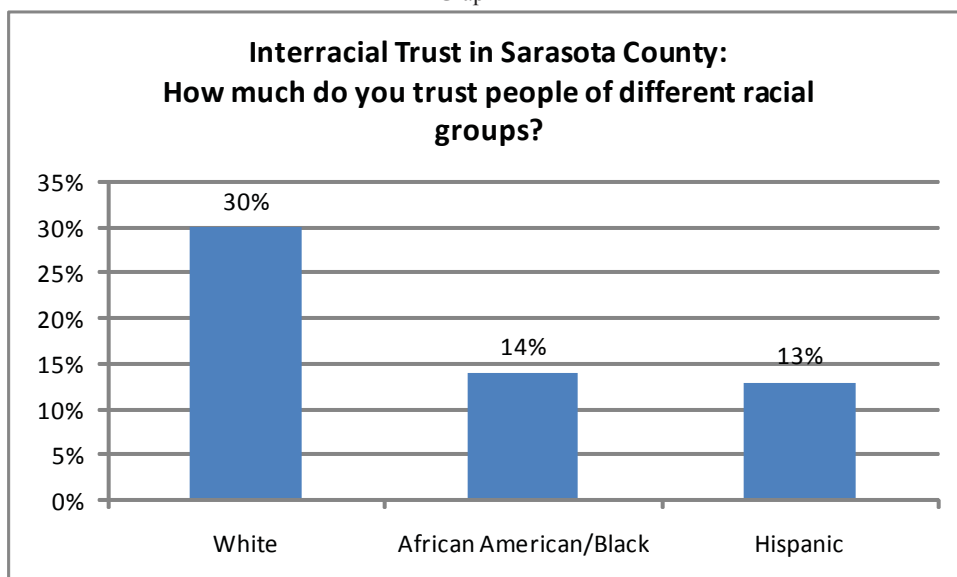
The challenge for modern, diversifying societies is to create a new, broader sense of ‘we’ (Putnam 2007, 139). Putnam states that “increased immigration and diversity are not only inevitable, but over the long run they are also desirable. Ethnic diversity is, on balance, an important social asset, as the history of my own country demonstrates.” Putnam states the need for a greater effort to create “shared identities.” He writes: “Successful immigrant societies create new forms of social solidarity ... by constructing new, more encompassing identities. Thus, the central challenge for modern, diversifying societies is to create a new, broader sense of ‘we’.” He cites the historic way immigrants came to the United States, “hunkered down,” and eventually changed the culture of the country itself as they became part of

the mainstream. Additionally, the correlation of low social capital and diversity should not be surprising in communities in a nation with such a painful racial history that still operates on a system of race-based power and privilege.

In 2004, the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice released the results of a study conducted to measure various indicators of Social Capital in Sarasota County. Graphs 1 and 2 illustrate two key indicators, Generalized Social Trust and Interracial Trust.

Social Trust, the core of social capital, measures the degree to which you trust other people. This index combines trust of neighbors, co-workers,

Graph 2



shop clerks, co-religionists, local police, and “most people”. Whites have a much higher level of trust than both Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos.

The Interracial Trust index is a measure of how various racial groups trust each other. It specifically looks at the extent to which White, Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino and other groups trust one another. The differences between Whites, African Americans/Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos are even more pronounced than generalized trust.

Asset-Based Community Development

An asset-based approach adopted for this initiative creates a new path for residents and institutions to partner. An asset approach looks at each individual within the community as someone who has something valuable to share and the power to make a difference in their community. Focusing on the assets of communities does not imply that these communities do not need additional resources from the outside. Rather, this approach recognizes that outside support will be much more effective if the local community is mobilized and invested, and if it can define the agendas for which additional resources must be obtained. A focus on assets affirms and builds upon the remarkable work already going on in neighborhoods and communities. It is critical that businesses, government, and nonprofits work with residents to figure out how to support the work done around diversity. This approach enables organizations to most effectively accomplish their missions by having a relationship with and building upon the capacities of residents and associations.

To this end SCOPE did the following:

- Issued an invitation to facilitated conversations on race and cultural relations in Sarasota County. The conversations were based on carefully considered questions that sought to:
 - Establish connection among the participants and connections to the issue.
 - Focus conversations on possibilities of what we could do as a community.
 - Create personal ownership of and commitment to the problem and the solution.

- Share doubts and reservations as a form of genuinely caring enough to address concerns.
- Share gifts: What contribution will each make as a next step toward realizing the possibilities?
- Published data from the US Census and other sources that illustrated the demographics and trends in our community as well as racial disparities in education, health, work, finance, etc.
- Invited leaders to share their insight with our community including:
 - Dr. Deborah Plummer, author of *Racing Across the Lines: Changing Race Relations Though Friendship*
 - Dr. Michael Battle, author of *The Church Enslaved: A spirituality of racial reconciliation*
- Facilitated the creation of the Coalition for Inclusion & Diversity

Part 3: The Coalition for Inclusion & Diversity

“The world is changing and anyone who thinks they can get anything meaningful done without the input of all a community’s leadership is simply not paying attention. Inclusion is more than a buzzword. It’s a necessity.”

Dr. Jewelle Taylor Gibbs, sociologist and author

The initial steps in SCOPE’s focus on Race & Cultural Relations were to convene community members to engage in conversations about race and cultural relations that were a shift from previous conversations. The questions focused on:

- Genuine connection between participants and the topic
- Ownership of the issue
- Possibilities focused: What can we create together?
- Open sharing of doubts and reservations
- Commitment of the individual to share their gifts towards a common goal

Focusing discussion through these questions, participants had a broad ranging discussion of diversity in our lives and eventually focused on a handful of areas which they believed were important and actionable. These key areas included:

- Disparities of economic opportunity
- The power of art to unite
- Growing, relationship by relationship, the community of individuals, associations and institutions engaged in the work of community change around race and cultural relations.

This last goal was the impetus for the creation of the Coalition for Inclusion & Diversity (CID). From late 2005 through early 2006, SCOPE staff facilitated a collaborative effort among roughly a dozen people and organizations to outline a vision, mission, and basic structure for a volunteer-driven coalition. Founding partner, and specialist in organizational development through the lens of diversity, DeWanda Smith-Soeder created a strategic plan for the CID that outlined a steering committee structure, membership forums and networking opportunities. Another founding partner, Bo Kim, an attorney with Ruden McClosky, took responsibility as the CID's

first volunteer chairperson. The CID began its work via a series of community forums and other focused activities. It has continued to develop its structure and programs since its inception and continues to spark action in Sarasota County around a shared vision of unity.

CID Forums

Building on a foundation of new connections and relationships, and the sharing of talents and skills, the CID's first community gatherings included:

- An art festival featuring art from diverse artists and photographs portraying diversity in our community. Music and food of various cultures were incorporated.
- A walking tour of the 2006 Embracing Our Differences exhibit
- An interactive event: "Market Place of Diversity" in which participants discussed and documented what gifts (e.g. talents, skills) each had that could be used to create a more inclusive community that valued diversity.

In the summer of 2007, disturbing community events, two hate crimes, prompted the CID to convene the community around preventing and responding to

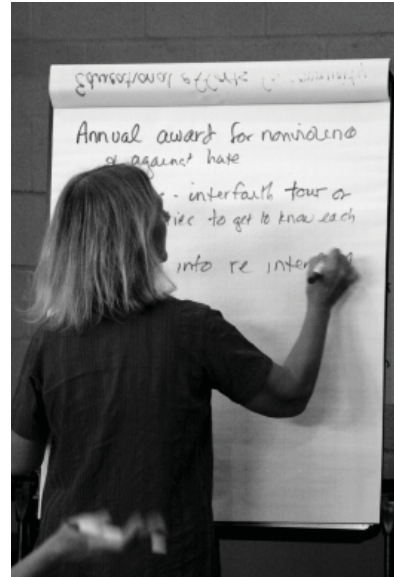
"Just as a chamber of commerce connects those in the business world to each other through their common interest of successful commerce in the community, the CID, similarly, seeks to connect people and organizations around the common issue of building an inclusive community that values diversity."



hate crimes. On July 6th, a Bosnian Muslim family was burned out of their Sarasota County home after it was vandalized and violent anti-Muslim graffiti was spray painted. Another hate crime was to occur in North Port the following week. The CID collected financial assistance and dozens of letters in support of the victimized family whose home was destroyed.



Carolyn Mason and Adriana Robledo field questions at October 21st forum on Hate Crimes



In response to these severe crimes, the Coalition for Inclusion & Diversity convened the community on October 21st 2007 to address the question, "How can our community prevent and respond to hate crimes?" The forum included the story of the July arson told by a representative of the family. An expert speaker on hate crimes from the Anti-Defamation League was followed by a panel. The panel included representatives from media and law enforcement. The forum ended with topic conversations aimed towards preventing and responding to hate crimes. The CID committed to reporting the outcomes of the forum and to keeping the conversation and action going.



Presentations, Discussion, and Strategizing at the October 21st Hate Crimes Forum, 2007

Stemming from the forum were seeds of progress:

- North Port Police Chief intends to hold similar forums in North Port to engage his community
- City of Sarasota and North Port Police intend to schedule special law enforcement officer training on hate crimes.
- A *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* column covering the forum and an editorial follow-up spread the word about hate crimes to the wider community
- Interfaith leaders are interested in initiating dialogue on addressing hate crimes



Motive matters, and hate is a bad one

Published: Sunday, October 21, 2007 at 2:58 a.m.

Hasib Sejfovic's Sarasota County home on Avila Avenue burned while he and his family were away, sheriff's reports told us in July.

It was arson and seems to have been a hate crime, judging by the anti-Muslim words spray painted on the walls. The family is Muslim and from Bosnia.

The governor condemned the crime, and for three months since there has been a multi-agency investigation, but almost no news and no arrests. The state Fire Marshal's Office is saying just about nothing.

While I was making futile calls to various agencies about it this past week, a colleague learned I am to be part of a panel discussion on hate crimes. He sent an e-mail pretending to misunderstand the topic. He said he hates crimes, too, and listed offenses he especially dislikes.

A bad joke, maybe, but I've made the same one, and I think I get where the joke comes from. I believe crimes inspired by bigotry often deserve to be handled with special intensity. But many other violent and destructive acts also have hate, or an equally terrible indifference, as a vital element. Some are just as worthy of condemnation.

If vicious thugs beat you into unconsciousness for fun, for instance, it is no large relief to learn they picked you at random, not out of malice toward your race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

And there's an argument often made against the very idea of hate crime legislation. It holds that while racial and religious and other forms of bigotry are repugnant, it is wrong to punish a crime more because of a criminal's beliefs.

I think that misses the point. Judges weigh offenders' motives in almost all crimes. We have never asked judges to ignore a criminal's motive, and never should. If someone is caught climbing in your window while hoping to take your cash, the crime isn't just the broken glass. And it would be far worse if his aim had been to kidnap your child, or terrorize you into leaving the neighborhood.

Our society is allowed to make value judgments on things like that. We need to. Anyone who would destroy a family's home out of ethnic or religious hatred needs to have the motive as adamantly condemned in court as his actions are. We owe that to ourselves, and to the bigot.

That's not punishing people for their beliefs. It is punishing them for allowing their beliefs to inspire them to terrorize or brutalize, and for the anguish that causes.

I want every arsonist to be caught, but I'm especially hoping we find out who burned Hasib Sejfovic's home. I really hate that crime.

