



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
Office for Social Justice

SEEDS of JUSTICE

CCTWINCITIES.ORG

CHANGING HEARTS AND CHANGING STRUCTURES ON BEHALF OF SOCIAL JUSTICE | APRIL 2015



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DO JUSTICE, LOVE GOODNESS, WALK HUMBL Y



Cecilia D., 10th-12th Grade Winner

This year's CCHD Youth Art Contest submissions showcased the talents and compassionate reflections of middle- and high-school students who had a message to share about our community's response to poverty in our midst.

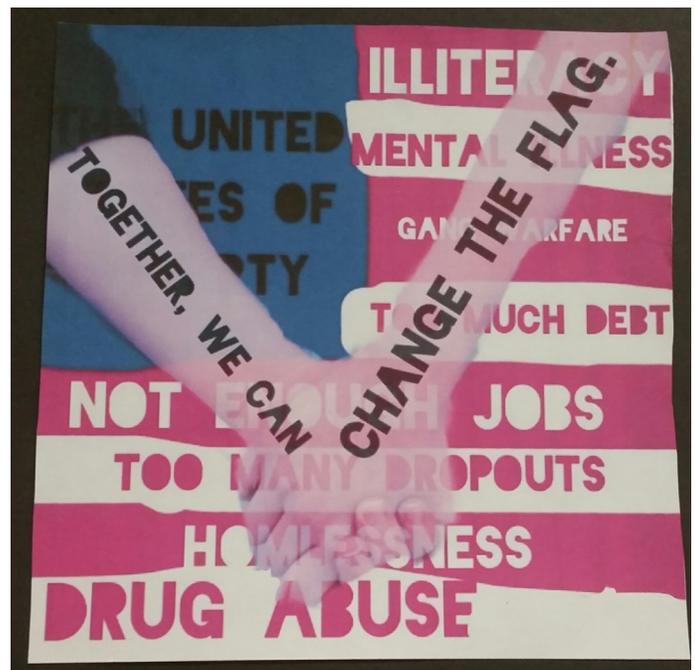
They highlighted the needs of many of our neighbors for shelter, food, opportunity, love, and community; students shared their

involvement in donating and volunteer work as ways for our community to respond.

Our first-place winners demonstrate artistic creativity as well as an understanding of CCHD's mission to give people access to the tools and resources to lift themselves out of poverty. For more information about the CCHD Youth Art Contest, please visit:

www.cctwincities.org/CCHD-CSF or email angela.butel@cctwincities.org.

Lizzie D., 7th-9th Grade Winner



Public Policy

At the Capitol

Though the Capitol is cloaked in construction, with the Rotunda closed, entire wings shut down, and a still-in-progress tunnel resembling a haunted house, the Legislature remains hard at work for the people of Minnesota. Some of this year's hot-button issues are transportation and transit, police body cameras, universal pre-kindergarten, and, of course, MNsure. As we keep an eye on the most popular topics, we continue to raise the issues surrounding those most in need in hopes that they, too, become elevated in the public eye.

In late February, we got some great news about the state economy when we learned that Minnesota has a projected budget surplus of \$1.87 billion. In response to this news, the Governor released a supplemental budget, which included two of our top initiatives: an additional \$2 million for the Homeless Youth Act, and a \$100 monthly increase for all families using the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

During the last week in March, the Senate and House released their budget targets, which reflect the priorities of each body. The Senate included increases in two areas that are key to our legislative priorities: an additional \$341 million in Health and Human Services, and an increase of \$45 million for Economic Development, Environment, and Agriculture, which includes some housing programs. Unfortunately, the House is proposing significant cuts in both of these areas, including eliminating a

whopping \$1.1 billion from the Health and Human Services budget. These budget proposals will change throughout the legislative session. Your advocacy in voicing concern about budget cuts is critical, so please watch for future Sowers Action Alerts on this topic! With your assistance, Catholic Charities will continue to effectively advocate for critical funding in the Child Care Assistance Program, the Minnesota Family Investment Program, several housing programs that benefit those most in need, and a new vision for the Dorothy Day Center.

One powerful story we were able to share in testimony before the Senate and House Health and Human Services Finance Committees related to the Child Care Assistance Program. Our client Akilah is a 25-year-old working mom in North Minneapolis, who's been receiving child care assistance to help pay for Nylah, her daughter, to go to Catholic Charities' Northside Child Development Center. Akilah works full time at a money transfer company, and last fall was able to pick up some overtime hours. Unfortunately, due to lack of funding for the Basic Sliding Fee program, a small bump in income led to Akilah's childcare costs skyrocketing from \$300 a month to \$1300 a month. For more on this story, including quotes from OSJ's testimony, please visit www.cctwincities.org/akilah.

