



Ubuntu House is an initiative of AALR, an Illinois not for profit organization with a mission to empower youth, especially youth of African descent, by providing opportunities for academic achievement, literacy and resiliency (<https://www.aalr4success.org/>)

Dear Seeking Social Justice Friends,

Amania and I had a very successful exploratory visit to Omaha, Macy and Bellevue, thanks in large part to your assistance and introductions. We were accompanied by Amania's friend, Martha Sadas, who is visiting her for a month from her home in Paris, France. They met when Martha was attached to the French Consulate in Chicago in the early 2000s. Below is a brief overview of some highlights of our 3-day trip.

Tuesday evening, Nov. 1, we had dinner with **Steve Humphries**, a high school (Batavia IL) classmate of Yvor's, who settled in Omaha in the 1970s. Steve is a land surveyor by profession. He has worked all across NE including on the reservations of the Sioux and Umo Ho (Omaha) Tribes. In addition to sharing his experience of living in Nebraska, he gave us a brief tour of the city.



Martha Sadas and Steve Humphries



Steve Humphries and Amania Drane

Dr. Asit Goswami and his friend, **John Pappan** (Umo Ho and Pawnee descent), met us Wednesday morning, Nov. 2, and took us to Macy, NE, the traditional home of the Umo Ho Tribe. Amania connected with Asit through a referral from her dentist in IL. Asit and John introduced us to **Medicine Eagle**, a resident of Macy, **Mike Grant**, the Umo Ho's Tribal Planner, and **Ricardo Ariza**, a career specialist at the Umo Ho Nation High School.



Dr. Asit Goswami, Yvor Stoakley, Medicine Eagle, and John Pappan



Martha, Amania, Ricardo Ariza, Yvor, and John.

After we returned to Omaha, Wednesday afternoon, we met briefly with **Graham Christensen, Laura Thomas, and Gus von Roenn**, agriculture activists and farmers in eastern NE. Graham and Laura are part of Grassroots Community Resolve. Gus is the founder of Omaha Permaculture. These were contacts identified and introduced to us by Asit.



Laura Thomas, Martha, Asit, Yvor, Gus von Roenn, John, Graham Christensen, and Amania

On Wednesday evening we traveled to Bellevue, NE and met with **Cliff and Laurie Mason**, and **Portia Lyle**. Cliff is an English literature professor at Bellevue University. Laurie is an artist and teacher who has worked at the Umo Ho Tribe schools. Portia currently works with a non-profit effort called Racial Justice & Healing. Cliff, Laurie, and Portia were introduced to us by Hal and Jubi Maggiore.



Yvor, Portia Lyle, and Martha



Cliff Mason and Yvor

On Thursday morning, Nov. 3, we met with **Melissa Kreader Cleaver** of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. Melissa is a native of Omaha, has lived in several other NE communities, and previously worked for the Omaha Public School system. We were introduced to Melissa by Geri Mohler and Larry Molczyk.



Melissa Kreader Cleaver, Yvor, Martha and Amania

We also met with **A'Jamal Byndon** via Zoom. A'Jamal is a retired professor who taught at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and in the community college system. He is also a founding member of Omaha Table Talk. (Omaha Table Talk is one of the first local human-relations programs to provide facilitated and structured, but informal gatherings of people of different ethnicities and cultures throughout the greater Omaha community, engaging in conversations about diversity & inclusion over dinner.) Dori Bush introduced us to A'Jamal.

These discussions have laid the foundation for ongoing relationships and a possible return visit by Ubuntu House in 2023.

Thank you,

Yvor and Amania