



Everyday Democracy's Historical Timeline

The Everyday Democracy timeline shows how we came to be who we are, unearthing the roots to our thinking on what makes for a strong democracy. The timeline includes the voices and stories of people who have been a part of the organization over the years. Starting with our founder's participation in the Ford Foundation's Fund for Adult Education study discussions in the 1950s, the timeline attempts to capture the pivotal moments in our history that helped shape what Everyday Democracy is today.

1950-1960

"Owning" an issue

Paul J. Aicher participates in the Ford Foundation's Fund for Adult Education—"study-discussion" groups on political, economic, and international affairs. An engineer by training and profession, Aicher has his first experience of "owning an issue" for himself, with finding his own voice -- rather than letting the "experts" define the issue for him.

Befriending Homer Jack

Paul Aicher becomes close friends with Homer Jack, Unitarian minister in Evanston, Ill., and together they work on refugee resettlement. Jack goes on to found the Congress of Racial Equality and the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. Aicher's and Jack's life-long friendship strengthens their commitments to participatory democracy, anti-nuclear activism and racial justice.

1981

Putting down roots in Pomfret

The Aicher Family purchases property known as "Topsfield," in Pomfret, Connecticut.

Finding his voice

In Pomfret, Conn., Paul joins a group of residents who meet regularly to organize local nuclear freeze movement. Here he meets Susie Graseck who would become the first director of the Topsfield Foundation. Paul is central to getting the town of Pomfret to establish itself as a nuclear-free zone; he begins to make connections with the peace movement, state-wide and nationally.

1982

Shifting to philanthropy

Paul Aicher founds Topsfield Foundation, Inc., after selling Technical Materials Inc., his company in Rhode Island.

"My father came to visit me in the early 80s, and asked what I thought of him selling the company he founded, leaving business, and pursuing his interest in social change and what he then dimly conceived of as a philanthropic future. In graduate school, studying literature, I thought it was a good idea and told him why: Over the years, he'd gotten used to being the boss, and it might be refreshing to give something else a try. In hindsight, my advice (which he took with his usual good-natured sufferance) now seems both arrogant and naïve."—Peter Aicher

Seeing the larger picture

"After flying up to Portland, Maine, with Paul, I thought, 'This guy sees things from a height that most of us don't see. He is a navigator. He can change course if required. And, he's a detail man; he makes sure all parts of the plane are working.' I think Paul applied all the principles of flying a plane to his career and his work with the foundation." —Jock McClellan, board member

1982-1989

Funding nuclear-freeze efforts

Topsfield Foundation grants \$50,000-\$100,000 a year to groups around the country working to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

1984

Connecting the U.S. peace and justice movement

Aicher establishes the **Grassroots Peace Directory**, to collect and disseminate news, updates, and contact information from peace and justice groups around the country. The first of its kind, the print directory of 7,000 connects the groups and helps to strengthen and coordinate their movements.

"When you realize that you're part of something bigger, you're more confident and bold in your undertakings. I think this was part of Paul's intent with the Grassroots Peace Directory."—Phyllis Emigh, editor of the Grassroots Peace Director, and early executive director of the Study Circles Resource Center

1985

Exchanging arms reduction information

Paul Aicher starts **ACCESS**, a security information service based in Washington, D.C., to further the exchange of information and viewpoints on international affairs, conflict and conflict transformation. Mary Lord directs ACCESS; ultimately, it becomes a project of the United States Institute of Peace.

Meeting our future executive director

Martha McCoy, future director of Everyday Democracy, first works for the Topsfield Foundation as a consultant, because of her background in arms control. After hearing about Paul Aicher, McCoy travels to the Foundation to meet with him and with Susan Graseck (who was then Topsfield's executive director). They discuss McCoy's research into public opinion on the arms race in the 1960s vs. public attitudes in the 1980s, and about the voice that citizens should have in a democracy.

"I showed up at this little white house in the small town of Pomfret, and found Susie Graseck and Paul Aicher sitting at a kitchen table. We talked about SALT II (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks between the U.S. and Soviet Union). I asked myself, 'How is it that these knowledgeable, visionary people ended up in Pomfret, Conn., working on arms control?' They were all about giving citizens access to information on national

security issues, so that people could be active participants. I knew I had found something rare." –Martha L. McCoy, executive director

Engaging on security policy

Aicher helps found **Options** at Brown University, which later moves to Juniata College in Huntingdon, Penn. Options provides funding and tools for university faculty to work with community groups, leading discussions, workshops, and debates on arms control and nuclear weapons. The project aims to improve and deepen the debate over security policy and to increase public participation in policy formation.

"Options came at a time when Paul was looking for ways to go beyond the 'usual suspects' to get people with different perspectives to think and talk together."
—Susie Graseck, board member and former executive director of the Topsfield Foundation

From 1986-1991

Providing international security news

The **International Security News Service**, a global bi-weekly clipping service, provides a selection of articles from national and international newspapers for researchers, teachers, and speakers. It helps academics and policymakers see different views, from different countries, on the most important security challenges during the final years of the Cold War. Susie Graseck, Topsfield Foundation executive director, is the first editor.

"It's important to remember that the International Security News Clipping Service - and the Grassroots Peace Directory too - were happening before the internet had really taken hold. It's hard today to imagine a time before internet, but people didn't have ready access to the information they needed on the most critical issues they were facing. Paul wanted to change that." -- Susie Graseck, former executive director of the Topsfield Foundation, and first editor of the International Security News Clipping Service

1988

Supporting affordable housing

Topsfield Foundation makes a \$100,000, three-year, tiered grant to the **Connecticut Housing Coalition** enabling the organization to hire its first full-time staff and strengthen its work.