In addition to testifying on behalf of clients like Akilah and Nylah we have been meeting



Youth and staff from Hope Street talk to Senator Dibble in early March about the importance of the Homeless Youth Act.

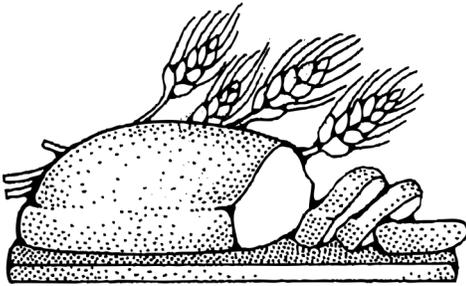
(cont. page 3)

Public Policy

with legislators, attending committee hearings and working with coalitions of like-minded organizations to advance our legislative agenda. We were also very thankful to be with many of you at the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition and Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless Days on the Hill in March, where you raised your voices on the issues that you care about most deeply. Your presence and voices are crucial!

If any of these issues pique your interest or ignite your passion for justice, don't let the scaffolding around the Capitol keep you from contacting your legislators! As always, please contact us for hints on where to park, take the light rail to a stop just behind the Capitol, pick up a phone, write an email, or send some snail mail. Your voice can truly mean the difference between important increases and harmful cuts, and we are so grateful for your partnership in this work.

Marie Ellis, Ana Ashby, and
Bev Turner
OSJ Public Policy Team



Is it not to divide your
bread with the hungry
And bring the
homeless poor
into the house;
When you see the
naked, to cover him;
And not to hide
yourself from your
own flesh?

-Isaiah 58:7

The new vision for the Dorothy Day Center

Building dignified shelter, housing, and pathways out of poverty

Homelessness in Saint Paul has increased and Catholic Charities' Dorothy Day Center has reached a breaking point. The need for a new vision and long-term solution is urgent. Our facilities are deteriorating and not meeting the needs of our most vulnerable community members.

We have an innovative plan that will serve our neighbors in a more dignified way. In the future, people will find dignified emergency shelter and promising opportunities to rebuild their lives.

VISIT [WWW. DOROTHYDAYREVISION.ORG](http://WWW.DOROTHYDAYREVISION.ORG) TO LEARN MORE



From the Research Desk

Slow Recession Recovery, Changing Preferences Create a Perfect Storm

According to the Federal Reserve Board, recovery from the recession has clearly gained steam. However, even though employment rates are rising, wages continue to grow very slowly. For many working households and unemployed individuals and families, this has resulted in a continued inability to afford housing.

From 2003 through 2012, Wilder's triennial survey data demonstrated that as the economy faltered, fewer homeless adults were able to engage in full-time employment to help them transition back into stable housing.

In the 2012 survey, job loss or hours cut were major reasons for not being able to continue to afford housing for almost a third of the homeless heads of households. More than one out of every four homeless adults interviewed had lost their job in the previous six months. One out of every five homeless adults interviewed had used employment-related services, including job training and job-seeking assistance. More than half of all homeless adults were looking for work.

Between 2007 and 2013, 146,440 home foreclosures occurred in Minnesota. Six out of every 10 of these foreclosures happened in the Twin Cities metro area. The foreclosure crisis increased the population of people who were unstably housed or homeless in at least three ways. The foreclosure crisis had:

- An immediate impact on renters who were evicted because their landlords went into foreclosure. These households quickly appeared in emergency shelters;
- A longer-term impact on owners who lost their homes to foreclosure and went through their own personal resources and support networks before arriving at emergency shelters.
- A sustained impact on the local housing market, through supporting a spike in demand for rental housing, which reduced rental vacancy rates and increased the cost of rental housing.

Today's gap in affordable housing is the result of lagging supply intersecting with sharply rising demand. Between 1996 and 2012, simultaneous with rising poverty rates, the Twin Cities region had fallen increasingly behind on the production of new affordable housing for lower-income households.

According to the Metropolitan Council's data:

- In 1996, market-rate housing units were produced at a rate that was 23% higher than the production rate for new affordable housing units.
- In 2012, market-rate housing units were produced at a rate that was 921% higher than the production rate for new affordable housing units.

A perfect storm is brewing as elders choose to downsize, millennials choose to rent rather than own, and those impacted by the foreclosure crisis (both owners and renters) compete in a very tight affordable rental housing market. We, at Catholic Charities, know the job ahead of us is challenging if we are ever to realize our vision of housing stability for everyone.

