



**“Trust is something we earn one person at a time”  
Joe Martin**

## **Friday Friends Overview**

How do we bridge the gap between races and cultures?

At times, Charlotte seems to have an especially wide gap. Too often we view people from a race, culture or faith that are different from our own as "people we don't trust" and "people we have no way to get to know".

Since 2007, Mecklenburg Ministries has stepped forward to bridge the gap with a program called "Friday Friends." Over 1,300 people throughout the Charlotte community have committed to pair as lunch partners across racial/ethnic and faith differences. They agree to eat lunch once a month for 4 months to get to know each other as people and not as "categories".

The goal is to learn to connect beyond the color of our skin and religious or cultural beliefs. Friday Friends are people who have gotten outside of their comfort zones, corrected wrong assumptions and bridged the gap to find the common ground of trust.

Mecklenburg Ministries launched our fifth year of Friday Friends in June, 2011 connecting people and building trust, ***one person at a time.***

### **Friday Friends at a Glance**

**Commitment:** Have lunch (or coffee) with someone of another race, religion or culture on the last Friday of each month for 4 months to build a relationship together. (If Friday does not work for your calendar, any day of the week will do!)

### **What are participants saying?**

*“Helping [my friend] with his organization and his being able to help me with mine has provided great networking and learning.”*

*“I have corrected some wrong assumptions.”*

*“I honestly cannot imagine a time when (my Friday Friend) and I would not be able to learn from each other, to grow from our relationship, or to reap the benefits of a blessed friendship. I shall be forever grateful to Mecklenburg Ministries and Friday Friends for making this connection.”*

***“Building bridges across differences one friendship at a time”***

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## Mecklenburg Ministries

### Friday Friends Monthly Questions

Mecklenburg Ministries provides questions to take the conversation deeper and to empower pairs to build greater interracial/interfaith trust.

**MEETING #1:** What attracted you to this program? How much risk are you willing to take with your Friday Friend? What would help you do that? Describe your family as you were growing up. What messages did you receive from them about yourself and your racial/ethnic or faith group?

**MEETING #2:** Describe the first time when you were made aware of your identity as a member of your racial/ethnic or faith group. What would you want other people to understand about you and/or your group? What messages did you receive in your family about people from other racial/ethnic or faith groups? How do you perceive those messages today?

**MEETING #3:** Talk about the words associated with your group and your feelings about them. What stereotypes exist about your racial/ethnic or faith group? What would you like to ask your Friday Friends partner regarding the use of these words/stereotypes? What would you like to ask your partner that you think might be risky to ask?

**MEETING #4:** Where do you think Charlotte will be 10 years from now, in issues of inclusion and inter-racial trust? What concerns you most about building inter-racial, inter-group trust in our city? What would need to happen to create the future city you want to live in? What are you willing to commit to as an individual and/or as Friday Friends partners to help create that future?

Friday Friends is Mecklenburg Ministries' Crossroads Project



Mecklenburg Ministries is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that promotes interfaith relationships, fosters racial and ethnic understanding, and inspires collaboration to address social issues.