"Paul's initial investment made the fledgling Coalition into a solid, staffed organization. I'm proud to report that, as a result, we were able to grow substantially and make a real difference in the lives of people struggling to secure safe, decent housing that they can afford."

—Jeffrey Freiser, former executive director of the Connecticut Housing Coalition

1989

Joining the dialogue and deliberation field

"We need to do something to create dialogue experiences for everyday people." – Paul Aicher

As the Cold War comes to an end, Paul Aicher wants to focus the Foundation's efforts on strengthening grass-roots participation in the U.S. – on a wide range of issues. He recalls his years in the Fund for Adult Education, and the experiences of dialogue

that gave creating access to “expert” information and ways for all kinds of people to discuss it. Paul decides that he wants to contribute to the emerging dialogue and deliberation field.

Pursuing ‘study circles’

Paul reads *Study Circles: Coming Together for Personal Growth and Social Change* by Len Oliver and learns about the Swedish model of ‘study circles’ – populist adult education born during the Chautauqua era in the U.S. This book and conversations with Oliver and his Kettering Foundation colleague Jon Kinghorn lead Paul to further pursue the study circles idea – opportunities for all kinds of people to learn about and “own” public issues for themselves.

Learning about Swedish study circles

Paul J. Aicher visits Sweden to learn how the study circle idea is applied there. He sees ordinary people coming together to discuss issues; in the process they are becoming more engaged and productive citizens.

“I arranged for Paul to go to Sweden, the heart of the study circle process, and meet with folks from the trade unions and government who were doing study circles. Everyone was taken by his enthusiasm. The Swedes were thrilled to have someone from the U.S. who wanted to adopt their format and had the resources to do it.”— Len Oliver, friend and consultant

Launching Study Circles Resource Center

Paul J. Aicher establishes the **Study Circles Resource Center** as a project of the Topsfield Foundation.

“There’s a direct line between Paul’s experience in the Ford Project, ACCESS, Options, the International Security News Clipping Service, the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC), and today’s Everyday Democracy. Paul’s passion was to create ways to include people who didn’t have opportunities to take part in civic life, or who didn’t feel empowered to take part. All these projects are based on a profound respect for everyone’s voice, and for the impact of listening across divides. These projects made today’s work possible.” —Martha L. McCoy, executive director

SCRC extends its reach by networking, building relationships with groups and people inside and outside the emerging field of dialogue and community building. It becomes a “clearinghouse” of materials and resources from all kinds of dialogue and deliberation organizations.

1990

Creating our first how-to materials

Phyllis Emigh, Mark Niedergang, and Francine Nichols work on SCRC’s first recommendations for creating dialogue focusing on populist small group efforts.

Publishing our first discussion guide

Before the onset of the first Iraq war, Martha McCoy and Susie Graseck (director of Choices for the Century, a national education program at Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Studies) develop discussion materials for high school students and a discussion guide, *Crisis in the Gulf*, that SCRC offers to communities and Choices offers to schools.

1992

Focusing on racial tensions

In Los Angeles, in the wake of civil disturbances that followed the acquittal of police officers in the beating of Rodney King, Martha McCoy spends time with community leaders from different ethnic groups. That experience leads Martha to recommend that we create our first discussion guide on race and racism, *Can't We All Just Get Along?*

"Taking on racism is now a pillar of our work, the foundation of which began during our work in LA."—Gwen Whiting, senior associate

Structuring discussion guides

"I had very specific ideas from my own experience in dialogues on how to structure the discussion sessions. I remember arguments we had about the first session. I fought hard and won to have the session's focus on people opening up and getting to know each other, helping people see each other for who they really were. Session one then became a central part of the study circle methodology."—Mark Niedergang, early consultant to SCRC, and co-writer of *Can't We All Just Get Along?*

1993

Pioneering community-wide dialogue in Lima, OH

Lima, OH, creates a multi-racial, cross-sector coalition to launch dialogue on race across the whole community. More than 1,000 people come together to talk about race relations in their city. SCRC begins to add advice on community mobilization to its dialogue recommendation.

"Lima was a beacon for communities to figure out how to cross those racial and economic barriers to save their city through dialogue."

—Fran Frazier, senior associate

"I think the process has fundamental value for building long-term, positive relationships and accomplishing institutional change. Even if it doesn't accomplish everything folks might want, it's an important, creative and energizing process."—Mayor David Berger, Lima, Ohio

Making national news

On the CNN talk show, "Both Sides With Jesse Jackson," former Senator Bill Bradley and Jesse Jackson lead a "study circle" among college students using *Can't We All Just Get Along?*

Hosting our first conference

The Study Circle Resource Center hosts its **first National Meeting**, in Pomfret, Conn.

1994

Featuring Lima, OH, in documentary series

In the fall of 1994, the television documentary series "Story of a People," hosted by Louis Gossett, Jr., features SCRC and dialogues on race and race relations in the City of Lima, Ohio. This series aired on network affiliates around the country.

Influencing opinion leaders and scholars

Paul Aicher and Martha McCoy meet with Lani Guinier at the National Civic League meeting in Philadelphia. Years later, in *Lift Every Voice*, Lani wrote about SCRC, the community-wide study circles model, and the connections between racial justice and deliberative democracy.

