

# A Window and a Mirror: Looking Out, Looking In

## **A Case Study of The Saint Paul Foundation: Documenting a Comprehensive, Institution-Wide Commitment to Anti-Racism**

1998-2008

by Alicia Cordes



A window and a mirror: the title of this report was inspired by the process of gathering the information that went into creating it. I was honored when Carleen Rhodes and John Couchman asked me to document The Saint Paul Foundation's 10-year commitment to anti-racism—and impressed when the mandate was to create a “warts and all” report. As a consultant who has worked with a variety of nonprofits and foundations, it was refreshing to receive an assignment with so much boldness attached to it. At their request, I looked out into the community to assess the external effects of The Saint Paul Foundation's efforts, then turned my gaze inward to reflect on the Foundation's internal efforts to create an anti-racist organization and workplace.

This report is the culmination of delving into 10 years' worth of records, collecting and reviewing additional documents, and interviewing the entire Foundation management team as well as numerous Foundation staff and board members. The anti-racism study revealed a highly transparent organization that is truly at the forefront of anti-racism work—an organization willing to learn from its challenges while building on its many successes.

– Alicia Cordes

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## **Executive Summary**

This case study tells the story of The Saint Paul Foundation's past and current efforts to become and remain an anti-racist organization. Both internal and external work toward creating and supporting an anti-racist organization and region will be explored. The case study is historical and qualitative in nature. It details the genesis of The Foundation's formal commitment to ending racism and the steps it has taken both externally and internally, including the creation of the staff anti-racism committee and the Foundation's related accomplishments to date. The information is presented chronologically in an effort to identify a clear period of time—thereby demonstrating a starting point for formal anti-racism efforts and related progress over time as tied to key events.

Furthermore, the study establishes a baseline related to the Foundation's anti-racism efforts and includes next steps to consider for moving forward as an organization committed to ending racism.

## ***Methodology***

Interviews were conducted with 15 Foundation employees—representing a broad mix of departments, job longevity and exempt/non-exempt status—four members (two past and two present) of the board of directors, and all members of the management team. Additionally, all senior managers, as well as several other staff members, provided a wealth of insight and documents pertaining to the Foundation's anti-racism efforts from 1998 to 2008.

## ***Findings***

Between 1998 and 2008, The Saint Paul Foundation made significant efforts and took numerous steps to create an anti-racist organization and region. Findings from the study fall into six thematic areas: accountability to constituents; messages to the community; community initiatives; individual employees; systems and departments; and leadership. While the Foundation has made great strides internally and externally, all those interviewed agreed much work remains to be done.

## I. Introduction

This report tells the story of The Saint Paul Foundation's past and current efforts, from 1998 to 2008, to become and remain an anti-racist organization. It details all Foundation efforts—internal and external—to create an anti-racist workplace and region.

The Saint Paul Foundation recognizes racism as “fostering dominance and control of one group over another based on social definitions of race.”

An anti-racist community is one that acknowledges the pervasiveness of racism at both overt and covert levels, and actively works to combat its various forms. Furthermore, an anti-racist community works to counter racism at all levels: discriminatory beliefs and behaviors of individuals and organizations, the involuntary segregation of racial/cultural groups, institutional and structural barriers to equal opportunity, and negative cultural stereotypes and images.

Though it is often at the individual level that discrimination, prejudice and hatred may be displayed, racism involves much more than interpersonal relationships and feelings. It is also a pervasive part of the institutional structures of society. Institutional racism is seldom acknowledged or confronted. While some discriminatory practices have been eliminated by civil rights changes, racial bias remains a reality in social and institutional life. If racism puts people from communities of color at a disadvantage, the corollary—that racism puts whites at an advantage (also known as “white privilege”)—is seldom acknowledged and remains a mostly-invisible part of institutions and social settings.

As noted in the 2007 Minnesota Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity:

*There is a growing racial fault line running through our state—a fault line that is undermining our future. Minnesota leads the nation in key quality-of-life indicators. Taken as a whole, we are one of the healthiest, wealthiest and best educated. At the same time, there are growing disparities between whites and Minnesotans of color—racial disparities that in some cases are among the worst in the nation (p. 2).*

As noted in the Foundation's Strategic Plan for Grantmaking, “In order to continue creating respect, equity and unity throughout the East Metro area, as well as within the Foundation, it is imperative that issues of racism continue to be addressed. An understanding of the centrality of race and racism must be incorporated into solutions to a variety of community issues, including economic development, strong families, and quality education for all” (Dec. 1998, p. 7).

## II. Background and History (1992-1998)

As early as the late 1980s, when the demographics in the Saint Paul Public Schools began to change dramatically, it became apparent to the Foundation that the face of the entire community was changing. The Foundation came to understand that it would need to embrace these demographics in order to stay relevant and connected to the community. This understanding led to the development of the five Diversity Endowment Funds, now known collectively as **SpectrumTrust**, under the leadership of the former Foundation president Paul Verret. SpectrumTrust is a unique partnership between communities of color and the Foundation, established to engage people of color with organized philanthropy. Since its creation in 1992, SpectrumTrust has built permanent endowments within communities of color throughout Minnesota.

Several years after the development of SpectrumTrust, the Foundation embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process in 1996 to guide its unrestricted grantmaking. An integral part of this effort was the creation of the **Community Advisory Committee**, a 27-member grassroots-based group consisting of members of the board and representatives of major cultural and geographic communities committed to action. It was charged with identifying the region's critical issues that would become the focus of the Foundation's grantmaking in the following decade. As part of its work with the Community Advisory Committee, the Foundation interviewed over 200 people in a series of 19 community meetings that were held throughout the East Metro area. "We actively solicited ideas, opinions and information from people who had not typically been asked," said John Couchman, vice president of grants and program for the Foundation. The Community Advisory Committee met monthly for almost a year to synthesize input from community meetings and review information on community issues of concern to them.

