



SOULS OF OUR NEIGHBORS

FEARS, FACTS & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Facilitator's Guide

This facilitator's guide is intended for use with the "Souls of Our Neighbors" DVD, which is available for purchase at www.soulsofourneighbors.org

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Introduction to Souls of Our Neighbors

Souls of Our Neighbors: Fears, Facts and Affordable Housing is a collaborative project of Mecklenburg Ministries, Temple Beth El and Crossroads Charlotte.

Mecklenburg Ministries is an interfaith cooperation of congregations and their members that promotes interfaith relationships, fosters racial and ethnic understanding, and inspires collaboration to address social issues.

Temple Beth El is a Reform Jewish congregation of Charlotte that is committed to the repair of our world by bringing the Prophetic call for social justice and equity to life.

Crossroads Charlotte is a civic engagement initiative that offers numerous ways for the community to *act* today in small and large ways to build trust by creating access, inclusion and equity in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Committee members for the *Souls of Our Neighbors* documentary and project are:

Jennifer Gallman | Charlotte Housing Authority

Dr. Maria Hanlin | Mecklenburg Ministries

Michael Rizer | Wells Fargo

Tracy Russ | Crossroads Charlotte

Judy Seldin-Cohen | Community Advocate

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The DVD production was made possible through the generous support of Foundation For The Carolinas, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Wells Fargo and Crossroads Charlotte. Russ and Wendy Gill of Professional Communications are producers of this documentary as well as the entire series of documentary DVDs, which includes:

- *Souls of Our Neighbors: Fears, Facts and Affordable Housing*, 2011
- *Souls of Our Teachers: An Inside Look at Urban Education*, 2010
- *Souls of Our Students: Appreciating Differences*, 2008

Rosalyn Allison-Jacobs of R.O.I. Impact Consulting originally developed this group process and template for the *Souls of Our Teachers* Facilitator's Guide. Valaida Fullwood of VF Consultant Services edited and adapted this version for the *Souls of Our Neighbors* DVD.

How to Use This Facilitator's Guide

This guide is designed to assist facilitators in guiding a participatory learning experience for viewers of the *Souls of Our Neighbors* DVD. The guide is intended for use with general audiences to increase the public's understanding of affordable housing.

Objectives of the Facilitated Discussion Forum:

- To provide a structured process through which participants explore the myths and realities of affordable housing and the people who reside in affordable housing
- To encourage exchanges of ideas about the challenges and solutions associated with creating affordable housing in neighborhoods throughout our community
- To stimulate dialogue about what it means to be your neighbor's keeper in an increasingly diverse community

The guide outlines a two-hour forum that includes a preliminary discussion, the viewing of the 28-minute *Souls of Our Neighbors* DVD and a group discussion to debrief the video. The primary audiences for this facilitated process are individuals and groups who have questions about affordable housing and mixed-income communities and/or those who would like to gain a deeper understanding of community issues.

For an experience that creates opportunities for meaningful dialogue and balanced participation, a group of 20 to 40 participants is recommended. This discussion is designed without breaks, so please invite participants to take any required breaks independently and only as needed.

Primary Content for Facilitators

- Suggested process with activities running approximately two hours
- Notes for facilitators to ensure a successful audience experience
- Assortment of worksheets and forms for use with the audience (included as appendices)

Facilitator's Checklist

Before facilitating a forum, please take time to:

- Review the Facilitator's Guide
- View the *Souls of Our Neighbors* DVD and familiarize yourself with the program content
- Familiarize yourself with facts and information relative to affordable housing

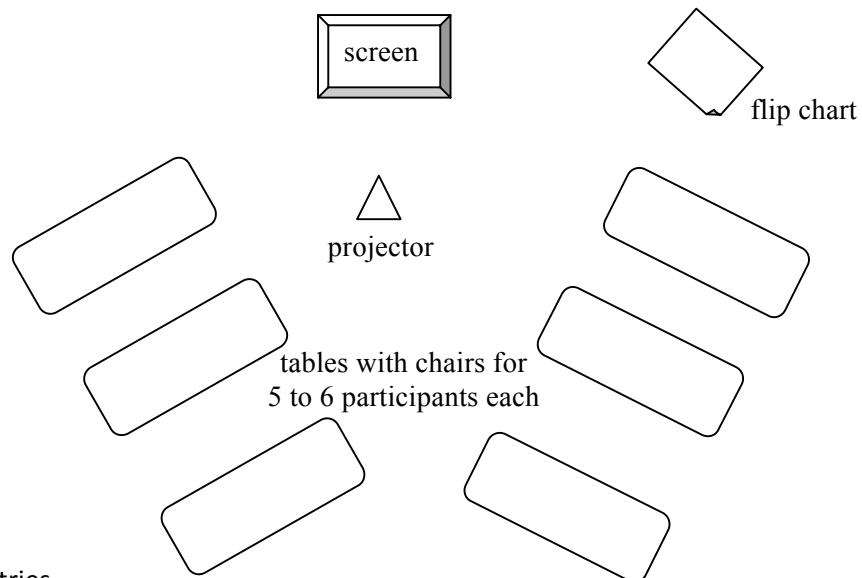
Set up the following equipment:

- Television and DVD player –or– Projector, Laptop and Screen
- Souls of Our Neighbors* DVD

Secure needed materials:

- Post-it™ notes
- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- For each participant: Copies of material in Appendices: (A) Pre-DVD Reflections worksheet; (B) DVD Observation Sheet; (C) Five Questions for Discussion worksheet; and (D) Quick Facts sheet

Set up the room as shown in the diagram below:



Design Outline

Below is a timed outline of key activities composing the forum. A detailed version with facilitator notes, instructions and talking points follows on page 9 (*Discussion Forum Design*).

Activity		Time Allowances
A.	Welcome	3 minutes
B.	Introduction to discussion forum, including objectives, overview and ground rules	5 minutes
C.	Pre-viewing reflections (on individual basis)	5 minutes
D.	Sharing of reflections (whole group)	5 minutes
E.	What We Believe exercise (on individual basis)	10 minutes
F.	DVD set-up and viewing instructions	2 minutes
G.	View <i>Souls of Our Neighbors</i> DVD (whole group)	28 minutes
H.	DVD debrief (whole group)	20 minutes
I.	Instruction about small-group work	2 minutes
J.	Five Key Questions for Discussion (small groups)	20 minutes
K.	Reporting (small groups)	10 minutes
L.	Wrap-up	10 minutes
Total estimated time		2 hours

Notes to the Facilitator

The *Souls of Our Neighbors* Facilitator's Guide and DVD provide an opportunity for participants to explore their perceptions and beliefs about affordable housing. This discussion forum is designed to encourage participants to surface their impressions and attitudes about affordable housing; to compare, contrast and reconcile their beliefs with the reality, as represented in the video; to make connections between their own neighbors, home, family and circumstances and those of the people in the DVD; and to build community support for broad community access to safe, secure and affordable housing.

Facilitators should be prepared for the possibility that some participants will recount negative experiences. This forum is not intended to refute or negate the reality of a participant's prior experiences, but rather to introduce new possibilities and other realities that dispel and overcome generalizations and stereotypes. A primary goal is to provide compelling data, stories and insights that curb polarizing attitudes and address not-in-my-backyard views about affordable housing.

On confidentiality and mutual respect

Emphasize that what is shared during the forum is confidential and that personal details will not be relayed outside the group. When individuals relate stories about their own experiences or the experiences of others, or about their beliefs and impressions, they are not to be criticized for their perspectives. Encouraging the group to participate in establishing ground rules will help to build an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality.

On creating a climate of candor and safety

It is impossible to validate or invalidate beliefs that have not been expressed. The success of your facilitated forum is contingent upon participants feeling that they can share their opinions and perspectives with complete candor and without judgment. As part of establishing ground rules, please stress that "political correctness" adds no value to the quality of the discussion or the richness of the dialogue. Stress the importance of respecting the opinions of all, especially those opinions that differ from your own.

On affordable housing

Housing is a basic need and housing patterns are pivotal determinants of a city's economy and workforce, physical environment, transportation systems, public health, education and overall quality of life for individuals and families. While some people fear that the presence of affordable housing will lower property values, increase crime rates and create an undesirable environment, research shows such worries are unfounded. It

will be important to provide participants with fact sheets, resources and references to encourage them to educate themselves further about affordable housing and “best practices” for creating homes for people with low to moderate incomes.

On facilitating tough topics

Some of the issues that will arise both before and after the viewing of the video are difficult and may not be regularly discussed in most people's daily lives. Discussing income, wealth, earning gaps and homelessness can evoke a range of reactions and emotions—from denial to discomfort, guilt, blame, avoidance, grief, sadness, etc. There may be reluctance and resistance to sharing negative perceptions about groups that a participant does not identify with or people who have had different experiences for fear of offending others.

