

## **SEND and R/ROS in light of the global Black Lives Matter movement**

A review of past situations regarding the Barrington and Norwood areas of Indianapolis revealed a history of neglect.

The current situation is characterized by the actions of R/ROS, through a slow but sure process, as to its neighborhood responsibilities and the assertion of its demands regarding Barrington and Norwood.

### **“We’ve been gentrified”**

With the July 27 *Recorder* story, "We've been gentrified," about the colonized so-called "Monon 16" neighborhood, we hear the complaint of original residents about being pushed out of their neighborhood where they always lived, "...[but]...don't tell Pearl Carter she lives in the Monon16 neighborhood. That's a ploy, she said, to attract new--mostly white--people and businesses." [http://www.indianapolisrecorder.com/recorder\\_headlines/article\\_45ca559e-cced-11ea-9833-1f17f74c8b21.htm](http://www.indianapolisrecorder.com/recorder_headlines/article_45ca559e-cced-11ea-9833-1f17f74c8b21.htm)

### **What is to happen to Barrington and Norwood?**

In the story we also read about what's happening to Riverside. This is all in line with the erasure of west-Indianapolis Black American history and culture with the previous gentrification of Ransom Place and the demolishing of the Fall Creek Y, a center of Indianapolis Black culture and resistance.

The *Recorder* article illustrates what's going on around so-called "Tinker Street" --the recently colonized East 16th St area up to and through the old Kountry Kitchen neighborhoods.

With the erasing of Black families, Black culture, and decades of history around Hosbrook St., and other long-time Black Southside neighborhoods like Concord and Babe Denny, the concern is what is to happen with Barrington/Norwood?

### **When put in the context of the BLM movement, a unique circumstance has occurred**

It's not that R/ROS has no history being critical friends of SEND, but that the two have not been involved under the challenges and demands of the global era of the Black Lives Matter movement.

The point here is an R/ROS organization of Black men being presently evolved in Barrington /Norwood is now new on many levels.

This has produced a situation that has not been experienced by Mr. McCoy or the SEND staff and board who in the past dealt mainly with Black women.

### **A review of SEND's past in a local systemic racism**

From its early 1990's birth, SEND was existing in a system of racism, but like in the majority of situations, the racism was hidden, quiet, or disguised.

SEND's creation, development, and policy and procedures, like most before and since 2000 did not necessarily or specifically have the welfare of Southeast side Blacks in mind. This was the norm with many other community organizations around Indy. Even so, Southeast Indy's racism was everywhere and obvious to Black folk, but not to the SEND and the Southeast white establishment.

## **Examples**

We won't go into the obvious displacement of residents and the erasure of long-time Black Hosbrook St., and the moving in of white urban settlers, making domestic refuge of the Hosbrook residents. This fact alone is enough to convince objective observers of the intent of SEND's policy toward Hosbrook St. where we now see homes worth hundreds of thousands of dollars--even Two Chicks and a Hammer live on this now exclusive street! See: "The Hyper-gentrification of Fountain Square: Erasing a working-class community and their network of mechanisms for survival."

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/The-Hyper-gentrification-of-Fountain-Square-Erasing-a-working-class-community-and-their-network-of-mechanisms-for-survival-by-Angie-Calvert.pdf>

Racism has always been here on the Southside. Indy, south of US 40, the city's Mason-Dixon line, has not been welcoming to Blacks...and north side Blacks know this. The city knows this. Everyone knows this (again) except the southeast's white mainstream. They evidently don't see race. They are not racist because racists are bad people and the SEND organization and the new white gentrified south eastside establishment are good people. Right?

See the story of our Southside legacy of racism: "Rich local (Southside Indy) heritage lives on in forgotten areas" at <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Rich-local-Southside-Indy-heritage-lives-on-in-forgotten-areas.pdf>.

## **A better more subtle form of systemic racism: A Southside charter**

We can only conclude the systemic racism was part and parcel of the Southeast social-political-economic climate. Thus, this pervasive racism also touched the neo-colonial SENSE school.

Of course the current staff at SENSE and board members were not there when SENSE was formed. Even those who were there when discussions happened, like John Loflin of R/ROS, did not experience race as an issue. He doesn't remember it being mentioned. In fact, why would race be brought up? Racism was invisible even though it was rife throughout the city and so in every southeast neighborhood. Yet, white Southeasters were like fish in water—they did not see that which was obvious to people of color standing on shore.

## **SENSE was not formed in a bubble**

So of course there's no reason for SENSE to admit systemic racism was a part of the school's history. But, on the other hand, we have to assume, looking back, that like everything else in town, it was.

SENSE was formed on the more racist part of Indy: the Southside. To believe SENSE was formed free of racism is naive and serves the interests of the White establishments of the Southside and the city. SENSE was conceived and birthed in the racism that was systemic. SENSE was not an exception. *SENSE was not formed in a bubble.*

Consequently, it's not that the SENSE was anti-Black. This was not necessarily the case. What is certain is the general "whiteness" of the school, which was subtly enabled and validated.

At that time providing South East side K-12 families an alternative to the Manual H.S. feeder system was one of the purposes of SENSE. Manual, with its racially diverse student body, very low graduation rates, classroom discipline problems, gangs, and fights worried people.

Also, we cannot forget some of the original SENSE board of white middle-class members such as Kim Wise, Lee Lewellen, Mark Pflum, and Bill Taft. The board had the school dabble with the whiteness of

the Core Knowledge curriculum of E. D. Hirsch. The then all-white Kevin Teasley/GEO matrix got SENSE to hire a white male Protestant minister to be the school's first principal. None of this was exceptional. It was just how things were done back then.

With a history of majority white boards, we can only assume this is intentional; yet, the present SENSE board (<https://www.senseindy.org/board-members--167>) might rationalize that some sort of "invisible hand" of systemic racism continues to control school policy, and thus the school or board is not a fault.

### **SEND and Black women**

Historically, on the Southeast side, most interactions between Black Americans and organizations like SEND have been with Black women. Dealing with assertive, culturally aware, astute in Black history, equity-minded, and politically savvy family men with a strong Black identity who are self-organized is not the norm for SEND.

In fact, for the majority of its existence, the majority white SEND area, staff, and board (<https://www.sendcdc.org/team>) offered no reason to conclude SEND had/has the interests of Black people in mind.

Just think what could have happened to Hosbrook St. if SEND helped home owners and renters to self-organize and turn the 2 blocks into something they envisioned—where their Black working-class history and culture was validated and their homes were restored.

Hosbrook St. could have enhanced Fountain Square. It could have been an example to the world of the rich diversity of Indianapolis neighborhoods. Unfortunately, Black Hosbrook St. has been erased and decades from now no one will know any better.

### **The SEND Plantation**

To be sure, there has been Black representation on the SEND board, at SEND events, and in conversations such as Twin Aire/2020 plan.

From the R/ROS perspective, we see this token representation of Black Americans works for SEND or what we call the "SEND Plantation" because these Black representatives know their role: don't scare white people.

### **Is SEND racist? Yes, of course.**

Finding racism in predominately white organizations like SEND is natural in today's Indiana where in 1907, we Hoosiers created and passed the world's first Eugenic law. It is also inherent in the DNA of Indianapolis which created 1) a Jim Crow public school system in the 1920's atmosphere of the KKK, 2) a hegemonic UNIGOV system, and 3) a current neo-liberal, neo-colonial school district that disenfranchise Black parents/Black constituents who can't vote in or out members of their charter school board, while that same privatized board spends their taxes. Taxation without representation is tyranny.

**SEND must begin the long journey of self-examination leading to self-renewal.** The book, *White Fragility* will help with any intra-organizational conflicts.

### **It's not SEND *per se*, it's SEND's coloniality**

If and when SEND starts this journey, it's inevitable they will discover--not so much any intentional racism, and intentional racist actions or policies--but the hidden or camouflaged "whiteness" in the organization and its DNA. Hint: start with SEND's epistemologies.

## **Recommendations**

SEND staff and board will deconstruct *How systemic racism works*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KT1vsOJctMk>

The Black men of R/ROS recommend Mr. McCoy and SEND staff and board to take anti-racist/diversity-equity training. Those included will be John Loflin and Commissioner Mascari.

If SEND staff and board have taken such training, please present proof and E-mail R/ROS SEND's current anti-racist policy

R/ROS recommends the SEND organization decolonize.

R/ROS also demands Mr. McCoy get an assistant who is a Black man. Our evaluation of Ike to date reveals he has plenty of experience with women, but lacks the experience to deal with Black men.

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