Husky Compact Reflection: Act with Personal Integrity and Civic Responsibility
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In connection with the oral presentation "Demographic and Landscape Change in Linden Hills, Minneapolis: A Case Study in Gentrification"
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My project, Demographic and Landscape Change in Linden Hills, Minneapolis: A Case Study in Gentrification relates most strongly to Our Husky Compact Dimension of Act with Personal Integrity and Civic Responsibility. However, along with this dimension, my project is also relevant to Engage as a Member of a Diverse and Multicultural World. Through the process of developing ideas about this topic and creating a project on gentrification, I addressed many different avenues of learning outcomes within Our Husky Compact. When I began looking into my thesis project I thought about what type of geographical research was of most interest to me. A few years ago, in my cultural geography class (GEOG 270), I learned about gentrification in Vancouver and how it changed an area drastically. Gentrification is the "middle-class settlement in renovated or redeveloped properties in older, inner-city districts formerly occupied by a lower-income population" (Ley 2009). This topic fascinated me because not only does this change affect the lower-income population, it changes the social, economic, cultural, and psychological aspects of a community. After learning about this, it really struck me that one of my favorite places, Linden Hills, appeared to be going through the same controversial change.

My project fits into the Act with Personal Integrity and Civic Responsibility dimension for many reasons. One of the major components of my project involved surveying residents of Linden Hills. By doing this, I became a member of their community by visiting local businesses, attending church gatherings, talking with people who live in the neighborhood, and going to musical events at Lake Harriet. I gathered information on the residents of Linden Hills opinions on gentrification and whether they believe that it is occurring in their neighborhood. In this way, I exercised informed action to address ethical and societal challenges amongst the community. I brought up a topic that could be very sensitive to some people. My overall goal for the survey was to be a leader in the community by addressing these residents' sense of civic identity within their community. By understanding how Linden Hills residents feel about gentrification or how they locate themselves within their community (as either a gentrifier or a non-gentrifier) helps me to better structure a project that can be used to inform more people about the ethical or societal challenges in their community. By becoming a leader, of sorts, in this community, I was influenced through my work within the Gamma Theta Upsilon International Honor Society as the President. In this student organization, I am a leader and I try to promote the idea that everyone has a purpose within our organization. By empowering others through my leadership, I make sure that everyone is included and shares in a sense of responsibility for its success.

In addition to my survey, I have researched the amount of home tear-downs in the Linden Hills neighborhood and identified which areas have the most homes torn down and re-built. This is hugely controversial for this neighborhood. However, I believe that by gaining this information we can continue to learn and grow amongst this ever-changing world. Though many dislike new homes being built because they take away from the perceived charm of the neighborhood, I have been able to inform others about the good influences and how some of these changes can help the well-being of their selves and others. I understood this concept when I thought about my experiences at St. Cloud State. For one,

I had a class that was extremely difficult and every time it came to test time, I did terribly. My professor could see that I was trying so hard and he suggested I didn't look at my notes right before taking the test and instead relax with some music. Ever since that day, I have taken that advice to each test and have gone in with a more optimistic frame of mind. A professor taught me how to learn and develop my school skills, so I took that negative class experience and found the good influences that I had gained from that advice. This professor informed me on how take action with a challenge and I took this same mindset to empower others with participation in understanding or supporting change. Finally, this project looks at multiple disciplines because I am covering two different areas of study, geography and global studies.

This leads to my project relating to the dimension of Engage as a Member of a Diverse and Multicultural World. By using a survey, I identified whether there are enough international food offerings available in a gentrifying neighborhood based on what people who live in Linden Hills thought. I delved even further into the matter to see if more non-American born citizens moved to the area because of having culturally diverse places to eat. My study led me to engage in a diverse and multi-cultural setting. I even went as far to ask if people wanted to see more options. By doing this, I was integrating diverse perspectives to address local problems amongst a changing environment. After having engaged in numerous multi-cultural events and classes on campus and traveled to different places with my family, I have developed a deeper understanding of how diversity influences everyone's identities. I recognized that these restaurants have been successful because people have been able to value diverse perspectives amongst their community. By researching international food offerings and how this has changed diversity in a generally white area, I have been able to analyze how these great influences work amongst a community that is facing its own challenges.

References

Ley, D. (2009). "Gentrification." In *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, by Derek Gregory. Blackwell Publishers. Retrieved from Credo Reference.