

BRIDGES REGIONAL DIFFERENCES REPORT REVEALS SIMILAR SOCIAL ATTITUDES; MUSLIMS ARE MOST DISTANT GROUP THROUGHOUT REGION

Agenda 360, Vision 2015 Recognize Report As Good News

CINCINNATI, OH – November 19, 2009 – BRIDGES for a Just Community announced the results of its “Regional Differences Report” extracted from last year’s *BRIDGES Progress Report on Human Relations in Greater Cincinnati*, the second biennial status report of inter-group relations in our eight-county region.

While the 2008 BRIDGES Report measured the relationships among eight different social groups – African Americans, Whites, Hispanics, Asians, Gays and Lesbians, Jews, Muslims and Men and Women – the companion report looks closely at regional attitudes and their potential variance from Northern Kentucky, to Cincinnati, to Hamilton County Suburbs and surrounding counties. Overall, residents in the four sub-regions agree on the most important issues facing the region and majority whites report the same level of contact and closeness with African Americans. On the other hand, the report reveals some differences, including the finding that whites in the city are more accepting of other social groups, in particular of Gays/Lesbians and Jews, than white residents elsewhere in the region.

“While there is regional alignment on many social attitudes, what you will see is that the main dividing line is not the Ohio River, but between the City of Cincinnati and the suburbs on both sides of the river, especially in the ways the majority white community views the smaller groups defined by race, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation,” said Shakila T. Ahmad, chair of the BRIDGES for a Just Community Board. “Whether we’re talking

about Hispanic immigrants or religious minorities, our goal is to create an inclusive community for all,” she said. --(more)--

Page 2

BRIDGES Regional Differences

“Differences between the city and the suburbs can easily be exaggerated. The city is not a utopia of diversity, and the suburbs are not enclaves of anti-minority

sentiment. Evidence of the social distance of religious minorities, Muslims in particular, and of gays and lesbians in the suburbs is a call to action for regional leaders,” said Robert C. “Chip” Harrod, president and CEO of BRIDGES.

“Our survey data in each of the sub-regions indicates that Muslims, a small but growing segment of the population, are the most distant group throughout the eight-county region and therefore the most susceptible to misunderstanding and stereotyping – they are especially vulnerable at times like these in the aftermath of the Fort Hood incident to experiencing a backlash of anti-Islamic sentiment,” Harrod added.

“The similarities are stronger than the differences, which is great news for regional planning,” said Myrita Craig, executive director, Agenda 360. “We define our region as including Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky and their surrounding counties – having regional alignment on these human relations and social policy issues creates a relatively cohesive metropolitan region for Agenda 360 and Vision 2015 going forward,” she added.

KEY FINDINGS:

Residents of the four subregions compared in this report – 1) Northern Kentucky, 2) Cincinnati, 3) the Hamilton County Suburbs, and 4) Other OH/IN Counties (Warren/Butler/Clermont/Dearborn) - largely agree on the most important issues facing the region.

- *Crime/Safety* was the top issue in all four subregions, and had increased considerably in importance everywhere since 2004.
- *The Economy* was the second most frequently mentioned issue in each subregion.
- *Race Relations* was not one of the top three issues mentioned anywhere in the region, and had diminished in importance everywhere since 2004.

The amount of contact people have with Hispanics, Asians, Jews, Muslims, and Gays and Lesbians varies only modestly from one part of the region to another.

- People in each subregion report less contact with Muslims than with any other group, with the least contact in Northern Kentucky.
- People in Northern Kentucky and Other OH/IN Counties report the most contact with Hispanics, and the greatest increase in contact with Hispanics since 2004.

Women in each one of the four subregions say they still face unequal treatment, especially when it comes to pay and promotions.

- More than two-thirds of women in each subregion say men are treated better when it comes to pay, varying from 68% in Cincinnati to 81% in Northern Kentucky.

--(more)--

Page 3
BRIDGES Regional Differences

- Substantially more than half of women say men are treated better when it comes to pay and promotion, ranging from 58% in Cincinnati to 69% in Northern Kentucky.

Among the majority white population, which makes up more than 90% of the population in six of the eight counties included in this study:

Nine in ten whites in every part of the region say they have some contact with African Americans, in spite of the persistence of residential segregation by race.

- Ninety-two percent of white Cincinnatians and 89% of white Northern Kentuckians say they have contact with an African American, though Northern Kentucky is only 3% African American compared to 44% in Cincinnati.

Whites in every subregion feel closer to African Americans than they do to Jews, Asians, Hispanics, Gays/Lesbians, or Muslims.

- About one in two of whites in every subregion say they feel close or very close to African Americans, many more than say they feel close to Jews, Asians, Hispanics, Gays/Lesbians, or Muslims.

Whites in the City of Cincinnati are much more likely to say they feel close to Gays/Lesbians and Jews than whites in the suburbs.

- Thirty-nine percent of whites in Cincinnati say they feel close to Gays and Lesbians compared to only 20% of whites in Northern Kentucky, 19% in Other OH/IN Counties, and 24% in the Hamilton County Suburbs.
- Forty-two percent of whites in Cincinnati say they feel close to Jews compared to only 23% in Northern Kentucky, 28% in Other OH/IN Counties, and 33% in the Hamilton County Suburbs.

Research for the report was conducted by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati, under the direction of Dr. Kimberly Downing, associate director of the Institute. Gary Wright, president of Wright Futures, Ltd and formerly a senior demographer at The Procter & Gamble Company served as project manager for the BRIDGES Report. LaVerdad Marketing conducted the Hispanic over-sample in Spanish.

The United Way of Greater Cincinnati has endorsed the research and has contracted to include the BRIDGES Progress Report in its own State of the Community Report. Agenda 360, led by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, and Northern Kentucky's Vision 2015 have been included in the process.

For more information about the BRIDGES Regional Differences Report, the complete report is available on-line at www.BRIDGEScincinnati.org or call the BRIDGES office at 513-381-4660.

Contact:
Tamara Sullivan
513.583.1433
tsullivan1@cinci.rr.com

BRIDGES for a Just Community

www.bridgescincinnati.org

Tamara Sullivan

Sullivan Communications, Inc.

• Public Relations • Community Partnerships • Cause Marketing •

861 Miami Ridge Drive
Loveland, Ohio 45140
513.583.1433 phone
513.583.1189 fax
tsullivan1@cinci.rr.com

Robert C. "Chip" Harrod
President & CEO
BRIDGES for a Just Community
430 Reading Road, Fourth Floor
Cincinnati, OH 45202
(513) 381-4660
(513) 381-2190 fax
www.bridgescincinnati.org