Mr. Couchman spoke about the founding of the Community Advisory Committee: "The board wanted to engage in more of a discussion with the community about how various sectors of the community viewed issues, needs and perspectives, and how they saw the role of the Foundation going forward in those areas." The Community Advisory Committee presented its report to the board in September 1997.

Through community input, the message that came through clearly during the strategic planning process was that how the Foundation does business is just as important as *what it funds*. The final report in 1997 noted: "In the course of conducting community meetings, many community informants were skeptical about the willingness of The Saint Paul Foundation and other foundations to change their practices. In the past, they had been asked to provide input to funders, yet few could point to significant changes that resulted."

In November 1997, the board of directors devoted a two-day retreat to reviewing the Community Advisory Committee's recommended outcomes and strategies that were laid out in the final report. They accepted the recommended outcomes and strategies that included the goal of creating an anti-racist community. These terms were defined as follows:

*Racism fosters dominance and control of one group over another based on definitions of ethnic and cultural status. An anti-racist community is one that acknowledges the pervasiveness of racism and actively works to combat its various forms.*

In an interview for the Minnesota Council on Foundation's *Giving Forum*, Mr. Couchman reflected on the entire community process:

*When we started this process, most people probably thought that the kind of response we would get would be that we should do more of this and less of that. However, the discussion centered more around the fact that the community is changing, the people in the community are changing, and so the way that a foundation engages with the community to help address community issues needs to change as well. People told us that The Saint Paul Foundation, as a community foundation, had a special opportunity and obligation to engage with the community as a partner and a leader ("Changing Focus," Winter 1998).*

Throughout 1998, the Foundation worked on developing, shaping and writing the Strategic Plan for Grantmaking, entitled ***Connections: Commitment to Community***. In November 1998, the board of directors approved the plan, which would directly affect the distribution of The Saint Paul Foundation's Unrestricted and Field of Interest Funds, as well as funding of community initiatives operated by the Foundation. The *Connections* plan was significant, particularly because of the community-based process that was used to advise the Foundation on how it should focus and carry out its grantmaking programs and practices. Also of note during this time period was the board's adoption of a **Staff Diversity Plan** in June 1997, which prompted development of a Diversity Tracking Matrix (a tool that monitored the racial composition of the staff). Furthermore, the board approved the creation of a full Recruitment and Hiring Practices plan with the goal of assuring the Foundation took intentional action in its hiring practices to establish a more diverse workforce.

### **III. Building on Momentum: A Renewed Commitment (1999-2002)**

In 1999, The Saint Paul Foundation began implementation of the newly-adopted strategic grantmaking plan, ***Connections: Commitment to Community***, which focused on four long-range goals:

1. Creating an anti-racist community;
2. Economic development for all segments of the East Metro;
3. Strong families that provide healthy beginnings for children and youth;
4. Quality education for all.

The stated **anti-racism goal** was: To reduce racism at both the individual and institutional level through education, direct action and/or increased dialogue and understanding.

Starting in 1999, implementation of the *Connections* plan relied on five strategies that were initially recommended by the Community Advisory Committee, then adopted by the board of directors of The Saint Paul Foundation. The strategies included:

1. Promote neighborhood decision-making and community-building efforts;
2. Rely on cultural communities as primary resources for developing solutions to community challenges;
3. Adopt a form of leadership that works in partnership with its constituent communities to influence the public agenda;
4. Support holistic ways of strengthening families and communities; and
5. Support efforts that promote the importance of spirituality and the values of personal and social responsibility.

The Saint Paul Foundation also committed to allocating a minimum of 50 percent of its unrestricted grant funds to meeting these goals and strategies.

Also during that year, the **Words Work!** early childhood initiative was established at four Head Start sites in Saint Paul. While Words Work! was not started as a specific anti-racism project, it served and supported children and families from communities of color who comprised 90 percent or more of the population served.

Furthermore, the **Management Improvement Fund**, an initiative of The Saint Paul Foundation which helps build the organizational capacity of nonprofit organizations, adopted the goals and strategies of the strategic grantmaking plan to guide its grantmaking decisions. The Management Improvement Fund paid particular attention to the goal of creating an anti-racist community.

During this time, other foundations also provided funding to support The Saint Paul Foundation's commitment to creating an anti-racist community. In 1998-99, a W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant of \$150,000 was directed to increase philanthropy through the Diversity Endowment Funds (now SpectrumTrust) by developing culturally appropriate strategies for building permanent endowments within communities of color. In 2000, the Bush Foundation awarded The Saint Paul Foundation a \$2 million grant—\$1 million for grantmaking to support the *Connections* goals, including \$250,000 towards creating an anti-racist community, and \$1 million to increase grantmaking from the Diversity Endowment Funds and to provide funds to match new gifts.

In 2000, the board of directors of The Saint Paul Foundation approved a **Diversity and Investment Policy** which established goals to communicate the Foundation's value of diversity to existing and prospective investment managers, periodically survey and discuss the managers' diversity practices, and make a good faith effort to identify and include all qualified minority investment managers for consideration in the search process. The diversity survey asks questions about the firm's ownership, the ethnic composition of the staff, efforts to support minority-owned businesses, mentor programs for individuals of diverse backgrounds, programs designed to enhance the quality of living in ethnically diverse communities, etc. When conducting an investment manager search, all managers invited to the finals are required to complete the diversity survey. Jack Pohl, vice president of investments, also presented the Foundation's Diversity and Investments Policy to the chief investment officers of fifteen of the largest Minnesota foundations and colleges. He encouraged these organizations to consider adopting this approach as one way to implement their organizations' commitment to diversity.

## ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS

In 1999, 2000 and 2001, The Saint Paul Foundation granted a total of \$13.6 million—or 70 percent of its Unrestricted Funds—to programs and projects that addressed *Connections*' four long-range goals. Requests for anti-racism grants from The Saint Paul Foundation's Unrestricted Funds were slow at first but increased over time. An in-depth **Interim Evaluation of the *Connections* Plan** was completed by Margaret Walker and submitted to the board's Grants Policy Committee in November 2001. In the report, it was noted that from January 1999 through April 2001, The Saint Paul Foundation “accepted proposals and made grants that addressed racism at various levels: Individual Racism, Segregation, Institutional Racism, and Cultural Racism. During this time, 26 grants totaling \$1,280,585 were made from Unrestricted and Field of Interest Funds. Four special projects—including Census 2000, the Diversity Endowment Funds, the Clarence Wigington Recognition, and a Racism Assessment/Award—totaled \$850,362 in additional unrestricted Foundation funds during this time.

In Ms. Walker's report, there were also several findings specifically related to the Foundation's commitment to creating an anti-racist organization and region. Some examples include:

- “*Connections* strategies are a constant guiding presence in the operational work of the program team” (p. 4);
- “The influence of *Connections* on hiring and board recruitment is noticed and applauded by members of the community. The composition of the program team provides strong evidence of the Foundation's commitment to *Connections*, according to focus group members” (p. 4);

- “The program team's public leadership on *Connections* is developing incrementally, with much potential for additional growth” (p. 5); however, in many ways, “*Connections*' effectiveness is directly related to the strength of the program team” (p. 10).

In November 2002, in an effort to attract more targeted proposals to address issues of racism in the community, The Saint Paul Foundation issued a **request for proposal (RFP)** that led to eight grants totaling \$200,000 to organizations working on specific anti-racism projects. Seven projects were completed with varying results. One of the findings of an evaluation of the RFP completed by Rainbow Research noted that “programmatic-focused grants tend to be more successful than planning grants and should be the focus of future RFP's.”

Also in 2002, in a move to be more proactive to complement what was occurring in responsive grantmaking, the Foundation organized an **Anti-Racism Advisory Committee** to help shape an appropriate community initiative. This eventually became known as the **Facing Race We're All in This Together™ Initiative**. The group was recruited to serve 12–18 months, but six years later members still meet to advise on the evolving efforts.

#### **IV. Continued Advancement: Internal and External Progress (2003-2007)**

The Community Advisory Committee Report, completed in 1997, stated that, “The community needs models of major organizations taking a public stand against racism and working toward dismantling it.” It went on to state, “By changing its organizational culture and identity to be anti-racist, and by challenging others to change, the Foundation can demonstrate leadership on this issue” (p.7, CAC Report).

A more intentional effort to work at addressing the Foundation’s internal culture and practices, as a complement to the work the Foundation was doing externally, began in 2003 under the leadership of the Foundation’s new president, Carleen Rhodes.

#### **INTERNAL EFFORTS**

The Metropolitan Group was selected to facilitate a full-day staff retreat held on March 24, 2004. This was the first required all-staff training on the subject of racism conducted by the Foundation. Agenda items for the retreat included viewing part of the film *The Color of Fear*, a presentation on “minority” and “majority” identity development, small group discussions on relationships and stereotypes of individuals, and a personal sharing session. Staff member evaluations from the retreat varied widely—from “a good mix of information and opportunities to share with others,” and “it was a high-risk training and a beginning in engaging staff,” to “the film said a lot more in 45 minutes than was said all day about what it [life] is like for persons of color” and “I don’t know the internal issues—do we have internal race issues [at The Saint Paul Foundation]?” Other comments included: “I have heard that the minority staff want to get together to discuss the retreat; this seems inappropriate,” and “I’m

concerned that this [action to address racism] will be forced on us.” Two longtime Foundation employees described their markedly different experiences from the staff retreat:

#### **Employee 1**

*Internally, intentional anti-racism work really started after Carleen [Rhodes] began here [as president of the Foundation] four or five years ago. After the mandatory full-day staff training through the Met Group—which at least got us talking about the reality of racism and white privilege—a working group called the Anti-Racism Task Force was formed. When three individual committees emerged [from the Task Force], that’s when the staff really took ownership [of the anti-racism initiative] and that’s when people started connecting and communicating more effectively.*

#### **Employee 2**

*The pivotal staff event, when the entire office closed for a day, was a day-long retreat. It was the first significant all-staff effort to really focus on anti-racism. Parts of the day were good, the idea was good, but we definitely had the wrong consultants! It was my very first exposure to this topic of white privilege and actually talking about racism. It was a horrible experience...it felt like a ‘blame game’ and really took me in a backwards direction. There was a lot of talk about white privilege, and as I said, it was a complete blame game for many of us who were white. It was horrible. That day of the retreat, there was a lot of resentment, a lot of guilt, and then the facilitators left and everyone felt awkward. The organization didn’t know what to do...how should the fences be mended, how do you address all of that residual tension?*

Numerous conversations ensued. The day had clearly stimulated thought, discussion and some consternation. A number of staff indicated their desire to see the entire film (only a segment of *The Color of Fear* had been shown at the retreat). An additional half-day staff meeting was organized to do just that, and the dialogue continued. Seeing strong interest in learning more, Ms. Rhodes invited staff members who were interested to join a task force she would convene—to both discuss next steps and to determine what should be done to build on the learning day.