“We talked about dialogue and race for nearly three hours, in a whirlwind creative brainstorm. We started making connections between dialogue principles, whole-community organizing, and progress on racial justice – and how it all could work together for sustained change in democracy.” —Martha McCoy, executive director

“My conversation with Paul and Martha [at the National Civic League’s conference] helped me pivot from thinking just about the act of getting people elected or the act of being ‘represented.’ It encouraged and challenged me to focus more on both problem solving and participation. The conversation led me to the question of, ‘Once representatives are elected, do they allow their constituents to participate actively in the process of deliberation? And are the proposed solutions responsive to the needs not only of their own constituents but to the larger mission of our democracy?’” —Lani Guinier, Bennett Boskey Professor of Law at Harvard Law School

Building everyday leaders

Topsfield Foundation launches the **Community Leadership Project**, which offers a leadership course at six community colleges to help people—especially women and people of color—develop skills they need to be effective leaders in their community.

“Paul wanted to expand on the idea that everyday people could be leaders. You didn’t have to have a degree or be a politician to lead. Everybody knows this today, but back then, the idea of leaders in a community settings wasn’t everyday.”—Marya Axner, author of the Community Leadership Project Curriculum

1995

Taking part in ‘Days of Dialogue’

Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas asks SCRC to help the city address racial tensions stirred up by the O.J. Simpson trial. We invite the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice to work with us. More than 1,000 people take part in “**Days of Dialogue**.” National media — ABC Nightly news, NBC Nightly news, NPR’s All Things Considered, and *The Los Angeles Times* — feature the story.

“Maybe we should be a race organization.”—Paul J. Aicher, commenting on how the issue of race is connected to all others.

Increasing the scope and scale of our work

President Bill Clinton’s “**One America in the 21st Century: The President's Initiative on Race**” consults with SCRC and several other organizations, including NCCJ, Hope in the Cities, and the Community Relations Service, to create the ***One America Dialogue Guide***. Deputy Director, Sally Campbell, represents us with the White House. People around the country take part in a national conversation about America’s racial diversity.

1995-96

Engaging on race in Hartford, Conn.

The office of the Secretary of the State collaborates with SCRC and the National Conference for Community & Justice on a dialogue project called **“Community Conversations on Race.”** People from community organizations, corporations, police departments, and agencies as well as public officials take part in the discussions.

“We involved hundreds of people. I thought that was a fabulous project.”—Miles Rapoport, PJAF board member and former Secretary of the State of Connecticut

Paving the way for criminal justice reform

Oklahoma’s **Balancing Justice**, the first statewide study circle program, leads to legislation creating truth-in-sentencing guidelines for various crimes and helps to establish a large-scale community corrections program. More than 972 people took part in study circles in 13 Oklahoma communities.

“Looking back at Balancing Justice, it’s perhaps the single project in the last 20 years that actually engaged a lot of people and legislators in dialogues, and led to policy change. The effort led to the creation of truth-in-sentencing guidelines for various crimes and established a large-scale community corrections program, making Oklahoma the top community corrections state.”— Matt Leighninger, senior associate

1996

Calling for dialogue on race

Martha McCoy speaks at **“A Call to Community,”** at the National Press Club. Hosted by Hope in the Cities, the goal of the event is to “build a movement of inclusive, honest dialogue across differences of race and politics.”

Publishing our first how-to guide

SCRC publishes ***Planning Community-Wide Study Circle Programs: A step-by-step guide***—our first “how-to” guide focusing on ways to implement the idea of community-wide dialogue.

Connecting U.S. Congress with public dialogue

Topsfield Foundation launches the **Congressional Exchange**, led by Pat Scully. Based in Washington, D.C., the project aims to help members of the U.S. Congress organize study circles so that they can discuss local and national issues with their constituents. Congressional Exchange yielded lessons in how to work more effectively with public officials at the federal, state and local levels.

Evaluating success

“In the early years, Paul tried to evaluate success by quantifying what we did. Over time, Paul and the board realized that you can’t always quantify success by the number of communities holding study circles or the number of people involved. When you’re really looking at throwing a stone into the water and testing the spread of the ripples, numbers can never tell the full story.

“I think towards the end of Paul’s life, we all talked more about impact and community building, moving further away from more traditional quantitative systems for measuring success. —Diana Johnson, board chair

1997

Taking on education

SCRC collaborates on a project to create statewide study circle programs on education in Oklahoma and Arkansas. Partners in **“Calling the Roll”** are the Southwest Education Development Laboratory, the Oklahoma League of Women Voters, and Arkansas Friends for Better Schools.

Deepening our learning on racism

SCRC develops a discussion guide called ***When a Church is Burned in Your Town.***

“The Community Relations Service (CRS) of the U.S. Department of Justice fostered dialogues in towns across the South where there were church burnings. Partnering with CRS helped us learn more about race in the Deep South”.—Sally Campbell, former director of training and leadership development

“We were listening in on focus groups of recent study circles participants in Delaware. One African-American man in his mid-40s was sharing that he had a pleasant enough personal experience during his six-week involvement in a small group, but was sharing some real skepticism about whether it could really make much difference. But when he learned that more than 600 people across the state were meeting in similar dialogues, you could see his face change, and a very sincere, ‘Okay, now THAT could make a difference.’ It was a clear memory for me, the recognition that the process could go beyond one personal experience to something greater.” —Lori Villarosa, board member

Connecting dialogue to action

In the early days of SCRC, Paul thought it was important that action *not* be a structured part of the dialogue process. He thought that an action focus might cause people to shortchange the richness of dialogue. Later, as he and the staff listened to participants talk about their experiences, he came to understand that having an action component was *essential*; it would help people make a difference on the issues they had just been talking about. It provided another opportunity for citizen empowerment and voice. Paul first grappled with this dynamic in conversations on race: “We needed to emphasize that the dialogues weren’t meant to appease the white person’s guilt.” -- Paul J. Aicher in an interview for *What Democracy Feels Like*

