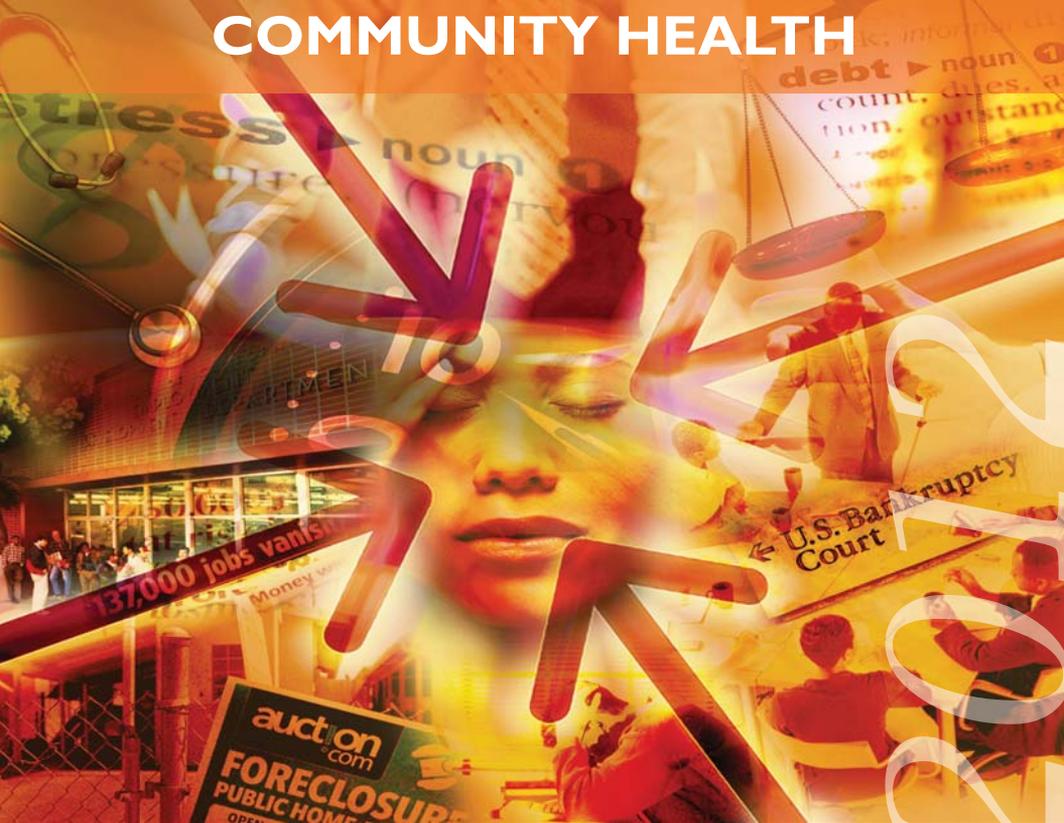


FROM WRECKAGE AND RUIN... THE ROAD TO REBIRTH: Days of Dialogue A DAY OF DIALOGUE



ON THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND
COMMUNITY HEALTH



Leap Day, February 29

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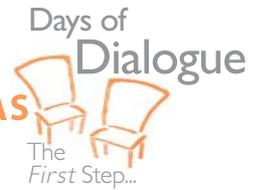
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message

A LETTER FROM AVIS RIDLEY-THOMAS



Welcome to today's important Days of Dialogue gathering – "From Wreckage and Ruin ...the Road to Rebirth: A Day of Dialogue on the Economic Crisis and Community Health!"

Our current economic plight feels very much like a Phoenix slowly rising from the ashes of our country's economic disaster.

We are gradually emerging from our nation's Great Recession. But as recovery arrives, little by little, what will it mean for our diverse communities? The impact of the economic crisis struck many communities and their residents far worse than others. What has been the effect on the health of our communities?

These are some of the questions we will examine and talk about together during our dialogue.

By now, we all recognize we share a common plight. We know we all must take responsibility for making our communities stronger and more cohesive. Our struggles affect our individual health. Our individual health impacts our families, communities and our local economy.

We have been connected by economic crisis. To achieve a productive recovery that will have lasting impact for our communities and ourselves we must stay connected.

In his Letter from Birmingham Jail, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

Our dialogue will allow us to focus inward without losing sight of our paramount external concerns: family, home, community, workplace, school and place of worship.

Dialogue is our first step in examining these issues together. Dialogue is a means for us to explore the impact of outside forces on our lives and the life of our communities.

Dialogue enables us to assess the commitment we are prepared to make to move ourselves, and our institutions and communities, forward to, hopefully, more stable and prosperous times.

Today marks the beginning of this important dialogue process. Throughout Los Angeles, social media platforms will buzz with the tone of our discussion and allow today's dialogue to expand throughout our communities and continue on in the days ahead.

