

The ACTION Project

Connecting communities across the United States...

In a complex world where individuals often lose their sense of purpose and fear drives communities apart, America's great promise of equal opportunity and dignity for all has not been fully realized. United in a vision of a more just, inclusive society, we must transcend our competing interests and identities and demonstrate that diversity is our great strength.

Mobilizing a network of tomorrow's leaders...

The ACTION project was launched in 2005 to help tomorrow's leaders discover and implement creative solutions to the challenges of diversity by providing an experiential education in transformational leadership, conflict resolution and team-building. Distinctively, ACTION seeks to equip leaders to bridge cultural divides with an emphasis on personal change as the basis for wider change in society.

Bringing transformation, healing and hope to America and the world...

In partnership with *Initiatives of Change*, a global network with over 70-years of experience in conflict resolution and reconciliation, ACTION takes emerging leaders on a comprehensive journey through America's past and present, visiting cities from the East coast to the West. It is a unique opportunity to be part of an international team of young leaders seeking to build a new American community that can offer hope to a world torn by divisions of every kind.

Communities:

"In the team members I saw real people ... breaking down the barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding to share true dialogue. In these interactions, the seeds for true change and peace can be planted." Sara Walter, Phoenix

"Your commitment of time at this young stage of your life shows your remarkable passion to be the change you want to see in the world." Ramesh Doshi, President of Jain Center of Southern California

"It was a powerful 4-day visit that has started transformation in this community. There is groundswell of support here...several people said to me, 'We need to continue this, and I want to help.'" Linda Moore, Local Coordinator, Ft. Myers

"I'm big on perspective, and I think Ashley and Zoryana provide a fresh one for those of us living in...Clarksburg." Tim Brady, Radio Host, West Virginia

"The teambuilding is evident in the ACTION group." Marinetta Cannito, American University, Washington, DC



Participants:

"It was a unique opportunity to discover where you really stand in your life—what are your values, strengths, etc. It helps you understand ...how much you can really give." Zoryana Borbulevych, Ukraine

"I came in the country with so much prejudice about America. ACTION helped me look at my life and become aware of the stereotypes I have of the 'other'." Wambui Nguyo, Kenya

"What I have discovered on this trip is the power of honesty and humility. When walls are taken down, relationships and trust become possible which creates a safe space for lasting changes." Dave Ruffin, USA

"ACTION let me understand how important it is to look inside of myself. It opened my heart to be able to give and receive trust and care from others." Florencia Ruiz, Argentina

"I would have never guessed that in ten weeks I could accumulate so many tools for being a transformational leader." Ashley Sider, USA

"Suddenly you realize that you could be an agent of the changes you want to see in the world." Hoang Le Danh, Vietnam



ACTION's first week in **Washington, DC**, coincided with the remembrances of 9/11. The Team joined in a multi-faith Unity Walk to speak out against terror of all kinds and to recognize the compassion which unites different faiths. This kind of American response to terror inspired many of the participants, especially those from other countries who came with very different views of America.



In **Bridgeton**, ACTION gave a conflict resolution workshop with African American teens in Youth to Youth, an amazing program led by Karen Barnett. The Mayor of Bridgeton also attended the workshop and shared afterwards that he recognized how relevant the lofC approach was in a conflict he is having with another government official. One of the students then shared how she had been inspired to call a relative and to try to mend their relationship.



In many cities (such as **Boston** in photo), ACTION learned about the stories of different communities. A theme which quickly emerged was that history is not consigned to text books but is quite literally in the room with us where ever we go. Without recognizing those histories we can't understand each other, and move past conflict to reconciliation.



The Civil Rights Team at **Clarksburg's** Liberty High School was an inspiring testimony to how much young people can do to make a difference in their communities. Many of them expressed excitement at meeting such an international delegation and said they would remember this day for a long time. They told stories of creative ways that they were turning prejudice into opportunities to build community.