“Paul and I talked about how frustrating it could be for people who did all of the deliberation, learning and thinking, and then not have the opportunity to take action. Not giving people the opportunity to affect decisions is a problem in a lot of civic models, and it can create burnout. Paul was interested in study circles as a civic method, so we talked about how to build action into the process.”—Dr. Benjamin Barber, president of CivWorld at Demos

Taking part in national public dialogue projects

As part of the National Endowment for Humanities’ “National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity,” SCRC partners with Mari Peak and filmmaker Andrea Simon to create the discussion guide *Toward a More Perfect Union* to be used with the video *Toward a More Perfect Union: An Invitation to Conversation*, which aired on PBS.

"It was a time when people and groups like Anna Deavere Smith, PBS and public dialogue art projects, outside of our core community dialogue and deliberation work, began contacting us."—Cathy Flavin-McDonald, former evaluator

Assessing impact

"Matt posted a map of the U.S. in the kitchen and put push pins in it where we had programs. Paul asked, 'How are we going to know that this isn't just zits on a wall?' It's one of those phrases that stuck over time because it raised questions of whether or not programs would last and have real impact. I think some of our research grew out of the 'zits on the wall' worry to show that this process has real staying power."—Cathy Flavin-McDonald, former evaluator

1998-1999

Capturing what it takes to facilitate dialogues

SCRC publishes *A Guide for Training Study Circle Facilitators* to help people across the country build the leadership skills of peer facilitators.

Advancing democracy in Conn.

"Two days after I lost the race in the democratic primary for an open congressional seat, Paul called me. He said, 'Miles, you've been a good voice for progressive politics. Tell me what you're thinking of doing next and I will help you fund it.' I received a similar call from Frank Melville of Melville Charitable Trusts. Together, they made it possible for me to found Democracy Works, an advocacy organization dedicated to advancing a vibrant and inclusive democracy in Connecticut."—Miles Rapoport, board member

Expanding our reach, deepening our understanding

SCRC establishes a senior associates program to expand the size, quality, diversity and geographical reach of our work.

"The scaling up of the organization was important... the organization created discussion guides and trainings and brought in senior associates—all vehicles for expanding the work on limited human resources."

—Susan Stroud, board member

Exploring racial dynamics more deeply

"During a planning meeting with staff and senior associates, Carlyne Abdullah used the example of community-police relations to help us understand why a predominantly White staff needs to make a concerted effort to understand the everyday experiences of people of color. When Carlyne described the fears she has as a mother when her teenage sons go out for an innocent evening with their friends, we understood on a deeply personal level how different her experience can be from that of the White parents in our organization. This helped deepen our commitment to explore the racial dynamics of every public issue we address."

--Patrick Scully, former deputy director

Building democracy, "block by block"

SCRC publishes the discussion guide *Building Strong Neighborhoods*.

"I worked on housing and neighborhood issues, so before *Building Strong Neighborhoods* came out, Paul picked my brain to answer questions like, 'What's a neighborhood?' 'How does a community define a neighborhood?' 'What makes a

neighborhood grow?’ The guide focuses on the needs of a neighborhood and how to get people involved in their neighborhoods to help make decisions.”

—Selena Singletary, board member and former Director of the Department of Human Relations, Housing and Neighborhood Services, in Springfield, Ohio

Finding your voice

“Paul used to tell the story of an African-American woman who took part in a dialogue as a participant, who had never before felt welcome in a public meeting. She had what it took to be a facilitator, so, when asked whether she might consider being trained as a facilitator, she responded with, ‘You know, that’s real flattering, but not now. I just now *got* my voice.’ He would go on to say that as this woman sat amongst lawyers and political people, she discovered that she could do all that they could: think, reason, understand the issues. It gave her a sense of confidence to keep using her voice.

“Paul would say that so many people taking part in dialogues, like this woman, come to have a new sense of their own public worth. He often recounted this story, because this woman’s experience in dialogue moved him deeply. The same kind of experience had happened to Paul when he had first been a participant in dialogue, years before. He knew the impact of dialogue on his own life and he recognized a kindred spirit.” – Martha McCoy, executive director

Discussing immigration

SCRC and Congressional Exchange jointly produce ***Changing Faces, Changing Communities*** discussion guide on issues related to immigration in the U.S. SCRC and Congressional Exchange work with a multiracial, multi-sector alliance in Miami, Fla., to help frame and review the guide.

Bringing communications to SCRC

“When I came to work for SCRC in Pomfret, there was no communication department. I literally had to create it from the ground up.”—Amy Malick, communications director

Taking on racism with U.S. Congressional members

Congressional Exchange also works with Faith & Politics and its project **Congressional Conversations on Race** to support Members of Congress in addressing race-related challenges in their districts.

Launching first large-scale evaluation

The Mott Foundation funds a large-scale evaluation of study circles on race. Rona Roberts leads a multi-ethnic team of evaluators examining community-wide dialogue in 25 communities over two years. Mott program officer, Lori Villarosa helped us connect our learning to others in the racial justice field.

2000

Finding out ‘what works’

SCRC publishes **Toward Competent Communities: Best Practices for Producing Community-Wide Study Circles**, a two-year study of organizing strategies and outcomes in community-wide “study circle” programs, especially those focusing on race and racism.