Facebook, Twitter, and our Days of Dialogue Blog, provide us with the technological mechanisms for ongoing interaction and feedback as we grapple with our present economic and community health challenges, and search together for opportunities for our communities to rise together as one.

"The Road to Rebirth" is our path. Whatever difficulties we face, in advancing our families and ourselves, we face the companion challenges of working to reshape our institutions.

Through dialogue, we will take the first step in our journey down the "Road to Rebirth" together.

In dialogue,

Avis Ridley-Thomas
Co-Convener
Days of Dialogue

Days of Dialogue:

A Rich and Vibrant Local Tradition

Today's Day of Dialogue emerges from a tradition of mobilizing civic dialogue that goes back for many years. Some of the highlights from this history include the events and topics listed below and throughout these pages.

[T I M E L I N E]

CIVIC DIALOGUE TOPICS HAVE INCLUDED:

2012

■ 20TH ANNUAL EMPOWERMENT CONGRESS SUMMIT ■

2011

■ EMPOWERMENT CONGRESS SUMMIT: EMPOWERED TO REALIZE THE DREAM ■

2010

■ ANNUAL EMPOWERMENT CONGRESS ■

Issue Overview: The Economic Crisis and Challenges to Community Health

The dialogue today is a chance to explore our views around the impacts, causes, and potential solutions to the recent economic crisis and the resulting challenges to community health and general well-being. To stimulate your thinking about these issues, we provide a few examples of impacts, causes, and potential solutions that exist at the level of the individual, community-based organizations, and large institutions such as government and large corporations.

Impacts

Some examples of impacts on individuals

- More people out of work
- Increased emotional strain within families
- People discouraged from looking for work
- More difficulty in getting loans or credit
- Lower family income makes it harder to maintain standard of living
- Reduced savings/investments
- It's harder to get needed medical care and medicine

Some examples of impacts on community-based organizations (e.g. neighborhood groups, local non-profits, small businesses)

- Increased demand for assistance by people in need
- Decline in contributions from donors
- Increased competition for limited government funds
- Many local businesses are struggling or have had to close down
- Some businesses and non-profits have gotten much smaller or shut down
- Increased frustration because it is hard to adequately fulfill mission
- Some community needs are simply unmet

Some examples of impacts on large institutions, such as government agencies and large corporations

- Fewer resources available for government to perform its tasks and fund programs
- Increasing budget deficits that burden the entire economy and make it more difficult to improve things in the future
- Significant decrease in public confidence that government and large corporations will behave appropriately
- Declining profits for businesses and corporations as economic activity declines
- Increasing mistrust of our major financial institutions

[T I M E L I N E]

■ RAMPART/WESTLAKE LAPD COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ■

■ EMPOWERMENT CONGRESS YOUTH SUMMIT ■

2009

■ PACIFIC PALISADES HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH DIALOGUE ON STREET RACING
AND SCHOOL SAFETY ■

■ BUDGET SUMMIT: WE ARE THE SECOND DISTRICT EMPOWERED FOR CHANGE ■

■ SUSTAINING QUALITY SERVICE AFTER THE BUDGET CRISIS ■

Causes

Some examples of ways the crisis was caused by actions by individuals.

- People not knowing how to manage their personal finances
- Not enough emphasis on saving and long term financial planning
- Excessive consumerism leads to too much spending on unnecessary things.
- Not holding politicians accountable for their decisions affecting the economy and community

Some examples of ways the crisis was caused by actions by community-based organizations

- Not anticipating the economic decline or adequately responding to it
- Inadequate coordination of services and activities
- Failure to provide financial education for those who need it

Some examples of ways the crisis was caused by actions of large institutions

- Inappropriate government oversight of financial institutions
- Reckless manipulation of investments by Wall Street bankers
- Careless approval process for home mortgages that enabled many unqualified buyers to get big mortgages
- Corporations that focus on profit to the exclusion of other values
- State and federal government's inability to balance their budgets
- Unfair and/or unwise taxation that undermines good economic incentives

Solutions/Actions Steps

Examples of actions that individuals can take that contribute to the road to rebirth

- Take specific steps to become more financially literate
- If necessary, get training for job skills needed to improve your personal economic situation
- Be more conservative in what you buy and learn to distinguish between needs and wants
- Start saving more money and make it a higher priority
- Volunteer more time to help groups working to meet community needs
- Be involved in efforts to make public officials more accountable to community needs
- Urge organizations you belong to—faith groups, clubs, associations, sororities, etc.—to make more effort to assist the needy

[T I M E L I N E]

