

**ST. JEROME SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**January 16, 2009**

**Present:** Tara Whalen, Jennifer Prescott, Honey Secchi, Dan Loch, Laurie Corasaniti, Barbara Bagnato, Annette Maiberger, Father David, Rebecca Sweeney

The meeting began at 7:05 PM.

**RECENT PROJECTS:**

**Recap of Jan. 25 Food Drive and Food Drive News** – Rebecca reported that we collected a total of 1,260 food items, a spike in the monthly average of 900 food items. The Milk Fund brought in \$250. Perhaps the spike was due to Barbara's effort to place advertising flyers at the church entrances the week prior to the drive, something we should try again. Barbara reported that the Christian Community Action Food Pantry was extremely low, especially tuna fish, peanut butter, and hearty soups, and so really needed Monday's delivery of our food drive by Frank Lilithy and Bill Halstead. Annette shared that CCA is no longer limiting the number of families served to 20/day, since United Way has committed to increasing funding to cover whatever number is needed. Last Wed., 46 families received food. Upcoming dates for our Food Drives are: Feb. 22, Special Lenten Food drive – March 29, April 26. Father David suggested that the May Food Drive would be better scheduled for May 17, to avoid the Memorial Day Weekend.

**Recap of Christmas Giving Tree** – Barbara reported that the project went really well. We provided 77 children from CCA with a book, a toy, and an article of clothing. We provided approximately 75 of Julie's kids with fleece jackets. \$200 in cash donations were used to purchase Shop-Rite gift certificates for the largest families. \$65 in cash donations were used to purchase wrapping paper and "fill in" gifts. \$195 in check donations will be used to defray the cost of shipping the fleece jackets to Guatemala. Father David called it "astonishing", since every gift tag was taken from the Tree, and some parishioners made cash donations since they were not able to find a tag.

**Cell Phone Collection Update** – Barbara shared Kathy's report: To date, she has collected 168 cell phones and chargers. The pace has slowed a bit. There is still the problem of people forgetting to donate the charger with the phone, which is essential for its use. Kathy was dropping off several complete sets to the Women's Crisis Center last week.

**Updating Social Concerns Parish Website Information** – Barbara and Rebecca agreed to accomplish this task and send any edits to Dan. Rebecca will focus on the Food Drive section and Barbara will focus on the general information and confirm Funeral Reception information with Francie Mansager.

## **IDEAS FOR 2009 MONTHLY PROJECTS:**

February – Dan explained that the Lenten Crosses will go up on Feb. 24. They will include requests for Malta House's wish list needs and requests for housewares (gently used or new small pots, pans, mugs, soup bowls, silverware) for CCA's Housewares Program. There was some discussion re: creating tags requesting healthy snacks for Briggs High School's Health Center, and Jennifer is going to find out if the students are provided with reduced or free lunch at Briggs.

Annette offered to investigate a possible one-day Lenten parish project inviting volunteers to sort through and organize all the donated clothes at Once and Again in South Norwalk. Annette will check with Christi Pope at CCA to see if this is possible.

March – The Special Lenten Food Drive will take place during the Masses of 3/28-3/29. The group agreed to stick with the "shopping list" distribution, which invites parishioners to provide all or some of the food items given out to an individual who comes to the CCA Pantry for food.

April – To promote Earth Day on April 22, Barbara asked the group if we want to organize information or schedule a speaker. She asked that we think of ideas to share next meeting.

May – In the Fall, Jennifer suggested a collection for toiletries, gently-used paperback books, magazines, etc., to be shipped to soldiers stationed in Afghanistan. We would like to explore this idea for May, and Jennifer will discuss with her brother, who is stationed in Afghanistan, the best way to ship such a collection, and for specific items that are needed. One idea is to ask the parishioner to purchase a box at the post office (approximately \$9.00 will cover the shipping to the APO Box address) as part of the donation, so that each parishioner will pack up his/her donations and be provided with an address.

## **OTHER OLD AND NEW BUSINESS:**

**November Gift Packs to Soldiers** -- Jennifer read a thank-you letter from her contact at CAUSE ([www.cause/usa.org](http://www.cause/usa.org)) for our November collection for gift pack items given to soldiers at Walter Reed Hospital. Barbara will share the letter in the Bulletin. Jennifer reported that when she delivered our collection, she was shown the beautiful gift packs, and that the Christmas cards we filled out were also included in them.

**Fodor Farm Garden Plots** -- Barbara and Honey intend to keep the same plots as last year. Perhaps this year we may promote the idea for growing fresh produce for the CCA Food Pantry. Father David reminded us of the great idea to invite parishioners to donate some of their garden's bounty to the pantry, too. Barbara wants to make sure to advertise this idea well in advance of gardening time.

**Migrant workers in South Norwalk** -- Rebecca suggested that we contact the teacher at Brien McMahon who spearheads the student group that works with the migrant workers in South Norwalk to see if we could support them in any way.

**Homes for the Brave** -- Tara recommended the Homes for the Brave organization in Bridgeport, a living skills recovery center for many homeless veterans, as a willing recipient of donated dinners.

**Shipping to Julie's Kids** -- Tara suggested that we look into ways to eliminate the cost and work of shipping the many donated gifts to Julie's kids in Guatemala.

Our next meeting is Feb. 23, 2009.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.