

Our Community

Children playing in the trees

Families jumping in piles of leaves

Strong, safe, comfortable

Our community should be

Neighborhood watches, block parties and fun

Tutoring, caring, working as one

United we stand, divided we fall

Our community should uplift one and all

Communication, diversity, and openness is key

To helping this community become what it should be

~ Sharda Fields



“What I like about Imagine Memphis is that it highlights the potential that Memphis has. Also, Imagine Memphis could use the ideas from adults to solve the problems of Memphis, but instead it invests in the youth and uses our input to address the issues of Memphis, including how we think we can make Memphis a better place.”

-Ural Grant, Imagine Memphis Youth



Spring 2008, Volume I, Issue 1

**To join this initiative, please e-mail us at
info@imaginememphis.org**

Imagine Memphis is a city-wide initiative designed to connect youth and adults to imagine and create a better Memphis. The initiative is modeled after the Imagine Chicago initiative that began in 1992 and is not only still inspiring Chicago, but other cities around the globe today. Three core processes supporting Imagine Memphis are dialogue, capacity development, and network enhancements. This news report details each component of the Imagine Memphis effort, and explains how you can become a part of this global initiative.



IM in the Beginning

Bliss Browne, the original designer of Imagine Chicago, brought to the Gathering a special expertise spanning community development efforts across the globe. Bliss immediately enrolled the youth in creating an engaging, inspiring learning environment. The youth were active participants and often helped shape the discussion towards concrete possibilities.



Imagine Memphis Core Processes

Dialogue: Coming together to plan and create with openness to learn from each other.

Capacity Development: Providing learning opportunities with master teachers for community influencers to expand their networking experiences and learn the power of more positive narratives.

Network enhancements: Strengthening the capability of participating groups/organizations/individuals by bringing various groups together and creating learning experiences that foster expanded networking and collaboration.

Discovery Interviews

Since November, Memphis's youth interviewed approximately 80 community influencers to find out exactly what they appreciated about Memphis, and how those positive characteristics could be expanded upon. On March 1, 24 youth from across public and private high schools made meaning from the documented interviews. Twenty-three community influencers gained tangible, usable feedback in regard to imaging a vital future for our city.



Stronger school systems, safe communities, more minorities in leadership, entertainment, communication and overcoming race-based politics were the four areas where the most concern was centered.

Community Gathering

Forty-eight participants with twenty-five percent of the participants being high school youth attended the Saturday, January 19th, session at BRIDGES.



People Are Talking about IM

I have visually been able to see a difference in the demeanor of those who have been touched by the Imagine Memphis appreciative inquiry.

"Imagine Memphis is important to me because I have witnessed first hand the positive changes it can make in individuals' lives and the effects of those changes in the individuals serve to make a positive difference in the environment surrounding them. I have visually been



able to see a difference in the demeanor of those who have been touched by the Imagine Memphis appreciative inquiry. Imagine Memphis is a symbol of what can make our great city of Memphis reach its full potential and be all that Memphians hope it can become. As business executives, teachers, doctors, students, and many others contribute their work ethic to discuss how Memphis can improve for the betterment of its people, I have been thrilled to have been a part of those discussions because although I am a youth board member, my opinion is as valued as the adult sitting next to me. The values Imagine Memphis embraces are key to the success of not only this organization but of the future of the city of Memphis."



~Katelyn Nichols, Imagine Memphis Youth