

The International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life at Brandeis University

About the Center | News | Events | Coexistence | International Justice | Brandeis Courses
Fellowships | Publications & Resources | Seminars for Professionals | Partnerships

Brandeis 1998 Ethics and Coexistence Student Projects Fellows

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A Call to Community: An Honest Conversation on Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility

Internship with Interfaith Action for Racial Justice, Inc.
Baltimore, Maryland

Project Goals:

The goal of "A Call to Community" is to build community between Baltimore City and the surrounding counties so that citizens and leaders throughout the metropolitan area can cooperate to solve common problems. Through organized conversations leading to action plans, project participants strive both to understand, and to combat, the deep personal and institutional racism that lie at the heart of many of the region's problems.



Personal Goals:

To deepen my understanding of how race and racism operate in the United States.

To learn about different ways people are working to combat racism, particularly the "study circle" model.

To contribute to efforts to combat racism.

Activities:

Examining the evaluation and follow-up processes for study circles, proposed more effective approaches, and began implementing some of my proposals.

Participating in a "study circle" and facilitator training. Working in the project office.



**Key Dilemmas:**

How can people of different races and classes effectively be brought together to deal with substantive issues?

How much work has to be done within communities before it is possible or effective to reach out and work between communities?

Is it possible to build organizational structures that model the mission of the organization? If so, how?

Important Learnings:

I learned:

- about the depth and complexity of issues of race and racism in the United States.
- how difficult and yet how essential it is for a project's internal structure to model its mission.
- about the "study circle" model of working against racism.
- more about my own place as a Jewish, white, woman, in the struggle against racism.



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