



REPORT ON THE INAUGURAL GUILFORD DIALOGUES

June 7-10, 2022

Guilford College • Greensboro, N.C.



Dear Friend of Guilford Dialogues,

I am very pleased to share with you a report of the inaugural Guilford Dialogues held June 7-10, 2022, on the campus of Guilford College. In these pages you will find a recap of discussions among over 200 conference participants about issues of economic inclusion.

I see the Guilford Dialogues as an ongoing opportunity to bring people together to discuss and come up with solutions to critical challenges. This year, we wanted to look at the issue of economic inclusion from a few perspectives. These issues aren't just limited to the field of economics. There are some political issues, issues within the business community, housing issues, and issues related to city planning. For our inaugural conference we brought a diversity of perspectives together as we pursued multifaceted strategies for dealing with economic inclusion.

In many ways the time we spent together in the inaugural Dialogues exceeded my expectations. I am thrilled by the conversations we had among people from all over who came up with ideas and solutions. Now the exciting part begins, where we can test some of those ideas and see what resonates in different communities. When we gather again we can see what worked and what hasn't worked and keep the momentum going to continue addressing pressing issues of economic inclusion.

In March 2023, we will reconvene on issues of educational opportunity. Between now and then we will check in on where we are since the 2022 meeting. We are looking at some research involving Guilford College faculty

and students, along with faculty and students from other higher education institutions, think-tanks, and other organizations. And we expect to implement some programmatic ideas. My goal is to keep this community growing.

If you are interested in being part of our community, collaborating around issues of economic inclusion, or joining in our future Guilford Dialogue topic of educational opportunity, or you simply want to find ways that you can partner with members of our Guilford community about making an impact on some of the broad challenges we are examining, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at president@guilford.edu.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Kyle Farmbry
President
Guilford College



(DAY 1) JUNE 8: AN ECONOMY FOR ALL

The inaugural Guilford Dialogues, which focused on economic inclusion, kicked off June 8 with Regina Malveaux, Executive Director of the Washington State Women's Commission, offering up some sobering numbers.

Numbers like, for every dollar a full-time male worker earned last year, a female peer earned just 83 cents doing the same job. Add part-time workers to that mix and the number for women drops to 77 cents. The number shrinks even more when those women are Black (63 cents) and Hispanic (58 cents).

The question throughout the day, then, was how to include more women, minorities, and refugees in a rapidly growing economy. "How do businesses, municipalities, and individuals value everyone equally?" Regina asked more than 100 conference attendees.

"We know everybody brings talent and labor to create the economy that we have, but ... this (economy) continues to be built on the backs of extraordinarily talented, committed, hardworking people who are still deeply undervalued as compared to the majority. This isn't a 300-years-ago problem, it continues to be a modern-day problem."

It's not just equal wages that needs addressing. **Sarah Glover '88**, Director of Family Success Centers for the United Way of Greensboro, told attendees that the high cost of child care remains a huge barrier, blocking many women from even entering the work force. And those who are able to work, she said, become so burdened by the costs that the financial hardships make it hard for them to advance in their careers.

Sarah says child care is expensive, in part, because of increased licensing and training regulations and high staffing ratios required to give children much-needed attention and supervision.

What's missing, she said, is the funding for that work. "There's very little public investment in childcare and that needs to change," she said.





Only exacerbating the problem is the uneven scheduling prevalent throughout the child-care industry. “Many day-care schedules don’t align with public school schedules, forcing parents – often mothers – into part-time jobs to accommodate logistical problems for dropping off and picking up children in day care and elementary or middle schools,” she added.

Sarah says it comes down to better coordination and funding, the latter is a piece of the puzzle that is missing whenever cities and states map out budgets.

Lamar Thorpe, the Mayor of Antioch, Calif., said states and municipalities need to rethink how money is allocated. “No (city) minds writing a blank check for a police department, but we have consternation about having universal day care or preschool.”

Colleen Thouez, of The New School’s Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility, who spoke on a panel about including migrant communities – including refugees, undocumented individuals, and others – in a city’s economy said that federal and state funding of local agencies can be better.

“They are on the ground with these people, they know the needs,” she said. “We should be pouring more money into helping them because the return on investment is huge.”

Colleen says people who hold onto the mentality that the economic pie of a city like Greensboro is a finite number of slices and think that for one person to eat they must beat out another are clinging to outdated ideas.