Tom Lyons can be contacted at tom.lyons@heraldtribune.com or (941) 361-4964.

Sarasota Herald-Tribune column responding to July 2007 hate crime in Sarasota County

SARASOTA HATE CRIMES FACT SHEET

How many hate crimes are reported in Sarasota County?

A US Dept. of Justice report estimates that actual hate crime rates may be 15 times the actual rate nationwide because of under reporting by victims and law enforcement. Reports from the Florida Attorney General's office indicate that from 2000 to 2005, there were 11 hate crimes reported by law enforcement in Sarasota County. Those 11 crimes consisted of damage/destruction of property, intimidation, aggravated assault, and robbery. They targeted victims based on race/color, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation.

What is different about hate crimes?

According to the Anti-Defamation League, "Hate crimes, or more generally bias-motivated crimes, demand a priority response because of their psychological and emotional impact which extends beyond the original victim. Failure to address this unique type of crime could cause an isolated incident to explode into widespread community tension. The damage done by hate crimes cannot be measured solely in terms of physical injury or dollars and cents. Hate crimes may effectively intimidate other members of the victim's community, leaving them feeling isolated, vulnerable, and unprotected by the law. By making members of communities fearful, angry, and suspicious of other groups — and of the power structure that is supposed to protect them — these incidents can damage the fabric of our society and fragment communities."

According to the US Dept. of Justice, "Of all crimes, hate crimes are most likely to create or exacerbate tensions, which can trigger larger community-wide racial conflict, civil disturbances, and even riots. Hate crimes put cities and towns at-risk of serious social and economic consequences. The immediate costs of racial conflicts and civil disturbances are police, fire, and medical personnel overtime, injury or death, business and residential property loss, and damage to vehicles and equipment. Long-term recovery is hindered by a decline in property values, which results in lower tax revenues, scarcity of funds for rebuilding, and increased insurance rates."

SARASOTA HATE CRIMES FACT SHEET

Who is responsible for deterring and counteracting hate crimes?

Everybody: Individuals, families, neighborhoods, faith communities, businesses, government etc. have a vested interest and a role to play in deterring and counteracting hate crimes. The actions of these sectors set the tone in a community of what is tolerated. Continuing education and the courage to speak up and support victims is the job of everyone.

Media: According to the US Dept. of Justice, “The influence of the print and broadcast media on preventing and investigating hate crimes cannot be overstated. The media is critical in shaping public attitudes about the crime, its perpetrators, and the law enforcement response. Local officials should designate an informed single-point-of-contact for hate crime information. Accurate, thorough, and responsible reporting significantly improves the likelihood that stability and harmony will be restored. The media can promote public understanding of mediation and conflict resolution processes, and help alleviate fear, suspicion, and anger.”

Law and Law Enforcement: Florida hate crime law provides for enhanced penalties, reporting and data collection, and special provisions for civil action after a hate crime. Protected classes include race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability but not gender. There is no law requiring special training for law enforcement, although volunteer training is available through the Florida Attorney General’s Office and through the Anti-Defamation League. Law Enforcement training aids officers in identifying symbols, patterns and effectively communicating with victims, referring them to appropriate community-based organizations and being a leader in generating community deterrents and counteractions.

Other CID Activities

Aside from the community forums, volunteer leaders in the CID spend time working on two projects that help the CID work towards its mission. Those activities are the Youth Initiative and Speaking of Diversity Workshops.

Youth Initiative - Anytown and Unity Days

There is a common sentiment among those trying to combat prejudice and ignorance and create an inclusive community that values diversity: The surest way for profound, meaningful, long-term change is to begin with the youngest generations. Help them explore values of tolerance and an appreciation for diversity. Equip them with the tools to interact in an increasingly diverse world. Such was the belief that prodded the CID to begin working with youth.

By reflecting the relationship and asset focus that has been central to this effort, CID members chose a course of action that would build adult youth partnerships and value youth as partners and leaders. The CID Steering Committee sent nine students to a nearby five day residential diversity awareness and leadership summer program called Anytown. The committee raised nearly \$8,000, sending students to the Anytown program.

Anytown is a youth leadership and diversity awareness program for high school-age students. The goal of Anytown is to empower young people to create inclusive and just schools and communities, while learning new skills, having fun and making friends. Anytown received national recognition as a “Best Practice” by the U.S. Department of Education.



Post-Anytown Celebration July 17th, 2007

CID VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT:

Lauren Gwinn



Photo courtesy of Sarasota County Government

Lauren Gwinn is one of the students who attended Anytown and serves on the CID Steering Committee through the Community Youth Development STAR (Students Taking Active Roles) Program.

Lauren Gwinn worked with the Coalition for Inclusion & Diversity for nearly a year. In that time she:

- Developed her leadership capacity by devoting a week of her summer to a week-long leadership and diversity awareness program
- Identified a project to take the lead by creating a diversity club at her high school
- Served as a liaison between her fellow classmates and adults and organizations to match resources to needs

Lauren has taken leadership based on socializing concerns she had about her school. Lauren saw her classmates in cliques. She also saw a need for more respect for diversity among students and school staff. To this end she set out to create a club at her school where students and adult partners would learn, discuss and take action regarding issues of diversity in the school.

Lauren met with school administrators who were supportive of her project. In early 2008, the Cardinal Mooney Diversity Club met for the first time with 18 people in attendance. They participated in an exercise where students agreed or disagreed with a wide range of statements to reveal similarities and differences in the way they think. Lauren said the conversation was animated and productive.

Unity Days are daylong conferences held at schools or youth-focused community centers. The conference agenda includes interactive exercises exploring issues of diversity, interpersonal skills, and character development. Participating institutions include Booker, Cardinal Mooney, Venice, North Port, and Sarasota High Schools and Laurel Civic Association. The number of participants has ranged between 50 and 80 students per conference.



North Port High School students dialogue at Unity Day March 17th, 2007

Through the work of the CID, seven Unity Days have been held since 2006, reaching over 300 students. Evaluations at all schools were favorable and 95% of students rated the day A (on a scale of A-F). Many students placed their names on evaluations with a request to be involved in the next school year.

CID members plan to help organize Unity Days at every public high school in the 2008-2009 school year and to hold a community-wide Unity Festival featuring Unity Day participants. Future aspirations include extending Unity Days to middle schools.

An adult sponsor (teacher, coach, school staff personnel) is identified at each school. Sponsors organize a conference at their school in conjunction with student leaders and Jennifer Mainey, Sarasota County Public Schools Liaison to Safe and Drug Free Schools. Jennifer Mainey co-facilitates conferences with selected student facilitators.

The goal of Unity Days is to create safer schools by effecting changes in student and staff knowledge, skills, relationships and personal behavior relating



to diversity, interpersonal skills and character development. This is accomplished through activities that are hands-on and experiential and incorporate reading, dialogue, art, music, and physical activities. Not only are participants affected, but they in turn affect many others throughout the school.

Student evaluations from Unity Days reveal the following learning outcomes of participating students:

- “We are more similar than I thought.”
- “People have probably been through what you have.”
- “Respect everyone.”
- “Saying ‘that’s gay’ is really hurtful to people.”
- “We all share pain.”
- “Agree to disagree.”
- “Be your own person.”
- “People bully because they are not happy with themselves.”
- “Be a role model.”



Speaking of Diversity Workshops is a 3-4 hour conversation-based interactive workshop for adults facilitated by trained volunteers. The workshop explores three important areas in which diversity impacts our lives:

1. **Assumptions:** Humans couldn't get through their day without making certain assumptions about others. However, sometimes assumptions can lead to stereotypical thinking that separates one from others. Assumptions are explored to increase awareness of the impact of one's interactions.
2. **Privilege:** In American society today some people enjoy economic, social, political and other privileges that are unavailable to others based purely upon the race, religion, socioeconomic class, location or other group into which they belong. Participants consider their own privileges (or lack thereof) and how the often unacknowledged system of privilege delegation operates in society.
3. **Speaking up:** When one encounters discrimination or bigotry, speaking up and addressing it can be difficult and anxiety causing. This difficulty is discussed and ideas shared for being better prepared to speak up.

Outcomes of Program since 2005

- 275**.....Number of people reached through workshops
- 11**.....Number of organizations reached through workshops
- 90**.....Percent evaluations indicating that participants reported that the workshop met their expectations and was of value to them
- 8**Number of community members that have acted as volunteer facilitators
- 4**.....Number of volunteer facilitators in training

“I will focus on how my biases, even subconsciously, cause me to sustain discrimination.”
(*Sarasota Herald-Tribune*
Editorial Staff)

History of the Program

In 2005 Embracing Our Differences (EOD) sponsored a series of diversity-related programs featuring diversity presenters/facilitators Mahnaz Shabbir and Sheila Sonnenschein. The pair gave a presentation highlighting their post 9/11 interfaith friendship (Muslim and Jewish) as well as a Diversity Awareness Workshop and a train-the-trainer workshop to introduce techniques to facilitate Diversity Awareness Workshop for others. Twenty-five community members attended the train-the-trainer session.

Shortly after, EOD partnered with SCOPE and the Coalition for Inclusion & Diversity to implement a mostly volunteer-based workshop program that could be offered to the community. Workshops began in the fall of 2006 reaching 200-275 people.

Administrative support has been provided by partner organizations SCOPE and Embracing Our Differences. The coordinator of the program is Ann Friedman.

Factors Affecting the Future of the CID:

Volunteer leaders working on SCOPE and CID initiatives are charged with carrying a banner for a complex topic that is often difficult to frame, lacking conceptual clarity and resources. At best this work takes good leadership, risk-taking, persistence, and the ability to overcome adversity from those who are resistant to the work. Below are some lessons learned from this work.

Lessons Learned:

Relationship building is essential to developing leadership for change

The success that CID has enjoyed has come from the work of individuals and organizations that were connected and mobilized one relationship at a time. While hundreds of people are connected to the CID via email and attend periodic forums, the leadership and resources to make projects like the youth initiative, the workshops and forums happen come from a small group of people and organizations. The penetration of the CID and the issue of diversity are limited so far in this early stage. With each new activity or event, the CID makes connections with other individuals, associations and institutions. Engaging additional leadership from other sectors is a key goal of the CID.

Conceptual clarity around framing issues of diversity and racism and what to do about it

The CID has suffered from a broad mission ‘to simply create an inclusive community that values diversity.’ The CID doesn’t target economic, educational or health equity as an explicit goal. One challenge has been how to measure and talk about outcomes. A recent forum created conversations and built new relationships. Yet the measure of community impact is a challenge to define. Volunteer leaders of the initiatives feel a lack of clarity.

Resources (In-kind or direct funding) are critical

Communities are struggling to determine the best type of organization to lead change efforts. A volunteer coalition like the CID has its advantages, which are reflected by the many hours and resources that have been mobilized to create successes throughout the community. However, there are also challenges such as lack of conceptual clarity and a strain on the limited number of volunteers and partner organizations to complete intensive and involved work. Through relationship building, the CID is working to secure volunteer and other resources needed to carry out its effort.