2008

■ THE SUNLAND TUJUNGA COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ■

2007

■ THE POWER OF PEOPLE: EDUCATE, ENGAGE, EMPOWER (JANUARY 20, 2007) ■

■ WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER HEALTH CARE" (PARTNERSHIP WITH CALIFORNIA SPEAKS) ■

■ LAUSD SECONDARY TRANSITION EDUCATION PROGRAM (STEP) ■

2006

■ CONFRONTING VIOLENT CRIMES: OUR COMMUNITIES. CONTINUING CHALLENGE (AUGUST 24, 2006) ■

Examples of actions that community-based organizations can take that contribute to the road to rebirth

- Create programs that highlight the need for increased financial literacy
- Create neighborhood banking and investment groups to assist community development
- Enhance public awareness of the importance of supporting locally-owned businesses
- Host forums where different segments of the community can come together to explore ways to cooperate and support each other

Examples of actions that large institutions can take that contribute to the road to rebirth

- Create a more fair and simple tax code
- Reduce government budget deficits
- Make corporations more sensitive to needs and concerns of local communities
- Increase corporate donations to worthy organizations that meet community needs
- Focus on programs which stimulate job creation and encourage more companies to hire new workers
- Continue efforts to make the health care system more effective and cost-efficient

[T I M E L I N E]

- CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSES TO 9/11: CONFRONTING OUR FEARS, WORKING TOGETHER, MOVING AHEAD (SEPTEMBER 11, 2006) ■
- EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND SUCCESSES (OCTOBER 27, 2006) ■
 - DIALOGUE ON DISCRIMINATION IN THE LOS ANGELES CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT (FEBRUARY 23, 2007) ■
- IMMIGRATION, RACE, & JOBS: VALID JUSTIFICATION FOR INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT (OCTOBER 6, 2006) ■

Discussion Questions



This Day of Dialogue on the economic crisis and community health is organized in four phases.

Phase 1: Who are we? — *Who is in this conversation and how do we make our time together most useful?*

Phase 2: Where are we? — *What have been the most significant **impacts** of the recent economic crisis on us and our community's health?*

Phase 3: How did we get here? — *What are the key **causes** of the economic and community health crisis, in terms of behaviors among individuals, community based groups, and large institutions?*

Phase 4: How do we move forward? — *What are the most important realistic actions and **solutions** we and others need to prioritize so we can best move forward toward a healthy community?*

For each phase, we have included a number of questions. If time is short, it is most important to address the questions in bold.

[T I M E L I N E]

- IS OUR COMMUNITY HEALTHY? ENERGIZING & MOBILIZING AROUND PREVENTION, ACCESS & EDUCATION (2006) ■
- SCHOOLS, COMMUNITIES & SAFETY IN SOUTH L.A. (2006) ■
- SCHOOLS, COMMUNITIES, AND STUDENT SAFETY: VIEWPOINTS FROM SANTEE HIGH (MAY 4, 2006) ■
- 2006**
- SEEKING APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO PREDATORY PRACTICES IN THE SUB-PRIME LENDING MARKET (APRIL 12, 2006) ■

Phase I: Who are we? — *Who is in this conversation and how do we make our time together most useful?*

Part 1: Introductions

- What is your name?
- Where you live or work in LA county
- Why did you come to this meeting today?

Part 2: Family Background Questions

- **When you were growing up, what were your expectations about how you would fare economically?** How would you describe your economic circumstances of your family and neighborhood?
- What were you taught about what you needed to do to ensure you have a comfortable financial future? Was there any guidance that was particularly useful or particularly wrong?

For organizational events only

- What were your expectations about how your organization would handle difficult economic times? How did you come to those expectations?

Part 3: Making Sure Our Time Together is Most Useful

- **Of the ground rules that were presented as useful for dialogue, which of them stands out to you as the most important for us all to focus on?**
- Besides the ground rules we have seen, what are the most important things we all need to keep in mind so that our conversation stays both honest and respectful?

Part 4: (only if there is time) The Context for Our Discussion

- Are there concerns you have about our community's economic situation and community health that are sometimes overlooked but you hope are part of our discussion today?
- What are the issues related to this topic that are hard to discuss, but important to discuss if we are to be honest about what our community is facing?

[T I M E L I N E]

2005

- A DAY OF DIALOGUE ON THE DEVIN BROWN SHOOTING (2005) ■
- HOMELESSNESS: OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND? (2005) ■
- IS OUR COMMUNITY HEALTHY? ENERGIZING AND MOBILIZING AROUND PREVENTION, ACCESS, & EDUCATION (OCTOBER 1, 2005) ■
- VIOLENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS: A DIALOGUE AMONG PRINCIPALS (JANUARY 14, 2005) ■
- VIOLENCE ON WESTERN AVENUE: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH (AUGUST 12, 2005) ■

Phase 2: Where are we? — *What have been the most significant impacts of the recent economic crisis on us and our community's health?*

Part 1: Impact of the Great Recession

- **What are the primary ways that you have seen the impact of the recession on you and your family and friends? On your neighborhood or community based business or organizations? On large institutions - such as government agencies or large businesses - that matter to you?**
- Even though most of the impact is likely negative, have there been any positive impacts of the recession for you, people you know, or institutions you care about?

