

Collection #
SC 3233

**DIALOGUE TODAY (INDIANAPOLIS, IN)
ADDITION, 2009**

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Processed by

Alysha Zemanek
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 manuscript folder

COLLECTION
DATES: 2009

PROVENANCE: Wilma L. Moore, Indianapolis, IN; September 2009

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS: Dialogue Today Records M0775

ACCESSION
NUMBER: 2009.0276

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

In 1984 Theresa Guise, Diane Meyer Simon, and Carole Stein formed a coalition between African-American and Jewish women in Indianapolis. The group, Dialogue Today, was comprised of 100 women, and attempted to maintain an equal balance between the two groups. When the organization incorporated in 1987, it stated as its purpose: "To consider and deal with common problems through a coalition of Black and Jewish women."

In an effort to keep informed, the women stayed abreast of current events, had book talks, attended lectures, and planned thematic programs, including annual retreats. They often localized national programs and discussions. Two issues that captured their attention were racism and anti-Semitism. They discussed hate groups, myths and stereotypes about their two groups, problems in Africa and the Middle East, as well as the United States, and concerns facing women in society. Programs that shared Jewish and African-American culture included a Passover seder and a lecture on the history of the black church.

Dialogue members saw their role as advocacy and working to make conditions better for groups within Indianapolis. They committed to several community projects, and sometimes commented on political issues. In 1987, the Action Committee prepared a public statement describing the organization's opposition to Robert Bork's nomination to the United States Supreme Court. The following year, Dialogue Today lent financial support to Interfaith Housing, Inc., to provide homes for residents with low and moderate income. In the Homes of Hope program, abandoned houses were often rehabilitated, and the work gave training in construction jobs to criminal offenders. Dialogue Today was particularly supportive of construction training for female offenders.

Teen Dialogue was an effort to create a coalition between Jewish and African-American teens from different congregations. Originally formed during the first years of Dialogue Today, the program was revived in 1990. Meetings and get-togethers were held for teens in grades ten through twelve. A main purpose of the group was to create a tolerance in the schools among the students.

In 1991, Dialogue Today compiled and printed 2,000 copies of a booklist that was distributed to Indianapolis area libraries and schools. *Learning About Each Other*, a 100-item list included novels, biographies, and children and nonfiction books recommended by members of the group. It was hoped that the titles on the list would promote the goals of dignity and understanding, and demonstrate the need for human rights for all groups.

Dialogue Today celebrated its 10th anniversary in the Crystal Room of the Marott Apartments in October 1994. Attended by a host of politicians (including Governor Evan Bayh, Congressman Andy Jacobs, and Attorney General Pam Carter), the event honored and roasted the group's founders.

The organization has alternated its leadership by having a Jewish or African-American president every other administrative term.

Carole Stein	1984–87
Osma Spurlock	1987–89
Gladys Nisenbaum	1989–91
Alpha Blackburn	1991–93
Claudette Einhorn	1993–95
Clara Shelton, Kathy Blaine	1995–97
Natalie Siegel	1997–99
Jackie Blackwell	1999–2001

Dialogue Today plans programs that examine varying viewpoints. Some guest speakers have included Muhammad Siddeeq of the Islamic Center; Sam Jones, Indianapolis Urban League; Lani Guinier, Harvard Law School, and Brian Wittman, Indianapolis Baha’I Faith Community. In 1999, the organization joined forces with the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation to present “Praising God in the Seasons of Easter and Passover.” The featured performers, Rosemarie Gore Bigbee and Cantor Janice Roger, brought Christian and Jewish perspectives to the program.

The organization has held annual retreats that encourage the members to explore and reflect on various issues. Every year there is a different theme or focus. Through diverse programming and genuine dialogue, Dialogue Today has continued to confront and discuss issues that affect African-American and Jewish women.

Sources:

Collection materials.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection addition contains an invitation and program for the 25th Anniversary Gala of Dialogue Today on 24 September 2009 at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis.

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25th Anniversary Gala invitation, 2009

25th Anniversary Gala program, 2009

CONTAINER

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