Part 4: Important Factors & Lessons Learned:

1. **Rather than a community effort focused on race and cultural relations, factors of diversity should be well incorporated into all realms of enterprise from business and governance to environmentalism and affordable housing.**
2. **Increasing bonding relationships can be a step to bridging social capital:** The Black Business Professional Network began in 2005 as an interactive community where Black business owners and professionals build relationships that create access to markets, information, knowledge, data, people and resources. Similarly the Latin Chamber of Commerce serves as a vehicle for Hispanic/Latino business people to create relationship and act collectively. Not only have these affinity-group-based associations allowed homogenous communities (e.g. African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos) to create strong bonding relationships and social capital, but have also served as a conduit for bridging relationships and building inroads between these communities and others.
3. **Data illustrating demographics and disparities are critical.** Data can help start the community conversation about diversity by simply describing what the community looks like. It is important to know the makeup of community diversity. Data are also critical in illustrating economic, housing, educational, health and other disparities. Moreover, tracking such disparities over time helps shape a community’s response.
4. **The economic divide is a highly visible and important factor in race and cultural relations in Sarasota County.** The growing economic divide between the wealthiest residents and the working class and poor is intertwined in the struggle for racial justice. While minorities by no means constitute a majority of the poor, they are disproportionately represented (see section on disparities). Sarasota County’s extremely high level of personal income attributed to passive sources (not from

salary/wage) coupled with its consistently low wages and high cost of living brings the class divide and the racial divide into sharp contrast.

5. **Relationships with people different from you are very important. They don't always occur naturally, so we must be proactive in creating them.** Maybe it's not simply talking about race but doing things with other people that are different from you. Because Sarasota County is a comparatively homogeneous community, many residents do not have an opportunity to interact with people different from themselves. In her book, *Racing Across The Lines: Changing Race Relations Through Friendship*, Deborah L. Plummer writes "I do not believe that race relations in the United States will progress until what we do after five o'clock and on the weekends, especially in our churches, includes a bit of diversity...The practice of diversity management can only be learned in the school of life--especially life after work hours."
6. **We will always have prejudicial thought patterns and that's okay.** A lifelong learning approach to gain greater understanding about people different from oneself can help us to confront these issues. We live in a society where advantages and disadvantages are inherited by individuals based on race, religion and ethnicity. When race defines or influences social power, racism becomes internalized into the social fabric of our society where a continual pattern of self-sustaining reinforcement takes place. We inherit these attitudes and worldviews from our families, schools, television, and other social institutions. Rather than claiming we are not racist, we can be conscious of the racism within ourselves and in our society.
7. **Racism doesn't just mean bigotry – it's a structure of power and resources that favor some individuals on the basis of race. Factors such as privilege and structural racism maintain a system that benefits some at the expense of others through practices that may otherwise seem benign and natural.**

Privilege: We all belong to different groups based on who we are (white, gay, Jewish, Asian, older/younger, disabled etc) World-wide and in our country, some groups enjoy privileges that others don't have based upon their membership in a given group. Privilege can be thought of as an invisible package of unearned assets that some can count on using and cashing in each day. It is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks. This knapsack makes passage through life easier and opens doors and opportunities.

Institutional racism is a form of racism which is structured into political and social institutions. It occurs when institutions, including corporations, governments and universities discriminate either deliberately or indirectly, against certain groups of people to limit their rights. Race and ethnic-based discrimination in housing, education, employment and health are forms of institutional racism. It reflects the cultural assumptions of the dominant group, so that the practices of that group are seen as the norm to which other cultural practices should conform. Institutional racism is more subtle, less visible, and less identifiable than individual acts of racism, but no less destructive to human life and human dignity. The people who manage our institutions may not be racists as individuals, but they may well discriminate as part of simply carrying out their job, often without being aware that their role in an institution is contributing to a discriminatory outcome.

Part 5: What Successful Strategies Are Other Communities Using?

How does a community launch, lead, support and maintain a community-wide race and cultural relations initiative? This question has become a mandate for communities across the nation. According to one survey there were 266 large scale intergroup dialogue programs existing in 46 states. In 2007 a Ford Foundation funded study examined such efforts and focused on four communities with unique challenges that were actually making some progress in changing their community's culture. What follows are descriptions of these programs and lessons learned that can help Sarasota County.

The following is excerpted from the report "Community Change Processes and Progress in Addressing Racial Inequities" 2007, by Maggie Potapchuck with MP Associates in consultation with the Aspen Institute Roundtable for Community Change and funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Four Distinct Communities

- Seattle (WA) became an immigration gateway between 1990 and 2000, as its foreign-born population increased by 40%. Mayor Greg Nickels, who heard concerns about inequitable access to city services expressed during his first campaign, created an initiative to (a) increase city employees' knowledge, skills, and commitment to a government free of institutionalized racism and (b) align business practices with goals for racial equity and social justice. A multilayered organizational infrastructure was created to address five core concerns: economic equity, workforce equity, immigration/refugee issues, capacity building, and public engagement.
- Saint Cloud (MN), a historically white, urban hub surrounded by farm communities, saw an influx of residents of color during the 1980s due to demographic shifts in migration. It subsequently experienced one of the state's highest rates of hate crimes. The Community Change Initiative Addressing Racial Inequalities

(CCIR) initially focused on racial harmony, with the goal of building relationships across race and increasing awareness of different racial identity groups. The initiative now involves regranting to community organizations to tackle (a) closing the gaps in educational attainment, housing access, and health care access and (b) dismantling racism to strengthen the community.

- Elected officials in Charlotte (NC) convened community members after a series of incidents magnified racial divisions. Their efforts led to a leadership development initiative for nonprofit board members and other sector leaders to build commitment and capacity for racial/ethnic inclusion and equity. In 2000, Charlotte scored near the bottom of a 40-city survey on levels of interracial trust, which led to large-scale community engagement that includes using scenario planning. The process has involved organizations in creating projects that could increase the level of access, equity, and inclusion in the larger community.
- Long Island (NY) is geographically small, but its population is larger than 18 states and it encompasses 1,000 government units, including 125 school districts. It is one of the most segregated suburbs in the nation, with 95% of African-American residents concentrated in 5% of the Census tracts. CCIR educated residents about institutional racism and engaged them in a partnership for change. Using research on fair housing, it showed what happens when the system doesn't work and underscored the impact on people of color. The research led both of Long Island's county governments to improve fair housing laws, including enforcement procedures.

Stemming from a thorough analysis of these three promising projects, the authors identified the following five capacities needed for successful community change initiatives around race and cultural relations.

1. **Capacity to engage a diverse leadership stakeholder group** in which members (a) shape and lead the process and (b) have the individual and group knowledge needed to frame community problems and goals in racial-equity terms.
2. **Capacity to implement a community assessment process** to (a) identify the barriers to racial equity and improved race relations, (b) understand community members' awareness of racial and ethnic issues, (c) establish baseline data in different disparity areas, (d) understand the state of race relations and historical trends in disparities, and (e) understand past and current community change processes.
3. **Capacity to use multi-pronged strategies** to address racial inequities based on a theory of change that is created from historical and current knowledge of the community's disparities, barriers to change, and decision-making and community engagement processes.
4. **Capacity to create an organizational and programmatic framework** that can weather the variable, demanding, and complex nature of this type of community initiative by: (a) marshalling necessary resources to fund and staff the effort; (b) partnering with elected officials, public and private sector stakeholders, community organizations and residents, and encouraging them to create collective goals; (c) learning about best practices of different race relations and racial justice approaches and community building and engagement strategies; (d) using the media and other communication sources to frame and convey the information about community racial disparities and the goals of the initiative; (e) developing an inclusive and equitable process and framework that can serve as a model for community institutions; and (f) assessing and measuring progress using participatory

evaluation practices, adjusting strategies, and sharing information readily with the community.

5. **Capacity to engage a critical mass of diverse residents and institutions** to proactively, effectively, and strategically address racism. This may entail: (a) increasing residents' knowledge and awareness; (b) providing opportunities for diverse residents to build relationships and work together on issues; (c) developing diverse leadership; and/or (d) transforming institutions by changing policies, practices, and procedures to eliminate barriers to racial equity.

These guidelines can be helpful to Sarasota County as it addresses its own issues regarding race & cultural relations.

Arts, Civic Dialogue, and Improving Race & Cultural Relations

Tens of thousands of years before we had museums, theaters and downtown art galleries, Cro-Magnon man was making cave paintings of hunters, animals and outlines of their hands. The spirit of the arts has direct relevance to our lives and the way communities of people express themselves. Here in twenty-first century Sarasota County, SCOPE continues convening community members to discuss the question “How can art contribute to building stronger communities?”

The arts allow for public celebration and exploration of the meaning of community diversity and are an important tool in community building. For example, a shared artistic experience can connect community members to each other. A moving painting or play can deepen understanding of community issues or even reframe the way an issue is thought about. Public art, such as a mural or sculpture, inspires civic pride and a collective experience. The arts can document and share experiences, provoke dialogue, increase interaction of diverse segments and open lines of communication.



In Sarasota, one exhibit in particular uses the arts to spark discussion about our differences. **Embracing Our Differences** is an international outdoor art exhibit intended to celebrate that diversity enriches our lives. The mission of Embracing Our Differences is to use art as a catalyst for creating awareness and promoting, throughout our community, the value of diversity, the benefits of inclusion and the significance of the active rejection of hatred and prejudice.

The Embracing Our Differences exhibit features 39 billboard size images created by professional artists, art students, and school children from Florida and around the world. Their creations reflect their interpretation of our message: “enriching lives through diversity.”

Embracing Our Differences also reaches out to Sarasota and Manatee County public and private schools, grades K-12, by providing free transportation for field trips and donating supplemental educational materials. They also produce workshops designed to assist teachers to create a deeper awareness about diversity and how it enriches all of our lives. Since 2004, more than 30,000 students have experienced and benefit from these free educational programs.

Community Action Focused On Race & Cultural Relations, the Economy and the Workforce

Race and cultural relations is a key factor in all human enterprise including our local markets for goods, services and workers. Diversity affects the bottom line of business in ways such as workforce productivity and gaining market share of the buying power of growing numbers of minority consumers.

SCOPE has been an active partner with the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County Diversity Subgroup. The group tackles economic development through the lens of diversity. Via research, education and collaboration, the Diversity Subgroup identifies opportunities to capitalize on diversity as an economic engine and address the challenges diversity poses to the workforce.

In a 2006 focus group study sponsored by the Diversity Subgroup, the most critical workforce and community diversity issues as perceived by participating business leaders and managers were issues related to:

- Economic status (groups of people differentiated on basis of income)
- Race and ethnicity
- Language

In order to address these issues, the study's recommendations included sponsoring diversity/cultural training for business leaders. The idea was to provide learning opportunities for business leaders on the multifaceted benefits and challenges of workforce diversity. Specifically, information was needed on subjects including policy statements, organizational development, recruitment and conflict resolution.

A half day conference was held in March of 2008 where local diversity consultant, DeWanda Smith-Soeder, outlined the transition over the last few decades from quotas for minority-held jobs to a more contemporary definition of business creating an atmosphere of inclusion that aids the bottom line. She stated that diversity at the executive/board level is among the best indicators of how committed an organization is to diversity.

Questions that participating business leaders discussed in small groups were:

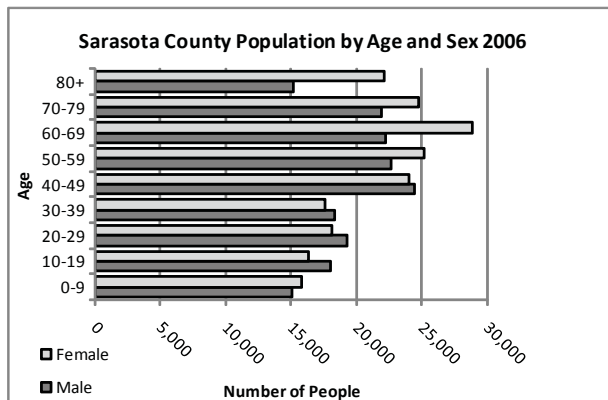
- How does having workers from multiple generations (Boomers, Gen Xers, Gen Y) affect the workplace?
- What does an aging population mean for employers?
- How will retirement be reinvented in the future?
- How is conflict in the workplace avoided or resolved?
- How is successful succession planning accomplished?