The **Omaha** World-Herald ran a story on ACTION's visit which gave a compelling description of the program. The same day, the Team met with Mayor Mike Fahey (in photo on left) to hear about how he was trying to encourage the different ethnic communities to work together. He shared insightful stories about the successes and struggles he has had leading the city. He knew about ACTION from the article and said he resonated with its message that change can start with each individual. He said he planned to use that idea in a talk he was giving in the afternoon.



At the Youth Services of **Tulsa** shelter, ACTION learned about the struggles of homeless teens. This showed a side of the US which many of the international participants had never seen. They were surprised to hear that the average age of the homeless in the US is about 9 years old. Some of the teens staying at the shelter took part in a conflict resolution workshop and played sports with the Team.

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Los Angeles is home to cultural communities from around the world. ACTION was grateful for the opportunity to live into the life of their Jain community (in photo) hosts—to learn about their religious beliefs, customs, food and sense of community responsibility. The hosts shared their enthusiasm for what ACTION was doing.

In **Phoenix**, ACTION heard opposing sides of controversies over immigration and water usage (in photo). Different proposals and reasons behind them were presented by the individuals who are actively involved in each issue. This made the debates come alive for the Team.

ACTION partnered with Austin Recovery to present a two-day series about the historic relationship between Initiatives of Change (then called the Oxford Group) and Alcoholics Anonymous. Panelists from the **Austin** area discussed their own recovery experiences and the ACTION Team shared about IofC's work around the world today.

ACTION was honored to give a presentation at the Rosa Parks Museum (in photo) as the nation honored her death. Montgomery and **Selma** provided a challenging exploration of America's painful history of racism and exclusion. One participant reflected: "Selma has been a very painful experience for me. It opened doors in me about racism and my personal growth around it that I did not expect."

Down the road from **Ft. Myers**, The Coalition of Immokalee Workers told their stories—of their eight year struggle to bring about fairer wages for the tomatoes they picked. ACTION toured their migrant farmworker community, spoke on the local Hispanic radio station (right), and worked with the Coalition team on some of their daily projects.

School presentations, such as the one pictured here at Franklin Military Academy in **Richmond**, were one of the highlights of every visit. ACTION shared stories of how they were transforming conflicts in their home communities and as a team. Students responded with courage and honesty about the difficulties they faced in their schools and families and ways they could resolve them.



ACTION 2005 Community Partners and Sponsors

Washington, DC

Local Coordinator: Will Jenkins
Hosts: Aquilina, Messner, Ruffin, Sherman, Greisdorf, Kennedy
Partners and Sponsors: Mobilizing America's Youth, Jubilee Jobs, SEED, Fuddruckers, Chinatown, Giant Foods, Applebees, Falls Church, Quiznos 19th & K Sts., TGIFridays, National Airport, TGIFridays, Vienna

Bridgeton, NJ

Local Coordinators: Robert Dragotta, Dick Sindell and Karen Barnett
Partners and Sponsors: Vineland Rotary, Youth To Youth-Bridgeton, First Presbyterian Church, The Jewish Federation, Cumberland County College

Boston, MA

Local Coordinators: Bryan Hamlin and Judith Olesen
Hosts: Hamlins, Olesen, Tribble, Vandewege & Kuehnhoff, MacCollin & Ballin
Partner and Sponsor: Gordon College

Clarksburg, WV

Local Coordinator: Jim Hunt
Hosts: James, Crowley, Hunt, Light
Partners and Sponsors: Clarksburg Mission, Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Liberty High School Civil Rights Team, Sutton Inn and John Skidmore, Chunki's Pizza, Minard's Restaurant, City of Clarksburg, Clarksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau, CENTRA, Tomaro's Bakery, Inc., Robert C. Byrd High School, Oliverio's Peppers, Inc., Young, Morgan & Cann, Marino Brothers Meats

Chicago, IL

Local Coordinator: Margie Palmer

Omaha, NE

Local Coordinator: Patrick McNamara
Hosts: McNamara, Fangman, Peters
Partners and Sponsors: University of Nebraska-Omaha, Todd Kanne, The Mammel Foundation

