



Durham Citywide Book Study

Collective Courage by Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard

SpiritHouse Kicks off its Third City-Wide Book Study further exploring collaborative interventions to systemic barriers that African Americans have face.

Collective Courage examines the history of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice.

DURHAM – February 1, 2016, SpiritHouse, a Durham-based community collective of artists and activists, will kick off its third annual city-wide book study Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard's book, *Collective Courage: A History of African- American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice*. SpiritHouse has been working since 1999 to create and develop grassroots programs that seek to dismantle structures of racism and poverty that affect communities of color. *Collective Courage* was chosen to follow up our previous studies of mass incarceration, through Michelle Alexander's, "The New Jim Crow," and serial displacement through Dr. Mindy Fullilove's "Urban Alchemy," with an in depth look at the collective resilience of those most impacted by these issues, in order to help us chart a new, firmly grounded course toward a more equitable Durham.

Nancy Wilson, SpiritHouse's Executive Director states "Our city-wide book studies and film screenings give people a place to educate one-another, have difficult but productive conversations, and create the foundation on which we can build a Durham that is accountable to all of its residents."

SpiritHouse's book-study program is part of its Harm Free Zone project which seeks to promote independent and self-directing community autonomy as a necessary step towards creating true accountability and reducing reliance on law enforcement. Through programs and initiatives like the city-wide book study, the Harm Free Zone project provides tools and trainings to strengthen and develop Durham's capacity to confront and transform harm. In 2015, more than 100 community members, including city officials, came together to read and discuss *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* and *Urban Alchemy: Restoring Joy in America's Sorted Out Cities*.

In *Collective Courage*, Dr. Nembhard reminds us of the "long rich [African American] history of cooperative ownership, especially in reaction to market failures and economic racial discrimination...

There are lessons to be learned the history of cooperative economic models that can be applied to future discussions about community economic development in communities of color."



From February through April, community members will create small discussion groups that will commit to reading the book and hosting at least four group discussions. In May, all participants will come together in a city-wide convening to share their experiences.

“The enthusiastic involvement of so many community members made our reading of *The New Jim Crow* a tremendous success. This year we are expecting an even larger turnout,” added Wilson. “SpiritHouse was created to get to the root of the inequalities that divide our communities. Our city-wide book studies create space for us to do just that.”

Community Supporters:

Action NC
All of Us or None
Central Park School for Children Equity Team
CityWell
Cocoa Cinnamon
Communities in Partnership Old East Durham
Cooperative Development Center
DEEP (Durham Equitable Equity Partners)
Earth Seed
Episcopalians United Against Racism (EUAR)
FADE (Fostering Alternatives for Drug Enforcement)
Fertile Ground
Funds for Democratic Communities (F4DC)
Justice Auto Works
OAR Durham (Organizing Against Racism)
Partners for Youth Opportunities
People’s Alliance
Southern Coalition for Social Justice
SpiritHouse Inc.
SURJ (Standing Up for Racial Justice)
Village of Wisdom
Warrior Healers

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SpiritHouse is a Durham-based cultural arts and organizing collective that, since 1999, has worked with low-wealth families and community members to uncover and uproot the systemic barriers that prevent us from gaining the resources, leverage and capacity for long-term self-sufficiency.



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Collective Courage
Recommendation for
Book Study Schedule

At a bare minimum, we suggest at least four meetings for your book study group. The book is divided in to the following components:

1. Early African American Cooperative Roots

- a. Early Black Economic Cooperation: Intentional Communities, Communes, and Mutual Aid
- b. From Economic Independence to Political Advocacy: Cooperation and 19th Century Black Populist Movement
- c. Expanding the Tradition: Early African American-Owned “Cooperative” Businesses

2. Deliberative Cooperative Economic Development

- a. Strategy, Advocacy, and Practice: Black Study Circles and Co-op Education on Front Lines
- b. The Young Negroes’ Co-operative League
- c. Out of Necessity: The Great Depression and “Consumers” Cooperation among Negroes”
- d. Continuing the Legacy: Nannie Helen Burroughs, Halena Wilson, and the Role of Black Women
- e. Black Rural Cooperative Activity in the Early to Mid-Twentieth Century

3. Twentieth- Century Practices, Twenty- First- Century Solutions

- a. The Federation of Southern Cooperatives: The Legacy Lives On
- b. Economic Solidarity in the African American Cooperative Movement: Connections, Cohesiveness, and Leadership Development



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Study Group Considerations

- Get people involved and talking about the book.
 - Share The SpiritHouse Press Release explaining ‘**WHY**’ the Durham citywide book study
 - Inform people about the [Facebook](#) for updates
- Determine the size capacity for your study group
- Determine the frequency for meeting over the months of February and April (We recommend a minimum of four meetings)
- Determine the length of time for each meeting and time of day
- People get hungry. Consider including snacks or potlucks around your gatherings.
- Send out reminders a week in advance of each meeting
- Check-in with fellow readers about securing a copy of the book. Remember SpiritHouse is selling copies of the book.
- Have pens and blank paper available.
- Consider having someone besides the facilitator take notes for each gathering
- Have a sign in sheet with contact information at every gathering
- Be mindful of an even exchange so that everyone has access to speak. Utilize the step up/ step up policy. If someone is speaking too much, invite them to step up and listen more. And conversely others, who might be quite involved as listeners, ask them to step up as speakers.
- Be mindful of your group’s needs. Do you need translators? Is your meeting space accessible to everyone?
- Consider asking members to take turns in your group to summarize the assigned reading. We have heard this helps when not all participants are able to complete the reading.
- Set the ‘intention’ at the beginning of each gathering.