Part 6: Demographics and Statistics

Data has the power to provoke questions and inform discussion. What does the diversity of our community look like as measured by indicators available from the census? While diversity encompasses much more than labels such as age, race, origin, and socio-economic status, these measures are helpful and available.

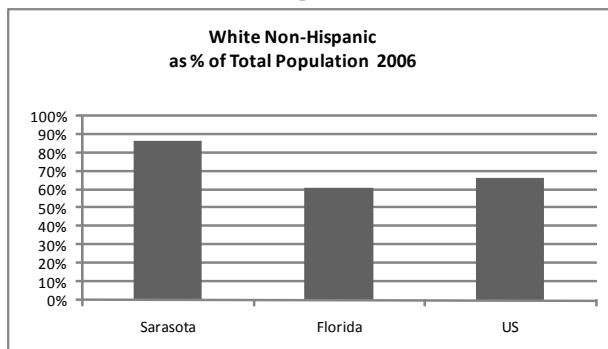
Age: Sarasota County is rich with a population of older adults. According to the US Census, nearly 30% of our population is age 65+ making us the oldest large county in the US (of counties over 250,000 plus population). See Graph 3.

Graph 3



Race & Origin: As measured by racial composition, Sarasota County has considerably less diversity than the state or the nation. See Graph 4. Graph 5 shows that all but 12% percent of our population is white-non-Hispanic whereas the minority population makes up 35-40% of the state and national percentages.

Graph 4



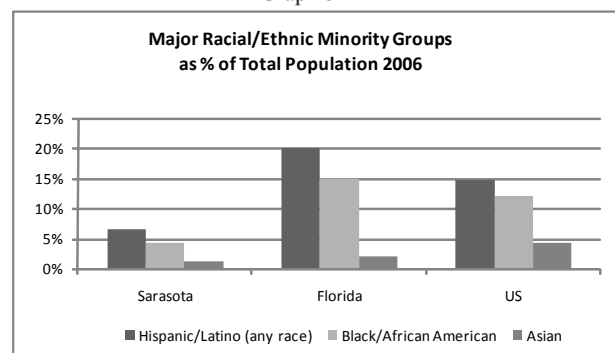
Origin of Hispanic/Latino Population

Community members of Hispanic or Latino origin in Sarasota County are from many different countries. Just under half of Hispanics/Latinos in Sarasota are from Mexico whereas nationwide Mexicans are the clear majority with nearly 65%. The next largest group of Hispanics/Latinos is South American at 18%. Sarasota County has a larger percentage of Hispanics/Latinos of South American origin than the state or the nation. Islanders from Puerto Rico and Cuba make up 13% and 6% of our local Hispanic/Latino population respectively. About 58% of Hispanics/Latinos in Sarasota are US citizens. Graph 6 comparatively illustrates the Hispanic/Latino populations by country of origin for the United States, Florida and Sarasota County.

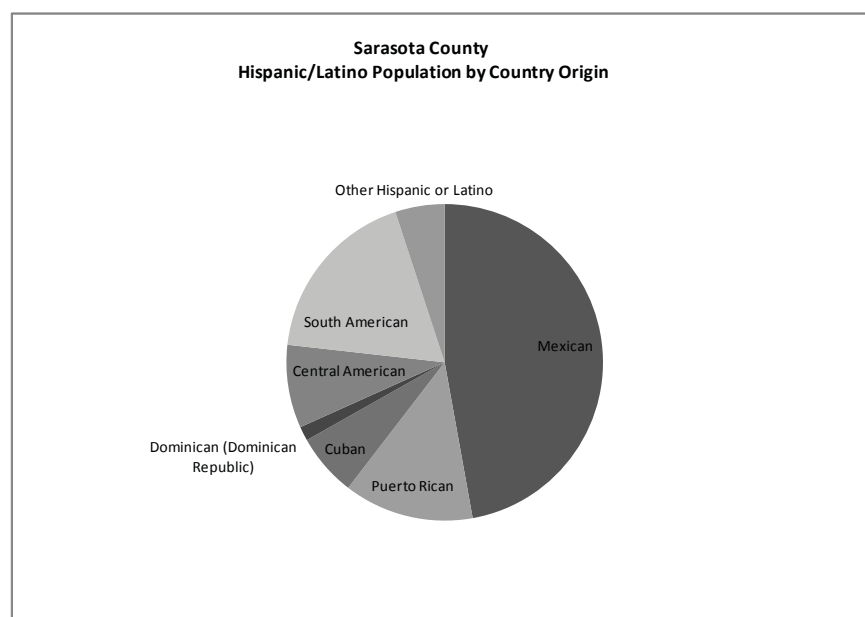
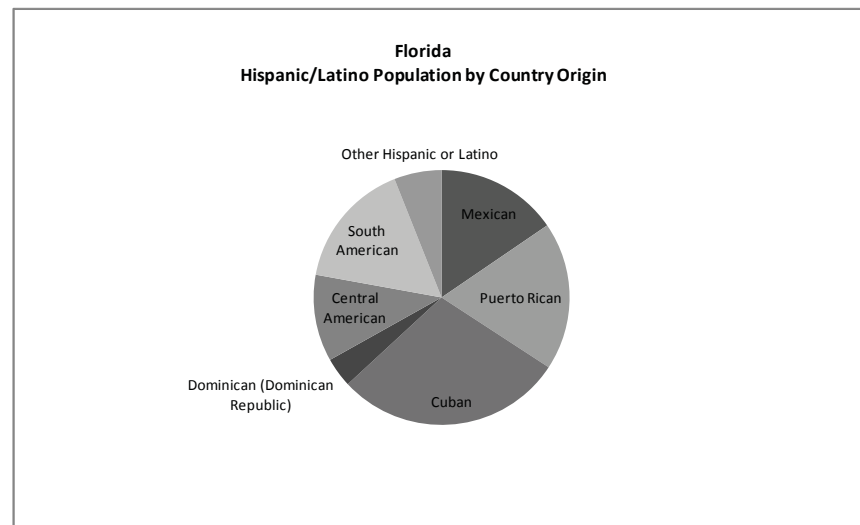
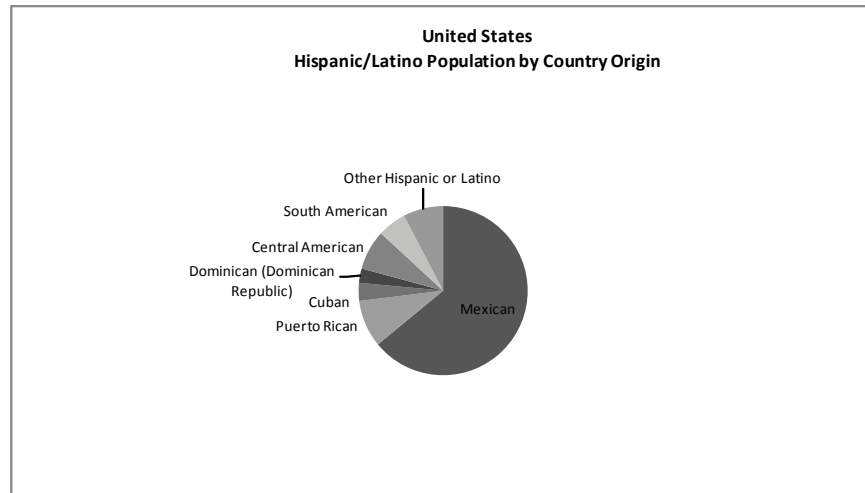
Linguistic Diversity

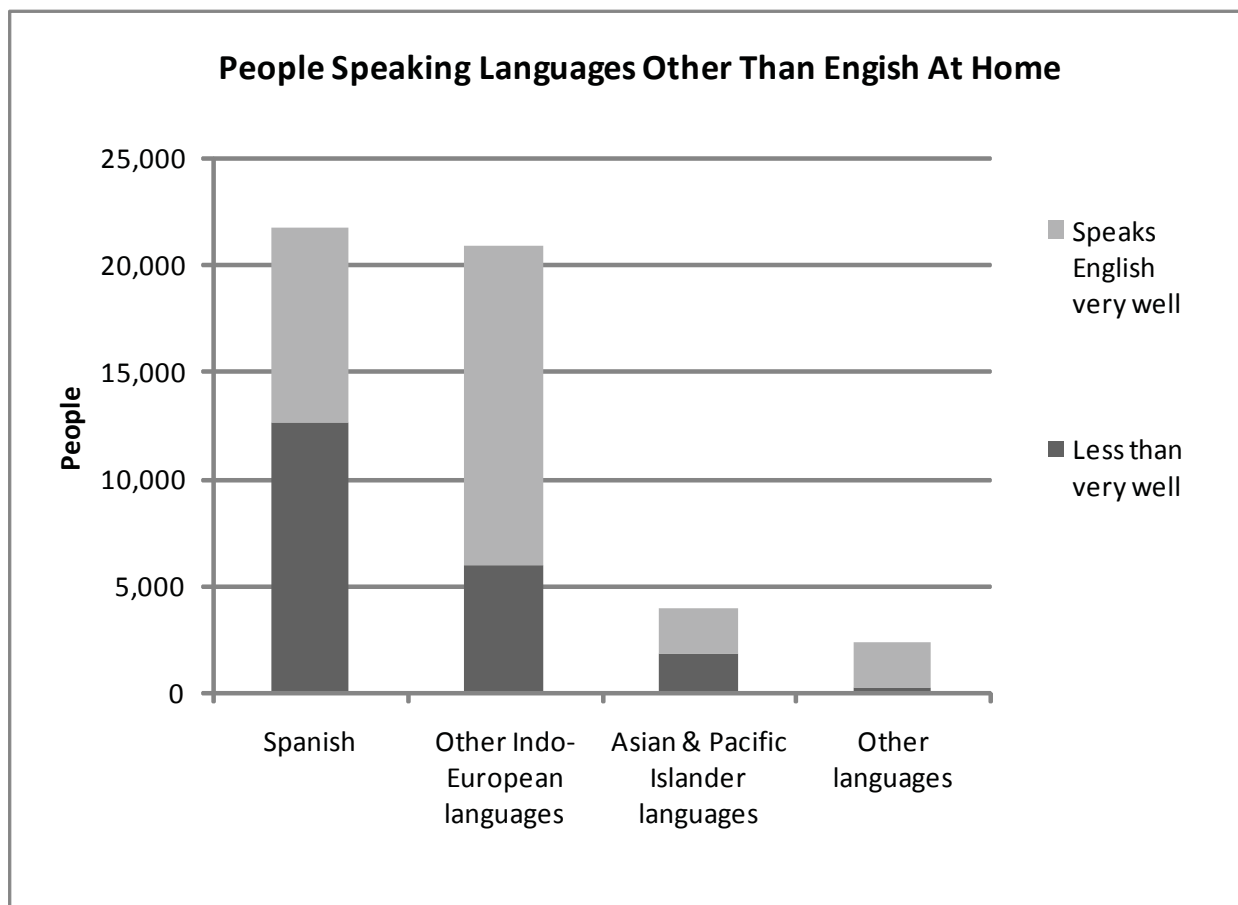
In Sarasota County, almost 15% of people speak a language other than English at home. Just under half (44%) of these speakers of other languages speak Spanish. The other large group of speakers of other languages consist of various Indo-European languages for example German, Italian or French. Graph 7 illustrates this linguistic diversity of our community as well as speakers' ability to speak English as well as the non-English language.