In some instances, you, as the facilitator, may be able to share relevant personal experiences as a way to alleviate tension. Sharing your own experiences and feelings can open the door for participants to do the same. However, please avoid responding to participants' opinions, perspectives, stories and comments with one of your own, and/or telling participants how they should respond or react based on your feelings or experiences. Make every effort to respond neutrally and to appear impartial to every participant.

It is imperative to create a safe environment where people feel that they can open up and publicly voice candid thoughts. It is helpful to open the session by asking participants if they have any ground rules or guidelines (suggestions included in the table titled *Discussion Forum Design*) that they would like to establish before engaging in deep discussion. If participants collectively agree on ground rules, then they must adhere to those ground rules and both you and the participants must enforce them.

Discussions of difficult topics about which there may be disagreement frequently create moments of silence. Often, participants are processing and thinking about the subject. Moments of silence are healthy. However, if the silence lingers too long, feel free to rephrase the question, ask if the group requires clarification, provide a clarifying example, or offer another discussion prompt.

For further information about *Souls of Our Neighbors*, please visit our website at www.soulsofourneighbors.org.

To learn more about other topics in the series, i.e., *Souls of Our Students: Appreciating Differences* and *Souls of Our Teachers: An Inside Look at Urban Education*, please go to www.meckmin.org.

Discussion Forum Design

Activity	Facilitator's Instructions	Estimated Time
<p>A. Welcome <i>Facilitator</i></p> <p><u>Facilitator note:</u> Have agenda recorded on flip chart paper in advance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce yourself ▪ Talk about why this discussion forum is being offered; suggested talking points about project goals include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our organization values community engagement in support of safe, stable, accessible and affordable housing choices for everyone. ○ We believe that every community member deserves a place called home. ○ We want to increase understanding that a wide range of housing options across our community is in the best interest of everyone. 	<p>2 minutes</p>
<p>B. Introduction to discussion forum, including objectives, overview and ground rules <i>Facilitator</i></p> <p><u>Facilitator note:</u> Have workshop objectives recorded on flip chart paper in advance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review agenda ▪ Review workshop objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ explore myths and realities of perceptions about affordable housing ○ encourage exchanges of ideas about the challenges and solutions associated with creating affordable housing in neighborhoods throughout our community ○ stimulate dialogue about what it means to be your neighbor's keeper <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued on next page</i></p>	<p>8 minutes</p>

Activity	Facilitator’s Instructions	Estimated Time
	<p><i>Continued from prior page</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish ground rules for how participants will interact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ only one person speaks at a time ○ listen attentively to each other ○ participate with candor, not “political correctness” ○ respect differences and show common courtesies ○ create a safe space for all participants ○ commit that “what is said here, stays here” ○ add other ground rules, if desired 	
<p>C. Pre-viewing reflections <i>On individual basis</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute Pre-DVD Reflections worksheets (Appendix A) to participants ▪ Ask participants to think, individually and silently, about where they lived while growing up and how their home(s), neighbors and neighborhood experiences impacted their lives. ▪ Instruct participants to write a brief description about what having a place to call home means to them, including, if possible, an anecdote that captures the essence of what makes housing/shelter important to them. 	<p>5 minutes</p>
<p>D. Sharing of Reflections <i>Whole group</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite 2 or 3 participants to share their written vignette. ▪ Identify commonalities and themes that emerge from the vignettes. 	<p>5 minutes</p>
<p>E. What We Believe exercise <i>On individual basis</i></p> <p><u>Facilitator note:</u> Distribute pads of Post-it notes to each table</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reiterate the ground rule that honesty, not political correctness, is important, and that participants are not to judge the perspectives of others. ▪ Instruct participants, individually and anonymously, to record words on Post-it notes that they associate with affordable housing and residents of affordable apartments and houses (one word or description per Post-it). <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued on next page</i></p>	<p>10 minutes</p>