“Economic inclusion doesn’t reduce your opportunity, it grows the economy which grows everyone’s opportunity and, in turn, everyone benefits,” she said.

REFLECTIONS FROM JUNE 8

Guilford College Economics Professor Bob Williams: “Money and the accumulation of wealth are the tickets into our society. If you don’t have either you’re not admitted.”

Marcus Bass, North Carolina Black Alliance: “Access to loans is important to women in business, but it’s not easy. If you can’t get a loan for a house that’s going to appreciate in this climate, imagine how hard it is to get a loan to grow or start a business.”

Esther T. Benjamin, World Education Services: “You can never enable individuals and not focus on systems. Every day in our work, we’re enabling individuals and we’re disrupting systems.”

Lamar Thorpe, Mayor of Antioch, California: “No (city) minds writing a blank check for a police department, but we have consternation about having universal day care or preschool.”

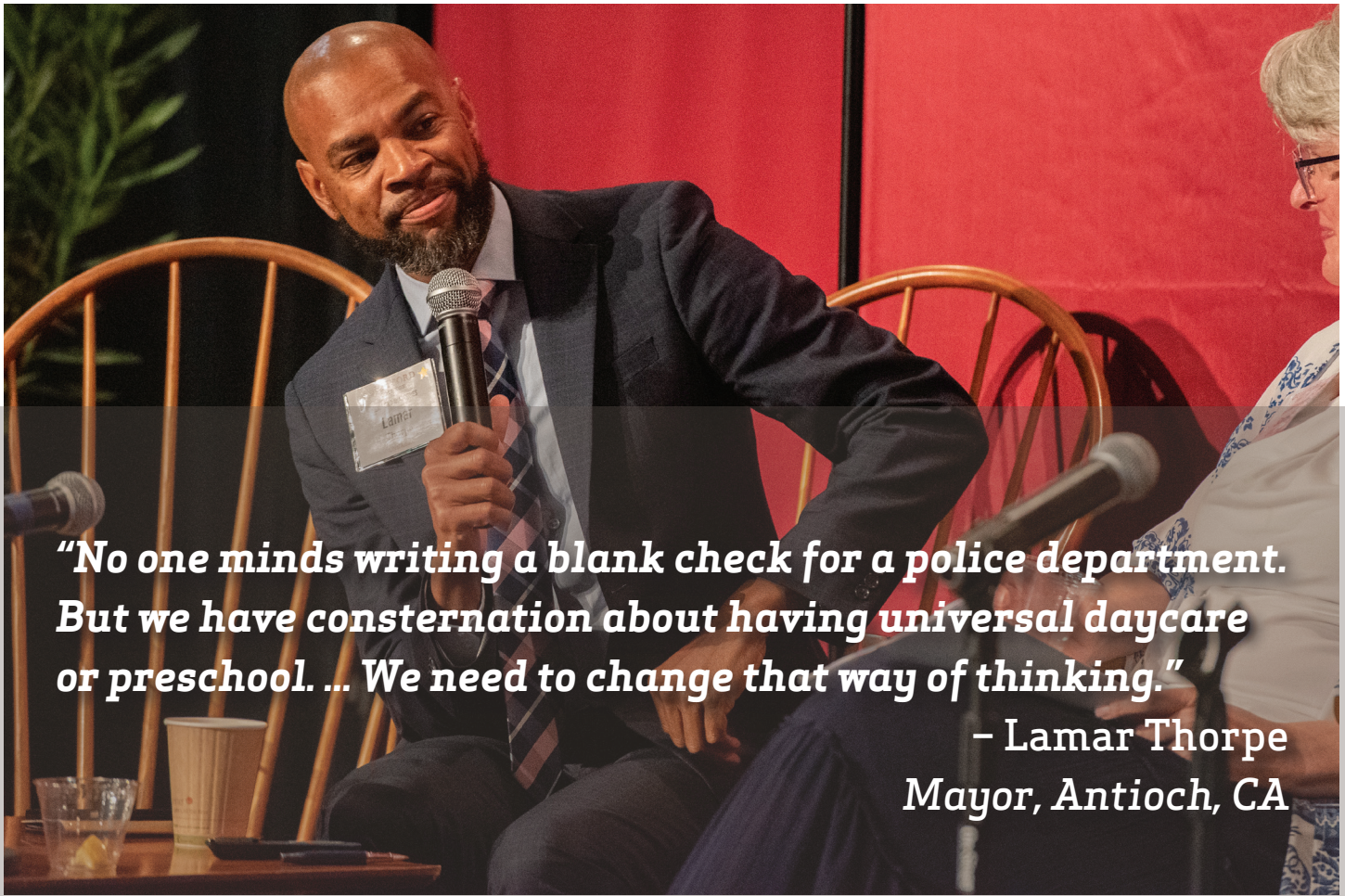
Colleen Thouez, The New School’s Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility: “It’s at the city level that we’re going to get the type of change we need. I agree that the leadership of a city, what I’ve heard called a city’s body language, can have an impact on a sense of belonging.”

