

## ST. JEROME SOCIAL CONCERNS MEETING MINUTES

Sept. 28, 2009

**Present:** Barbara Bagnato, Claire Budnick, Kathy Jimenez, Dan Loch, Annette Maiberger, Maureen Morrissey, Jennifer Prescott, Sheila Rietano, Alex Sgoutas, Rebecca Sweeney, Nancy Wagner.

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

### **RECENT PROJECTS:**

**Parish Festival** -- Dan offered feedback on the successful Golden 50s-60s Parish Festival, held on Sun., Sept. 27, which was moved from proposed location at Cranbury Park to Church, due to the rainy forecast. Approximately 240 parishioners attended and enjoyed the "50's"-themed menu (meatloaf, hot turkey sandwiches, snow cones) directed by head chef, John Davies. The Band played great Golden Oldies music. Many thanks are due to all those who planned, set up, cooked, served, cleaned up.

**Monthly Food Drive** -- Rebecca reported that September's Drive brought in 1,127 food items and the Milk Fund tallied \$145.50. The recent trend of topping over 1,000 items is excellent. The next few food drives will take place on : October 18, November 15, and December 20.

**Cell Phone Update** -- Kathy reported that, to date, we have collected 211 cell phones with chargers. In addition, 12 "incomplete" sets (single phones or single chargers) have been passed on to the Women's Crisis Center, as well, since they are able to sell those parts.

### **IDEAS FOR PROJECTS FOR 2009-2010:**

**Sorting Donated Clothing at Once & Again Clothing Room** -- Barbara addressed the continued need for volunteers to help sort and organize the donated clothing that is given away to both Norwalk Emergency Shelter (NES) clients and anyone in the community in need. The current room is overflowing with bags and bags of unsorted clothes. Barbara will put a note in the Bulletin inviting parishioners to volunteer to help 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** -- This annual food collection at area grocery stores will take place again. Barbara will post a sign-up sheet for volunteers to work a shift at a store, asking shoppers to purchase a non-perishable food item for the drive. All food is given to Norwalk's food pantries.

**Collection for New/"Gently Used" Children's Books** -- Barbara reported that Christian Community Action (CCA) Food Pantry has run out of books to hand out to clients as they pick up their food. We will set up a donation box in the hallway, asking for books for preschool and elementary-aged children.

**CCA Winter Coat Collection Oct. 24 - Nov. 1** -- Barbara reported that CCA is hosting another Winter Coat Drive, which we participated in last year. We will advertise it and provide donation boxes for the coats in the hallway, and ask for volunteers to drop off the collection of coats to CCA.

**Collection for Gift Packs for Walter Reed Veteran's Hospital** -- Jennifer generously offered to deliver the items to Walter Reed Veteran's Hospital (as she did last year). Most needed items include: electronic games, disposable razors, BPA water bottles, shampoo, magazines, new paperback books,

shorts, long pajama bottoms. After considering how many collections we are sponsoring this Fall, the Committee agreed that this project should be scheduled for February, and run for two weeks.

**Nov. 23 Meeting to Write Giving Tree Tags** -- We will meet on 11/23 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 will be happy with whatever gifts we choose (e.g., fleece jackets, underwear, socks, etc.) 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. 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 sorting the gifts, a huge project. Rebecca suggested that we publicize that we need to ask people to drop off their gifts by the morning of *Sat.*, Dec. 12, and we sort that afternoon. Fr. David offered us Room 5 to store the gifts.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Annette invited the Committee to the first fundraiser for CCA on **Fri., Oct. 23**. All ticket proceeds from **Harvest for the Hungry**, a wine and appetizer reception held at City Hall, will help CCA meet the increasing demand resulting from a recent 40% increase in the number of clients served. Tickets are \$50/person. Annette also informed us that the new CCA Coordinator, Joy, is looking for substitute pantry volunteers.

Dan lead a discussion re: the **Kiducation used clothing bin** situated in the parking lot. Recently, there have been unsightly tires, computer monitors, and other large items stacked in front of the bin. Perhaps the Parish Council can consider moving the bin to a less conspicuous spot on church property?

Maureen asked re: interest in a sale of **Fair Trade coffee, tea, and chocolate**, the proceeds of which are sent to the fair trade farmers. In the past, this sale coincided with the Maya Works crafts sale in Dec.

Alex asked if Social Concerns would consider composing **a list of local nonprofit organizations** in need of support, so that other church groups (e.g., the Men's Group) could match resources with needs.

Jennifer reminded us that the **Daycare Program at Briggs High School** can always use diapers, wipes, hand sanitizers. This could be a collection we consider later in the year.

Barbara noted that the summer's wet weather was tough on the Fodor Farm harvest, but the gardening was well worth the effort. Some fresh produce was donated to CCA's Food Pantry.

**Dates for upcoming meetings: 10/26, 11/23 (writing out Giving Tree tags), 12/12 or 12/13 (to be determined for sorting Giving Tree gifts), 1/25/10, 2/22, 3/22, 4/26, 5/24.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Rebecca Sweeney