The Saint Paul Foundation's **Anti-Racism Task Force**, comprised of 18 interested members of the staff, was officially created on May 19, 2004—less than two months after the full staff retreat that provoked a mixture of emotions across the staff. The Task Force was charged with providing direction and communication—including recommending policy and procedural changes to Foundation leadership—during the design and implementation of the Foundation's internal commitment to combating racism. The first meetings were open discussions. The group members did not feel they were experts on the topic and wanted to do some learning and exploring on their own before they outlined what they wanted to propose as next steps for the entire staff. After five or six meetings centered around exploring their feelings, observations and ideas, the group proposed the establishment of three subcommittees to take on specific tasks. The subcommittees then recruited other staff members and proceeded to develop work plans.

In April 2005, Foundation staff members submitted a proposal to the management team suggesting a new organizational model be established for proceeding with the Foundation's internal racism work. They did so because “[the charge of the Task Force] was not fully integrated into the work of the entire organization,” and some employees felt that the work of the three subcommittees that emerged from the Task Force could be more effective as stand-alone groups with management team engagement. Another employee of more than five years at The Saint Paul Foundation noted:

*Being a member of the original Anti-Racism Task Force was challenging...both in terms of setting up committees and in terms of addressing racism. We had to wrestle with both, so sometimes it was tough as the emotional side of racism had to be dealt with while also focusing on organizing. I was concerned—based my past experience with such efforts—that organizations dealing with racism and bias often tend to set up committees and then say, ‘Now it’s taken care of.’ I was also worried about skimming the surface [of the issue] while never going deeper...or just dealing with individual awareness and never tackling it [racism] at the institutional level. I did appreciate everyone’s commitment and that helped keep me at the table.*

In 2005, the Task Force was disbanded and the three former subcommittees became stand-alone teams: the **Office Environment and Culture Committee**, the **Institutional Policies and Procedures Committee** and the **Learning Opportunities and Training (LOT) Committee**. A different vice president from the Foundation was assigned to “sponsor” each of the three committees; they were then expected to report to and be held accountable by the president.

The stated goals of the **Office Environment and Culture Committee** were to (1) select and display art that represents the community and (2) enhance staff satisfaction through activities and events that illuminate and dismantle racism. It focused its efforts on assembling short-term art shows that reflected the diversity of the community to make the Foundation’s public spaces more inviting and hospitable to the variety of people who visit the offices. Between 2004–2006, four different collections of art were displayed throughout the office. The artist or curator of each show was invited to a staff meeting to provide insight about the art being displayed. The Foundation purchased a piece of art from each show to display permanently. The committee evaluated the success of the short-term art shows and determined that the time volunteered by staff to assist with these showings was not producing the intended learnings and overall staff satisfaction. The committee agreed that it had served its usefulness and agreed to disband after the following process was put in place:

- It is important for the office environment (specifically through artwork and photos) to reflect the diversity of the community.
- Funds should be budgeted every year for the acquisition of new pieces.
- The acquisition should be coordinated by a curator and the president (or president’s designee).

The stated goals of the **Institutional Policies and Procedures Committee** were to (1) be inclusive in recruiting efforts, to track efforts of outreach and assure a diverse pool of candidates for each open position and (2) improve employee retention. Around the time the committee was established, the Foundation retained consulting firm Employers Association (EA) to conduct a review of the Foundation’s human resources practices. It was determined that the committee would work in tandem with EA to examine where and how the Foundation recruits, to inform the development of baseline data through EA’s research, to advocate for supervisory training and hiring procedures with regard to people of color, and to review the standard interview procedures and questions. EA’s review was completed in 2005. It specifically reviewed the Foundation’s track record with regard to employing people of color and found the Foundation’s human resource policies and practices in general to be consistent with best practices in the human resource field. It also recommended that the purpose, responsibility and authority of the Anti-Racism Task Force and its subcommittees be more clearly defined and/or articulated. In response to recommendations from EA, the Foundation conducted training for all its supervisors and revised its performance appraisal process. The Institutional Policies and Procedures Committee has not continued to meet since EA’s report was completed and shared with staff.

## The Learning Opportunities and Training

Committee's vision reads: We will support The Saint Paul Foundation in becoming an anti-racist organization, recognized as inclusive, equitable and welcoming, through a variety of learning opportunities. The Committee planned to provide learning opportunities and trainings that focused on the entire Foundation and built upon previous sessions. LOT goals included increasing the cultural competence of individuals within the organization and providing tools to combat or tackle racism in staff members' personal lives and in the workplace.

The Committee sponsored the following sessions:

### 2004

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- Institutional Racism with Eric Jolly, president of the Science Museum of Minnesota
- The history of the Hmong and their experiences in Minnesota

### 2005

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- All-Staff Anti-Racism Task Force Open House
- Native American Language Reclamation and Boarding Schools
- *M.E.E.T. on Common Ground: Speaking Up for Respect in the Workplace* (2 sessions)

### 2006

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- The Saint Paul Foundation's *New Conversations about Race and Racism*<sup>™</sup> discussion
- *RACE—The Power of an Illusion: The House We Live In* (episode 3)
- The history of the Somali community and their experience in Minnesota

### 2007

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- Challenges and Strengths in the African-American Community
- *The Difference Between Us* (PBS video)
- All-Staff Talking Circle as part of the Science Museum of Minnesota's exhibit, *Race: Are We so Different?*

As part of the recommendation to establish three stand-alone committees, staff also recommended that the management team assume a more active role in understanding the issue of institutional racism and how it affects The Saint Paul Foundation. James Addington and a co-facilitator from the **Minnesota Collaborative Anti-Racism Initiative (MCARI)** facilitated a training for the Foundation's management in September 2006. The purpose of the training was to "foster participation in ongoing racial reconciliation among diverse communities, with a broader goal of understanding and working toward dismantling systemic racism" ([www.mcari.org](http://www.mcari.org)). During the training, the management team discussed numerous topics: definitions of racism; past and present struggles for racial justice; the creation of a framework for race and power; race, power and privilege at The Saint Paul Foundation; where to locate the Foundation on a continuum towards becoming an anti-racist multicultural institution; and two approaches to institutional change (transactional and transformational). The management team considered it a successful educational experience that has continued to inform their thinking.