Hourie Tafech, Ph.D., Post-Doctoral Scholar, Guilford College: “In my research I found that what we think might be evidence of economic inclusion can turn out to be economic exclusion.”

Maria J. Zamora, Assistant Director for Undocumented Student Services at Rutgers University, Newark: “Where can we get funding to get these students hands-on experience? ... We definitely look toward private donors who can fund fellowships and offer sponsorships.”

Lisa Hazlett, Vice President of The Nussbaum Center: “I believe that entrepreneurship is a pathway out of poverty.”





“No one minds writing a blank check for a police department. But we have consternation about having universal daycare or preschool. ... We need to change that way of thinking.”

***– Lamar Thorpe
Mayor, Antioch, CA***

Russell Fugett, Founder and Chief Encouragement Officer of the Jumla Network: “Access to education, access to capital, these are things that resonate when we talk about entrepreneurial attainment. The other thing is community, creating an ecosystem, creating family. These are the gaps we have a responsibility to fill.”

Wendy Bolger, Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Loyola Maryland: “I really want entrepreneurs to own a sense of community, to own their leadership capabilities. ... It sure feels great when they can step into those shoes.”

Simon Gifford, CEO of Mashauri Limited: “The success of an entrepreneur is directly related to the ecosystem around them. It’s quite challenging to build an ecosystem. It isn’t one player’s responsibility. Every player has to want to join in.”

Shelly-Ann Eweka, Senior Director, Advice Solutions, TIAA: “Women retire with 30% less. We’re on a mission. We’re going to retire inequality. We’re going to eliminate the gender pay gap. We’re going to make a difference. This whole day has encouraged me.”



SPECIAL GUILFORD DIALOGUES EVENT: EUGENE ROBINSON

Where economic inclusion is concerned, the ideas flew fast and furious at the Guilford Dialogues.

But the most controversial, perhaps, came from Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Eugene Robinson in a special public event June 8 at Dana Auditorium on campus.

In a wide-ranging conversation with City of Greensboro Communications and Marketing Director Carla Banks, Eugene said it's well beyond time for U.S. cities and the nation as a whole to consider reparations to Black Americans.

"We're now at a point where we have to take steps to compensate for the long centuries of discrimination," he told an audience of about 250 people, wrapping up the Dialogues' first day. "We have to create opportunities and we have to do that mindfully."

