THE ROAD TO AN EQUITABLE TOMORROW BEGINS BY UNDERSTANDING YOUR SPECIFIC REALITY, TODAY.

THE GOAL?

Guided by the Folded Map™ project, use this Action Kit to further your understanding of the disparities between Chicago neighborhoods, the structural reasons behind them, and ultimately to make new connections to an area you’ve never been or where you have only a narrow understanding. To have an interactive, introspective and intentional real-world experience of your “map twin” neighborhood.
HOW TO FIND YOUR MAP TWIN NEIGHBORHOOD

“Part 3 of this Action Kit encourages you to have an interactive, introspective and intentional real-world experience of a Map Twin neighborhood. To identify a Map Twin neighborhood, use Chicago’s grid system to find the opposite area of where you live (i.e., “folding” the map). For example, North- and South-Siders (those whose address is north or south of Madison street and east of Western): Englewood’s 6720 S. Ashland has a Map Twin in Rogers Park at 6720 N. Ashland. Please know that the most important thing is “not” identifying the exact house number, but instead being as close as possible to the same hundred block as yours. West-Siders (those whose address is west of Western), your “folding-point” is North Avenue. To find your Map Twin neighborhood, look for the same hundred West street (i.e. Garfield Park’s 3200 W. Washington and Logan Square’s 3200 W. Palmer are Map Twin Neighborhoods.)
In 1993 I was a 13 year old Freshman at Lane Tech, a diverse, 4,000-student selective-enrollment high school that is literally a city-block long and 15-miles north of my home in Englewood. Every day, my two-hour journey to school on public transit started at 5:45am. On that commute I saw how the neglected, weathered buildings, abundant corner liquor stores, vacant lots, storefront churches and fast food restaurants on the predominantly Black South Side transformed into neighborhoods rich with groomed lawns, polished homes, boutiques, cafés and markets on Chicago's predominantly White North Side. One detail in particular was that the streets had the same names in both Englewood and Lane Tech's neighborhood. Though sharing the same name, streets like Ashland, Paulina, Wolcott, and Western looked completely different.

It was at this time I grew and hung out with my new friends from all over the city. They took me to buy Jamaican beef patties at the Caribbean bakery on Howard Street. We went thrifting for clothes on Belmont. I tasted Pancit made by my Filipino friends' mothers; discussed the brilliance of Tupac's and Nirvana's albums with my white, grunge friend Conrad; was scolded by my Latino friends about the distinction between Puerto Rican and Mexican cultures; discovered that friends I thought were Black like me were actually first-generation Belizean and Panamanian-Americans; was humorously informed that Chicago's "true" west-side is "from Cicero to Laramie and Laramie on down"; enlightened by my Asian friends to stop assuming they were all Chinese; and, most special to me, I met similar teens from Englewood—neighbors I never knew but grew close to after finding each other far from our home.

My daily journey to high school was also one through Chicago's segregation. A journey that took me to a high school where diverse friendships showed me a Chicago I might not have learned otherwise. I also learned that the only way to truly know a place is through friendships with people from there.

Just as those friendships allowed me to experience the beautiful, sociocultural diversity of my city, the public's interest in participating in Folded Map has inspired me to create this Action Kit. Ask yourself: does Chicago's segregation reflect how we want to interact? If not, what can you do to help? Hopefully this project can shift your mindset and open your heart and mind to understanding Chicago's history of segregation and systemic racism. Consider how they shape your everyday experiences and what you can do to combat them.

Folded Map began as an art project, but has become my way of combating social injustice. Ultimately, I want Folded Map to help us heal and get to know each other so that we can tear down the racist walls that divide us.
WHAT IS THE FOLDED MAP PROJECT?
Tonika Lewis Johnson’s Folded Map™ Project connects residents at corresponding addresses on opposite sides of Chicago. She investigates what urban segregation looks like and how it impacts residents. What started as a photographic study quickly evolved into a multimedia exploration with video interviews, inviting audiences to open a dialogue and question how we are all impacted by social, racial, and institutional conditions that segregate us. Her goal is for people to understand how our urban environment is structured and to challenge everyone to consider solutions. The project has been an art exhibition, interpreted as a stage play, spearheaded workshops and utilized to form a school curriculum. Learn more at www.foldedmapproject.com

THE FOUNDATION OF SEGREGATED CHICAGO

Chicago's Grid Map was established in 1909 to make an easily understood system of streets and blocks. It means that there is a 6720 North Ashland and a 6720 South Ashland—what we call Map Twins. These twins, however, experience Chicago very differently depending on whether their address is “North” (e.g., Roger’s Park) or “South” (e.g., Englewood).

Redlining is a practice that started in the 1930s. The Home Owner’s Loan Corporation literally outlined in red areas on maps where mortgage were to be denied. And it was African American neighborhoods that were overwhelmingly outlined in red, thus slamming the door on the American Dream of homeownership. But that’s not all…

The foundation of segregation was laid by redlining and also many other discriminatory local, state, and federal housing policies and practices over time. These efforts discouraged investment in schools, shops, banks, community spaces, and a host of other resources in Black neighborhoods. Mix in the behaviors of white residents who greeted potential new Black neighbors with either violent protests or by fleeing, segregation and the racial inequities it perpetuated became intentionally cemented into Chicago’s landscape.

WHERE WE ARE TODAY

Since the 1960s, changes have set the stage for potential declines in segregation. Housing discrimination was declared illegal by the 1968 Fair Housing Act. The Black middle class expanded. Racial attitudes of whites changed and to some extent softened. But even with this, there have been only gradual declines in segregation: Chicago was and continues to be one of the most segregated cities in the U.S.

So why does segregation persist? There is no easy answer. The traditional explanations—discriminatory policies, economic differences, and personal preferences—play a role and set up a system of perpetual segregation through disinvestment and investment. But so do our social networks, lived experiences, and the media. These things directly and indirectly shape how we end up living where we do because they create and inform our options and shape perceptions of where we “should” live.

Segregation begets segregation. Our social networks tend to be segregated; our lived experiences differ based on our race; and the messages sent by the media about neighborhoods are racialized. So the information and perceptions of communities, and the opportunities we have, end up funneling us to segregated neighborhoods. Refer to the book, Cycle of Segregation: Social Processes and Residential Stratification to learn more.

To break the cycle of segregation, we must disrupt these processes. We need to fight discrimination where it persists. Examine policies through a racial equity lens. Reinvest in communities. Create opportunities to break down segregated networks. Expose ourselves to other parts of the city. Influence the media’s portrayal of communities. Work together to dismantle inequities. We must remember that segregation is not “natural”; its foundation was intentionally laid. To break the cycle, we must be equally intentional at the individual, neighborhood, municipal, local, regional, state, and federal level.
“MY HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF MY NEIGHBORHOOD”

“My biggest thing is just bring back the unity. Bringing families back together. Trust. That’s what I want most in this neighborhood. That togetherness.”

“I would really love a neighborhood where you can have diversity but can there be more intersection? Can we come to each other’s homes? Can our kids play together?”

“What Folded Map Means to Me”

“I really enjoyed when my Map Twin came to my house, but going to her house was by far way more important to me. I knew I liked her immediately, the minute she opened her door. We have shared so many similarities as we sat together talking. Of wanting the same thing. When we’re honest and when we’re authentic and when we speak our truth. That’s what connects us.”

“My Map Twin and I look different, but we want the same things. We live in different places but we want the same things. So Folded Map gives me a validation that everybody wants the same thing. Most people want the same things, although we are on different sides of the track.”

"It is an immigrant neighborhood, so we have people from all over the world who immigrate to the US and come to live in Rogers Park. On our street alone, right next to us, are Vietnamese immigrants. On the other side of us are Indian immigrants. Then at the corner we have a Chinese family, a Bangladeshi family. Down the street we have a Nigerian family, people from West Guinea. We have a lot of people who, like the family next door to us, ran a nail salon for a long time.

We have quite a lot of guys in the neighborhood that run their own cab businesses. It’s literally the globe on our street. It’s very working class, too."

"I purchased my home in 2007 for $331,000."

"Back in 1974, it was really nice. When I was coming up here on this block, we knew that if Mr. White next door saw us doing something, he was gonna either get on us and tell our parents, or if our parents weren’t home and we were locked out, well, come on over, call your parents and you know, there was unity. There was families that stuck together. We had block club parties back then.

I just moved back so it’s more of almost like a culture shock for me coming back to [Englewood]. Not impressed with the neighborhood. But I know it’s going to come back! Maybe in 10 years or so."

"My parents purchased this home in 1974 for $30,000."

[156,000 in 2019 dollars]

"Open for business?"

"From a walking perspective, there isn’t a ton in the immediate walking area. We have Cermak Grocery Store, an amazing global grocery store, down the street from our house. And if you walk, like, four-five blocks over, you’re going to be right in the center of Little India. So if you want Indian food, if you want clothes that are Indian in style, if you want to go to get your hair done or to get your eyebrows done, there’s definitely that. There’s a gas station and a laundromat, there’s a McDonalds. Down the street is the post office. ...But we’re not really close to a train so if we were to get on the Red Line, we’d have to take a 10-12 minute bus ride just to get to the train."

"I don’t go shopping in the stores in this neighborhood, because they just aren’t the standards I would look for. The closest store that I go would be Whole Foods, and I have to get in my car and take a 15-minute drive to get there. If I didn’t have a vehicle, then I would have to take two buses to get to it. The closest gas station is on [Garfield] Boulevard, but I wouldn’t dare go to that one. Laundromats, movie theatres, none of that exists over here. Well, the laundromats, but no movie theaters. It’s just nonexistent with the entertainment. Or things that should be in the neighborhood. They’re just lacking here in this area. I have to go outside the neighborhood for entertainment."

"The vibe of my neighborhood"
"MY PLACE OF PEACE"

"My place of peace is back here in the backyard with trees and various urban wildlife that live there. I'm lucky to have a strip of backyard here where I can have a little garden where I can grow things in the summertime.

"I would definitely say home. I feel most at peace in the bed. Kinda just tunin' the world out. I also have a studio in-house, so when I'm creating... The music, when I'm writing it, creating different bodies of work."

"WHAT FOLDED MAP MEANS TO ME"

"It's dope. I remember bringing myself out here [North Side] for some type of interview or something, I was using GPS and when I got out here, and I was looking like, I was on Ashland somewhere and I was like, this looked like the same street... but I was like, confused... this ain't Englewood, you know what I'm sayin'? But then I figured it out. If you just stay over there and I'm over here, you'll never know that you have so much in common. Because I think everybody just wants opportunity and sometimes if opportunities were there, people would do better. But sometimes in neighborhoods like Englewood, when there is no opportunity there, people are in survival mode."

"This is a lot of fun. It is fun to get to expand our horizons like this."

"I've been in the Edgewater-Uptown-Rogers Park neighborhood since the early 1990s. I've always liked this area a lot, and I've always just kind of circled right around here. We moved to this house in 2004."

"I was raised in Englewood, starting when I was about 8 years old when my family moved to a house that we were renting—it wasn't anything we purchased."

"This is a lot of fun. It is fun to get to expand our horizons like this."

There is a lot of different stuff going on in this neighborhood. I mean, you go east and there's the university community and you go west there's the Indian and Pakistani community, and you've got a lot of hippie artist types up here and all types of different communities and it's kind of fun to be around. It has a lot of local businesses. It's kind of fun and funky. It's got a Latin Market, an Asian Market, an Eastern European one – it's this crazy mix of stuff. It's fun.

In 2004, we bought our house in the SW corner of Rogers Park for $320,000 and it was the best place we could get for that kind of price.

I have no idea how much my family home is valued at, but it's nowhere near $300,000.

Englewood is definitely improving. There's a lot of things in the works, but for the most part for a long time, there are a lot of things it doesn't have. If you are familiar with Englewood or if you live in Englewood, you see the small changes that's kind of happening.

Pretty much everything we need is pretty close here. I mean, I can walk to the Devon Market. We just got the Fresh Market over here so we can get food. And Walgreen's isn't that far away. We don't have a Walmart or anything like that, but the Target is not that far if we needed anything like that. And, ironically, they're building a new smaller Target over by Loyola and the people didn't want it there. There is a lot of little shops and stuff by Loyola.

We've got a post office right here on the corner... I get my haircut down the street. And there's little entertainment venues, little bars and pubs, music and small theaters. A movie theater over by the school. In the summertime we have a few Farmer's Markets.

When it comes to food it's been definitely a food desert. We could definitely use more markets, supermarkets, you know. Fresher foods, vegetables.

Entertainment. There isn’t much entertainment. Places to go to kinda hang out. No bowling or theaters or anything like that. Even something as simple as a Walmart. There is a Walmart in our neighborhood, but it's just one that sells the food and the basic things that you need but it doesn't have everything that you need.

For the most part, as an Englewood resident, I often have to travel outside of the neighborhood for different things.
PART 3

THE WORKBOOK

STEP 1: REFLECT ON YOUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD

STEP 2: VISIT YOUR MAP TWIN NEIGHBORHOOD

STEP 3: SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

THE GOAL? TO UNDERSTAND AT A DEEPER LEVEL:

✔ the differences between neighborhoods
✔ the structural reasons behind those differences
AND
✔ to make new connections to an area of the city where you’ve never been or where your understanding is limited
Consider where you live. Take pictures of your own neighborhood. Answer at least five of the questions on this page for yourself. Take note of your responses, keeping track of your immediate thoughts here and/or expanding upon your notes later (on your own paper or smartphone).

**How long** have you lived in your neighborhood?

**How much** did you pay for your home/how much is your rent?

**How** close is your home to where you work, go to school, and/or your child(s) school?

Is there **art** (public art, like murals), or galleries/museums in your area?

What types of businesses or activities are **kid-focused**?

What’s it like to **run errands**? Groceries, grabbing a cup of coffee, seeing a movie, buying toiletries, $20 from an ATM, etc.

How would you describe the **vibe** of your neighborhood?

**What’s missing** in your neighborhood?

Where is your place of **peace**?

What is your hope for the **future** of your neighborhood?

**THE GOAL?**

To get the most out of your journey to a new neighborhood, take some time to reflect on your own neighborhood and how you got here.
STEP 2: VISIT YOUR MAP TWIN NEIGHBORHOOD

After figuring out your map twin neighborhood (see the back of your activity kit folder for how), get to know it a bit better. Pick at least three actions to do—one (or more!) from each of the categories. Take notes and pictures so you can share your experience later at foldedmapproject.org/submit

THE GOAL?
To appreciate what it would be like to live here, and to understand how it differs from your own neighborhood.

YOU'RE A COMMUNITY MEMBER; A RESIDENT, FOR THE DAY.

YOU ARE NOT A TOURIST

AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, LET THAT BE YOUR MINDSET.

Amenity Access
☐ Walk around the produce section of a local grocery store. How is it the same or different from the one in your neighborhood? What are the prices like? Find some organic vegetables or fruit.

☐ Find a store where you could buy body wash/soap, lotion, allergy or cold medicine, lightbulbs, and dog food. How many different stores did you need to go to? How were the items displayed? What are the store hours? What were the prices for these items?

☐ If you needed some cash, how close is a bank? Does your bank have a branch here? Where is the nearest ATM? How much is the ATM fee?

☐ Imagine you had to fill a prescription for medicine—where is the nearest pharmacy? What are its hours?

City Services/Businesses
☐ Find the nearest bus stop or train station. What condition is it in? How busy is it?

☐ Find the nearest park: What is it like?

☐ Find the nearest sit-down restaurant: What type of food is served? How many do you see in general?

☐ Check out the sidewalks: How many garbage cans, bike racks, benches, and Divvy bike stations do you see? How many potholes? Gardens?

☐ Visit the nearest library and look at the community bulletin board—what's there? Who are the library patrons? Is it well staffed?

Community Life—What You See, Hear, and Feel
☐ How many people do you see? Are they in groups or alone? What are they doing? What are their ages, races, or ethnicities? Are there kids around? Do you see any dogs or pets?

☐ Name something beautiful here.

☐ Name something missing.

☐ How did being here make you feel?

☐ Did anything surprise you while here?

Take pictures (like the bus stop, sidewalks, your lunch, etc.) and notes of your experience. Always be considerate and thoughtful of your interactions and discussions with local residents, if any. Do not ever take pictures of people without their explicit permission first.

YOU CAN START YOUR NOTES HERE, THEN CONTINUE ON YOUR PHONE OR A SEPARATE NOTEPAD
Now that you have taken notes and pictures of your own neighborhood and your experience in your twin neighborhood, it's time to process the experience with deeper consideration. Use the questions as your guide, and then upload your thoughts and pictures at www.foldedmapproject.org/submit.

**Process Your Experience**

Hopefully this experience has helped you see for yourself the ways in which so much of what we do and what happens to us, is shaped by where we live. Because of segregation, these realities are profoundly different, on average, for white, black, and brown people. We live divergent social worlds. And you have taken an important and concrete step in understanding this at a deeper level.

Please take some time to think about how structural factors have shaped your neighborhood and your map twin neighborhood. And reflect also on how your lived experiences, social networks, and the media have shaped how you ended up living where you do, and, importantly, what you think of other neighborhoods in Chicago. To create a greater impact, please share your journey with Folded Map by going to www.foldedmap.org/submit to submit your pictures and reflections, guided by these questions:

- How is your neighborhood different from your twin neighborhood? How is it the same?
- How did your perceptions of your **twin** neighborhood change after you visited it?
- How did your perceptions of your **own** neighborhood change after visiting your twin neighborhood?
- What is the most important thing you learned from this experience?

**Now Put it All Together**

Upload your pictures and words at [www.foldedmap.org/submit](http://www.foldedmap.org/submit). Click the button on the webpage to share. You can type or paste in your thoughts in the online form, upload a Word doc, or even upload a scan of a written statement.