

## ST. JEROME SOCIAL CONCERNS MEETING MINUTES

March 24, 2014

**Present:** Barbara Bagnato, Dan Loch, Father Dave, Kathy Jimenez, Rebecca Sweeney, Kathy Coyne, Francie Mansager, Shelia Rietano

The meeting began at 7:01 p.m. with a prayer offered by Barbara.

### ONGOING PROJECTS

**Food Drive/Milk Fund Collection:** Rebecca reported that the March food drive was outstanding, a real trend for our 2014 drives -- 1,691 food items, which included 360 cans of tuna fish, our "featured" item for sale after Masses. In addition, we collected 50 pounds of potatoes, cabbage, apples, onions, zucchini, and carrots. This large collection was in part due to the high participation by parishioners who took grocery bags with lists of food items from REACH students after March 15-16 Masses. The Milk Fund Collection total was \$130.00. The rice that was bagged into 1 lb. baggies by our REACH students was included in the food drive pick-up.

We will continue to promote the "shop the list" Special Lenten food drive for the weekend of Palm Sunday (April 13), with the flyer stuffed in the March 29-30 Bulletin, and flyers available at exits on April 5-6. Traditionally, we give about 500 food items from our Special Lenten food drive to St. Vincent de Paul's food pantry. Rebecca noted that in recent years St. Vincent de Paul does not accept donations from Make a Difference Day or the Postal Workers food drive as its pantry is well-stocked and not in need. Father Dave suggested that we discontinue the food donations to St. Vincent de Paul, but continue with the milk fund donations.

Barbara shared that Sandy Billings suggested we focus on a non-food drive for May, when Person-2-Person is inundated with food from the Postal Workers' food drive. Traditionally, we have suggested paper goods for May, but we can emphasize it this year and check with Ed Kearns at P2P to see if items like diapers, sanitary supplies, laundry detergent, and paper towels, etc. would be most needed. We could focus on the non-food items that are important, but not purchasable with food stamps.

Our upcoming Food Drive Sundays are: April 13 (Palm Sunday) and May 18.

**CONNECT (CSC) Update:** Father Dave reported that CONNECT is focusing on gun safety. St. Jerome's, St. Joseph's and Tempel Bethel are sending representative to a meeting with Norwalk's Mayor Harry Rilling to promote the idea for Norwalk to join a national program for police departments to purchase only from gun companies that manufacture guns with safety modifications. (e.g., when gun companies stamp the parts of guns, it makes them easily traceable, and so, less likely to be used in violent ways). In addition, cities should purchase from gun companies who sell guns to legitimate dealers. Bridgeport and Newtown are on board with this program, and New York City is about to join. This will be a long process, but it has lots of growth potential.

Dan reported that 60 people attended the March 3rd Healthcare Update and Accountability Session at Community Baptist in New Haven. Participants heard from a panel of public officials re: Medicaid computer glitches, update on Access Health CT numbers, long call-wait lines, CT Medicaid primary care providers, etc. One of CONNECT's objectives is to focus on controlling the power wielded by insurance companies for getting around regulations when increasing rates.

CONNECT will have a regional caucus in April and a Delegates Assembly in May. More details will follow.

**Make a Difference Project:** Barbara offered to work on a magnetized index card explaining our mission to help with driving, grocery shopping, visits. We will ask Father Joe and Cornelia to drop cards to parishioners he brings Communion to, or visits. Sheila offered to be the contact person. Barbara will work up a draft and ask the Committee for feedback.

**Toiletry Items Collection for Mid-Fairfield AIDS Project and The Open Door:** We collected many bags of toiletry items and cleaning supplies, which John Wagner delivered to Mid-Fairfield AIDS Project and Daniela O'Callaghan delivered to The Open Door.

**Education and Hope's 20th Anniversary Celebration:** This special gathering was attended by a nice crowd, on Sat., March 22nd, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Kathy C. gave special thanks to Barbara for supervising.

**Lenten Cross:** Barbara delivered donations to The Open Door; Lorraine Larkin, to Amerikids; Nancy Wagner to Malta House; and Rebecca, to Notre Dame.

### **NEW PROJECTS**

**List of Agencies/Resources:** Sheila offered to look into organizing a master list of resources available to people in need in Norwalk. (e.g., Person-2-Person has operated a program for financial assistance for fuel bills).

**Outreach to Aurora Senior Living of Norwalk:** Francie suggested that our parish gets more involved with assistance to the former Honey Hill Nursing Home on Midrocks Rd.

**The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.**

**Our next meeting is Monday, April 28th. Monday, May 19th is our May meeting date.**

Sincerely,  
Rebecca Sweeney, Secretary