

ST. JEROME SOCIAL CONCERNS MINUTES FROM 2/23/09 MEETING

Present: Dan Loch, Gerry Moran, Father David, Barbara Bagnato, Annette Maiberger, Honey Secchi, Rebecca Sweeney, Nancy Wagner, Bill Halstead, Kathy Jimenez.

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

Introductory Remarks -- Barbara introduced parishioner Gerry Moran, who explained his hope to become involved in some volunteer work. He reported that he visited the St. Vincent de Paul Society's food pantry and found it to be a "well oiled machine", fully staffed with volunteers and shelves of food.

Recap of Feb. 22 Food Drive and Food Drive News -- Rebecca reported that we collected a total of 1120 food items. We donated 3 checks for \$324 each to St. Vincent de Paul Society, Christian Community Action, and The Emergency Shelter to be used for purchasing milk. Annette shared that CCA is not limiting the number of families served each day to 20/day any longer, since The United Way has committed to increasing the funding needed to feed everyone. Bill reported that the number of families served has ranged from 30 - 45/day. Rebecca discussed the upcoming Special Lenten Food Drive, set for March 29, when we invite parishioners to "shop the list" of food items that are typically given away to provide one person one week's worth of food at CCA. She has compared prices for the list at both Stop and Shop and Wal-mart and the bills have come to \$20.28 and \$17.29, respectively, keeping the donation at approximately \$20. Laurie Corasaniti has offered to purchase the items on the list for display in the hall, as an advertisement for the drive.

Cell Phone Update -- Kathy reported that to date, she has collected 180 cell phones with chargers for the Women's Crisis Center. Good news is that the Center will even accept cell phones without chargers, and random chargers as well, which they can use by selling them for a small profit.

Updating Social Concerns Website -- Barbara, John DiDomizio, and Rebecca finished the updates last month, which Dan quickly transferred to our St. Jerome website, so now the information is state-of-the-art.

The Emergency Shelter Clothing Room -- Barbara is hoping to get a call back from the coordinator of the room, Once and Again, to see if we can organize a project for straightening up what is currently a chaotic collection of donated clothing. Annette reported that Christi Pope, from CCA, is interested in seeing what can be done to improve the facility and its operation and is pursuing it with Carol Antonez, from The Emergency Shelter. Also, there was some offer for help from a Wilton church, so by next meeting there may be some more information.

CCA Furniture Program -- Barbara offered to put a note in the Bulletin to invite parishioners to donate used furniture to CCA, where it is given away to needy families.

Pennies for Peace Program -- Kathy shared with Barb information about a charity that donates to impoverished schools in Afghanistan. Barbara will ask Kathy Coyne if a penny collection is something that REACH would like to pursue.

Fodor Farm Announcement -- In March, Barbara will advertise plans for our parish to maintain 2 garden plots at Fodor Farm, for personal use and for growing vegetables to donate to local food pantries. Also, parishioners will be invited to donate fresh produce from their gardens to local food pantries.

Earth Day -- we are still thinking about ideas for commemorating Earth Day.

Recycle Computer Equipment -- Nancy shared that Computer Fox, on Main Ave., will accept old computer equipment for recycling.

Memorial Day -- we are exploring the idea for a collection for care packages for soldiers stationed in Afghanistan. Jennifer Prescott is looking into logistics and Barbara has information on a USO website that could be a big help.

Soles4Souls -- Barbara has information on a gently-used shoe collection sponsored by Hawley Lane Shoes on Westport Ave., which we will consider advertising in the Bulletin.

CT Bike Project -- Father David will contact this collection program, which donates used bicycles to needy people in the area.

CCA Fundraiser -- Annette reported that she is involved in coordinating a new project -- a fundraiser for CCA, which could use the financial support of the neighborhood restaurants and businesses, as well as the Norwalk community. The fundraiser, an evening of appetizers and chamber music, will be held on Fri., May 8, at the Community Room at City Hall. Barbara suggested contacting Jeff's Cuisine for donations and Honey suggested contacting The Exchange Club for a one-time donation to CCA. Annette is looking for support for this event.

The Emergency Shelter Food Pantry -- Bill discussed the unclean conditions he's seen at the food pantry, with food not stored properly, and wonders if there is a possibility to have a clean-up project initiated. Father David said that he will speak with John DiDomizio about this.

Dan Loch had the great suggestion for posting our meeting minutes on the website. Rebecca and Barbara will send him the latest meeting minutes.

Our next meeting is March 23, 2009.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Sweeney