	<p><i>Continued from prior page</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instruct participants to affix their Post-it notes to the blank flip chart paper at the front of the room. ▪ Facilitators will sort the Post-its into themes. ▪ Facilitators will briefly summarize and feedback themes reflecting participants’ perceptions. 	
<p>F. DVD Set-up and Viewing Instructions</p> <p><i>Facilitator</i></p> <p><u>Facilitator note:</u> Distribute DVD Observation Sheets (Appendix B) and ensure all participants have an unobstructed view of the screen</p>	<p><u>Script to introduce the DVD:</u></p> <p>We are about to view a short documentary that was created through a partnership between Mecklenburg Ministries, Temple Beth El and Crossroads Charlotte. In it, you will hear from six families who live or have lived in affordable housing. As you view the video, please jot down notes about anything that strikes you about the family members, their stories and comments and the opinions expressed during the on-the-street interviews. Note common themes. Record observations about what you see as well as what you hear. Especially note anything that you see or hear that changes your mind from the perceptions that you recorded during the reflections exercise.</p> <p>Additionally, write down any questions that you have about affordable housing.</p>	<p>3 minutes</p>
<p>G. View Souls of Our Neighbors</p> <p><i>Whole group</i></p>	<p>Scan the audience periodically to observe participants’ reactions to the documentary. During the debrief, you may want to inquire about what you observed.</p>	<p>27 minutes</p>
<p>H. DVD debrief</p> <p><i>Whole group</i></p> <p><u>Facilitator note:</u> Record participant feedback on flip chart as they share their observations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask participants to share their observations about the families featured in the documentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ how would you describe the families? ○ how do your descriptions of affordable housing and the people who live in affordable housing in the documentary compare to your memories of your home, neighbors and neighborhood while growing up? <i>Continued on next page</i> 	<p>20 minutes</p>

Activity	Facilitator’s Instructions	Estimated Time
	<p><i>Continued from prior page</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore themes that emerge for participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ what did you hear that resonated strongly with you? ○ did you hear anything that contradicted any of the beliefs that were recorded on the Post-it notes before we watched the documentary? ○ what were the major themes that you heard throughout the documentary? ▪ Prompt participants with the themes below, if and when needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ homelessness and other options in the absence of affordable housing ○ homes for the working poor ○ bridge during transitions & troubled times ○ hope and sense of belonging ▪ Reactions to closing quote by Pope John Paul II: “A community needs a soul if it is to become a true home for human beings. You, the people must give it this soul.” 	
<p>I. Instruction about small-group work</p> <p><i>Facilitator</i></p> <p><u>Facilitator’s notes:</u> Distribute Five Key Questions for Discussion sheets (Appendix C). Be sure to instruct each group to designate a recorder and a reporter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instruct participants to engage in dialogue at their tables as they respond to the Five Key Questions for Discussion worksheet. ▪ Ask that each table assign a recorder to document in writing the responses of each participant. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued on next page</i></p>	<p>2 minutes</p>

Activity	Facilitator’s Instructions	Estimated Time
<p>J. Five Questions for Discussion <i>Small groups</i></p>	<p>Participants will work at their tables, reviewing each question and sharing their thoughts. The designated recorder at each table will document responses on the Five Questions for Discussion sheet.</p>	<p>20 minutes</p>
<p>K. Reporting <i>Small groups</i></p> <p><u>Facilitator’s note:</u> Record participants’ responses on the flip chart</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask the reporter from each table to summarize responses shared by participants at the table. ▪ Instruct reporters and other participants to avoid repeating ideas already offered, but rather to share only those ideas not already expressed. 	<p>13 minutes</p>
<p>L. Wrap-up <i>Facilitator</i></p> <p><u>Facilitator’s note:</u> Quick Facts about Affordable Housing sheet (Appendix D)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute Quick Facts about Affordable Housing sheet. ▪ Inform participants that they will receive an email with a link to an online evaluation of the experience. Assure them that their responses will be confidential and anonymous. ▪ Direct participants to visit www.soulsofourneighbors.org, which will contain new information and links as of mid-February 2012. The website will promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ multiple opportunities at local agencies to volunteer—as an individual and as a part of a group—and to donate in-kind support ○ “Learn More” links where the public can access to data and a variety of resources and obtain additional information ▪ Encourage participants to share news about the <i>Souls of Our Neighbors</i> DVD and to assemble a group for a viewing and discussion. ▪ Thank everyone for participating. 	<p>10 minutes</p>

Pre-DVD Reflections

For the next few minutes . . .

- Reflect on where you lived while growing up.
 - *What was your home like?*
 - *What was your neighborhood like?*
 - *What was near your home?*
 - *Was it convenient to school? Grocery stores? Libraries? Public transportation? Parks and playgrounds?*
 - *Did you feel safe?*
 - *What else do you remember?*

- Reflect on how the places you've lived, your neighbors and your neighborhood experiences have impacted your life and the choices you've made.

