



Stateline Organizer

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Lead stories

- **Say “NO” to Violence**
- **Skills Training for listening campaign**

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JOB calls on community to say “NO” to violence

Leaders of Justice Overcoming Borders and Pueblos Unidos held a public prayer vigil on Tuesday, September 15, one day after Gina Zamora, a 17-year-old Beloit girl, was shot and killed in front of her house. The evening vigil was held in the front yard of Zamora’s home and attended by about 100 people, including members of the victim’s family, Beloit religious leaders, and youth and adults from the community.

The Beloit Police Department is still seeking information about who is responsible for the drive-by slaying. This was the third shooting of a teenager in Beloit this year, with two of them fatalities.

“I’m tired of driving around this city and seeing other places where there are flowers marking other acts of violence,” said JOB leader Rev. Kurt Handrich at the vigil. “We can’t let violence have the last word.” Handrich was one

of eight religious leaders who participated in the vigil.

JOB will host a meeting for religious leaders on **Tuesday, October 6**, to plan further action to address the youth violence issue. This luncheon meeting will take place at **First Presbyterian Church, 501 Prospect Street, Beloit at 12:30 p.m.** Call JOB at 608-201-5326 for further information.

There are many problems relating to the needs of our youth, with the increase in street violence being one of the most urgent. It is critical that we work together as a community – young and old – to create real solutions to the problems our young people are facing. Contact JOB if you are ready to get involved!



Listening Campaign can help strengthen your congregation

JOB leaders conducted two leadership training sessions in August, with help from staff from our statewide network, WISDOM. These training sessions were held at St. Thomas Catholic Church in Beloit and St. John’s Lutheran in Janesville. Members of four congregations participated.

The training is designed to provide an overview of congregation-based community organizing and its basic methods and principles, and to teach simple techniques to build relationships and identify potential leaders within congregations. Participants are encouraged to conduct

listening campaigns within their congregations in order to develop deeper relationships, discern the interests, gifts and skills of congregation members, and define issues that are important to the congregation.

See page four

Drunk Driving: Treatment should be first priority



Wisconsin has the highest rate of alcohol consumption in the nation

“State Assembly unanimously passed a bill to curb drunk driving”



The first step in solving a problem is to recognize that you have one, and Wisconsin is starting to realize it has a whopping drinking problem.

Wisconsin has the highest rate of alcohol consumption in the nation, as of 2006, and has led all states in “binge drinking” since the Centers on Disease Control (CDC) started keeping records. In 2007, Wisconsin also had the highest alcohol use by high school students (49 percent) in the country. During the past decade, the arrest rate for liquor law violations in Wisconsin was three times the national average. The financial cost to the state from alcohol-related accidents and medical conditions is well over \$900 million annually.

Perhaps not coincidentally, Wisconsin also has some of the weakest legislation in the nation relating to alcohol use and abuse. Wisconsin is one of only two states that do not issue a felony charge until a person’s fifth OWI (Operating While Intoxicated) offense, and the only state that does not criminalize the first offense. Wisconsin also has the third lowest beer tax in the nation. It has not been raised in 40 years.

On September 17, the State Assembly unanimously passed a bill (AB 283) to curb drunk driving. The bill includes various measures, including somewhat stiffer sentences and ignition interlock devices, (which prevent repeat offenders from

starting a car if they are intoxicated).

The bill also includes a provision that would expand a successful Winnebago County program statewide. The **Safe Streets Treatment Option Program (SSTOP)** is one of several models in Wisconsin that aggressively and effectively confronts drunk driving without increasing incarceration. Under SSTOP, a person convicted of a second or third drunk driving offense can have their jail time reduced if they successfully complete a probation period that includes alcohol and other drug treatment. SSTOP has been operating for three years and has an 80 percent completion rate, according to program manager Michael Olig. Only six percent of clients completing the program have re-offended, to date, compared to a 54 percent statewide recidivism rate.

The program has also saved over 10,000 “jail days” at a cost of \$665,000. When the expense of program staff and treatment are factored in, the savings for county taxpayers has still been \$350,000 or more.

Another effective model is the **OWI Treatment Court**. The alcohol treatment court in La Crosse County has enjoyed success similar to SSTOP and has also been operating for three years. To participate, a person must have been convicted of a second OWI offense (or greater) and be

assessed as “alcohol dependent”. Clients must undergo an arduous three-phase treatment program that can take from 12 to 25 months to complete. Each phase has 15 requirements that include a treatment plan, regular appearances before the treatment court judge, alcohol and drug testing, attendance at a *Victim Impact Panel*, and community service, (which is not in lieu of fines or court costs).

According to an evaluator’s report on the program, there were 515 participants in the first three years: 166 have graduated, 127 are currently active, 135 were expelled, and 87 voluntarily opted to serve jail time instead. Seven percent of those who dropped out were re-arrested for an OWI offense, 14 percent of those expelled were re-arrested, and only 3.6 percent of those who completed the program were re-arrested in the three-year period.

It’s time for all of us to call on our legislators to make treatment the first priority for dealing with drunk driving. Experience shows that programs like SSTOP and OWI courts are more effective than incarceration in reducing drunk driving, and far less expensive.

Our legislators also need to raise the beer tax and **use this additional revenue for treatment and prevention programs**. A proposed bill [AB 287] to increase the beer tax from \$2 to \$10 per barrel of beer will generate

nearly **\$40 million** in new revenue, part of which can be applied to the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) fund. This would create a significant

pool of money for Rock and other counties to apply for, to create and expand drug and alcohol courts, institute SSTOP programs, and other treatment

alternatives. Call your legislators today [see box, page 4] and ask them to support the SSTOP program expansion and raise the beer tax to fund treatment!

Time is now to pass real health care reform!