Graph 5



Graph 6





Graph 7

Part 7: Disparities Data

Disparities exist along race and ethnic lines including economic, social, educational, and health measures. What follows is a sampling of available statistics illustrating the local disparities.

Health Disparities

Local numbers reflect nation-wide disparities in health. The Community Health Improvement Partnership conducted a county-wide survey in 2006 that revealed the following health disparities along racial and ethnic lines. These graphs show information for White, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino because those are the largest groups that comprise at least 1% of the population.

Below, Graph 8 shows that African Americans are less likely to report good or excellent health status compared to Whites and Hispanic/Latinos. Source: CHIP Survey 2006

Graph 9 shows that both Blacks/African Americans and Latinos are significantly less likely to rate their community as one that is healthy to live in. Source: CHIP Survey 2006

Diabetes, one of the leading causes of death in the US is much more pronounced in the African American community as seen in Graph 10. Source: CHIP Survey 2006

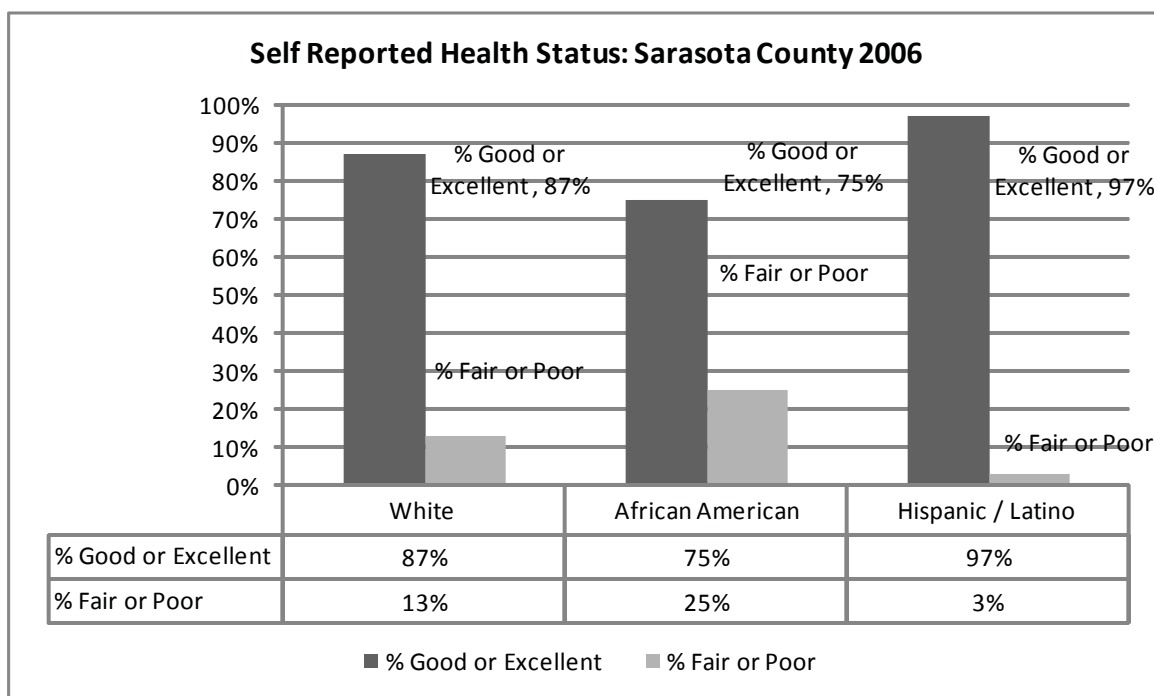
Economic disparities

In addition to health disparities, economic disparities also exist.

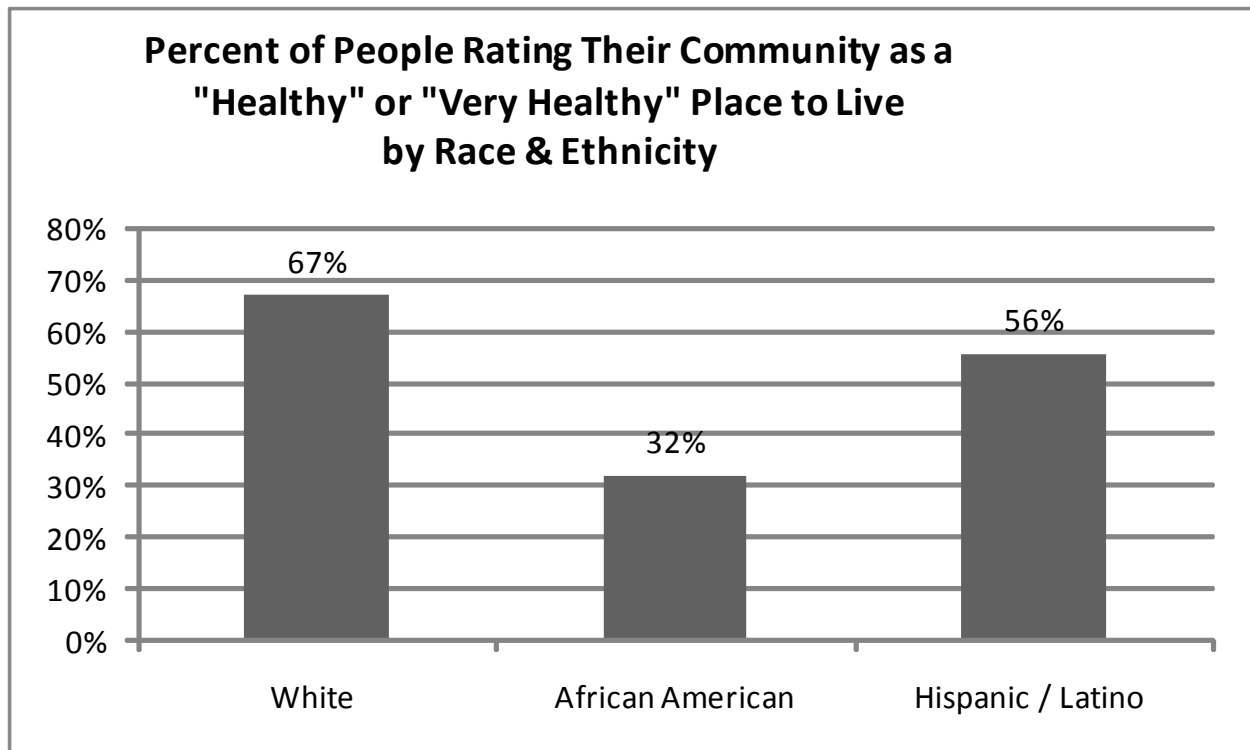
Graph 11 illustrates that the income levels of Blacks/African Americans and that of Hispanics/Latinos is significantly lower than that of Whites in the community. Source: US Census

Of particular concern are the economic disparities that exist among families with children. A common proxy indicator is to use the percent of students that meet the minimum income qualifications for free and reduced lunch. Graph 12 shows that while about a quarter of white students qualify, over two thirds of Hispanic/Latino students qualify and the vast majority, 80% of Black/African American students live in low income families. Source: FL Department of Education