For organization focused events:

- What have been the primary negative impacts on this organization of the recent economic and community health crises that you have directly experienced? Have there been any positive impacts, even if they are small? How, if at all, have the recent challenges affected how you feel about the organization?

[T I M E L I N E]

■ WHERE IS THE SAFETY NET? (2005) ■

2004

■ STATUS OF EFFECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND POLICE REFORM (2004) ■

2003

■ AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: THE NEXT FOUR YEARS (2003) ■

■ MAKING A DIFFERENCE: FROM WORDS TO ACTION (2003) ■

2002

■ FROM TRAGEDY TO TRANSFORMATION: L.A. AFTER 9/11 (2002) ■

Phase 3: How did we get here? — *What are the key **causes** of the economic and community health crisis, in terms of behaviors among individuals, community based groups, and large institutions?*

Part 1: Causes based on the actions of individuals

- Looking at yourself, people you know, and folks generally, were there things that individuals did or did not do that you think helped bring about the recent crisis, or made it worse than it needed to be?

Part 2: Causes based on the actions of community organizations

- **Were there important breakdowns that happened within communities (e.g. within neighborhoods, by local businesses, by community-based organizations) that really should not have happened and that made it difficult to sustain a healthy community within an economic downturn?**

Part 3: Causes based on the actions of large institutions

- What are the main actions (or inactions) that took place by government entities that caused the economic crisis or the resulting challenges to community well-being and health?
- What were the main actions (or inactions) that took place by the corporate sector that caused the economic crisis or the resulting challenges to community well-being and health?

For organization focused events:

- Were there key decisions taken by our organization that affected how well it dealt with the recent challenges to overall economic vitality and organizational health and well-being?

Part 4: (only if there is time) Exploring Surprises and Common Ground

- When other people were talking about their view of things that individuals did that helped cause our problems, did you hear anything you had not thought of, especially that applies to your or your family? What were the biggest surprises for you in the conversation? What were the most significant points of agreement about the causes?

[T I M E L I N E]

■ REMEMBERING THE RIOTS (2002) ■

■ UNITED COMMUNITIES TO STOP VIOLENCE (2002) ■

2001

■ CARSON TOWN HALL ON SECESSION FROM LAUSD (2001) ■

■ CARSON UNITY DIALOGUE: UNITY STARTS WITH YOU (2001) ■

■ COMING TOGETHER IN A TIME OF CRISIS (2001) ■

■ HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FAMILIES & CHILDREN: SAN GABRIEL VALLEY (2001) ■

■ HOUSING DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION, FAIR HOUSING COUNCIL (2001) ■

Phase 4: How do we move forward? — *What are the most important realistic actions and **solutions** we and others need to prioritize so we can best move forward toward a healthy community?*

Part 1: What actions are needed by individuals, community groups, and large institutions

- What are some behavior changes from individuals that are realistic, but that would represent a substantial change for the better?
- What are the behavior changes we need to see done by neighborhoods, churches, non-profits, local businesses and other community-based organizations?
- What are the most important changes that we need to see done by: Government agencies? Decision-makers who control large companies?

For organization focused events:

What are the most important steps our organization needs to take to more effectively cope with the recent crisis in the economy and community health?

Part 2: Connections between different solutions

Are there changes at one level that are needed to create changes at other levels? (e.g. Is it important for community based non-profits to encourage different behavior by individuals?)

Part 3: What do you intend to do?

- *As a result of this dialogue, are there any actions that you would like to take or be involved in, either by yourself or in connection with other people?*

[T I M E L I N E]

■ TEEN SUMMIT ON RACE RELATIONS (2001) ■

■ VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DIALOGUE ON SEXUAL ASSAULT
DENIM DAY LOS ANGELES (2001) ■

1996

■ DAY OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (1996) ■

■ DAY OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, YOUTH & FAMILY ISSUES (1996) ■

Ground Rules:

The following guidelines have proven very useful in creating an environment for honest and productive dialogue.

- **Speak openly and honestly**
- **Listen carefully and respectfully to each person**
- **Keep comments brief and stay focused on task**
- **Explore differences respectfully and look for common ground**
- **Trust that the facilitator has the best interest of the group at heart**
- **Turn off your cell phones**

[T I M E L I N E]

1995

- DAY OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS & AFFIRMATIVE ACTION (1995) ■
 - DAY OF DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS (1995) ■
 - NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR DIALOGUES (1995) ■

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