The national debate over health care continues to rage, with misinformation, myths and fear-mongering commanding most of the media limelight. But now is the time when voices of compassion and faith must speak out loud and clear: Congress is likely to vote on health care legislation by mid to late October.

We must raise our voices now to insist that Congress pass a health care plan that guarantees quality and affordable health care for all Americans. Plain and simple, our current health care system reinforces the social divide between those who have and those who have not. Our faith values call us to create a sacred community with equal opportunity for all.

“The church acknowledges that people have a right to health care and therefore society has a moral obligation to provide for that right. That means it is not just unfortunate that 47 million people in the U.S. lack insurance; it is unconscionable in light of the church’s preferential option for the poor,” wrote Fr. Pat Norris, a Madison Dominican priest, in a recent church newsletter. [The *Cap Times* reprinted his article.]

Rev. Norris went on to list other social justice principles of his faith, and how we should judge current health care reform proposals in light of these faith values. “The church should raise a question about the for-profit motive in health care. As a public good, there is difficulty in treating health care as a commodity rather than a service. Such an approach has led to exorbitant administrative costs (including CEO compensation), difficulties for small businesses to obtain group insurance, the extremely high costs for individuals and families to purchase insurance apart from employment, and the un-insurability of people with pre-existing conditions.

“Church members have a prophetic responsibility to raise questions about the “sacred cows” of our health care system so that we can better help the “sacred people” the system is designed to serve,” he said.

If people are required to purchase insurance, Congress must make sure that premiums and out-of-pocket expenses are affordable. They should provide subsidies for low-income families, provide access for documented immigrants, and establish employer responsibility to provide good,

affordable coverage for employees.

American citizens are suffering and dying (and going bankrupt) because of the failure of insurance company health care. When 20 to 30 percent of payments do not go to care, but to **denying care** and profiting from it, this is a tax on the 96 percent of us who have health care. But this tax does not benefit those who are taxed; it only benefits managers and investors. And the people taxed have no representation. This is neither democratic nor moral.

JOB urges you to call all of your Congressional representatives the week of **October 5-9** and urge them to push hard for **quality, affordable health care for all**. [See phone numbers, page 4].

If you want to do more, contact JOB [608-201-5326] to help plan public activities around health care reform for the weeks of **October 12-23**.



“The church acknowledges that people have a right to health care and therefore society has a moral obligation to provide for that right.”

Fr. Pat Norris



Justice Overcoming Borders (JOB)

Phone: 608-201-5326

www.justiceovercomingborders.org

JOB MISSION STATEMENT

Justice Overcoming Borders (JOB) is a coalition of faith communities uniting to act for justice, build power, and transform communities in the Stateline area. JOB's primary purpose is to create a strong, institution-based organization to powerfully engage and impact public decisions and give voice to the poor and powerless.

Check out upcoming training programs

Through its national network – the Gamaliel Foundation – JOB is offering several leadership development opportunities. Check these out:

November 1-7

St. Stephen's Retreat Ctr
Honolulu, Hawaii.

November 8-14

2010 Holiday Court
Annapolis, Maryland

This seven-day residential training presents the basic concepts and tools needed for a person to productively reflect on their present and future role in the public arena. Topics covered include: methods for building power, institutional organizing, tools to develop and sustain relationships, and elements of effective meetings. It is a life-changing experience!

The fee, including room and meals, is usually \$575 per person [not including transportation]. For those who cannot afford a trip to Hawaii or the east coast, there may be a week-long train-

ing in Wisconsin in **late February**. Contact JOB for more details on this.

Closer to home, JOB has been working with staff from WISDOM [our statewide network] and leaders of the ELCA South-Central Synod to develop leadership and a larger congregation-based organization in southern Wisconsin. With this in mind, we are offering a luncheon program for Lutheran pastors and lay leaders, hosted by ELCA Bishop Bruce Burnside, on **Wednesday, October 14**. Rev. Dennis Jacobsen, author of *Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing*, will give a keynote presenta-

tion. This event will take place at Covenant Lutheran Church in Stoughton from 11:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

On **Saturday, November 14**, Gregory Galluzzo, founder and director of the Gamaliel Foundation, will lead a training session on congregation-based community organizing for people of all faith groups. This training will also take place at Covenant Lutheran in Stoughton. Both events will be an excellent opportunity for you to learn how you and your congregation can benefit from community organizing, and give you some tools and motivation to get started.

Listening Campaigns –

After the listening campaign, the goal is to form a *core team* – a group of congregation leaders who continue to meet and engage others in the congregation and community to work together on local issues of social justice they identify. The core team is the direct link between the congregation and JOB.

JOB plans to offer another core team training in the near future. Contact us at 608-201-5326 if you are interested in having your congregation participate in a future training session, or to get more information.



Local Legislative Contacts

Governor Doyle 608-266-1212
Office of the Governor
Rep. Chuck Benedict 888-534-0045
[Rep. Benedict@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Rep.Benedict@legis.wi.gov)
Rep. Kim Hixson 888-534-0043
[Rep. Hixson@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Rep.Hixson@legis.wi.gov)
Rep. Michael Sheridan 888-947-0044
[Rep. Sheridan@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Rep.Sheridan@legis.wi.gov)
Senator Judy Robson 800-334-1468
Sen.Robson@legis.wi.gov

National Legislative Contacts

President Barack Obama 202-456-1111
www.whitehouse.gov
Rep. Tammy Baldwin 608-362-2800
www.tammybaldwin.house.gov
Sen. Russ Feingold 608-828-1215
www.feingold.senate.gov
Sen. Herb Kohl 608-264-5338
www.kohl.senate.gov
Rep. Paul Ryan 608-752-4050
www.paulryan.house.gov