Kathleen Tomlin & Kate Searls
Research and Policy

Things have a price
and are for sale,
but people have a
dignity that is
priceless and
worth far more
than things.

-Pope Francis



Human persons
are willed by God;
they are imprinted
with God's image.
Their dignity does
not come from the
work they do,
but from the
persons they are.

-The Hundredth Year
(Donders translation), #11

A Dynamic, Living Faith

The Office for Social Justice has long partnered with parishes offering JustFaith programs since its inception. The mission of JustFaith Ministries is to “form, inform, and transform people” in their faith and commitment to justice. We have seen over 850 graduates complete the JustFaith program throughout the archdiocese. These alumni are truly transformed. We, at OSJ, are inspired by their commitments to justice and so have enthusiastically hosted several events over the past few months to re-energize JF participants.

Journey to Justice Retreat

Human Dignity. Community. Participation. These are all key *Principles of Catholic Social Teaching* that are more than abstract ideas or ideals.

This year’s Journey to Justice Retreat in collaboration with six local CCHD-funded organizations, examined how these principles are being lived out in our community. Together with current JustFaith participants and program graduates, these groups shared how they identify an injustice in their communities and put Catholic social teaching into action to address social issues. Whether it was Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha promoting Dignity of Work by sharing personal stories of wage theft, the Hmong American Farmers Association sharing their Care for Creation in a farmer using cover crops, or Elpis Enterprises illustrating Option for the Poor in that no one, especially youth, should be without a home; all of the presenters embodied Catholic social teach-

ing, inspiring attendees to commit to action for justice with their low-income neighbors.

Jack Jezreel visits Twin Cities

In March, Jack Jezreel, president of JustFaith Ministries, offered a 3-day parish mission at St. John Neumann in Eagan and several additional presentations for special groups. “From Here to Pope Francis: A Tool to Help Parishes Change,” was a talk centered on a practical application of a business model for parishes to evaluate how they are meeting goals. Mr. Jezreel challenged our parishes to examine whether we are meeting our goal of building the reign of God through our works for justice and whether we are “completely mission-oriented.”

Mr. Jezreel also challenged a group of priests, deacons, and parish staff with Pope Francis’ call for a shift in how we understand the parish. Leaders of parishes, priests, deacons, and staff have an important role in helping their communities become places that not only gather people, but send them out into the world to transform it.

CCHD Immersion Experiences

JustFaith groups, at the end of their nearly year-long journey together, may struggle with how to put what they have experienced into action. St. Vincent de Paul in Brooklyn Park has a creative approach to inspiring JustFaith graduates, as well as other parishioners, to explore the injustices in our local community and meet organizations taking action.

In partnership with OSJ, St. Vincent’s has created a series of

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PARISHES AT WORK

immersion experiences with CCHD-funded organizations and other local grassroots groups. Once a month, the parish visits an organization to learn about their work and how community members can get involved. Unlike a typical “service project,” participants don’t jump into action right away; immersions are about listening to stories and building relationship as a basis for working together for justice.

If you are interested in reigniting your commitment to action, or re-connecting with JustFaith, please contact our office about upcoming opportunities or check with your parish to see if they are hosting a program next year.

OSJ Social Justice Meet Ups

The OSJ Social Justice Meet Ups have become an engaging monthly community conversation on challenging social issues. Meet Ups seek to spark conversations and leave participants with the desire to do something to right the injustices discussed.

The most recent evening filled the gymnasium at St. Joan of Arc Parish in Minneapolis with people ready for a real conversation and pathways to engagement regarding racial discrimination in our criminal justice system. The conversation began with a few opening remarks by Thomas Johnson, former Hennepin County Attorney, speaking about the large disparities in racial arrest patterns stemming from discriminatory policing practices. Then five panelists shared riveting personal testimonies of the negative impact of their encounters with the criminal justice system on their lives, their family members, and the greater community. The

personal experiences of police physical abuse, racial discrimination, and the on-going effects from mass incarceration fueled the evening’s small and large group conversations. The community examined “why this is happening?” In the clear words of one Meet Up participant, “Racism!”

People gathered not merely to see and better understand the impacts of racial injustice in our community, but to seek action to promote justice. Organizations including the Council on Crime and Justice, Restore the Vote, ISAIAH, Sowers of Justice, Amicus, and We are All Criminals offered some suggested action steps with the limited time remaining. Community members were encouraged to reach out to their legislators to seek support for RESTORE THE VOTE legislation, which will allow Minnesotans to vote upon release from incarceration. Restoring the right to vote will improve public safety by allowing positive participation and is consistent with principles of individual liberty and redemption. Getting involved in supporting change, transforming unjust systems, and ending racial discrimination are some ways we can make our monthly Meet Up conversations more than just words, but actionable realities.