With regard to **ethnic diversity** on the staff, The Saint Paul Foundation has taken steps to ensure that employee searches actively seek qualified candidates of color. A January 22, 2007 internal memorandum showed recent staff demographics as follows:

	Total Employees	Employees of Color	White Employees
June 30, 2004	66	11 (17%)	55 (83%)
April 15, 2005	62 + 3 open positions	11 (18%)	51 (82%)
March 1, 2006	59 + 5 open positions	10 (17%)	49 (83%)
January 22, 2007	60 + 3 open positions	12 (20%)	48 (80%)

## EXTERNAL EFFORTS

In 2003, under the leadership of the **Anti-Racism Advisory Committee** that was convened the previous year, The Saint Paul Foundation contracted with the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute and with Wilder Research Center. Research was conducted to look into experiences and perceptions of community members in Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties in identifying and dealing with racism. The work plan consisted of analysis of past local and national research; interviews with organizations that were conducting or had completed anti-racism initiatives; statistical analysis of the changing demographics in Saint Paul and surrounding communities; and interviews with more than 1,000 residents of the three counties using several methodologies. The researchers found that the vast majority of people viewed racism as existing at an individual level rather than at an institutional level.

Recommendations included the following:

1. Encourage and support efforts to bring diverse people together in order to improve mutual understanding, acceptance, and respect among all racial groups. Faith communities should take a leadership role.
2. Address racism at the individual level by identifying and communicating through media campaigns ways that all racial groups benefit from and share a mutual self-interest in improved race relations. White community and business leaders may be in the best position to influence improvements in race relations.
3. Address racism at the institutional level in workplaces and schools by providing holistic models of inclusion and incentives for changing institutional behavior.

The research results were widely disseminated throughout the community and were used by The Saint Paul Foundation and its advisory committee to create a community-wide initiative, which became known as the **Facing Race** *We're all in this together*<sup>™</sup> initiative. Based on the findings of the research, it was decided to start where most people were at by focusing on racism at the individual level. Over time, the intention was to engage people in understanding and addressing racism at the institutional and structural level.

A tool developed through the Facing Race initiative called *New Conversations about Race and Racism* was completed. This tool provided a means for groups of friends, family members, co-workers, church members, and other social groups to talk about attitudes and behaviors related to identity, racism and inclusiveness. It was formally introduced to the public in 2006 and was widely used in the community and at The Saint Paul Foundation with all staff and board members, as well as some donors and financial advisors.

In 2006, approximately **50 of the Foundation's donors** attended a *New Conversations* gathering hosted by The Saint Paul Foundation donor relations staff. "Because we [The Foundation] attract donors through professional advisors, they don't necessarily come to the Foundation because of its commitment to community or anti-racism," stated a longtime employee on the senior management team. However, the *New Conversations* gathering was the largest donor relations event to-date that did not utilize an outside speaker or presentation. In 2007, the Foundation marketed *New Conversations* to the corporations with Donor Advised Funds, resulting in one large corporation and two dozen smaller corporations learning about the tools. Additionally, 15 financial advisors who often refer donors to the Foundation participated in a *New Conversations*

group in 2007. One of the participants, a trust officer at a local bank, commented, "Since the session, my thinking about race and racism has changed. As a white woman, instead of pretending that we are all colorblind, I'm working to be more direct when I talk about race. I'm getting over my reluctance to ask questions and address the issue. Though I'm still not as comfortable discussing race with colleagues or clients as I am with friends, I like to think I am making progress."

In 2007, The Saint Paul Foundation held its first annual celebration to formally recognize a Facing Race Ambassador who works to combat racism in the region. **The Facing Race Ambassador Award** was created through funding received from an anonymous donor in 2000. Award nominees are invited to the celebration event to be recognized, and every year one recipient receives the overall award—which includes a grant to advance anti-racism work in the East Metro. The Facing Race Ambassador Award is an example of community awareness-building on the issue of race, provides multiple examples of what people can do to learn about and address ending racism, and celebrates those committed to advancing the region's commitment to creating an anti-racist community.

In 2005, the Foundation also undertook two efforts to better understand and improve the quality of its grantmaking with regard to communities of color. GrayHall completed an **analysis of grantmaking from 1994–2004** at The Saint Paul Foundation, primarily to determine the "number and amount of Foundation grants awarded to organizations led by and primarily serving people of color" (p. iii). To meet the criteria for this analysis an organization had to have either a majority of its board members or a majority of senior management from a community of color. In addition, either a majority of people served needed to be from a community of

color or the organization's mission statement needed to specifically target a community of color for service. The report analyzed the five years prior to enactment of the anti-racism goal (1994–1999) in comparison with the first five years of grantmaking *after* adoption of the anti-racism goal (2000–2004). Findings showed that during the 10-year period:

- 19 percent of all grants awarded by the Unrestricted Field of Interest Funds went to organizations of color.
- The total amount granted to all applications from Unrestricted Field of Interest Funds was approximately \$58 million.
  - More than \$6 million—or 11.5 percent—was awarded to organizations of color (p. iii)
- The Foundation's grantmaking to organizations of color was above average compared to national and state giving statistics.
- Grant dollars awarded to organizations in communities of color were significantly higher in the second half of the 10-year period—a 144 percent increase—than in the first half.
- A higher percentage of grant applications from organizations in communities of color were funded in the second half of the 10-year period. (p. iv)

Recommended actions for the future included the following:

- Maintain elements that have been successful in facilitating the distribution of grants to communities of color.
- Use this analysis as a benchmark and follow it with another grant analysis in five years.
- Pay close attention to application denial rates to avoid their being perceived as loss of support by organizations or communities of color. (p. v)

On a similar note, the Center for Effective Philanthropy completed a **Grantee Perception Report** for The Saint Paul Foundation in July 2005, comparing the responses to those from other foundations throughout the nation. Of the 121 grantees surveyed, 81 completed responses were received—a 67 percent response rate. The report noted that “a larger than typical proportion of survey respondents identified themselves as people of color” (p. 5). The Foundation was “rated highly relative to other foundations in its impact on and understanding of grantees’ local communities, and in open-ended comments, grantees often cited appreciation for the Foundation’s ‘leadership’ in their communities” (p. 5).

