

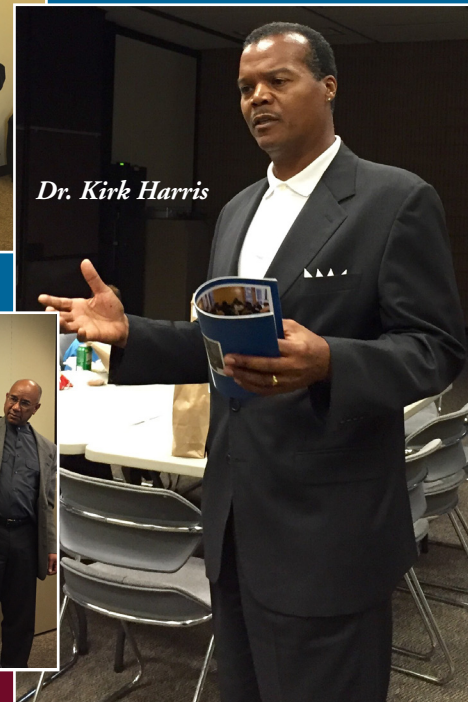
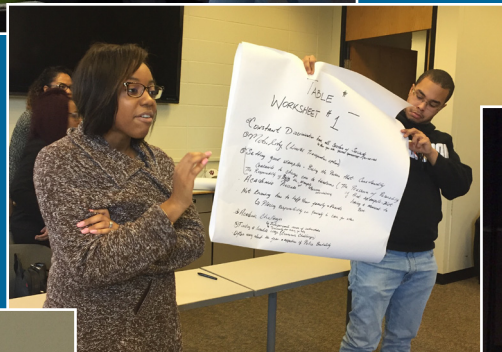
# Gary Commission on the Social Status of Black Males

*In Partnership with*

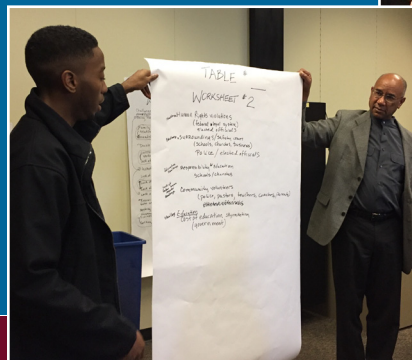
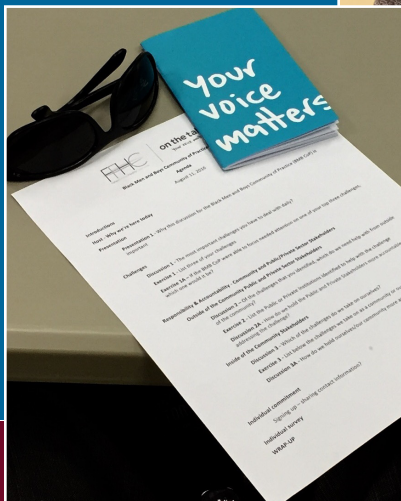
## Black Men and Boys Community of Practice an initiative of Fathers, Families and Healthy Communities



*Bennie Muhammad*



*Dr. Kirk Harris*



On May 10, 2016, The Chicago Community Trust convened residents across the Chicago area and Gary, Indiana for the 3rd Annual “On the Table” conversations.

The Black Men and Boys Community of Practice (BMB CoP) were invited to host a number of these conversations with black men and young black men. The BMB CoP reached out to partnering organizations whose participants were struggling with success (e.g., unemployment, returning citizens). The Gary Commission on the Social Status of Black Males (GCSSBM) hosted and BMB CoP facilitated two conversations, one with black men and the other with young black men, both events having around twenty participants.

What follows, are comments from participants in the various discussions held at Indiana University Northwest, on August 11, 2016 and January 21, 2017.

