

Session Title *

Creating awareness of Indy's labor classes: What's social justice for us white working-class co-citizens?

Presenters johnharrisloflin@yahoo.com 1-317-998-1339

John Harris Loflin is a graduate of Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS), Purdue (BA), and IU (MS). He was born and raised here by a working-class family and attended Harry E. Wood, the city's main working-class high school. Besides teaching (IPS grades 7-12, and at adult and university levels), he's worked many years as a laborer. He's chair of the Southeast Working-Class Task Force, an official group of Southeast Neighborhood Congress, and Director of Education and Youth Issues for Indy's Black & Latin@ Policy Institute. John's published internationally and has presented at education conferences on 6 continents.

Angie Calvert is a Senior at IUPUI, earning a BA in Sociology. She was awarded the Sam Masarachia Scholarship and has been studying union and community organizing since at IUPUI 2012. She plans to pursue a MA in Sociology at University of Indianapolis or IUPUI in Fall 2017. She was born and raised in a poor family from Appalachia decent. She spent her childhood in rural Tennessee and Fountain Square, Indianapolis. She has worked in community organizations and volunteered at grassroots groups organizing around quality of life issues in Southeast Indianapolis. She is a member of the Southeast Working-Class Task Force

Workshop Description *

Please provide a description of your proposed workshop, including a breakdown of your presentation agenda. If you would like to submit multiple proposals, please provide those additional descriptions in this section (Minimum of 100 words).

Indianapolis does have a significant white working class population. This history stretches back to America's First (1910-1940) and Second (1940-1970) Great Migrations when whites from the upper central South and Southeast United States arrived here.

The workshop will raise local awareness and appreciation of our community by connecting the dots with respect to the white working class and the 2016 election:

- The white working class felt underrepresented, and indeed they were ignored in the election platforms of the elites of both major parties. For most of us, not being listened to leads to a sense of hopelessness; it also makes us vulnerable. Like Nixon, Wallace, or Reagan, candidate Trump's campaign sought the least common denominator and appealed to the worst instincts of this persistently vulnerable socio-economic class.
- The workshop will basically discuss how we as a city and world-class urban university respond to the recent events which have brought to public awareness the realities of a white working class. Though marginalized historically and culturally, and most recently economically by globalization and our information-based society, this demographic was pivotal in deciding the outcome of elections in Indiana and America.
- More importantly, the presentation will remind attendees that our nation's white working-class co-citizens in rural and urban areas swayed the 2016 election in spite of the fact that like other so-called American "minorities," this culture has

historically resisted assimilation into white middle-class cultural norms and epistemologies--even to its own detriment.

Finally, the value of this workshop is illustrated by the current national conversation on the culture and politics of his demographic and books such as *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*, the national best seller, *Hillbilly Elegy*, and commentaries like, "Ignore the working class at your own peril, political parties" by *Chicago Tribune* reporter Ron Grossman.

Here's link to draft of workshop's agenda:

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/The-Presentation-Agenda.pdf>

Workshop in relation to theme

Please provide an explanation on how your workshop is relative to the theme "A Home for Awareness, Advocacy, and Action." (minimum of 100 words)

Due to the national attention given to the political power of white working-class voters and their communities in the 2016 local and national elections, it is incumbent upon the city and IUPUI to recognize this underrepresented demographic via social justice conversations around questions of class, culture, and race.

This presentation intends to create an awareness of the inadequately represented Indianapolis communities of the mainly white working class citizens of Stringtown; Fountain Square, Irish Hill, and Twin Aire; the Valley; Mars Hill; and, particular Southside, near Eastside, south Meridian St., and the greater Mary Riggs Community Center neighborhoods.

Although citizens of this community are of European heritage and experience and benefit from white privilege, they also experience discrimination and social issues within the larger white social hierarchy of the status quo through oppression in the categories of culture (language, music, art, life styles), health and housing, education, employment, crime/gangs, criminal justice, drugs/alcohol, poverty, single parent homes, unemployment and other social toxins.

The workshop will explain the advocacy of the Southeast Working Class Task Force (SEW-CTF) for our city's working class citizens and its special critique of the current neo-colonial gentrification of Indy's long standing white working-class neighborhoods. Task force actions taken and proposed for the city, Indy's southeast neighborhoods, and particularly IUPUI, will be reviewed.

SEW-CTF wants to bring the campus to an awareness and appreciation that the urban white working class is a group that is not deemed a category in the examples used to define diversity on campus (IUPUI Office of Diversity or Center for Urban and Multi-cultural Education [CUME]) and, for example, is not a culture that urban educators, who intend to practice culturally relevant teaching, are required to know.