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News Release

For Immediate Release

Greater Springfield Race & Faith Collaborative to kick off year-long effort to improve understanding of race and race relations

The Greater Springfield Race & Faith Collaborative, a group started by the City of Springfield, the Center for Diversity and Reconciliation, Missouri State University and the Council of Churches of the Ozarks, will host a kick-off event 8-9 a.m. this Saturday, November 16, at Council of Churches of the Ozarks, 627 N. Glenstone.

The group invites community members to participate in discussions about improving race relations and will offer take-home toolkits to attendees.

City Manager Greg Burris will show a video and describe the Collaborative's year-long project focused on promoting a deeper understanding of race in the community. The project's first three months will be devoted to self-introspection regarding race. The second quarter will be devoted to promoting conversation about race with family and friends. The third quarter will be devoted to promoting conversations about race within places of work, places of worship, schools and other places. The fourth quarter will be devoted to promoting a broader conversation within the community.

Missouri State University's Dr. Ken Coopwood will discuss the self-introspection component and introduce the toolkits.

The Greater Springfield Race & Faith Collaborative began when the group, planning to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, began exploring their collective desire to improve race relations and foster an appreciation of racial diversity in the Springfield area. Their discussions and desire led to the idea of having a year-long project to improve race relations and enhance racial diversity in the greater Springfield area.

For more information about the kick-off event, or the Greater Springfield Race & Faith Collaborative, please e-mail Stacey.road@gmail.com.