## Discussion 1: The most important challenges you have to deal with daily...

	What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...
<b>SOCIAL EMOTIONAL/ WELL BEING (Emotions)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Burden of representation... example minority versus majority settings</li> <li>• Doubt</li> <li>• White privilege that causes institutional racism</li> <li>• Ignorance of who we are as a people besides our names... example our history</li> <li>• Whether or not I will end up back in prison again... example apathy versus survival</li> <li>• Feelings of hopelessness and anger and the lack of humanity toward black men</li> <li>• Resilience and confidence issue are my challenges</li> <li>• The transition from street life to work life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Being Hungry</b>—Going to bed hungry and waking up hungry leading to anger and frustration</li> <li>• <b>Lack of motivation</b>—to keep trying and low morale</li> <li>• <b>Lack of father figure or mentor</b> - lack of representation, no one to talk to</li> <li>• The responsibility being the best example becomes overwhelming</li> <li>• Setting a good example, being the person that constantly commits to change can be tiresome</li> <li>• The pressure of responsibility, of being that example and not having a moment to rest</li> </ul>
<b>SAFETY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early demise... example violence—responsibility of being sore provider — safety</li> </ul>	
<b>SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (Relationships/ Community)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited opportunity in leadership</li> <li>• Things don't seem to be improving</li> <li>• No innovative and forward thinking leadership</li> <li>• Participation amongst those who are doing well and those who are not doing well</li> <li>• Lack of emphasis on public service and volunteers and its rewards</li> <li>• Poor City structure and organization</li> <li>• Teaching people how to change</li> <li>• Solutions for the real problems</li> <li>• Supporting a cause with no follow up—no curriculum or structure to in institute change</li> <li>• Survival skills</li> <li>• Getting people to take advantage of opportunities</li> <li>• How felon status impacts other rights... example child visitation rights</li> <li>• Relationship between older and younger generation</li> <li>• Passion and empathy for one another</li> <li>• Lack of guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Social Environment (relationship, community)</b></li> <li>• <b>Tickets</b> - I have a suspended license &amp; the high cost of tickets</li> <li>• <b>Lack of social support system</b></li> <li>• <b>Trying to fit</b>—knowing yourself finding out who I am and trying to fit, struggling to find your identity</li> <li>• <b>Meeting standards</b>—meeting standards in school, grades, outside activities and sports</li> <li>• <b>Surroundings/Environment</b>—School located in one area and I live in another area, it's dangerous with safety issues</li> <li>• Constant discrimination how you are perceived from all sectors of society</li> <li>• Not knowing how to help your family and friends and placing the responsibility on yourself to care for others</li> <li>• Often worrying about the year and of police brutality</li> </ul>
<b>EMPLOYMENT/ EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited options for the youth in schooling</li> <li>• Limited economic opportunity</li> <li>• Resources limited with jobs</li> <li>• Inability to keep resources inside the City of Gary to support Gary residences</li> <li>• Limited black businesses in Gary that limits self-reliance and employment</li> <li>• Limited training opportunities and limited businesses to do training</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> <li>• Black male mentoring and the opportunity to learn from mentors</li> <li>• Lack of male presence in the schools... example volunteers</li> <li>• Employment because a felon status... example past mistakes—opportunities then become limited for jobs or advancement—you're either over or under qualified for opportunities</li> <li>• Skill and ability development - lack of it</li> <li>• Going to work and choosing to do right and setting a good example</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Double standard</b> - I have to be twice as good or smart</li> <li>• <b>Finishing high school and getting into college</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Academic pressure</li> <li>– Academic challenges - interpersonal issues with instructors and their being disconnected when asking for help</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transportation</b>—Lack of transportation, bus passes, lack of support to get to places</li> <li>• Lack of mobility and limited transportation options</li> </ul>	
<b>OTHER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unconstitutionality of the legal system related to felons</li> </ul>	