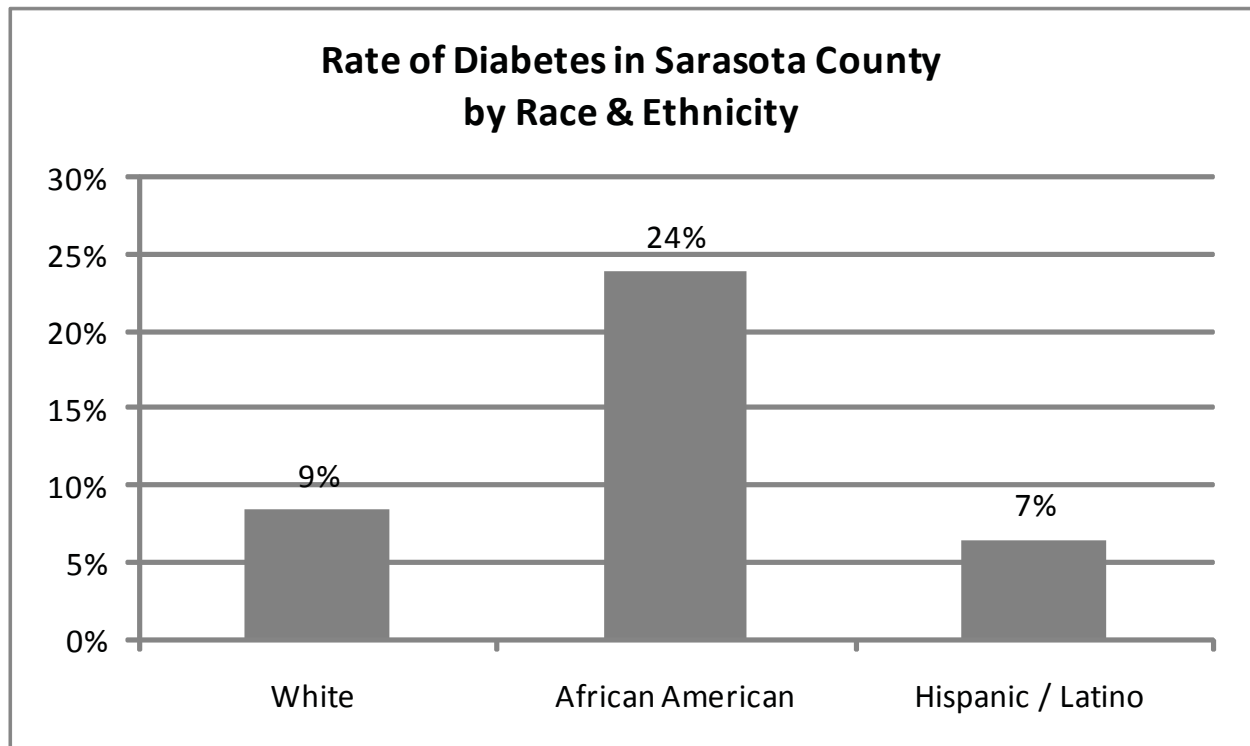
Graph 8



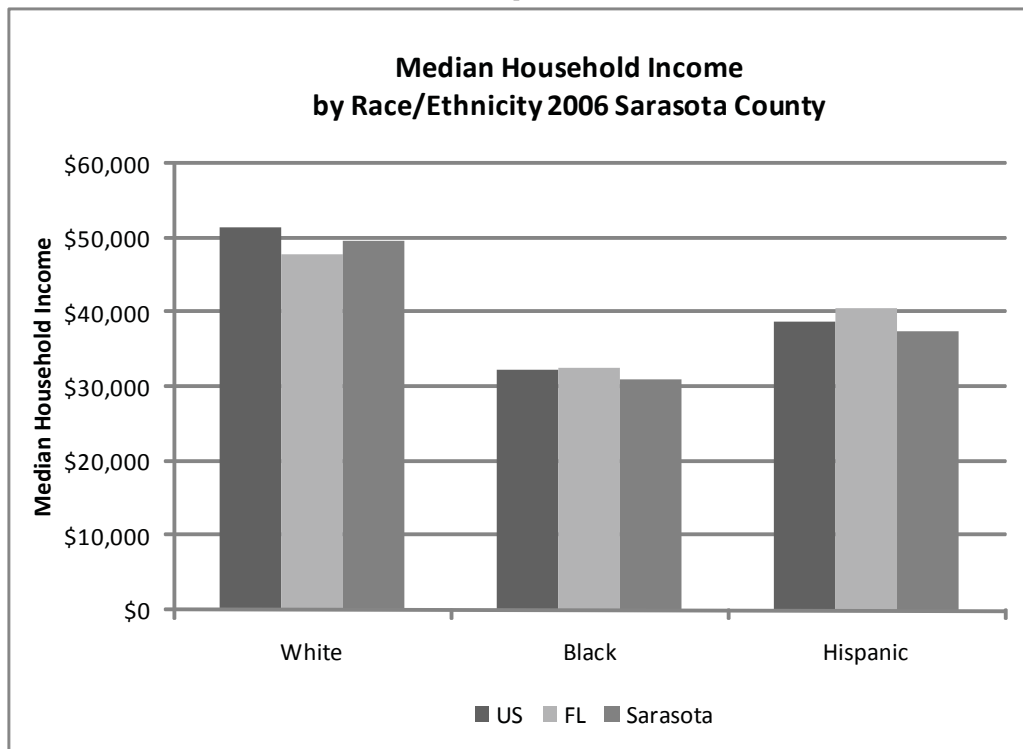
Graph 9



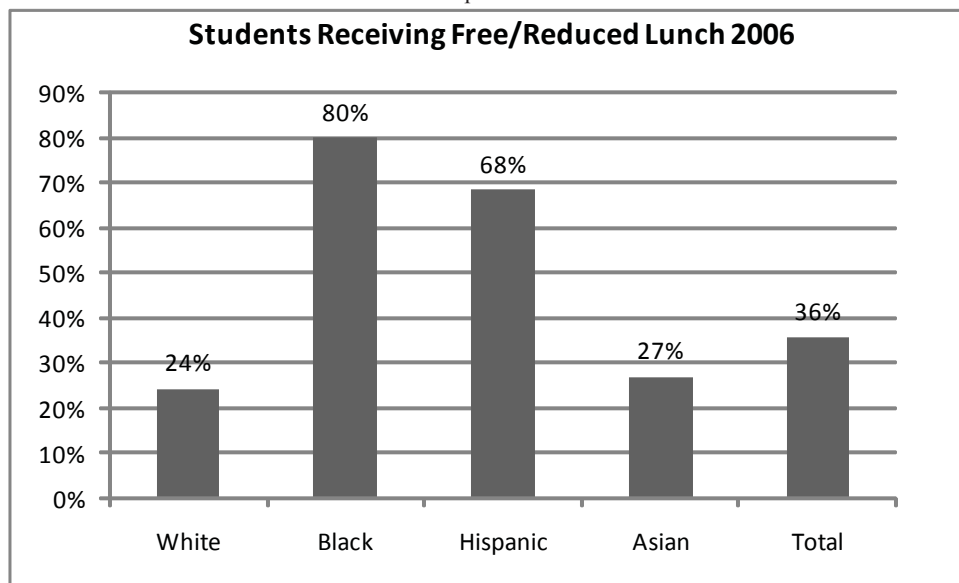
Graph 10



Graph 11



Graph 12



Disparities Among Business Owners

In 2002 the US Census conducted a survey of business owners to assess the diversity of firms in the US. Our community is not diverse in the rate of minority and women business owners. The vast majority of business owners are white men. Sarasota's female business ownership rate is 25%. (see Table 1)

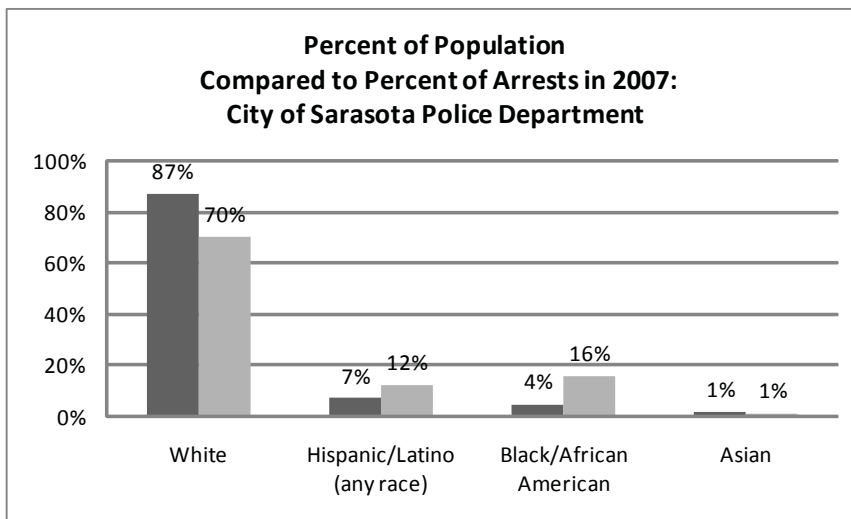
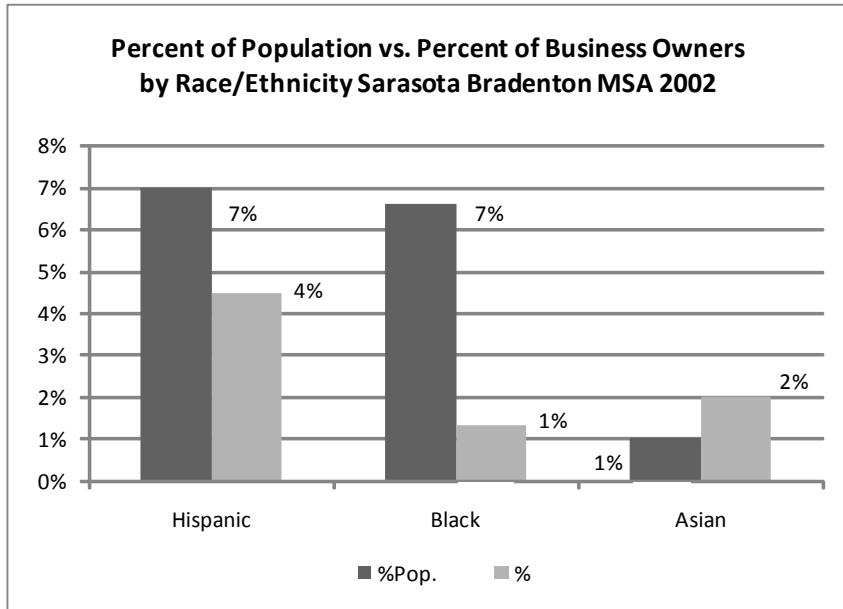
Because the number of racial and ethnic minority owned firms in Sarasota County is so small, data is not available at the county level from the US Census. Data is available for us to review for the Sarasota, Bradenton Metropolitan Statistical Area. Graph 13 illustrates the gap in minority business ownership among Hispanics and Blacks.

% Female-owned Firms 2002

Nation	28%
Florida	28%
Sarasota County, FL	25%

Table 1

Graph 13



Graph 14

Arrest disparities

Disparities also exist when examining the arrest rates of different races and ethnicities. While the White arrest rate is considerably less than their population proportion, the arrest rate for Hispanics/Latinos and

Blacks/African Americans is double or quadruple the percent of their respective population. This is illustrated Graph 14. Source: City of Sarasota Police Department.

Why is Racial Inequality Largely Ignored?

Maggie Potapchuk's 2007 study, Community Change Processes and Progress in Addressing Racial Inequalities, found that in, "a review of community-building and related efforts, undertaken in 2000, revealed the following reasons for under attention to racial inequity:

- Because antipoverty work often focuses on individuals and communities of color, race is assumed to be well-integrated into strategies and programs. This seems to reduce pressure to address race deliberately and explicitly.
- Community-building approaches are built on principles of cooperative problem solving, collaboration, and common enterprise. Addressing issues of race and racism implies a need to challenge power and privilege, which might undermine collaboration.
- Many leadership institutions in the social and economic development field (e.g., foundations, banks, corporations, research institutes) are products of historical racialized inequities in this country, so they don't have an ability to lead racial equity work naturally."

Being aware of such limitations can help our community navigate our way to a different future.

Part 8: Community: Diversity Directory Efforts Around Race & Culture

Our community is rich with individuals, associations, organizations, businesses, government agencies who want to be part of the solution. What follows is a directory of such organizations in Sarasota County.

The information can be thought of as a list of assets one can use to build an inclusive community that values diversity.

Coalition for Inclusion & Diversity: Diversity Directory for Sarasota County

Ability

Easter Seals Southwest Florida

Description:

Easter Seals Southwest Florida began in 1946 offering help and hope to disabled children and their families. Today, the mission of our organization has grown along with the communities we serve, and we have expanded the services we deliver to reach across the age spectrum from birth through adulthood. Whether we call it a delay, a special need, or a disability; whether it's named polio, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, or autism; the reality is that many children and adults experience challenges that compromise their ability to participate fully in the activities they would choose in their lives. These challenges also impact the loved ones who care and provide for them. Easter Seals Southwest Florida is committed to remaining a leader in special needs services - where individuals and families can turn for resources and support.

Contact:

MaryAnn Zyla-Smith
(941) 355-7637 ext. 104
maz@easterseal.org
350 Braden Ave
Sarasota, FL 34243-2001

Florida Council of the Blind, Inc. - Sarasota Chapter

Description:

Contact:

Barbara H. Grill
gbhgirl@aol.com

2030 Preymore Street
Osprey, FL 34229

Manasota BUDS

Description:

Directed towards families and friends of people with Down's syndrome, Manasota BUDS offers monthly meetings, workshops, scholarships, seminars, educational information, networking, encouragement and support. BUDDY Walk, the annual fundraiser will be held October 27, 2007.

Contact:

Betsy Kennedy
info@manasotabuds.com
8374 Market Street #113
Bradenton, FL 34202

Advocacy

Neighborhood Partnership Office

Description:

NPO links the Sarasota City Departments with over 50 neighborhoods and business associations through the creation and administration of neighborhood associations. The NPO offers a leadership academy targeted towards neighborhood formation and managerial skills. The Organization also holds the Manasota Regional Neighborhoods Summit and "City Hall at the Market," a forum for citizens to meet with City Staff.

Contact:

Michele Mician
michele_mician@sarasotagov.com
1565 First Street

Sarasota, FL 34236

Peace Education & Action Center

Description:

In developing relationships and partnerships of peace between local schools, colleges, and organizations, the Peace Education & Action Center supports a culture of nonviolence. The Center hosts public events, workshops and teacher trainings.

Contact:

ttj@comcast.net

Pl O. Box 974

Nokomis, FL 34274

University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee

Description:

In the pursuit of knowledge and further education, USF Sarasota-Manatee promotes university-community partnerships and collaborations to strengthen the economy, community, and culture of the area. In hosting forums, workshops, seminars, information sessions and other meetings, USF provides services on a wide variety of topics—ranging from “Diversity Film and Discussion” to “Dine & Discover” Information Sessions for prospective students. USF primarily serves upper division students: juniors, seniors and graduate students, in bachelor’s, master’s and certificate programs.

Contact:

Hillary Bardwell

bardwell@sar.usf.edu

8350 N. Tamiami Trail, SMC C107

Sarasota, FL 34243

Embracing Our Differences

Description:

Coexistence, Inc. proudly presents Embracing Our Differences®, an international outdoor art exhibit intended to demonstrate in a positive way that diversity enriches our lives. The mission of Embracing Our Differences® is to use art as a catalyst for creating awareness and promoting, throughout our community, the value of diversity, the benefits of inclusion and the significance of the active rejection of hatred and prejudice. The Embracing Our Differences® exhibit features 39 billboard size images created by professional artists, art students, and school children from Florida and around the world. Their creations reflect their interpretation of

our message: “enriching lives through diversity.”

Contact:

Michael Shelton

(941) 928-0567

info@embracingourdifferences.org

P.O. Box 2559

Sarasota, FL 34230

Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice

Description:

Serving as Florida’s largest community foundation, the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice provides leadership, partnership and endowed philanthropy through grants and technical assistance for nonprofit organizations. The Foundation also hosts programs, speaker series, scholarships and initiatives, including “Better Together” and “Because it Matters.” Volunteers are always needed. Call (941) 486-4600 to request an application.

Contact:

Marjorie Floyd

N/A

mfloyd@gulfcoastcf.org

601 Tamiami Trail South

Venice, FL 34285

Rising Tide International

Description:

Rising Tide, a not-for-profit organization, supports the sustenance of the local and global community through universal unity and inner spirituality. Rising Tide International frequently hold seminars, celebrations, classes and universal worship services at their international center. Rising Tide is not affiliated with a particular religion.

Contact:

Ann Ferrier

(941) 924-9259

anneferrier@comcast.net

6253 Weymouth Dr.

Sarasota, FL 34238

Suncoast Network for Compassionate Communication

Description:

In promoting peace through effective and nonviolent communication, the Suncoast Network for Compassionate Communication offers facilitated learning using Dr. Marshall Rosenberg’s

four-part language process. Previous clientele includes diversity groups, peaceworkers, church organizations, business, public and private schools and individuals.

Contact:
Mercedes Frace
(941) 539-7603
compassionflower@msn.com
PO Box 1221
Venice, FL 34284

WSLR Community Radio, Fogartyville Café

Description:

Serving the Sarasota Community, WSLR Community Radio targets cultural, artistic and political angles often overlooked by the media. Broadcasting programs of equality, democracy, social and economic justice, peace and sustainability, WSLR informs and empowers listeners of their responsibility to maintain an active role in the community.

Contact:
Arlene Sweeting
(941) 741-9755
fogartyvillecafe@yahoo.com
800 17th Avenue W.
Sarasota, FL 34205

Sarasota/Manatee farmworker supporters

Description:

SMFWS advocates support for farmworkers, migrant and non-migrant, by hosting public meetings to inform the public on issues facing farm labor. If you wish to become involved, there are four forums held annually and a Cesar Chavez Memorial dinner. Go online at <http://www.smfws.com/#welcome> for the newsletter and more information.

Contact:
Marvin Mills
4517 Ascot Circle South
Sarasota, FL 34235

Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness

Description:

Through awareness, advocacy and community engagement, the Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness works to prevent and reduce homelessness. The Partnership collaborates with service providers, advocacy groups, foundations, government agencies, and homeless themselves

to provide grants, support, educational services and develop initiatives on behalf of the homeless. Meetings are held monthly.

Contact:
Richard Martin
941-955-8987
richard.martin@suncoastpartnership.org
1445 2nd St.
Sarasota, FL 34236

Black/African American

Association For The Study of African American Life & History, Manasota Branch

Description:

The mission of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) is to promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community. ASALH endorses research, education and the dissemination of information to the communities of Manatee and Sarasota of Black achievements, history and culture. ASALH provides scholarships, guest lecturers, and hosts the annual Black Muse Art Show and Black Heritage Tour. Membership is \$50.00 a person. Meetings are held the fourth Friday of every month from September to April.

Contact:
Lois Watson
asalh@earthlink.net
PO Box 2356
Sarasota, FL 34230

Black Business Professional Network

Description:

Black Business Professionals Network engages its members in sharing ideas and experiences while providing support. Black Business Professionals Network is interested in those willing to support professional development and economic empowerment in the Black Business Community. Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month. See www.blackbusinesspro.com for details.

Contact:
info@Blackbusinesspro.com
15 Paradise Plaze, #335
Sarasota, FL 34239

Family Heritage House Museum at Manatee Community College

Description:

The Family Heritage House Museum at Manatee Community College focuses sustaining respect for black culture and its heritage in both youth and families. Through education and service, the Manatee Community College community and students in Sarasota and Manatee County are able to embrace this heritage. The museum is located on the MCC campus in Bradenton, building 8. Hours are 11 AM to 6 PM, Tuesday through Thursday. A special showing of "Summer Hill" will run from July 12 to August 30. It will be shown every Thursday at 2 PM.

Contact:

Fredi Brown
(941) 747-2879 (h) / (941) 752-5319
rogersam@mccfl.edu
5840 26th Street West
Bradenton, FL 34207

NAACP, Sarasota Branch

Description:

The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.

Contact:

Trevor Harvey
(941) 355-2097
sarasotanaacp@msn.com
P.O. Box 1024
Sarasota, FL 34230-1024

West Coast Black Theatre Troupe

Description:

The West Coast Black Theatre Troupe promotes the works and accomplishments of Black artists. Through the endorsement of the youth and young adults, the Troupe exposes the community to multicultural arts. An exhibit highlighting the achievements of the gifted youth is held at the Asolo. Seasonal events are held year-round.

Contact:

Nate Jacobs
358-9228, cell 780-2198
jacobsnate@hotmail.com, wbtt@hotmail.com

P O Box 1086
Sarasota, FL 34230

Economic

Newtown Front Porch Florida Community,

Description:

The Newtown Front Porch Neighborhood Revitalization Council, Inc. was designated in October of 2002 and was formally established as a neighborhood council on February 13, 2003 when the first officers were elected. Since that time the council has been a major role player in the redevelopment of the designated Front Porch Neighborhood and the broader Newtown Community.

Contact:

Lakieffa Williams
(941) 373-7886
lakieffa_williams@sarasotagov.com
1782 Dr. M. L. King Jr. Way
Sarasota, FL 34234

Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota

Description:

The EDC mission is to foster a strong and sustainable local economy that works for all. Their Diversity sub-committee helps the community learn about economic development through the lense of diversity.

Contact:

Diane Andrews
(941) 309-1200 ext.101
dandrews@edcsarasotacounty.com
2601 Cattleman Road, Ste. 201
Sarasota, FL 34232

Greater Newtown Community Redevelopment Corporation

Description:

The Greater Newtown Community Redevelopment Corporation facilitates in improving social and economic opportunities. Through housing and economic development initiatives, the Corporation is able to serve low to moderate-income families. One program aimed at leadership development and construction skills training is ecoLODGical: YouthBuild Sarasota.

Contact:

Che Barnett
(941) 358-7860
gncrc@verizon.net
1751 Dr. ML King, Jr. Way
Sarasota, FL 34234

Gulf Coast Latin Chamber of Commerce

Description:

The Gulf Coast Latin Chamber of Commerce upholds the development and sustainability of businesses and entrepreneurship. In working towards social and cultural betterment of the community, the Chamber of Commerce welcomes any association, corporation, partnership, estate or individual who is in agreement with the mission of the organization. There are many opportunities to become involved, including network meetings, job fairs, the monthly newsletter, and national conventions.

Contact:

Cesar Gomez
(941) 358-7065
info@latinchamber.org
8051 North Tamiami Trail Suite 37
Sarasota, FL 34243

Newtown Redevelopment Office

Description:

The Office supports all revitalization efforts in the Newtown community. The Office is aligned with other community organizations, including the Newtown Front Porch Neighborhood Revitalization Council, Inc.

Contact:

Lori Benton
941-373-7764
lori_benton@sarasotagov.com
1782 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way
Sarasota, FL 34234

Nuevo Punto Advertising

Description:

Nuevo Punto Advertising Group offers effective, creative techniques for marketing, advertising, public relations and Spanish/English translation to the Hispanic Community.

Contact:

Pedro Perez
(941) 752-4433
pedro@nuevoadvertising.com

6211 45th Street West
Bradenton, FL 34210

Smith-Soeder Enterprises, Inc.

Description:

Smith-Soeder Enterprises, Inc. uses both consultants and trainers in assisting with diversity management and organizational development. Consulting is not limited to groups or individuals.

Contact:

DeWanda Smith-Soeder
(941) 366-8403
dss3@verizon.net
1750 Wisconsin Lane
Sarasota, FL 34239

Gay & Lesbian (GLBTQ)

ALSO Out Youth, Inc.

Description:

ALSO Out Youth, Inc. promotes the health, safety and personal growth of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, intersex and questioning youth, ages thirteen to twenty-one. ALSO supports an environment of acceptance in seeking to end all forms of violence, harassment and discrimination against sexual orientation or gender identity. A center, open Monday through Friday, is available for youth.

Contact:

Candace Sorensen
(941) 951-2576
Executive.Director@alsoyouth.org
P.O. Box 7382
Sarasota, FL 34278-7382

Dignity Sarasota

Description:

DignityUSA strives for justice and respect for all GLBTQ within the Catholic Church. Services are held Saturdays at 4:00 PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

Contact:

Bart Coyle
dignitysarasota@verizon.net
7578 Tori Way
Bradenton, FL 34202

FTTD Media

Description:

FTTD Media provides information regarding upcoming events in the GLBTQ community. For more information visit the website or sign-up for the weekly e-newsletter.

Contact:

Jim Ferri
Jim@FerriThingsToDo.com
2111 S. Brink Ave
Sarasota, FL 34239-4204

Manasota GLBT Community Center, Inc.

Description:

Manasota GLBT Community Center, Inc. is a virtual community center that serves to connect and support organizations, people and events within the GLBT community. To find out about upcoming events, visit www.gaysarasota.com under the “events page” or sign up for e-list to receive e-mails.

Contact:

Misty Smeltzer
m.smeltzer@comcast.net
PO Box 3674
Sarasota, FL 34230

PFLAG Sarasota [Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbian and Gays]

Description:

The PFLAG encourages open communication and dialogue in the promotion of health and wellbeing of GLBTQ. PFLAG provides support to cope with an adverse society, education to fight ignorance, and advocacy to promote equal civic rights. Meetings are held monthly.

Contact:

Judy Weinstein
(941) 378-3536
judyleon@comcast.net
4618 Trails Dr.
Sarasota, FL 34232

Health

Gulfcoast South AHEC

Description:

GSAHEC establishes a connection between academic partnerships and the community by promoting a betterment in the health of the underserved. In

targeting the underrepresented minority students interested in the healthcare profession, the Center offers appropriate health education. GSAHEC also provides services, including educational programs, training, support and funding for health professionals and Community Health Worker programs.

Contact:

Ansley Mora
(941) 361-6602
amora@hsc.usf.edu
2201 Cantu Court, Ste. 117
Sarasota, FL 34232

Hispanic/Latino

CultureLink Consulting, LLC

Description:

CultureLinks Consulting, LLC bridges the cultural gap between the Hispanic community and employers and fosters an environment of inclusion and diversity. CultureLinks Consulting services are directed towards effective communication in the workplace, marketing strategies aimed at the Hispanic population and an emphasis on stronger relations between the Hispanic community and business.