In 2007, The Saint Paul Foundation completed the ninth year of its 10-year commitment to its **strategic plan for grantmaking**. In those nine years, the Foundation authorized grants from its Unrestricted Funds of \$3 million toward addressing its goal of creating an anti-racist community. In addition, it used \$5 million of its Unrestricted Funds and raised an additional \$1.4 million from a variety of other sources to help finance community initiatives such as SpectrumTrust, Facing Race and others that are focused on helping to achieve this goal.

Every year, one of the quarterly issues of *Enrichments*, a Foundation publication for its key audiences, is dedicated to issues of diversity and racism. The letters from the president have been honest and straightforward in tone: “We [the Foundation] struggled with the editorial planning of this edition of *Enrichments* [on the topic of racism] because we knew it would mean giving a voice to some and not to others. My hope is that you, the reader, accept our honesty and forgive our ignorance. I invite you to read, to think and to struggle with us as we continue to face a very tough issue” (Winter 2006); and “We hope this issue [on race] inspires you to have courageous conversations about racism and take action to break down barriers. We encourage you to share your stories with others as a way to begin a dialogue of your own about race” (Spring 2007). Examples of headlines included “Honesty and Ignorance: Struggling to Talk About Racism” (Winter 2006); and “Race: Varied Approaches to a Far-Reaching Topic” (Spring 2007). In addition to dedicating one issue to addressing racism each year, every issue of *Enrichments* strives for diverse perspectives and raises issues of racial disparities when appropriate.

## **V. The Current State of the Anti-Racism Initiative (2008)**

The Saint Paul Foundation remains committed to its anti-racism work in 2008. Both internal and external efforts continue to be expanded, and the intentionality of the Foundation’s anti-racism work is demonstrated in multiple ways.

### **INTERNAL EFFORTS**

#### ***The Learning Opportunities and Training (LOT) Committee***

Originally one of the subcommittees of the Anti-Racism Task Force, the LOT Committee continues to be an important and valued stand-alone group according to the vast majority of Foundation employees interviewed. Attendance at LOT-sponsored events is often optional, but between 30–90 percent of the staff typically participates. So far in 2008, the LOT Committee has sponsored the following two events:

- The Dakota War and the State of Minnesota’s Sesquicentennial
- Hispanics and Latinos in Our Community

In addition, an anti-racism Resource Area—maintained at the Foundation by the LOT Committee—provides a comprehensive collection of resources on issues of racism for use by staff members.

#### ***Expectations of staff***

Today, every employee of The Saint Paul Foundation must include a written personal goal for addressing racism and increasing cultural competence in his or her annual performance review. The supervisor and employee discuss progress in achieving the goal as part of the annual performance review conference. There are also numerous opportunities presented to employees to foster anti-racism engagement. The time staff members dedicate to participating in anti-racism efforts is encouraged and promoted.

### ***Recruiting practices***

By making a conscious effort to cast its net wider, The Saint Paul Foundation ensures that all people are included and welcome to apply for jobs. It is clear that this practice is not about achieving a quota or hiring for a certain ethnicity. Staff members have participated in seminars on how to interview people who aren't like them to increase their skills in this area. Often The Saint Paul Foundation will extend the application deadline for a job—not specifically in order to hire someone of color, but in an effort to ensure that the awareness of openings is broad and the pool of candidates is truly inclusive.

### ***Staff and board composition***

As of April 30, 2008, the demographics of the staff and board of directors at The Saint Paul Foundation were:

- 20 board members total
  - 5 board members of color (25%)
  - 15 white board members (75%)
- 61 total employees + 8 open positions
  - 15 staff of color (25% of total employees, not including open positions)
  - 46 white staff members (75% of total employees, not including open positions)

## **EXTERNAL EFFORTS**

### ***Community initiatives***

The early childhood literacy program, **Words Work!**, has made constant strides to have Head Start staff members reflect the populations served in order to be sensitive to and aware of different cultures. The meal menus continue to reflect culturally appropriate foods—avoiding some while intentionally including others. **Words Work!** offers books in the languages that children speak at home, and literacy kits that are sent home to parents are also home-language specific. Furthermore, The Saint Paul Foundation

and Head Start continue to grow the **Words Work!** program today by having Head Start staff members participate in *New Conversations* in 2008. According to one Head Start teacher with more than 30 years of early childhood experience:

*The dedication and investment to this project and the children and ethnically diverse families in our community has been huge [from The Saint Paul Foundation]. The Saint Paul Foundation walks the talk...they tell us that they want us to use our most effective practices to better each child. The Foundation met us where we were at and helped us grow. Our whole outlook and practice in how we do business in the community has really changed through working with The Saint Paul Foundation.*

The Facing Race anti-racism initiative and its widely-used tool for engaging people in the community—helping them talk about and understand racism—continues to build momentum. To date, nearly 3,000 people have participated in these *New Conversations*. The Foundation is also beginning to pilot an approach for organizations to use to better understand and address institutional racism; this will serve as a complement to its *New Conversations* tool for individuals. The Foundation is partnering with a group of predominantly white religious congregations to create an inter-faith learning table on anti-racism to understand and address the issue within their congregations and denominations. Opportunities to start a second institutional learning table in another sector of the community are currently being explored.

The second annual **Facing Race Ambassador Award** ceremony was held in April 2008 and built upon the success of the first annual award. Approximately 200 people attended the award event.

**SpectrumTrust** has been addressing community needs in communities of color since its creation in 1992. The Saint Paul Foundation has provided continued leadership and financial support to “improve the quality of life for Minnesota’s communities of color through building relevant and long-lasting philanthropic resources that promote social justice and cross-cultural understanding.” Several years ago, the program was restructured to address some of the concerns of SpectrumTrust, resulting in the Multicultural Endowment becoming a stand-alone Endowment instead of the umbrella Endowment under the banner SpectrumTrust Council. The other four endowments are: Asian Pacific Endowment, El Fondo de Nuestra Comunidad, Pan African Community Endowment and The Two Feathers Endowment. The combined market value of these five permanent endowments now stands at approximately \$6 million, and collectively they have made grants totaling \$3.75 million to support projects within communities of color since 1996.

A new director of SpectrumTrust was hired in January 2007. This position had been vacant for slightly more than two years with the Foundation providing support through consultants assigned to each respective Endowment. With this new leadership and attention, the Endowments have held strategic planning sessions, developed work plans, participated in group training sessions, and are recruiting new advisory board members.

### *Grantmaking*

The tenth and final year of the strategic plan for grantmaking is in 2008. Wilder Research Center has been retained to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the results and lessons learned through implementing the plan, including the goal of creating an anti-racist community. Additionally, the Center for Effective Philanthropy has once again completed a Grantee Perception Report in 2008 to determine how grantees view the Foundation and its approach to grantmaking. Of the 103 grantees surveyed, 77 completed responses were received—a 75 percent response rate. Once again, a larger than typical proportion of survey respondents identified themselves as people of color (p. 86). Grantees described the Foundation as “thorough,” “hands on,” “fair,” and “instrumental for success.” Ratings on almost all measures improved since a similar survey in 2005 (p. 51).

### *Investment practices*

As of April 2008, The Saint Paul Foundation is using the services of one minority-owned investment firm: Earnest Partners, based in Atlanta. Jack Pohl, vice president of investments, recently completed an RFP process for a new investment consulting firm. The second section of the RFP asked six questions about the firm’s diversity practices. The Foundation hired Summit Strategies Group, and a key member of the consulting team assigned to the Foundation is a person of color. In the past, Mr. Pohl has required the Foundation’s auditors to fill out the diversity survey. In 2008, the Foundation will issue an RFP for new auditors which includes a series of questions regarding the firm’s diversity practices.

In 2007, a group of 15 Minnesota foundations and colleges had its annual gathering and, again, Mr. Pohl shared the Foundation's Investment and Diversity Policy with them and encouraged others to use it. Additionally, he presented this policy to the country's 25 largest community foundations at a national conference in January 2008. As a former Foundation board member noted, "The board's Investment Committee took great pains to add a diversity component to its outreach efforts. It's real and meaningful...simply by asking the questions of the vendors about developing diversity initiatives, the Committee makes the point about how important it is to the Foundation. It also begs the question about why the Foundation doesn't have a comprehensive set of vendor practices...this is an overdue subject."

### *Communications*

The spring 2008 edition of *Enrichments* was once again devoted to the issue of racism. In addition to highlighting the Second Annual Facing Race Ambassador Award, it featured perspectives on racism from an administrator of a local school district, a financial advisor, a donor and a community resident. Additionally, the Foundation's website features images, language and overall content that is reflective of all communities it serves.

### *Strategic planning*

In 2008, The Saint Paul Foundation and its statewide partner, Minnesota Community Foundation, are focusing their collective resources to address the most pressing issues facing Minnesota and the region through implementation of a new **strategic plan**. A continuing commitment to addressing issues of racism is embedded throughout the plan. Examples include the following:

- Equity is one of five core values identified through the planning process as driving the work of the two foundations—working to eliminate racism and discrimination.
- One of four goals of the strategic plan is to advance progress on social issues, including racial disparities.
- Another goal of the strategic plan is to strengthen the capacity of donors, nonprofits and communities to achieve their goals. One of the objectives identified under this goal is to broaden the SpectrumTrust program to support philanthropy in and for communities of color.
- Another goal of the strategic plan is to transform the organization for greater impact. One of the objectives identified under this goal is to update the organizational commitment and approach to combating racism.

In 2008, additional steps will be taken to begin developing action plans for implementing the new strategic plan.

## VI. Summary of Overarching Trends and Recommendations

### TRENDS

Overall, The Saint Paul Foundation's 10-year commitment to creating an anti-racist organization and region has resulted in visible and significant results. The staff and board demographics are more ethnically diverse in 2008 than in 1998; large percentages of the Foundation's Unrestricted Funds go to support community efforts and projects working to end racism; the public and donors are engaged as accountable partners in ending racism; and selecting investment managers is done in a racially-conscious way. Perhaps most importantly, the Foundation is intentionally inviting scrutiny of its anti-racism practices, by openly sharing the findings and lessons learned with staff, donors, constituents, local communities and national colleagues.

