

## ST. JEROME SOCIAL CONCERNS MEETING MINUTES

February 24, 2014

**Present:** Barbara Bagnato, Sandy Billings, Tara Whalen, Dan Loch, Father Dave, Kathy Jimenez, Rebecca Sweeney, Maureen Morrissey

The meeting began at 7:04 p.m. with a prayer offered by Barbara.

### ONGOING PROJECTS

**Food Drive/Milk Fund Collection:** Rebecca reported the Feb. food drive was outstanding -- 1,298 food items, which included 815 cans of ravioli, which was the item of the month sold after Masses. In addition, we collected 53 pounds of potatoes, apples, onions, and carrots. The Milk Fund Collection total was \$141.00.

Rebecca asked Ed Kearns, Director of Person-2-Person what might be a good "item of the month" for us to sell in March, and he recommended tuna fish. The Committee agreed we will sell cans of tuna fish after Masses during our March Food Drive weekend, March 22-23.

Our upcoming Food Drive Sundays are: March 23, April 13 (Palm Sunday will be our Special Lenten food drive); and May 18.

Barbara added that Kathy Coyne is enlisting 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to hand out bags with the list we provide for our Special Lenten food drive in April.

**CONNECT (CSC) Update:** Dan reported that on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, CONNECT is hosting a Healthcare Update and Accountability Session at Community Baptist Church in New Haven. Topics will include Access Health CT enrollment numbers and deadlines; small business enrollments and deadlines; CT Medicaid and HUSKY re-applications, and CT Medicaid primary care providers and Medicaid funding. There is a need to post on the website a list of doctors who do not accept Medicaid, so people can make an informed decision before signing up.

In addition, there is renewed interest in gun violence, an advocating for police departments to purchase guns only from gun companies which stamp the parts of guns, making them easily traceable, and so, less likely to be used in violent ways.

Barbara added that the 3/5 CT Against Gun Violence meeting on Understanding Gun Laws and School Safety came with a too-expensive fee, as a fundraiser, more than a meeting for the general public.

Father David reported that CONNECT is trying to convince Norwalk's new mayor, Harry Rilling, to have Norwalk commit to a national program for police departments to insist that gun companies have safety modifications on guns before the departments will purchase them. He also added that St. Joseph's Church is concerned about what is happening with NEON. CONNECT will have a regional caucus in April and a Delegates Assembly in May. More details will follow.

**Make a Difference Project:** Barbara explained that we received one request from a parishioner for food, and we assembled several bags from our food drive, and supplemented additional items. That connection was completed. There was discussion that the Helping Hands box in the back of the church should also have sign-up sheets for volunteers to help solve identified problems.

**Toiletry Items Collection for Mid-Fairfield AIDS Project and The Open Door:** We collected many bags of toiletry items and cleaning supplies, which we stored in the Resource Room. After the business meeting, we sorted stacks of bags destined for Mid-Fairfield AIDS Project and The Open Door. Rebecca, Barbara, and Tara took bags to deliver to Mid-Fairfield AIDS Project. Rebecca will update Daniela re: the bags designated to go to The Open Door. This collection will run one more week, ending on March 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **UPCOMING PROJECTS**

**REACH Project:** Kathy Coyne is exploring the idea for Grade 7-8 REACH students to support Person-2-Person's food pantry by getting them involved in a hands-on project. She is discussing the project for students to scoop small bags of rice from oversize bags, for the preferred distribution size for each family.

**Lenten Cross:** Dan and Florence are running this program during Lent. Attached to the wooden cross at the back will be 5 different colored tags: purple for prayer requests; blue for donation requests; pink for acts of kindness; off-white for acts of prayer; and yellow for ideas for Lent. Parishioners are invited to take a tag to complete that tag's action. Tags will be refilled continuously throughout Lent.

### **NEW PROJECTS**

**Education and Hope's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration:** Barbara explained that the parish will celebrate Julie Coyne's work with a Mass and reception on Sat., March 22<sup>nd</sup>. She will send out a sign-up sheet to the Committee, Welcoming Committee, and Funeral Luncheon volunteers asking for appetizers, desserts, and clean up.

**The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.**

**Our next meeting is Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m. Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup> are meeting dates for April and May.**

Sincerely,

Rebecca Sweeney