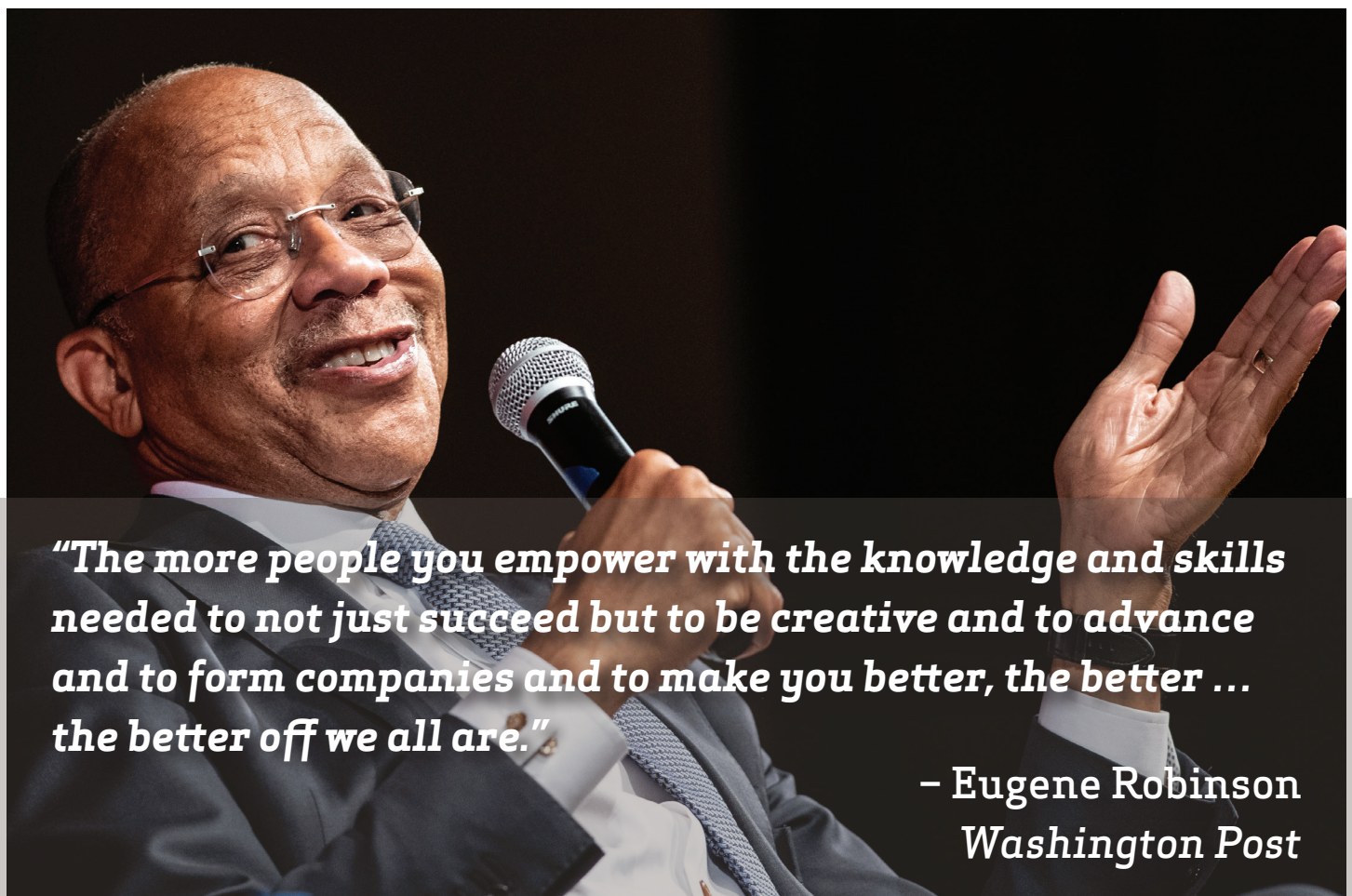
He acknowledged that reparations, long debated by a nation built at the expense of labor and wealth from African Americans, come with an expensive price tag. But in the same breath, Eugene, who writes a twice-weekly column for *The Washington Post*, sees recompense not just as an investment in people of color but also the economy.

"(Reparations) open doors for people who otherwise would not be going through those doors," he said. "The people who were used to going through those doors sometimes resent that and feel that they're being excluded, but I think of (reparations) as inclusive. We're growing the pie. We're not giving anyone the smaller slice of it."

Eugene suggested that reparations don't always have to be financial. He said access to more educational opportunities for Black Americans would also help grow a more inclusive economy.

"The more people you empower with the knowledge and skills needed to not just succeed but to be creative and to advance and to form companies and to make you better, the better ... the better off we all are," he said.

Eugene argued that not only does it make sound financial sense for a more inclusive economy, reparations come



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**– Eugene Robinson
*Washington Post***



with the added virtue of being the right thing to do. “There are 400 years of history in this country that argue persuasively that there is an actual debt imbalance that is owed to African Americans in the United States that has never been paid,” he said.

“People get freaked out ... sometimes with the word reparations. But when you actually look at and understand the system of how African Americans were deprived of wealth and opportunity, over decades and centuries in a way that compounds the theft, it’s hard to argue against,” he said. “It’s not going to redress 400 years of theory but it’ll do something.”

Eugene said he was inspired by the College’s efforts to tackle an issue as big as economic inclusion.

“It’s exciting to participate in the Dialogues,” he said. “Anyone who follows the stuff that I write and talk about knows how difficult it is to get anything done on a national level. I’ve come to think more and more that the good new ideas and the new approaches and solutions are coming from events like these.”