Join us for the next OSJ Social Justice Meet Up on April 14th at 7 PM at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Brooklyn Park to discuss Human Trafficking locally and internationally. If your parish is interested in hosting a social justice Meet Up next year, contact OSJ for more details.

Angela Butel and Marty Roers
Community Engagement Team

Over the long term, the global community must work together to reduce the factors that make persons vulnerable to traffickers, such as the lack of economic opportunity in migrant-sending countries, especially for women.

-On Human Trafficking,
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2007

SOWER SPOTLIGHT

St. Frances Cabrini Justice and Peace Coalition



On a snowy January evening, a committed group of 15 people braved the elements to get to St. Frances Cabrini to participate in an Advocacy 101. The tenacity of those who got there despite the weather is typical of the dedication of Cabrini Sowers to doing the work of justice. In the room as well that evening was a group of young women between the ages of 16 and 24, who together have gotten involved in advocacy around the foster care system. This fit Cabrini's vision of this workshop: an intergenerational event that would bring together the wisdom and experience of the long-time social justice people with the enthusiasm of the community's youth to learn more about how advocacy works. The balance worked beautifully as the group got a "civics refresher" and some tips on doing direct advocacy, and then practiced their skills in a mock meeting with a legislator. Mike Hirsch, one of the organizers of the workshop, reflected on the experience: "It was a good learning experience for me, and it gave me a number of things to think about, and I think others felt the same."

The work didn't end that evening; Sowers at Cabrini have used the workshop as a launching point for ongoing advocacy. Partnering with OSJ, Cabrini has been active in advocating on housing issues this session as well as the increase to the cash grant for families on the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). Through education, social media campaigns, and opportunities for direct advocacy, Sowers at Cabrini are getting the whole parish community involved in advocacy this year!

OSJ's next Advocacy 101 workshop will be April 7 from 7-8:30pm at Risen Savior parish in Burnsville. For more information, please contact Angela at angela.butel@cctwincities.org or call 651-647-2583.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

I Have a Name Exhibit: The Struggle of Undocumented Immigrants

April 2-17, 2015

Landmark Center—St. Paul

Social Justice Meet Up

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

7:00 p.m.—8:30 p.m.

St. Vincent de Paul—Brooklyn Park

Presentation on Catholic Social Teaching

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

6:30 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

St. Bridget's—Minneapolis

The CCHD Experience

Saturday, April 25th, 2015

10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Visit the Hmong American Farmer's Association (HAFA)

Concert for the Common Good

Saturday, May 9, 2015

1:00 p.m.

St. Olaf Church—Minneapolis

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Social Justice Meet Up

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

7:00 p.m.—8:30 p.m.

St. Mary of the Lake—White Bear Lake

Visit our website for more
www.cctwincities.org/advocacy



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

*Sow for yourselves
 justice,
 reap the fruit of faithful
 love;*

*Break up for yourselves
 a new field, for it is
 time to seek the Lord,
 until the Lord comes
 and rains down justice
 upon you.*

Hosea, 10:12



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*Saint Olaf
 Worship and
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**CONCERT FOR
 THE COMMON GOOD**
 BENEFITS CATHOLIC CHARITIES AND
 EXODUS RESIDENCE AT ST. OLAF CHURCH

**SAINT OLAF CHURCH
 DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS**
SATURDAY, MAY 9, 1PM

The St. Olaf Parish Choir joins From Age to Age Choral Music Ensemble, with solo and orchestral forces of St. Olaf to perform *Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo* by Franz Joseph Haydn. St. Olaf cantors Cailin Gudio and Timothy Lunneborg will perform solo and duet vocal works. From Age to Age Choral Music Ensemble performs as choir-in-residence. Dr. Lynn Trapp will be at the Lively-Fulcher organ for *Concerto for Organ and Strings* by John Cook.

TICKETS
 \$20/adult; \$10/children (ages 12 and under)

ONLINE OR BY PHONE
 Visit cctwincities.org/events or call 612-767-6214. Tickets will also be available at the door.



Many of our Sowers and staff attended both the 2015 JRLC's Day on the Hill (800+ attendees) and The Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless' Homeless Day on the Hill (650 attendees) in March.

Thank you Sowers for being Housing Advocates!