"Toward Competent Communities was the first time we did a comprehensive analysis of how the tools and advice we provide are being used in communities across the country. It provided critical insights that helped us build on the things that were working well and change elements of our approach that didn't seem to be meeting communities' needs." —Patrick Scully, former deputy director

Responding to police-community tensions

SCRC publishes *Protecting Communities, Serving the Public*, a discussion guide on community-police relations.

Recognizing need to diversify

"I remember doing a regional training in Wilmington, Del., for the YWCA and a person of Latino descent asking me how many Latinos were on SCRC's staff. 'None,' I replied. The person then asked for me to call him when we had someone on staff who could understand what he was going through."—John Landesman, senior associate

2001

Increasing the nation's recognition of dialogue

Within three weeks of the 9-11 tragedy, SCRC publishes the discussion guide *Facing the Future: How Should We Respond to the Attack on Our Nation?* People across the country respond positively to having a way to move forward.

Vowing to 'walk the talk' on diversity

Lani Guinier delivers the keynote at SCRC's national conference in McLean, Va., "Working Together for Creative Community Change." At the closing plenary of the conference, people in the audience point out that the organization's senior leadership is all White. Paul makes a public commitment to diversifying our staff and management.

"It meant a lot to Paul to have Lani's perspective and support for this work. This happened because Paul made the work accessible to a broad range of intellectuals and political leaders."—Bruce Mallory, board member

Providing "steps between the steps"

SCRC publishes *Organizing Community-wide Dialogue for Action and Change: A Step-by-Step Guide* based on what we've learned working in communities.

"Through *Organizing Community-wide Dialogue for Action and Change*, we realized that study circles programs have to be prepared to take action. The guide shows this shift: You organize for action, rather than organizing just for dialogues."—John Landesman, senior associate

Sparking study circles across Maryland

SCRC works with Maryland Department of Education to introduce county superintendents to study circles and train their staff in organizing programs on education-related issues. Montgomery County Public Schools Study Circles Program is a result of this effort.

Continuing to expand our reach

SCRC hosts regional trainings around the country to better leverage its resources and create learning networks of study circle programs.

2002

Saying goodbye to our founder

Topsfield Foundation founder Paul J. Aicher dies, leaving an endowment to support the work of the Topsfield Foundation and the Study Circles Resource Center. Before his passing, community members across the country gather to honor him and to celebrate the anniversary of the Topsfield Foundation.

Board member Diana Johnson becomes the board chair of the Topsfield Foundation.

"It wasn't in Paul's ego to demand that the Foundation survive forever. He wanted us to take chances, to do what needed to be done, to do the right thing. 'If you go out of business in 10 to 15 years,' he said, 'that's okay.' Paul's charge going forward was for us to assess the best ways to be entrepreneurial when appropriate in order to strengthen democracy."—Diana Johnson, board chair

Helping to build a movement

SCRC helps found the **Deliberative Democracy Consortium**, a network of practitioners and researchers working to strengthen deliberative democracy at all levels of governance in the United States and around the world.

2003

Encouraging youth to cross social lines

SCRC partners with the Southern Poverty Law Center on "**Mix It Up**," a national campaign to help young people identify, question and cross social boundaries in their schools and communities.

Addressing power

"Michael McCormick (former program director) pushed us to do power analyses. There was a tension in the organization about whether or not addressing power was advocacy work. But, some of us kept saying that you can't create community change without addressing power."

—Carolyn Abdullah, director of community assistance

2004

Honoring Paul J. Aicher

To honor Paul J. Aicher, the Board of Trustees changes the name of the Topsfield Foundation, Inc. to **The Paul J. Aicher Foundation**. Martha McCoy becomes president of the foundation, and Patrick Scully becomes executive vice president of the foundation.

Fostering leadership

"In one of my dialogues, I had a 'knitter,' an elderly white woman who simply didn't talk, but, in a good natured way, sat through five sessions of dialogue, nodding and knitting, driving everyone crazy. Two months later, she was arrested while protesting a government decision that she considered racially unjust. She called me and shouted, 'I got arrested! I am so excited!'"—Nancy Thomas, senior associate

2006

Advancing our knowledge on racism

Everyday Democracy publishes *Facing Racism in a Diverse Nation* to support deeper discussions of race, racism, and racial equity.

“For me, *Facing Racism in a Diverse Nation* was a turning point. We finally saw the connections between inequities, structural issues and democracy. We shifted from asking whether racism existed to stating that racism *does* exist; now, what do we do about it?”

—Carolyn Abdullah, director of community assistance

“While writing *Facing Racism in a Diverse Nation* with Carolyn, I came to realize that the lack of equity is a fact and that it’s not up for debate. The guide helps people think through why inequities exist and what they can do about it.”—Sue McCormack, senior associate

Willing to experiment and adapt

“In the last 4 to 5 years Everyday Democracy has become more willing to experiment and adapt. Our allegiance to the study circles model has softened and we make room for other ways to bring people into dialogues. It’s now more about the ends of the process than the means.”—Bruce Mallory, board member

Making progress on racism

“In many cases, you cannot mobilize large numbers of people unless you acknowledge and address race and other differences, and you cannot make progress on racism and bias unless you mobilize large numbers of people.”—Matt Leighninger, senior associate, in his book *Next Form of Democracy*

Deepening communities’ knowledge about poverty

In partnership with the Northwest Area Foundation (NWAf), SCRC publishes *Thriving Communities: Working together from poverty to prosperity for all*. SCRC works with NWAf to understand and embed the study circle organizing process in their anti-poverty initiative, Horizons.