Tulsa, OK

Local Coordinators: Hannibal Johnson and Sharon Gallagher
Partners and Sponsors: Greenwood Cultural Center, Leadership Tulsa, University of Oklahoma—Tulsa, Cherokee Nation Enterprises, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Gilcrease Museum, John Pribram

Los Angeles, CA

Local Coordinators: Dhiren Mehta, Hasani Perry and Jay Stinnett
Hosts: Mehta, Doshi, Maniar, Doshi, Shah

Austin, TX

Local Coordinator: Larry Walker
Partners and Sponsors: St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Austin Recovery Center

Selma, AL

Local Coordinators: Lawrence Wofford and Georgette Norman
Partners and Sponsors: Montgomery Rosa Parks Museum, Alabama State University, Southern Poverty Law Center, One Selma, Selma Chamber of Commerce, Selma Rotary

Ft. Myers, FL

Local Coordinators: Linda Moore and Audrea Anderson
Hosts: Moore, Anderson, Arias, Bratt, Cummings, Halverson, Hubbard, McCormick, Mondora, Robinson
Partners and Sponsors: Hope House, Uncommon Friends, St. Peter Lutheran Church, Coalition of Immokalee Workers, Florida Gulf Coast University, April's Eatery, City of Cape Coral—Camelot Park, Palmetto Church of God

Richmond, VA

Local Coordinators: Annie Kendrick, Bob Petres, and Les Schaffer
Hosts: Robinson, Hawkins, McLeod, Petres & Marshall, Fitzhugh, Good
Partners and Sponsors: Bainbridge Art Center, Richmond Hill, Healing, History and Hope, Hope in the Cities, Museum of the Confederacy, Saint Paul's Baptist Church, Quiocassin Baptist Church, Westminster-Canterbury Retirement Center, Dr. Robert Petres & Dr. Margaret Duvall, Tanya Gonzalez

National Program Supporters:

Irene Prestwich Fund, Emerging Leaders Fund, Mr. & Mrs. Archie Mackenzie, Dale Hankins, William A. Fairbank & Sally H. Newton, Jane Faulkner, Elizabeth Loy, Ifeoma Malo, Dr. & Mrs. John W. Morrison, Mr. & Mrs. Jim Purvis, Carolyn Sacksteder, Dr. & Mrs. Harold Saunders, Mr. & Mrs. Zeb Simpson

ACTION 2005 Financials

Revenues:	\$69,711
Cash Donations –	\$10,441
Tuition –	\$4,000
Foundations –	\$12,723
lofC USA –	\$42,547

Expenses:	\$69,711
Personnel –	\$42,504
Food and Travel –	\$27,207

In-Kind Donations	\$50,000
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Partners and Sponsors: Watts Labor Community Action Committee, Jain Center, 4 The World, Shefali Mehta, Ashok & Vidya Sapre, Raj & Manjri Dhami, Al & Lourdes Fasani, Virendra & Urvashi Shah, Mike Zuck, Eba Hathout & Mohamed El-Shahawy

Phoenix, AZ

Local Coordinators: Nancy Splain and Lee Storey
Hosts: Splain, Clarke, Davis, Sprentall, Baker, Smith, Smith, Ettkin
Partners and Sponsors: Light of Hope Institute, Arizona Interfaith Movement, Shepherd of the Hills Church, Moyes Storey Law Offices, Arizona State University



ACTION is a program of Initiatives of Change. For more information on participating, volunteering or making a donation, please visit www.action.iofc.org or call 202-872-9077. All gifts to ACTION/lofC are tax deductible.

Initiatives of Change | 1156 15th St., NW, Suite 910, Washington, DC 20005

ACTION Core Values

- Listening carefully and respectfully to each other and to the whole community.
- Bringing people together, not in confrontation but in trust, to tackle the most urgent needs of the community.
- Searching for solutions, focusing on what is right rather than who is right
- Building lasting relationships outside our comfort zone.
- Honoring each person, appealing to their best qualities, and refusing to stereotype the other group.
- Holding ourselves, communities and institutions accountable where change is needed.
- Recognizing that the energy for fundamental change requires a moral and spiritual transformation in the human spirit
(from Initiatives of Change's A Call to Community)