At the same time, there is much work left to do, and the awareness level and personal feelings about The Saint Paul Foundation's commitment to anti-racism efforts vary widely across the organization. Similarly, while all members of the Foundation's management team articulated that creating an anti-racist community and organization was a goal of the Foundation, the level of understanding of what that meant—particularly with regard to their individual roles for **leading** and **modeling**—varied widely. Four employees commented on the status of anti-racism efforts at The Saint Paul Foundation:

#### Long-term employee

*The staff is committed to demonstrating that it's anti-racist, but probably no one thinks about being anti-racist in every single instance of daily work, such as printing checks, filing grantee folders, etc. Certainly staff members vary in how much they think about anti-racism.*

#### Long-term senior staff member

*It seems that throughout the organization—even among those who might have initially said that focusing on anti-racism is like operating a 'quota system'—[people] have grown tremendously and matured, and truly appreciate the Foundation's commitment to this issue.*

#### Employee of 2+ years

*Everyone is at a different place when it comes to racism and prejudice, and I admit that I wonder if a lack of self-awareness and 'not knowing what you don't know' is a problem at The Saint Paul Foundation for some staff members.*

#### Employee of 5+ years

*Even during this day and age, we still desperately need to remind ourselves to be respectful and to not abuse the idea of asking people of color to be experts.*

Following are additional overarching trends that came out of the study.

#### **Accountability to constituents**

Based on interviews with staff and board members, as well as extensive review of internal Foundation documents, it is crucial to close the 10-year loop with the original Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and all individuals and community groups that participated in meetings from 1998 through 2008. A past board member stated:

*I honor the Foundation for maintaining its commitment [to anti-racism]. I've seen other efforts in the community, and I think collaborations and partnerships in the long-term are the key to success. The more we can clarify our specific and expected outcomes, the better off we'll be. It's a huge, long-term, abstract goal to end racism; we need to define our specific agenda. Opportunity favors the well-prepared!*

### *Messages to the community*

As stated previously, one of the most significant trends that came out of this study is that *how* The Saint Paul Foundation does its work is just as important as *what* it does and whom it funds. When this case study was commissioned, the instructions were to make all of the Foundation's anti-racism actions, decisions and efforts visible to the public and all constituents—and to not omit, underscore or glorify perceived successes or failures. A member of the Foundation's management team noted:

*I would prefer not to talk about institutional racism prior to feeling like we have a strong handle on personal racism. I'd like to see us really think about anti-racism as we pick new issues for our strategic goal areas and communicate them to the community. I remain hopeful that we can continue to figure out a good multi-year strategy and focus on our continuing commitment to making a difference and doing the serious work [of ending racism] in the community.*

### *Community initiatives*

Just as recipients of the Foundation's unrestricted funding are held accountable for how they use the funds, so too must the Foundation be held accountable for how its community initiatives are initiated and how they are carried out. Another member of the Foundation's management team added:

*I'm not satisfied that the Foundation is doing enough... not engaging the leaders from communities of color...a good facilitator can handle all kinds of meetings, and using the connections, ideas and dialogues from the leaders of communities of color could be incredibly beneficial for The Saint Paul Foundation.*

### *Individual employees*

The personal anti-racism and cultural competence goal—as part of each person's annual performance review—is just a starting place. Moving forward, every employee needs to consider how his or her goals can grow over time to be more meaningful and to create more of an impact. As a current board member noted:

*All employees have so much on their plates, but as an organization we have to find the right prioritization and energy to make sure that addressing racism remains one of our underlying principles...it's not a single project or a once-a-year thing...and every person has to believe that.*

### *Systems and departments*

The Learning Opportunities and Training (LOT) Committee is an example of how well the Foundation's commitment to anti-racism plays out in daily work. While no budget exists to fund LOT presentations, a member of the LOT Committee states that the vice president who works with LOT has always secured funds needed to underwrite LOT's activities. However, without a firm annual budget for LOT-related activities, the prioritization of anti-racism is less clear. As an employee with more than five years of experience said in an interview:

*The work of the Learning and Opportunities (LOT) Committee seems to have a funny place within the organization...since there does not seem to be any other professional development plan for staff, is LOT the place where that happens? Also, the LOT Committee has no recognizable budget...we're always up in the air, yet it seems 'assumed' that we will function. Where does that leave us?*

## *Leadership*

Ideally, internal and external efforts to combat racism should be the responsibility of all employees.

However, due to the status of senior managers as heads of divisions or departments, they seem to have more authority and perceived accountability when it comes to leading, modeling or enforcing The Saint Paul Foundation's commitment to anti-racism. While the Foundation's board of directors is the final authority for external efforts such as grantmaking and investments, accountability for some internal efforts seems a bit unclear. Interviews with staff and board members suggest that going forward, the success of The Saint Paul Foundation's anti-racism efforts will rest heavily in how deeply the entire organization commits to the issues, and how strongly anti-racism work is prioritized and kept at the forefront by board members and the Foundation's management. A past board member commented:

*We as a Foundation need to examine whether or not our organizational practices—top to bottom—are extremely accessible and welcoming of diverse cultures and ethnicities. We need to understand these things while staying on-purpose with our work.*

## **Recommendations**

As the work continues, it is important that the Foundation continue its commitment to model leadership for addressing the issue of racism through an internal organizational focus while it also works with the larger community to address the issue externally. Specific activities for prioritizing The Saint Paul Foundation's commitment to anti-racism might include:

1. Determine which types of **support, education and resources** must be put into place so that every staff member of The Saint Paul Foundation can fully understand, appreciate and act in a matter that confirms his or her individual commitment to advance the ongoing anti-racism work of the Foundation. Putting these in place will help lead to a collective staff commitment.
2. Clarify **specific and expected outcomes** of The Saint Paul Foundation's anti-racism efforts. Any and all communication that can be done to define something as seemingly abstract as "ending racism" will benefit constituents, employees, grantees, donors and communities alike.
3. Continue to **demonstrate transparency and honesty** within the organization and throughout the community on the issue of racism.
4. Carry out the **Foundation-wide commitment to ending racism** as outlined in the new strategic plan (April 2008). Communicating these efforts with the public could further enhance The Saint Paul Foundation's image as an organization that learns for and with the community.
5. Continue **funding evaluations** of The Saint Paul Foundation's anti-racism efforts in the future.

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