

ST. JEROME SOCIAL CONCERNS MEETING MINUTES

Oct. 26, 2009

Present: Barbara Bagnato, Annette Maiberger, Sheila Rietano, Rebecca Sweeney, Father David.

The meeting began at 7:05 p.m., with a prayer offered by Barbara.

RECENT PROJECTS:

Monthly Food Drive -- Rebecca reported that October's Drive brought in 1,229 food items and the Milk Fund tallied \$284.00 (with a late donation collected by John DiDomizio). The great trend, topping over 1,000 items, continues. For November's Drive, we will add toilet paper and diapers to the most needed items list, as many clients at CCA ask for these nonfood items. The next few food drives will take place on : November 15, December 20, and January 24.

Cell Phone Update -- Barbara reported that Kathy has collected a few more cell phones since last month. This brings the total number of cell phones collected to over 211.

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS FOR 2009-2010:

Sorting Donated Clothing at Once & Again Clothing Room -- Barbara reported that no one has volunteered in response to her Bulletin note asking for help to sort and organize the donated clothing that is given away to both Norwalk Emergency Shelter (NES) clients and anyone in the community in need. Help is needed on Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.-- 3 p.m., and Thursdays, Fridays, or Saturdays after 1 p.m.

Make A Difference Day, Sat., Oct. 24 -- Despite a slight delay in starting, and some gaps in volunteer shifts, the food collection at Stop & Shop was a huge success, with a total of 4.5 tons of food collected. All food was given to CCA, and NES. Some of the St. Jerome volunteers included: Barbara Bagnato, Keith Garvey, Joe and Kathy Jimenez, and Rebecca Sweeney.

Collection for New/"Gently Used" Children's Books -- The book collection boxes have been overflowing. Elaine Halstead, Maureen, and Rebecca were able to purchase some excellent books at minimal cost from The Norwalk Library Book Sale.

CCA Winter Coat Collection Oct. 24 - Nov. 1 -- The coat collection boxes have been overflowing, too. Ebie Milton has offered to drop off coats to the Mayor's office, as has Barbara and Rebecca. The coats will be distributed to the needy from Norwalk's Police Dept. on Sat., Nov. 7.

Nov. 23 Meeting to Write Giving Tree Tags -- Barbara will write a Bulletin note to invite volunteers to meet on Monday, Nov. 23 to write the Giving Tree Tags for CCA's holiday gift distribution program, and for gifts we will send to Julie's kids in Guatemala. Barbara shared that Julie said she will be happy with whatever gifts we choose (e.g., fleece jackets, underwear, socks, etc.) Barbara will look back to last year to see exactly what gifts were given to Julie's kids. The completed tags will be placed on the tree set up on Sat., Nov. 28.

Giving Tree Collection -- Beginning on 11/28, parishioners can choose gift tags, shop for gifts, and return them with the tags attached by **SATURDAY, DEC. 12**. The deadline date for a Saturday is new this year -- due to Confirmation taking place on Sun., Dec. 13, we will not be able to use the downstairs hall or the pews that day for the huge sorting project. This change in due date needs to be publicized repeatedly -- on the gift tags, in the Bulletin, and on signs at the doors. After the sorting takes place, we will be able to store all gifts in Room 5. Barbara will contact Francie Mansager to check with her re: preparing the tags.

NEW BUSINESS:

Annette reported that **Harvest for the Hungry**, CCA's first fundraiser held on Fri., Oct. 23, was a huge success. The wine and appetizer reception held at City Hall, raised \$13,000 for CCA. Special thanks will be sent to Stew Leonard's for the wine for tasting, and for staffing it, and for the complimentary appetizers from so many area restaurants.

Kathy Coyne asked for any tips for involving REACH 7th and 8th graders in **a project promoting social justice**. Barbara discussed the zoning laws in Norwalk that prohibit The Emergency Shelter from expanding into a larger, Shelter-owned building to serve a growing number of homeless people. The zoning laws were vehemently upheld by East Norwalk resident organizations in an effort to keep the laws unchangeable, lest a shelter come into East Norwalk. Annette mentioned the good work of the Brien McMahon students who spotlight the needs of the transient workers of S. Norwalk. Either of these topics could lead the REACH students to study the problem, write letters to the newspaper about the problem, and brainstorm ways to help.

The Open Door Shelter at The Norwalk Emergency Shelter sent several of us a letter requesting that we consider having **a second collection** to help defray their increasing costs. Since we do not usually run a second collection to benefit just one organization, we decided against it.

Dates for upcoming meetings: 11/23 (writing out Giving Tree tags), 12/12 (sorting Giving Tree gifts), 1/25/10, 2/22, 3/22, 4/26, 5/24.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Sweeney