2006-2010

Engaging communities on poverty

With SCRC’s help, more than 238 small, rural communities in seven northwestern states take part in the anti-poverty initiative, Horizons. The community leadership program, sponsored by the Northwest Area Foundation, is aimed at reducing poverty in rural and reservation communities. Ending in 2010, Horizons engaged over 100,000 people from 238 rural communities across seven states. People in participating communities launched more than 1,800 action plans to address the impact of poverty on their communities.

2008

Envisioning ‘everyday democracy’

The Study Circles Resource Center changes its name to **Everyday Democracy**, to provide a clearer sense of the meaning of dialogue-to-change work.

Strengthening communications

“Communications has become a tool for creating change, not just another piece of our advice.” —Amy Malick, communications director

Reflecting lessons in our tools

Everyday Democracy updates advice for facilitator trainers in ***A Guide for Training Public Dialogue Facilitators***.

'Walking the talk' on diversity

Everyday Democracy moves from Pomfret to East Hartford, Conn.

"The move helped us diversify our staff in terms of age and racial/ethnic makeup" – Rebecca Reyes, communications manager

Energizing grassroots organizers

Everyday Democracy hosts its national conference "Making Every Voice Matter" in Denver, Colo.

"There were a number of bright young people involved [in the conference.] You could see the enthusiasm they brought." —Selena Singletary, board member

Learning what works in taking on racism

Everyday Democracy selects nine community programs to take part in "**Communities Creating Racial Equity**," a national initiative focusing on creating and sustaining community engagement and change on issues around racial equity.

"A light bulb went off for me when I read **Flipping the Script** [a monograph on white privilege in community building work] during the time of Communities Creating Racial Equity. The monograph talked about the role of foundations in working for racial equity, but, even with the best of intentions, foundations, like us, can end up reinforcing institutional racism. I realized that we needed to listen better to the needs of the communities in the initiative and not impose upon them." —Barb Yasui, senior associate

Everyday Democracy hosts the first of two learning exchanges for participants in the Communities Creating Racial Equity initiative.

"The Communities Creating Racial Equity learning exchanges demonstrated how much communities can learn from one another. Sharing lessons and ideas created energy and enthusiasm. And it helped people see that their dialogue and action work was contributing to a broader effort to make change."—Molly Barrett, senior associate

Influencing a movement in Australia

Martha delivers a keynote address and workshop at the **Annual Conference of Adult Learning Australia** in Perth. She and Patrick Scully spend two weeks meeting with practitioners, academics and government agencies working to engage communities in dialogue and problem solving.

"This experience gave us a different view of our own work, a deeper appreciation of civic experiments in Australia, and a deeper understanding of how our work can be adapted into other political contexts."—Martha McCoy, executive director

Strengthening our Nation's Democracy

Together with America Speaks, Demos, and the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Everyday

Democracy convenes thinkers and practitioners across the democracy movement to create a common vision, an action agenda, and recommendations for whoever the next president would be. They recommend the establishment of an Office of Civic Participation.

2009

Helping Obama ‘renew America’

Everyday Democracy collaborates with CIRCLE and Public Agenda to create the Renew America Together discussion guide for the Presidential Inauguration Committee for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The guide provides people with the opportunity to reflect on service activities in their community.

Deepening our knowledge on racism

Everyday Democracy hosts a second learning exchange for Communities Creating Racial Equity.

Sustaining public engagement

Everyday Democracy and the Kettering Foundation collaborate to produce ***Sustaining Public Engagement: Embedded Deliberation in Local Communities***, a research report providing insights into how public engagement initiatives can grow into a regular practice involving people from many different parts of a community and spanning multiple issues.

“I’d like to think that the Sustaining Public Engagement: Embedded Deliberation in Local Communities and all of the conversations that went with it increased the attention of Everyday Democracy on embedding and sustaining deliberation.”— Archon Fung, board member

Inspiring the South to take on poverty

Inspired by the Horizons leadership project, the Southern Rural Development Center partners with Everyday Democracy on Turning the Tide, an initiative to bring everyday people together to address poverty and inequities in the rural South.

Contributing to deliberative democracy in America

Martha and a small delegation representing the deliberative democracy field meet with the Office of Public Engagement at the White House to discuss how the Obama administration can contribute to deeper deliberations among the American public.

Strengthening Our Nations Democracy (part two)

During the summer of the town hall meetings on health care reform, Everyday Democracy works with America Speaks, Demos, and the Archon Fung at the Kennedy School to convene another Strengthening Our Nation’s Democracy gathering. Several members of the Obama administration take part, and listen to recommendations.

2010

Helping to create the Campaign for Stronger Democracy

“Through the creation of the Campaign for a Stronger Democracy, Everyday Democracy has blossomed, connecting with people in different parts of the democracy movement, not just the deliberative democracy movement. It’s been an exciting thing for me to watch as a board member.”—Miles Rapoport, board member

Working with New Mexicans to help kids succeed

Everyday Democracy selects five New Mexico organizations to be part of “**Strong Starts for Children**,” a Kellogg Foundation-funded initiative to help communities find ways for people from all walks of life to work together for the success of all children. We write and publish a discussion guide *Strong Starts for Children* for use in New Mexico and across the country.

Modeling what we ask of communities

“I definitely think the internal work that we’re doing on racial equity is helping us model what we are asking of communities.”—Charmane Tripp, administrative operations associate

2011

Furthering our internal learning on racism

The **People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond—Undoing Racism** conducts a training for Everyday Democracy staff and senior associates.

