



Municipal Services Agency

**Department of Neighborhood
Services**

South Community Service Area

County of Sacramento

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A YEAR LONG CONVERSATION ON RACE:

SOUTH SACRAMENTO GROUP SEEKS 100 PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT RACIAL EQUITY

Sacramento, Calif. — In south Sacramento, communities of African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Middle Easterners, Native Americans and Caucasians live side by side. Yet, these communities often remain segregated, the concerns and hopes of one group remaining unknown to the others. CARE (Committee Addressing Racial Equity) seeks to remedy that situation through a series of conversations and eventual solutions to address racial disparities in south Sacramento communities. CARE encourages south Sacramentans from all ethnicities and cultures to participate. The first step is to call 876-8356 for further information.

“This is a rare opportunity to get to know others in your community who care about these issues, and for people to have their voices heard,” said Vidal Gonzalez, CARE member and Youth Specialist at La Familia Counseling Center, “How often do you get to participate in a year-long conversation on race?”

C.A.R.E. committee members, including representatives from all of south Sacramento’s diverse communities, have begun the conversation at monthly meetings. While they continue their discussion, they are actively seeking 100 people to participate in a series of meetings and forums that will lead to honest conversation about problems and solutions.

“South Sacramento has no racial majority, said “Tom Burruss,” long-time south Sacramento resident and community development specialist. “CARE wants to ensure that resources and opportunities are equally distributed among all of south Sacramento’s residents. Hopefully, these conversations will lead us to address racial equity issues that arise in education, housing, health care, the justice system, immigration and jobs.”

CARE calls these discussion groups “Conversation Circles.” They are forming now. Outreach will continue through the summer, and groups will start meeting in late September, continuing once a month until March when the effort will culminate in an “Action Forum.” At that time, monies are available from Everyday Democracy to implement some of the strategies the community has identified.

Last January, CARE (Committee Addressing Racial Equity) was chosen to take part in a national initiative aimed at helping communities create and sustain public engagement and community change on issues around racial equity. CARE, which is a committee of South Sacramento County Visions, is one of nine groups across the country that will be working with Everyday Democracy’s Communities Creating Racial Equity initiative over the next two years.

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C.A.R.E. committee members include Faye Kennedy, chair, Sacramento Area Black Caucus; Tom Burruss, resident and community development specialist; Farouk Fakira, Board member, Masjid Annur Islamic Center; Sharon Whitton, retired middle school teacher and co-chair of Visions disaster preparedness committee; Gail Pilas, Native American community member; Ted Canty, Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance, Program Manager; Vidal Gonzalez, Youth Specialist, La Familia Counseling Center; Shonna McDaniels, Director, Sojourner Truth Multicultural Arts Museum; David Asfall, Director, Jbanta Resources and Support for Fathers; Elaine Abelaye, Executive Director, Asian Resources; Edd Smith, south Sacramento resident and Board member of the Southgate Recreation and Parks District, Melissa Cuevas, Sacramento County Department of Neighborhood Services; Victor Morrison-Vega, Director, Department of Neighborhood Services; and Bonnie Ratner, Highpoints Consulting Services, who as consultant to Neighborhood Services and Visions, will be coordinating the effort.

Visions is a south Sacramento partnership of residents, neighborhood associations, recreation, schools and local government. The group has been supported by the Sacramento County Department of Neighborhood Services since 2004. Visions has sponsored annual multicultural forums and also coordinates local disaster preparedness events. In 2006, Visions was the first community group in Sacramento to put on a daylong event and helped to light the spark of awareness about disaster preparedness in the Sacramento area.

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The Department of Neighborhood Services is a department of the Municipal Services Agency, a customer service organization of the County of Sacramento to provide innovative, efficient and effective residential, business and environmental services to the region's neighborhoods and communities and to engage residents in the decisions affecting their neighborhoods. Through its customer service model, the 11 departments that comprise the Municipal Services Agency are dedicated to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of life in our neighborhoods, business centers, recreation venues and wildlife corridors.

Municipal Services Agency: Keeping your community clean, safe and beautiful for today and tomorrow.