(DAY 2) JUNE 9: FOCUSED ON SOLUTIONS

Guilford Dialogues attendees spent the first day learning about the daunting but important issue of economic inclusion. On the second day of the conference, the nearly 200 participants got a glimpse at one possible solution.

A panel of four local city and nonprofit leaders discussed how community organizations can help foster economic inclusion and offered a perfect example close to home: East Greensboro.

For decades, residents of Greensboro's east side have endured food and health-care deserts, sagging home values, and a decline in growth as an increasing number of residents choose to live elsewhere.

But the panelists said that recent headlines signal a reversal of fortunes for the area. They discussed how each organization is mobilizing to align areas of expertise with the needs of marginalized residents.

Within the past year, Toyota, regional grocery chain Publix, jet startup Boom Supersonic, and seed and pesticide maker Syngenta have all announced significant investments in Greensboro that will bring more than 5,000 jobs to the Triad, many paying \$60,000 up to \$120,000. It's the hope of Marvin Price, Executive Vice President of Economic Development for the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, that many of those jobs go to residents of East Greensboro.

"Now we need to partner to make sure that the individuals in this community are skilled and trained to be able to take advantage of these opportunities that we're bringing here," he said.

Marvin said that the chamber has worked with local and state government officials to offer financial incentives to those companies for every job offered to a resident in east Greensboro. But he was quick to add that incentives only go so far.





A \$135 million bond referendum championed by the chamber and recently approved by voters allocates \$30 million for housing. The city wants to use those dollars to build affordable housing throughout east Greensboro and other areas, make homeownership easier, and make some neighborhoods more attractive to buyers.

“We partner with the city and the county to make sure we recruit companies that understand the values of the east side of town, to make sure that there’s equitable growth for everyone that’s coming through and that those residents benefit. This is not charity. The companies are going to win, but the citizens in these impact zones are as well,” he said.

The chamber is partnering with Guilford Technical Community College and GuilfordWorks, a local nonprofit organization that collaborates with local businesses, schools, and state agencies, that is developing adult-focused training specific to the needs of the companies expanding to Greensboro. GuilfordWorks even has a mobile career center that goes out into the community to inform residents of potential careers and the training that’s required for them.

“We’re out in the communities letting people know what’s coming in the way of jobs and what’s available with training geared to those jobs,” Marvin said.

He and other panelists said they are always looking for volunteers – individuals, churches, civic groups – to help with those efforts. “This is why we think something like Guilford Dialogues is so important to our city,” he said. “We want to partner up with people and agencies to get folks the training. Economic inclusion is very much a grassroots effort and that’s what we’re doing on a daily basis.”

REFLECTIONS FROM JUNE 9

Adriane Clomax, Ph.D. candidate at USC's Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work:

"Beyond just work, being in an employee-owned business really enriches the lives of the people who work in them."

Guenevere Abernathy, N.C. Employee Ownership Center: "There's been some qualitative work around people hearing stories, gaining financial knowledge, and taking it home and trying to get jobs and opportunities that offer these benefits."

Dennis Quaintance, Quaintance-Weaver Restaurants and Hotels: "We need to do a better job communicating that it's a great option for transferring ownership of a company. If you don't have a succession plan, you need to really start an employee ownership strategy."

Roodline Volcy, SeedCommons: "Black and brown communities are using the co-op model to enter the economy – and to enter the economy with dignified jobs, with living wages, with access to health care in a way that conventional businesses have excluded them."

Joyce Hobson Johnson, Co-Executive Director of Beloved Community Greensboro: "I appreciate the word inclusion, but we need more depth. You can be included in a process, but if your power, your voice, is not manifested, then you're not really included."

Joyce Hobson Johnson: "There is something systemic that we've got to deal with. But the truth is, there's no hierarchy of human value. All are important. We need to tap into that, and we'll have the richest, most inclusive economic setting."

Dayna Carr, Glenwood Together: "That's what inches back to an economic system that's right – when everyone engages. We all have to have someone who believes in us. And we have to be the right ones in their corner."

Marvin Price, Greensboro Chamber of Commerce: "When we're trying to be open and inclusive, looking for economic vitality, for someone to participate in that, 9 times out of 10 it's a job. The more ways we can help someone





to find that, to help their family, that's change."

Mac Sims, President, East Greensboro Now: "Is this not the appropriate place to have this conversation? This is #GuilfordCollege, from the Underground Railroad to now. For those of you from out of state, this is what we do here. Thank you for your support...."