“The People’s Institute was a really powerful event. It was interesting because everyone was at a different level of knowledge and understanding. I had plenty of ah-hah moments, but there were times when others were having ah-hah moments and I was like, ‘I already knew that.’ It was interesting to see that we were at different places in understanding racial equity.” —Gloria Mengual, program officer and equity team officer

Creating a roadmap

Everyday Democracy updates its theory of change and five-year strategic plan to focus on building the capacity of local communities to solve problems equitably and inclusively, and to help strengthen the national democracy reform movement.

“I think that our new strategic plan is helping us understand how our local and national work aligns with one another.”—Malana Rogers-Bursen, community assistance associate

Working towards a more vibrant democracy

“I think Everyday Democracy and related organizations hold some of the answers to how we get past the dysfunctional state of current governance to a more vibrant democracy.”—Jock McClellan, board member

Reflecting on our progress

“Paul always asked, ‘Is this making a difference?’ He wondered whether we and other civic organizations were furthering the notion of a movement around the country. If Paul could see the work now, he would say, ‘Yes, this is a movement.’” —Bruce Mallory, board member

Capturing the ‘civic health’ of Conn.

Everyday Democracy partners with the National Conference on Citizenship and Connecticut’s Secretary of State to produce the first-ever **Connecticut Civic Health Index 2011** report. Drawn from data collected in a special supplement to the U.S. Census, the Index shows us how involved Connecticut residents are in their communities and in political life, so that we can strengthen civic opportunities for all and achieve our potential as a state.

"The *Civic Health Index* is a landmark initiative for us. It examines the values we care about in the national democracy reform movement through everyday people and their engagement in their local communities."—Valeriano Ramos, director of strategic alliances

2012

Empowering communities to tell their story

"I count the Generation Justice videos documenting the Strong Starts project as a huge communication success. In this community-generated form of media, young writers, videographers and editors from Generation Justice helped participants from the initiative's communities document their dialogue-to-change efforts and tell their own stories. This form of media can be much more powerful than the conventional journalistic approach where a writer from the outside comes in to report a story."

—Amy Malick, former communications director

Learning together to work towards racial equity

With support from the Whitman Institute, Everyday Democracy brings together programs that took part in the 2008-2010 Communities Creating Racial Equity initiative for a learning exchange in Baltimore, Md. The event provides youth and adults from nine sites around the country with new ideas and resources, stories, connections, and personal renewal in their work to build racial equity in their communities. The event also reflects the effects of Everyday Democracy's deeper, more intentional work on equity, evaluation and community change.

"I learned that there are different ways to do the work, and that you have to be open to the possibility."

—Leslie King of Lynchburg, Va., learning exchange participant

Fostering relationships in New Mexico to help children thrive

Everyday Democracy continues its partnership with early childhood advocates in the greater Albuquerque area to share stories and lessons about bringing communities together to talk and find ways to help their youngest children succeed. Everyday Democracy hosts a learning exchange that helps both the organization and advocates reflect on their Strong Starts for Children efforts, and come together as a learning community with a focus on engagement, racial equity, and early childhood.

To expand civic engagement and racial equity throughout New Mexico, Everyday Democracy brings together early childhood development advocates to explore creating and sustaining a network of intermediary organizations that can catalyze and support the dialogue-to-change movement in the state. Drawing on what people share, Everyday Democracy begins to build a strategy that addresses the capacity-building needs in New Mexico with plans to implement plans in 2013.

Continuing to build civic health in Connecticut

The *Connecticut Civic Health Index 2011* report leads to Everyday Democracy and the Secretary of the State spearheading a Connecticut Civic Health Project to engage the public in civic renewal. More than 60 leaders from across the state join the Project representing government agencies, community and civic organizations, public interest and advocacy groups, service organizations, institutions of higher education, public education leaders and teachers, and youth and parent leadership organizations. Through its recommendations included in the 2011 report, the Project informs Connecticut about the health of youth engagement, voter access, civics

education, and racial/economic disparities as they manifest in civic life in the state. Advisory group subcommittees are actively carrying out a number of efforts, such as a news project that engages college students on public policy issues, a civics and media initiative for high school students, and the state television network covering and airing online a wide range of community conversations and panels on a whole range of issues.

Building equity into framework for children's success

Everyday Democracy partners with the Graustein Memorial Fund to help community coalitions across Connecticut create a framework and tools for engaging school districts, municipal governments, providers and the broader communities in meeting the inclusion/equity goals of the Memorial Fund's Discovery initiative – *“to ensure that Connecticut children of all races and income levels are ready for school by age five, and are successful learners by age nine.”*

Creating a roadmap for change

Everyday Democracy creates a theory of change outlining the assumptions, strategies, outcomes and impact of its work at the community, intermediary and national levels. The theory of change provides Everyday Democracy with a constant touchstone as it decides with whom to partner, what communities to serve, how to serve them, what to learn, and what to communicate. Community coalitions, intermediary organizations, funders and other strategic partners using the theory gain a clearer understanding of how Everyday Democracy contributes to a stronger local and national democracy, and, thus, a clearer idea of how they can effectively partner with the organization in these efforts.

2013

Working together to support mental health

In the wake of the school shootings in Newtown, Conn., President Obama calls for a National Dialogue on Mental Health, tapping the deliberative dialogue field to create a national platform for the initiative. Everyday Democracy and other leading deliberative dialogue organizations work with The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide in-depth support to cities around the country selected to host a city-wide dialogue on mental health.

