NEIGHBORHOODS AS UNITS OF SOLUTION AND STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Friday, December 5, 2014
Jane Addams Hull-House Museum
Chicago, Illinois
9 a.m.–2 p.m.
The purpose of the symposium is to discuss strategies for strengthening social justice through neighborhoods as units of solution. Participants— including engaged scholars and reflective practitioners—will exchange ideas, learn from one another, and build mutual support for this purpose.

Located in a Chicago neighborhood, Hull-House was a landmark settlement house whose founder, Jane Addams, was a community organizer, political activist, public intellectual, and pioneer social worker.

Hull-House held forums on the public issues of the day, including neighborhoods as caring communities, bridging differences, building power, participatory research, and education for democracy. Many of the same questions asked at Hull-House continue in their relevance today.

Jane Addams Hull-House Museum continues the vision and makes connections between earlier work and contemporary issues. The University of Michigan School of Social Work theme year is focused on strengthening social justice at the neighborhood level. The university and museum are partnering to recognize the settlement tradition and explore new strategies for the future.

What is a “socially-just neighborhood” and a socially-just process for accomplishing it? What problems and issues arise when neighborhoods are viewed as “units of solution” and “strategies for social justice?” If settlement houses were reinvented for the 21st century, what would it be?

Jane Addams’ viewed Hull-House as “a comprehensive program of civic, cultural, recreational, and educational activities.” She viewed the neighborhood as a unit of solution, understood its limitations, and also worked for policy changes at the citywide and national levels.
SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

**Building Power**

**Location:** HH Museum / Unfinished Business (no ADA access)

**Facilitator:** Nancy Aardema, LSNA

**Provocateur:** Tony Alvarado-Rivera, Chicago Freedom School

What is “building power,” and what are some strategies for building power for a socially-just neighborhood? How can effective and sustainable collaborations across race, class, gender and power be created?

Addams believed in social cooperation and social democracy, that is, egalitarian, or democratic social relations across racial, ethnic, and class lines. Hull-House residents and neighbors worked to build power within a democratic society by providing community-based services in addition to collaboration with unions, political organizations, and activist groups. These groups were voices for equity at local, state and national levels.

**Participatory Research and Knowledge Development**

**Location:** HH Museum / Jane Addams Bedroom (no ADA access)

**Facilitator:** Phil Nyden, Loyola University

**Provocateur:** Skyla Hearn, Social Justice Initiative

What happens to research when it is designed to both develop knowledge and also mobilize people for social change? Is there an approach to research which is appropriate to a “socially-just neighborhood”?

Hull-House Maps and Papers was a groundbreaking sociological study which involved residents in research and knowledge development as forms of empowerment. Theirs was an innovative approach at the time, but are there other innovative approaches that are or could be used by participatory researchers today?

**Bridging Differences**

**Location:** Residents Dining Hall

**Facilitator:** Cuitlahuac Heredia, YMCA

**Provocateurs:** Irina Zadov, Jane Addams Hull-House Muse
Mike Spencer, University of Michigan

What are some strategies for bridging differences through intergroup dialogue at the neighborhood level? Are there ways to organize dialogues that also contribute to social justice and social change?

At Hull-House, immigrants from more than 23 different racial and ethnic groups gathered for discussion and debate about their community and organized for social and economic justice.

**Education for Democracy**

**Location:** HH Museum / Invention of Childhood room

**Facilitator:** Naomi Milstein, Chicago Freedom School

**Provocateur:** William Estrada, Telpochcalli Community Artist

At a time of systemic inequity in public education, should community members and neighborhood residents come together to create educational programs that are high quality and socially just, and if so, how? What is “education for democracy” and, in neighborhoods whose populations are changing in their social and economic composition, what should it be?

Addams and John Dewey joined neighborhood residents at Hull-House for discussions about the educational issues of the day, including civic education for young people of color and low-income (including first generation) youth, experience as a basis for education, and the roles of public schools and neighborhood centers.

**Neighborhoods as Caring Communities**

**Location:** HH Museum / Maps and Papers (no ADA access)

**Facilitator:** Danton Floyd, UIC

**Provocateur:** Reuben Miller, University of Michigan

What are some strategies for strengthening neighborhoods as caring communities? What does caring mean for youth, older people, new immigrants, or other groups? What would a network of socially-just neighborhood-based services look like, as an alternative to the current prisons, juvenile courts, and child welfare agencies?
Social Media for Social Change

Location: HH Museum/Library
Facilitators: Monica Trinidad, We Charge Genocide
Pidgeon Pagonis, Inter/Act | Advocates for Informed Choice
Provocateurs: Desmond Patton, University of Michigan

12:00 LUNCH

Strategies for Strengthening Social Justice through Neighborhoods as Units of Solution

Location: Residents Dining Hall
Facilitator: Barry Checkoway, University of Michigan
Provocateur: Small Group Spokespersons

2:00 CLOSING

Comments: Irina Zadov, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum
Mike Spencer, University of Michigan

Post-symposium tours of museum

Participants

Nancy Aardema, Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA)
Tony Alvarado-Rivera, Chicago Freedom School
Kristen Atkinson, University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)
Diane Back, University of Michigan (UM)
Demecina Beehn, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum (JAHHM)
Mary Bird, Loyola University
Keri Blackwell, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
Loren Cahill, University of Michigan (UM)
Barry Checkoway, University of Michigan (UM)
Maurice Classen, MacArthur Foundation
Barbara Coates, University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)
Emily Cobbey, University of Michigan (UM)
Tim Colenback, University of Michigan (UM)
Diana Copeland, East Michigan Environmental Action Council @ Cass Corridor Commons
Jennifer Cossyleon, Loyola University
Jen Dean, Chicago Votes
Zakkiyyah Dumas, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum (JAHHM)
William Estrada, Telpochcalli Elementary
Steve Everett, University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)
Danton Floyd, University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)
Larry Gant, University of Michigan (UM)
Neil Guterman, University of Chicago (UC)
FaKelia Guyton, Evanston Family Focus
Skyla Hearn, Social Justice Initiative
Ryan D. Heath, University of Chicago (UC)
Cuítlahuac Heredia, Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA)
Nakisha Hobbs, Village Leadership Academy
Allen Jimenez, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum (JAHHM)
Jane Kimondo, Crossroads Fund
Iliana Krehbiel, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum (JAHHM)
Benneth Lee, Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities
Charles Leeks, Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago,
National Public Housing Museum
Rebecca Levin, Lurie Children’s Hospital