## Discussion 2: Of the challenges that you identified, which do we need help with from outside of the community?

	What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...
<b>SOCIAL EMOTIONAL/ WELL BEING</b> (Emotions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The trust that it takes to deal with the issues we have the solutions — artificial barriers, connection with other people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Human rights violations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal, the legal system, elected officials</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>SAFETY</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Surroundings/ Safety Issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools, Churches, Businesses, Police/Elected Officials</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT</b> (Relationships/ Community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of trust of stakeholders... example build our own capacity, living not surviving</li> <li>Misled by others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Community volunteers, lack of a father figure, mentor</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police, Pastors, Teachers, Coaches, Parents</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Discrimination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Mass media (print and visual), what is being shown</li> <li>Churches—Need to teach how to respect other people</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>EMPLOYMENT/ EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need outside support to advance our use of technology in education</li> <li>Outside support for building support for education in the trades</li> <li>Opportunities for building trade skill</li> <li>More outside support for training of governmental workers... example particularly the police</li> <li>Education on the issues</li> <li>Help from judicial system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Responsibility for Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools Churches</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Cost of education skyrocketing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Academic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gary Public Schools</li> <li>Deans of Universities</li> <li>Educational Institutions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need State support for infrastructure, development and improvement</li> <li>Outside assistance in developing home owners associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GTPC &amp; NIRPC</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>OTHER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of government accountability and professionalism</li> <li>More local initiatives like Christmas in April</li> <li>No response on the local, state or federal levels—lack of accountability</li> </ul>	



*Hubert Morgan*


## Exercise 2: List the Public or Private Institutions identified to help with the challenge:

What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Judicial system</li> <li>Health community... example mental illness</li> <li>Food systems... example USDA</li> <li>Truth and reconciliation councils</li> <li>NAACP</li> <li>Building brotherhoods</li> <li>Creating a platform</li> <li>Educational institutions—research, think tanks, K-12 and higher education</li> </ul>	 <p><i>Chair Steven Marcus</i></p>

## Discussion 3: Which of the challenges do we take on ourselves?

What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership and volunteering</li> <li>• Accountability to ourselves</li> <li>• Being more self-reliant and self-sufficient</li> <li>• More community information sharing</li> <li>• Becoming better advocates for ourselves</li> <li>• More community activity around mentoring and youth development</li> <li>• Getting youth to work in the community and helping them to learn about financial responsibility</li> <li>• The community can help young people gain more exposure at a younger age</li> <li>• The community can develop its own mentoring and apprenticeship programs</li> <li>• Support one another in the community and share our expertise with one another</li> <li>• Highlight the successes of the Gary businesses</li> <li>• Get the word out that the city of Gary is a good place to do business</li> <li>• Encourage the people inside and outside of the city of Gary to support local businesses</li> <li>• Supported youth in life skill development and personal development with a particular focus on them having personal healthy relationships and good communication skills</li> <li>• Capacity to do it ourselves... example HBCU and Black curriculum</li> <li>• Rebuilding cognitive and analytical skills... example teaching common sense</li> <li>• Bridging the black generation communications gap... example rebuild trust</li> <li>• Go out and tell people right versus wrong, speaking up and interacting with each other in our own neighborhoods</li> <li>• Identify 10,000 people who will be willing to love one another in spite of being afraid of one another</li> <li>• Work to restructure and rebuild our community, then influence our public policy and our public officials</li> <li>• Personal responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Surroundings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ourselves, the black community, Parents</li> <li>– Put the guns down</li> <li>– Clean your yard neighborhood block</li> <li>– Business owners step up</li> <li>– Neighborhood dad's step up</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Family structure—Father's &amp; Grandfathers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fathers stay with your family</li> <li>– No the right time to become a dad, when you are financially stable</li> <li>– Family's ability to accept and love the individual (no matter the circumstances)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Role Modeling/Peer Mentoring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Having conversations with others about role modeling and appropriate behavior</li> <li>– Being a mentor</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Discrimination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Writing to appropriate department</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Education/Academic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Creating Tutoring Groups</li> <li>– Being a mentor</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coming up with innovative practices</li> <li>– Advocacy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Discussion 3A: How do we hold ourselves / our community more accountable?

What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take ownership of informing others about what we have done and what we have learned</li> <li>• Knowing our history versus their history... example historical greatness. Then using our history to inspire each other and ourselves</li> <li>• Supporting one another and our institutions</li> <li>• Be more courageous and pushing our policy changes</li> <li>• Being a positive example every day</li> <li>• Increasing our personal interactions with one another</li> <li>• Leadership lives and preaches the truth... example “stop the BS”</li> </ul>	

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: