

Change Maker Dinners

Breaking Bread and Building Community

United South End Settlements (USES) has a long history of engaging children and families from diverse backgrounds in our programs because we believe that building communities of people with different identities, experiences, and socioeconomic backgrounds is vital to disrupting the cycle of poverty.

With the addition of our Change Maker Dinners in 2017, we have expanded our reach by convening small groups of individuals who are committed to building diverse and inclusive communities where all individuals can thrive. Each of the dinners, which are hosted by passionate leaders from the community and guided by a facilitator, are intended to foster and promote dialogue about the inequities facing our neighborhood and our city, as well as what we can do, both individually and collectively, to effect change.

Through the Change Maker Dinners, our goals are to:

- Provide opportunities to have meaningful conversations and discover commonalities with people who bring diverse experiences, identities, and perspectives to the table
- Identify current and cultivate potential leaders in the community who would like to partner with USES as we plan and implement initiatives that build networks for our participants and community members that help break down socioeconomic barriers
- Elevate USES's role in Boston as an organization that is empowering individuals to actively create a welcoming, inclusive community for neighbors from all walks of life

12 Passionate People + 1 Table + Deep Conversation = Profound Change

At Change Maker Dinners, some guests will know each other, and others will not. Some will already be connected to USES and for others this experience will serve as an introduction to our organization. With the guidance of a facilitator, the conversation focuses on a question. For example: Describe a community that you feel connected to and what it is that draws you in. Following the discussion, guests share what resonates with them and what they would like to follow up on. Everyone leaves with an action plan, which may include taking a tour of our programs, volunteering, hosting their own dinner, or engaging in other ways.

Interested in hosting a dinner?

USES Staff will:

- Work with you to define a topic that you are passionate about and accompanying questions
- Provide a facilitator and content expert
- Support you in preparing the guest list, if needed
- Coordinate invitations and attendance, if needed

Hosts will:

- Welcome 10-14 guests into your home
- Share remarks on what inspired you to host the event
- Provide food and beverages (USES has funds to provide the meal if needed)

To learn more about hosting a dinner for USES, contact Nikki Stewart, Vice President of Development, at 617-375-8132 or nstewart@uses.org.

Recognized as a GK10 Game Changing Equity Idea, Change Maker Dinners were inspired by the Jeffersonian Dinner model developed by Jeffrey Walker and Jennifer McCrae, and made possible by funding from The Boston Foundation.