

ST. JEROME SOCIAL CONCERNS MEETING MINUTES
September 26, 2011

Present: Father David, Dan Loch, Annette Maiberger, Kathy Jimenez, Georgia Smith, Barbara Bagnato, Rebecca Sweeney, Melanie Blanco, Francie Mansager, Judi Dennehy, Honey Secchi, Jennifer Prescott, Carol Caragine, and Sheila Rietano.

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

WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Barbara clarified that our Committee meetings will take place on the fourth Mon. of the month at 7 p.m., with the exceptions of Nov., Dec., and May. November's Giving Tree Tag Night replaces the monthly meeting; December's Giving Tree Gift Sorting replaces the monthly meeting, and in May, we meet on the 3rd Monday to avoid meeting on Memorial Day. The schedule of meetings is as follows: Oct. 24; Nov. 21, Tag Night; Dec. 10, Sorting Day; Jan. 23, Feb. 27, March 26, April 23, and May 21.

Jennifer brought up the question whether or not Briggs High School has the same breakfast program as Norwalk High and Brien McMahon, as there seems to be a need for food at Briggs.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Food Drive/Milk Fund Collection: Rebecca reported that our June, July, August, and September food drives averaged 800 food items and the Milk Fund averaged \$250. She thanked the coordinators of these drives –Kathy J., Barbara, and Nancy Wagner, as well as Sheila for the May food drive –supporting the food drives as a real group effort. The idea to redirect excessive money from the Milk Fund Collection to the purchase of needed food items was discussed, with the conclusion to use the funds for milk only. Oct. 16 and Nov. 13 will be the next food drives. We will wait to confirm the Dec. date with CCA's schedule.

Cell Phone Update: Kathy reported that, to date, the collection total is: 286 phones with chargers, and 70 phones without chargers.

CONNECT Update: The work of our representatives' 1:1 interviews with parishioners is well underway -- the aim to discuss "what keeps you up at night?" Dan, Judi, Father David, and Annette, agree that CONNECT should be in our parish's future, enabling us to join with 31 other churches and synagogues to voice concerns (e.g., in-state college tuition for illegal immigrants, regulating health insurance companies increased charges) to legislators. On Wed., Nov. 30, Father David has arranged for 2 buses to transport as many as 120 parishioners to a CONNECT meeting in Bridgeport. He will be getting the word out to as many people as possible to attend to support this vital work.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Back To School Supplies Drive: Barbara reported that we collected over 800 items which she delivered to The Carver Center's Afterschool Program. The Coordinator was extremely appreciative.

UPCOMING MONTHLY PROJECTS

Ziti Bake for Anti-Bullying workshop: Francie explained that she needs 12 volunteers to bake pans of ziti, which we will donate for the lunch to be served at Calvary Baptist Church's 10/1 Anti-Bullying Workshop. Francie brought all the pans and ingredients needed for making the ziti at home, and bringing warm to St. Jerome's by 11 a.m. on Sat., 10/1. Jennifer offered to deliver the pans of ziti to Calvary Baptist. Many Committee members volunteered, to guarantee the 12 dishes.

Catalog Choice: Dan will prepare a flyer/announcement for the Bulletin, describing the free service for opting out of receiving bulk mail, telephone books, catalogs, credit card offers.

Oct. 22 Make a Difference Day: Barbara shared that Christi Pope of CCA confirmed that the annual food collection at local supermarkets will take place. We will advertise for volunteers and post a sign up sheet in the hallway.

Nov. 5 Winter Coat Drive: The City of Norwalk will again hold a winter coat drive, which we will support by advertising for coat donations, and arranging drivers to deliver the coats to the designated drop-off locations (last year, City Hall, and one date for the Police Station).

Giving Tree: Nov. 21 is Tag Night. On Nov. 26, the tags are arranged on the tree. On Sat., Dec. 10, we will sort all the gifts. Dec. 12 is Gift Drop Off Day. Barbara will contact Julie Coyne to ask her what gifts would best help her Education and Hope students.

NEW IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

The Shepherd Program: Rebecca shared Gerry Moran's email, suggesting that St. Jerome be introduced to this program, which involves lay people subsidizing the education of inner city kids at Catholic high schools with financial aid and mentoring. Father David added that Bishop Lori is very supportive of this program, and he will look into it further and report back to us.

The New Day Center, Norwalk: Judi reported on the efforts underway to help the day laborers who gather on the Lowe St. Bridge to receive basic medical attention, and learn English, in order to help them receive fair wages when hired for temporary jobs. Judi praised the assistance offered by Brien McMahon's group and Pastor Oscar Destruge. The goal is to find a clearinghouse location to rent before winter. Judi and Bob are hosting a dinner in support of this work in progress, on Fri., Oct. 21.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

The next meeting is Monday, Oct. 24, at 7 p.m.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Sweeney