

News Release

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Diversity Circles

Manitowoc County's demographic data show an increase in racial diversity. Statistics reveal that the Asian, Latino, and African American populations have increased since 2000. This is a trend seen not only in our County, but also in the state and across the nation. The closest majority minority city is Milwaukee. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, new entrants into the U.S. labor force by 2008 will consist of 30% white males and 70% women and minorities.

Collaboration between the Manitowoc County UW-Extension Family Living and the UW-Manitowoc Continuing Education offices has made it possible to offer Diversity Circles to Manitowoc County residents. What are Diversity Circles?

The Diversity Circles process encourages dialogue to create an awareness of different cultures, helps participants develop sensitivity to others, and identifies prejudice as it exists in us and in our community. Locally trained facilitators will use the "Addressing Racism and Race Relations in a New Century" curriculum provided by the National Study Circles Resource Center to guide four, two hour sessions set at a time convenient for participants. Diversity Circles are rooted in dialogue and deliberation, not debate. Consensus is not required. Common areas of agreement and concern are found. Exploration, not agreement, is the objective.

Everyone is welcome to participate! Each participant has an equal opportunity to speak, so the group can gain wisdom from each member's unique experiences. Ground rules are used to set a tone for a respectful, productive discussion. Participants in Diversity Circles consider many perspectives, rather than advocating a particular point of view.

Support for Diversity Circles has been strong. Some partners include: the Aging Resource Center, CESA 7 Head Start/Early Head Start, Domestic Violence Center, Herald Times Reporter, Hispanic Consortium, Hmong Community Center, Holy Family Memorial, Kohler Company, Lakeshore CAP, Manitowoc City Government, Manitowoc County Government, Manitowoc - Two Rivers Area Chamber of Commerce, NE WI Area Health Education Center, Rahr-West Art Museum, Service League of Manitowoc County, Inc., Silver Lake College, United Way Manitowoc County, Inc., and the Village Inn.

Sign up for a Diversity Circle by contacting Kathy Palmer, UW-Manitowoc Continuing Education Outreach Program Manager, at (920) 683-4702 or at kpalmer@uwc.edu

Make a donation to Manitowoc County Diversity Circles by contacting Bill Hackney, Herald Times Reporter General Manager, at (920) 686-2143 or at bhackney@htrnews.com

Learn more about Diversity Circles by contacting Faye Malek, Manitowoc County UW-Extension Family Living Educator, at (920) 683-4171 or at fayemalek@co.manitowoc.wi.us

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