Contact:

Mariale Uria
(941) 706-1876
mariale@culturelinksco.com
6579 S. Tamiami Trail PMB# 236
Sarasota, FL 34231

Hispanic Latino Coalition

Description:

The Hispanic Latino Coalition offers the only bilingual resource directory, providing access to educational, social, and health-related resources in Sarasota County. The Coalition also offers meetings, health fairs and courses in cultural competency.

Contact:

Elsie Morales
(941) 955-5834
elsie.morales@hispaniclatinocoalition.org
1750 17th Street, Suite K-3
Sarasota, FL 34234

International

Sarasota Sister Cities Association, Inc.

Description:

Sarasota Sister Cities facilitates better understanding and cultural acceptance through exchanges in cities similar to Sarasota. Using culture, education, tourism, business and government as indicators, Sister Cities believes all citizens can engage themselves in citizen diplomacy. Other sister cities include Hamilton, Ontario, Dunfermline, Scotland, and Treviso, Italy.

Contact:

William Wallace
(941) 366-4224
walljb@comcast.net
1565 First St.
Sarasota, FL 34236

Law

City of Sarasota/Human Relations Board

Description:

The Board provides both education and outreach about Sarasota's nondiscrimination ordinance. For those who have submitted a claim for employment, housing or public accommodation under *ten protected classes, the Board offers conciliation and public hearings. * age, color, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status

Contact:

Beth Gonyea
(941) 365 2200 ext. 3747
beth_gonyea@sarasotagov.com
111 South Orange Avenue - Room 204
Sarasota, FL 34236

Sarasota Bar Association, Diversity Committee

Description:

Encourages a diverse legal community by promoting dialogue among members concerning benefits of inclusion, educating lawyers and public about diversity policies and practices, and by creating programs to foster cooperation between members of the local legal community and people of diverse race, ethnicity, religion and culture.

Contact:

Louis Ursini, III
(941) 316-7600

louis.ursini@ruden.com
1515 Ringling Blvd., Suite 700
Sarasota, FL 34236

Neighborhood and Community

Laurel Civic Association

Description:

The Laurel Civic Association is a private nonprofit formed in 1969 by a group of dedicated volunteers in the Laurel Community. They serve the needs of low income and at risk children and their families through activities that educate, provide positive social interaction, and lead to self-sufficiency. They also meet the needs of the community through other activities such as: An Affordable Housing, Homework Assistance, Earning By Learning, Kid's Café, USDA Food Distribution, Red Ribbon Celebration, Black History Week, Annual Easter Egg Hunt, Laurel Community Clean Up, No Fee Summer Camp, and a Summer Reading Program. Even though our main focus is on Laurel and Nokomis, this partnership has allowed us to grow and serve children and families from Newtown to North Port.

Contact:

Sandra Terry
(941) 483-3338
laurelcivic@aol.com
509 Collins Rd.
Laurel, FL 34272

Habitat for Humanity

Description:

Contact:

Mike Jacobson
(941) 365-0700
mjacobson@sarasotahabitat.com
1757 N. East Avenue
Sarasota, FL 34234

Religious

American Jewish Committee

Description:

In an environment of cohesion and unity, the American Jewish Committee aims at increasing the bond between American and Israeli Jews, strengthening the Jewish community both domestically and globally and fighting all forms of intolerance through

pluralism and civic achievement. In serving the West Coast of Florida, the Committee holds lecture series and celebrates those in the community who have positively impacted the community.

Contact:

Brian Lipton
(941) 365-4955
poste@ajc.org
2055 Wood St. Ste #218
Sarasota, FL 34237

Center for Religious Tolerance

Description:

The Center for Religious Tolerance encourages dialogue in pursuit of peace and harmony, both locally and internationally. Through increased interactions, heightened knowledge, and interactive spiritual practices, the Center demonstrates that peace is possible between divergent religious backgrounds.

Contact:

Andrea Blanche
info@centerforreligiousolerance.org
520 Ralph St
Sarasota, FL 34242

Congregation For Humanistic Judaism

Description:

Humanistic Judaism celebrates Jewish culture, history and identity. All are invited to participate who share a desire to either learn or identify with the Jewish culture. Meetings are held the first Saturday morning and third Friday night of every month at Unity. A conference on "The Middle East Jews" will be held January 18-20, 2008 – reservations required.

Contact:

Arlene Pearlman
(941) 377-1003
chjsarasota@hotmail.com
3023 Proctor
Sarasota, FL 34235

ECKANKAR

Description:

Through enhanced awareness and spirituality, Eckankar offers a spiritual haven and guide for peace, both individually and among each other. Meetings and services are held weekly.

Contact:

Mary Cetan
marycetan@verizon.net
2344 Bee Ridge Road
Sarasota, FL 34232

Order of the Night Star Rising

Description:

Order of the Night Star Rising is an earth-based spiritual community. With emphasis on improving the environment and increasing tolerance of all religious backgrounds, the organization promotes spiritual growth and awareness. Informational and celebrational gatherings are open to the public. Meetings are held bi-monthly. For more information, visit the website at <http://endorasemporium.com/OOTNSR.html>.

Contact:

Vincent Pareti
virmodus@aol.com
4245 Bee Ridge Road
Sarasota, FL 34233

Sarasota Manatee Jewish Federation

Description:

The Sarasota-Manatee Jewish Federation serves to strengthen and unify the Jewish Community. In promoting a strong Jewish identity locally and abroad, the Federation provides services, programs and publications.

Contact:

Sharon Kunkel
(941) 371-4546 +101
info@smjf.org
580 McIntosh Road
Sarasota, FL 34232

Sarasota United for Responsibility & Equity (SURE)

Description:

SURE addresses issues of systematic injustice through organized networks of congregations in Sarasota County. SURE serves all people of Sarasota County.

Contact:

Patrick Rostock
(941) 954-6553
suresarasota@verizon.net
104 South Pineapple Avenue
Sarasota, FL 34236

St. Boniface Episcopal Church

Description:

With the adage of “think globally, act locally,” the Peace and Justice Committee of St. Boniface seeks to identify issues of concern, including matters of justice and inequality, and find strategies to address them.

Contact:

Robert Thacker
rthacker@boniface.cc
207 Lookout Point Dr.
Sarasota, FL 34229

The Mennonite Peace & Justice Group of Sarasota

Description:

Mennonite Peace & Justice Group of Sarasota is committed to peacemaking in and throughout the community. In advocating for the marginalized and unrepresented, the group promotes nonviolence through the teachings and life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Contact:

Randall Spaulding
covenantmennonite@comcast.net
3205 South Gate Circle
Sarasota, FL 34239

Women

Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County

Description:

Serving the Sarasota Community for over 30 years, Girls Incorporated provides after school and summer programs for girls, ages 6 to 18. By “inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold,” Girls Inc. endorses self-confidence, responsibility, and well-roundedness.

Contact:

Angel Stringer
(941) 366-6646
angela@girlsincsrq.org
201 S. Tuttle Ave.
Sarasota, FL 34237

League of Women Voters

Description:

The League of Women Voters endorses political responsibility and active participation for all citizens. The League hosts many events during the

year, including presentations of local interest and non-partisan forums during elections.

Contact:

Cindy Guest
861-1230
lwvsc@comcast.net
6120 S. Lockwood Ridge
Sarasota, FL 34231

UNIFEM (President)

Description:

UNIFEM works to empower women politically, economically and socially. There are many opportunities to get involved, such as becoming a member, joining a committee or attending monthly events – including book clubs, Coffee Chat, Out to Lunch Day and much more. Contact Joyce Locklear at (941) 803-0600 for membership information.

Contact:

Francine Brown
923-4429
fbrown311@comcast.net
8807 Wild Dunes Dr.
Sarasota, FL 34241

Youth/Younger Adults

Community Youth Development Project

Description:

With the power of positive choices, CYD believes Sarasota County’s teens are the source of community solutions. Through a partnership between adults and teens, CYD supports strong decision-making skills, leading to more positive choices.

Contact:

Karen Bogues
(941) 922-5126
karen@cydonline.org
4409 Sawyer Road
Sarasota, FL 34233

Tallevast Community Center

Description:

Tallevast Community Center encourages a positive social and academic environment for children, ages 5 to 17. Meetings are held on the second and fourth Monday of each month. The Annual Arthur & Ruth Bryant Memorial Scholarship Fund Banquet will be held on September 8, 2007. Tickets are \$50.00

Contact:

Williams-Robinson Williams-Robinson
simplyred2001@yahoo.com
P.O. Box 15 - 7727 78th St. Ct. E.
Tallevast, FL 34270

Young Professional's Group (YPG)

Description:

Young Professionals Group (YPG) is a meaningful networking organization of dedicated, talented young professionals ranging in age from 21-40 in Sarasota County. YPG began with an explosive launch in May 2003 and a simple agenda: To enrich our community by uniting and developing our young professionals. Its mission is to create a platform for our members to build relationships, develop professionally, become politically and philanthropically active, and contribute to the economic development and high quality living of our community.

Contact:

Michele Anderson
941-416-1244
manderson@sarasotachamber.com
1767 5th Street
Sarasota, FL 34236

**The Race & Cultural Relations Initiative was possible thanks to the efforts
and collaborations of following:**

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 American Jewish Committee
 Anti-Defamation League
 Art Center Sarasota
 Avila Family Law Office
 Backlot Arts
 Black Business & Professionals Network
 Booker High School
 Bridges to the Holy Land
 Center for Religious Tolerance
 Churchwalls Studio
 City Of Sarasota Police Dept.
 Cody Hart Live (WTMY 12.80 AM)
 Community Foundation of Sarasota County
 Community Tampa Bay
 Community Youth Development (CYD)
 Compassionflower Communications
 Congregation for Humanistic Judaism
 Cosimo's Restaurant
 Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)
 Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota

Embracing Our Differences
 First Congregational United Church of Christ of
 Sarasota
 Florida Avenue Studios
 Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County
 Goodwill Industries
 Gulf Coast Latin Chamber of Commerce
 Hispanic Latino Coalition
 Islamic Society of Sarasota and Bradenton
 Koinonia Baptist Church
 Laurel Civic Association
 MetLife Foundation
 Metro Coffee & Wine
 NAACP Sarasota Branch
 North Port High School
 Peace and Justice Coalition, St. Boniface Church
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 Sarasota Arts Council
 Sarasota Bar Association Diversity Committee
 Sarasota County Parks and Recreation
 Sarasota County School Board
 Sarasota County Sheriff's Office
 Sarasota County Technical Institute
 Sarasota High School
 Sarasota Manatee Jewish Federation
 Sarasota Openly Addresses Racism (SOAR)
 Sarasota Police Department
 Sarasota Rotary Foundation
 Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity
 (SURE)
 Sarasota Visual Arts Alliance
 Second Thought Productions
 St. Boniface Church
 Take Stock in Children of Sarasota County
 The Community Foundation of Sarasota County,
 Inc.
 Tidewell Hospice and Palliative Care
 Udell Associates
 Unitarian Universalist Church
 United Way of Sarasota County, Inc.
 University of South Florida, Sarasota-Manatee
 Venice High School
 West Coast School for Human Development
 Whole Foods of Sarasota
 WSLR Community Radio
 YMCA Achievers
 Young Professionals Group

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