Marcus Thomas, Program Officer for Community Impact, Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro: "We envision a future where everyone in our community can live in safe and affordable housing."

Josie Williams '16, Greensboro Housing Coalition: "The physical environment in which we live, work, and play has everything to do with our overall wellbeing and health. There is a direct correlation between housing and health."

Gene Brown, Greensboro Housing Coalition: "Home equity is a huge chunk – and in retirement accounts equates to up to 60% of the wealth of an individual. One of the reasons we focus on home ownership and low-income families is, 'How can we help reserve that asset for them?'"

Graham Macmillan, President, Visa Foundation: "Capital with the right partners can have not only economic benefit but community benefit. ... With the right conversations, like these Dialogues, and the right policies we can see the right shifts occur."

Roberta Lobo, Director at Nuveen, a TIAA company: "The moral is really that you have to have two-way dialogues. You need to engage with management and you have to engage with investors to try to make an impact."

Byron Loflin, Global Head, Board Engagement NASDAQ: "We're talking about the need to have institutions we can trust. The notion of self-awareness in the boardroom, like self-awareness of a CEO, has become a prevalent condition to being an excellent leader."



(DAY 3) JUNE 10: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

As the inaugural three-day Guilford Dialogues conference to foster economic inclusion on a local and international level wound to a close, the final-session format was open and uplifting.

Attendees discussed their excitement and recommendations before departing for their homes locally, across the U.S., and globally and found there is consensus about needs and challenges around economic inclusion, but developing solutions is a work in progress.

That's where Mark Justad, Director of Guilford's Center for Principled Problem Solving and Excellence in Teaching, stepped in. Guilford's Principled Problem Solving model assumes that multiple perspectives are necessary for seeking solutions, and that complex problems like economic inclusion require contextualized, collaborative, and adaptive approaches to affect change.

"This isn't the ending," Mark told attendees. "It's just the beginning." He asked attendees to list actions or strategies they want to take home with them and implement in the coming days and weeks. Participants then worked within small groups to talk about next steps.

Guilford President Kyle Farmbry said that the College will reach out to attendees this summer about how to implement those next steps. He said the Guilford team will talk with attendees about "sub-issues" of economic inclusion as strategies are developed.

The plan for the Dialogues is to have a conference focused on the related topic of educational opportunity and inclusion in 2023 and circle back to the next phase of work on economic inclusion in 2024.

Greensboro entrepreneur Tiffany Grant realizes the challenges awaiting her and others implementing strategies that make local economies more inclusive to women, people of color, refugees, and immigrants, but she's determined to make it happen.

"This is a huge issue not only in the local community, but also internationally as well," she said. "Sitting in on some of these panels, it really opened my eyes to how all of these pieces – education, child care, funding – all kind of fit together. It's daunting but it's change that is doable."

That change, Dialogues leaders says, starts with the relationships formed this week in Greensboro. Martina Jordaan who leads community engagement and postgraduate students at the University of Pretoria's Mamelodi campus in South Africa, is encouraged after meeting so many others with like-minded goals.

"It was really great to talk to people about possible partnerships and networking and possible future projects," Martina said. "(Economic inclusion) is not something any of us can solve alone so I really enjoyed sitting next to others over a cup of coffee and talking to people and identify things we can do together."

That notion of partnerships was a recurring theme on Friday. The Rev. Hanna Broome told attendees that they took the first step of a long journey this week – not alone but rather together. "If it was easy we wouldn't be here in this room today," she said. But she also said the relationships and partnerships formed over the week between panelists and attendees will make the journey easier.

She said Guilford Dialogues speakers and attendees reminded her of an Ethiopian proverb. "When spider webs unite, they can entangle a lion," she said.

"Our lion today is economic inequality. This week's events helped to weave a much stronger web of collaboration, mutual understanding and shared action across the diaspora. We have a shared moral consciousness. We're fighting a revolution in social and political will, as well as new innovations and greater collaboration across all sectors. We can win this fight."

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Number of participants: 202
Number of panelists/speakers: 53
Sponsors: 7

RESOURCES

Dialogues web page
<https://www.guilford.edu/GuilfordDialogues>

Photo gallery
<https://www.guilford.edu/multimedia/photos/2022/06/guilford-dialogues-2022-gallery>



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GUILFORD DIALOGUES

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