Everyday Democracy works closely with Mayor Richard J. Berry of Albuquerque, N.M., to host a city-wide dialogue. Over three hundred residents come together at the National Hispanic Cultural Center on July 20, 2013, to engage in day-long conversations that move beyond stereotypes and negative attitudes and toward solutions that improve mental health and mental health systems. Mayor Berry ends the day by saying that his administration will continue supporting the ongoing dialogues, and that he will listen to and help implement ideas generated in the day's discussions.

“As themes developed and were voted on by participants, I was impressed with how the top ideas for taking action were all related. We had consensus.”

--Felicia Barnum

President, National Alliance on Mental Health, Albuquerque

Steering committee member of Creating Community Solutions-Albuquerque

“During the event, I watched people grappling with the issue of mental health and felt hope. It wasn't just lip service. People were really asking themselves, 'How does

our voice count?' 'How can we be accountable to the questions we're asking ourselves?' That was powerful."

--Troy Fernandez

Senior Director of Legislative Affairs & Community Development, OptumHealth
Steering committee member of Creating Community Solutions-Albuquerque

Taking on racism explicitly in education

Community coalitions across Connecticut form a learning community as part of the Everyday Democracy and Graustein Memorial Fund joint initiative "The Equity Learning Project," an effort to build equity and inclusion into the coalitions' work to help young children reach success in school. Through the project and partnership with Everyday Democracy, Graustein Memorial Fund's leadership says that the work has made a critical difference in the Foundation's understanding of the importance, difficulty and commitment to equity.

"In thinking about systems and effects of structural racism we have learned: (1) We have to pay attention to the whole child, to emotional as well as cognitive development; (2) We cannot mistake the symptom for the disease, and (3) We have to be explicit about race. The achievement gap is the symptom, racism is the disease."

--David Nee

Executive director, Graustein Memorial Fund, Connecticut

Propagating the deliberative dialogue "seed" in New Mexico

Building on the work of the Kellogg-funded Strong Starts for Children initiative, Everyday Democracy continues to partner with local Strong Starts partners and others to create a network that sustains dialogue and community change in the state. Organizations and community-based groups in the network are creating plans to build their skills in dialogue and action, parent development and equity in order to help others in the state gain such skills when taking on issues around early childhood development.

Standing against racism

In partnership with Hartford's Charter Oak Cultural Center, Everyday Democracy organizes a YWCA Stand Against Racism Day event titled "The Absurdity of Race." The event includes performances by local spoken-word artists and a panel of scholars and community leaders that focus on the race construct, its relationship to systemic racism, and ways to dismantle racism through knowledge, deliberation, and anti-racist organizing and action.

"The event gave Everyday Democracy the opportunity to connect local resources, such as the Charter Oak Cultural Center and local artists, to a national initiative. It was good to get to the street level and to also raise our visibility in Hartford."

--Charmane Tripp, executive assistant

2014

Expanding the mental health conversation

Together with our Creating Community Solutions coalition, Everyday Democracy supports ongoing mental health dialogues and action work in Albuquerque, NM, and Columbus, OH, as well as in communities across Connecticut. To date, nearly 200 mental health dialogues have taken place, and the supporting initiative Text, Talk, Act has drawn more than 2,000 people into the conversation. Everyday Democracy

and our Creating Community Solutions partners won the **International Association of Public Participation's USA Project of the Year Core Value Award** for our work on the national dialogue on mental health.

Creating Community Solutions is a partnership between the Deliberative Democracy Consortium, Everyday Democracy, the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, the National Institute for Civil Discourse and the National Issues Forum.

Ending racism within our lifetime

Everyday Democracy joins a nationwide coalition to launch the **"Campaign to Combat Implicit Bias,"** a campaign to raise public awareness about implicit bias and to encourage action to combat its impact. The campaign encourages people take the Implicit Bias Test to see if they have unconscious biases and then join dialogues to reflect on their experiences and work together to find solutions.

Finding a home for Topsfield Foundation's early history

Based on hopes Paul Aicher had expressed that Swarthmore College would someday house the papers of Topsfield Foundation's early projects, we move the collection to the College's Peace Collection. Researchers now have access to the papers of *Options*, *Access*, the *Grassroots Peace Directory*, and the *International Security News Clipping Service*. The Peace Collection holds materials from Paul's friend and mentor Homer Jack as well as NGOs and individuals working for "nonviolent social change, disarmament and conflict resolution around the world."

"Paul greatly admired Homer's long commitment to peace and justice," says Joyce Aicher in a letter to the Foundation. "[The collection] well deserves archiving in the Peace Collection."

In 2014, Everyday Democracy was approached by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the largest education philanthropy in New England, to be the technical assistance provider for its Public Understanding and Demand Initiative throughout the New England region.

2015

Creating Community Solutions was named one of the four finalists for Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Award for Innovations in Government related to public engagement.

2016

In December 2016, we held a national convening, "The Moment is Now," in Baltimore, MD, to highlight the critical importance of voice, participation, with a racial and intergenerational equity lens. The event received recognition from local and national civic leaders as a catalyst for hopeful democratic movement in a time of division, racist rhetoric, and despair.

2017

In 2017, Everyday Democracy entered into a partnership with the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge, aimed at reducing mass incarceration and reducing racial and ethnic disparities. We also carried out the first year of a multi-year national initiative on policing, race, and safety.

2018

With support from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation's Public Understanding and Demand Initiative, Everyday Democracy continues helping districts and community organizations throughout New England build their own capacity to involve people from all backgrounds in community conversations about the future of education and how education can work for all.