- Reflect on the characteristics that you find essential in a home.

- Write a brief description of what having a place to call home means to you, including, if possible, an anecdote that captures the essence of what makes housing/shelter so important to you.

Souls of Our Neighbors DVD Observation Sheet

■ DVD Themes

Myths and misconceptions about affordable housing:

Challenges of finding and securing affordable housing:

Benefits of living in affordable housing:

Equity in access to affordable housing:

What surprised me:

■ Observations about The Families

Situation / circumstances:

Personal rewards:

Observations about The Families, *continued*

What struck me about the families . . .



The Seibel Family:



The McClendon Family:



The Masters Family:



The Murphy Family:



The Henderson Family:



The Sherrill Family:

Five Key Questions for Discussion

In your small group, review each question and share your responses with fellow participants. Pace your responses and discussions appropriately, so that every member of your small group has an opportunity to express his or her points of view and all five questions are addressed within the time allowance.

Designate one group member as the *recorder* who captures in writing your group's responses and discussion points. Also, designate another group member to be the *reporter* for your whole-group report.

1. What are the myths and realities about the impact of affordable housing on surrounding property values?
2. Who are the people in our community that need affordable housing?
3. What are the factors that cause people to become homeless, or conversely, to become successfully housed?
4. How does homelessness affect the lives of children? How does affordable housing change those impacts?
5. What is the impact on the entire community when affordable housing is available to those in need? The impact of insufficient availability?

Quick Facts On Affordable Housing

1. Did you know that you drive by affordable housing on Providence Road (Gladedale), by South Park Mall (Ashley Square), uptown on 7th Street (First Ward) and near Mountain Island Lake (Rivermere)?
2. Did you know that many people in our community such as bus drivers, customer service reps and healthcare aides typically spend more than 50% of their paycheck on rent and utilities each month? Housing is considered affordable when it costs 30% or less of your income.
3. Did you know that during the 2010-2011 school year, 4,711 children in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools experienced homelessness, for example, spending the night in an emergency shelter or on a neighbor's floor?
4. Did you know that at least 50% of homeless children have failed at least one grade, versus national retention rates of about 10%?
5. Did you know that in 2010 in Charlotte there were more than 800 adults with a disability who had been homeless for more than a year or at least four times in the last three years?

Quick Facts, *continued*

Data Sources and Details for the 'Quick Facts'

Quick Fact #1: Gladedale, Ashley Square & First Ward are Charlotte Housing Authority (CHA) properties (http://www.cha-nc.org/realestate/property_inventory.asp). Rivermere Apartments is a property of The Housing Partnership (<http://www.cmhp.org/Rental-Center>).

Quick Fact #2: Jobs in Charlotte paying \$12/hour include bus drivers, customer service reps and healthcare aides. Calculations of annual pay are estimated as follows: \$12/hour x 50 weeks x 40 hours = \$24,000. Actual take-home pay is less than \$24K after deductions for FICA and taxes.

The average rent in Charlotte is \$822 per month and the average cost of utilities is \$183 per month. Combined, the expense of rent and utilities is \$12,060 per year, which is more than half a gross income of \$24,000. Sources: Bundle.com and Charlotte Housing Authority.

Quick Fact #3: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and other school districts adhere to definitions of *homeless* that are set by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/ci/fed-state-programs/Pages/TitleX.aspx>

The number cited (4,711) is a cumulative count over the 2010-11 academic year, without a duplicative count of students. When one factors in children under school age (ages 0-5)—who according to the U.S. Census make up 37 percent of the County's child population—an estimated 6,500 local children have experienced homelessness.

Quick Fact #4: At least 50% of homeless children have failed at least one grade. Sources: [Educating Homeless Children](#), Foscarinis & McCarthy, 2000; Testimony of Lisa Keegan in 106th Congress, 2nd Session, 2000, eMedia MillWorks.

The percentage of students in grades K-8 who have ever been retained remains steadily between 9-11% from 1996-2007. http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_gra.asp

Quick Fact #5: The Urban Ministry Center—in partnership with local agencies and community volunteers—conducted a “Vulnerability Index,” to identify and count the chronically homeless. That figure is 807. These are the folks who have been homeless for more than a year, or at least four times in the past three years and have a disability. 388 of these individuals had at least one vulnerability factor which places them at higher risk for dying.

<http://www.urbanministrycenter.org/moore-place/location>