

**ST. JEROME SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE MINUTES
October 27, 2008**

Present: Laurie Corasaniti, Barbara Bagnato, Kathy Jimenez, Rebecca Sweeney, Jennifer Prescott, Father David, Annette Maiberger.

The meeting began at 7:00 PM

RECENT PROJECTS:

Recap of Oct. 19 Food Drive -- We collected a total of 900 food items, a good amount. The Milk Fund, which was collected the preceding weekend, was \$158. Unfortunately, there were no REACH class helpers to help sort. Thank you to Laurie for helping. The CCA Pantry is struggling to stock its shelves. Annette reported that there has been a daily increase of up to 10-15 families in need coming to CCA. Next month, Barbara suggested we add canned fruit, canned corn, ravioli, canned or bottled juice to the list of "most needed items" in the Bulletin.

Kathy, Barbara, and Rebecca reported that the food drives at Stop & Shop and Shop-Rite on Make a Difference Day seemed to go very well, and hopefully that collection will help CCA out.

Cell phone Update -- Kathy reported that, to date, she has collected 160 cell phones and chargers. Unfortunately, she has noticed that some phones that were in the hallway box were then missing when she checked a couple of days later. Several committee members offered to pick them up if they should see phones in the box and hold them until the next meeting.

Updating Social Concerns Website Information -- Barbara and Rebecca agreed to focus on this and complete updates before next meeting.

Sept. 28th Parish Festival Participation -- Barbara has received positive feedback on the committee's distribution of materials for emergency preparedness during the Festival. The leftover materials were set out on a table in the hall, and all were picked up by parishioners.

OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER PROJECTS:

Gift Packs for Our Veterans: Jennifer indicated a concern about the low volume of gift pack items collected to-date. She emphasized the urgent need for travel-size toiletries, such as shampoo, mouthwash, deodorant, body wash, hand and body lotion, and shaving cream. She has spoken with REACH teacher Ellen Passero, Kathy Coyne, and Pat Olson in order to recruit support from REACH and TOTAL. Other items mentioned included hand-held games, activity books, BPA-free water bottles, current issues of magazines. The REACH 6th graders have created cards to include in the collection.

Clean, Warm Coats Drive -- Barbara will write a Bulletin note to invite all to donate clean, warm coats to boxes placed in hallway Nov. 1- 12. We will need drivers to help deliver the coats to NEON on Fri., Nov. 14, 2-5 p.m. On Sat., Nov. 15, a City of Norwalk committee will distribute the coats from NEON to local residents in need.

Giving Tree -- On Mon., Nov. 24 we will complete the tags for the Giving Tree. Barbara has asked Julie for specific requests for her students. We have a concern about shipping costs to Guatemala, since we can no longer use Americares for shipping. The suggestion was made that perhaps Julie's requests could be light-weight items, instead of heavier items, if possible. Barbara will research shipping costs. The tree can be put up in church on Sat., Nov. 29, and tags attached. Parishioners will have from Nov. 29-Dec. 14 to bring tagged gifts to the tree. On Sun., Dec. 14, the gifts will be sorted and bagged by family.

Funeral Receptions -- The Funeral Reception Committee has been asking for helpers with "want ads" in recent Bulletins for two needs: servers to set up, serve, and clean up during the receptions; and cooks to drop off salads or desserts the day of the receptions. Rebecca suggested that since many funerals are held on Saturdays, parishioners who are unable to serve during the week, due to work, be invited to help as a "Saturday team." She will contact Francie Mansager with the idea.

Fodor Farm Garden -- Barbara and Francie cleaned up the garden for the final time, and we can have the same plot next year. Barbara reported the work as a success, and perhaps next year we can think about growing vegetables for the Shelter and CCA Food Pantry. Father David mentioned the idea to have parishioners invited to donate vegetables from their gardens, too.

FUTURE PROJECTS:

- **Healthy Snack Drive for Briggs High School** -- Jennifer suggested that we collect healthy snacks, and diapers and wipes for Briggs High School students and their babies. Barbara suggested perhaps these items could be added to the Lenten cross tags.
- **Malta House Collection** -- In May, timing with Mother's Day, perhaps we could have a collection for baby items to donate.
- **Mentor Program in Norwalk Public Schools** -- Rebecca mentioned that the number of mentors at West Rocks Middle School has decreased to 5. She will compose a Bulletin piece about being a mentor, but wonders if this should wait till after Jan. 1, as a "new year's resolution" type idea.

The next meeting will be a working meeting to fill out the tags for the Giving Tree, on Mon., Nov. 24, at 7 p.m. in the Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.