

St. Nicholas Peace and Justice Committee: Years in Review 2010 - 2011

In March 2009 (and re-affirmed May 2010), P&J members named the area of **Immigration Reform and Building Solidarity with the Immigrant Community** to be the key focus of committee efforts. In November 2011, P&J broadened the focus to include **Immigration Justice and Building Solidarity with the Immigrant Communities**. (Note: the P&J activities shown in black type occurred in 2010; the activities shown in blue type took place in 2011.)

EDUCATION:

- **Launched *Crossing Borders* prayer and education series**, spearheaded by Jacquie Axe, Dan Maloney. Joe Boyle; offered a fall and spring semester.
- **Organized** (March 14, 2010) "**Celebrate Our Family Origins**" event at which parishioners shared their ancestral stories.
- **Attended *Ministry with Immigrants Day*** - Saturday, February 20, at St. Benedict the African Parish in Chicago presented by Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants; keynoter: Daniel Groody.
- **Invited Rev. Daniel Groody** to present **Dying to Live: A Theology of Migration** on (October 12); assistant professor of theology and director of the *Center for Latino Spirituality* at the University of Notre Dame. Co-sponsored with Adult Faith Formation Committee.
- **Invited Sisters JoAnn Persch and Patricia Murphy** to present **The Broadview Sisters: Ministry to Deportees** (March 13) after the 9:00 a.m. Mass. After the 1 p.m. Mass, they were joined by **Maggie Perales** who spoke in Spanish on **Immigrant Rights**. Co-sponsored with the Adult Faith Formation Committee.
- **Held House Meeting Circuit on Immigration: Issues and Answers** at P&J members homes in March and April. **Rachel Heuman** presented with assistance from **Jane Whitford**.
- **Established a St. Nick's Immigrant Parish Contact** as a liaison to the Office for Immigration Affairs & Immigrant Education of the Archdiocese. **Barbara Steinbeigle**, our IPC; attends the Vicariate II meetings related to immigration.



MEETING HUMAN NEEDS

- **The St. Nick's List** was launched. The aim of this newly created job directory is to increase employment opportunities and build bridges within the parish community. This project was the result of prayer, study, and action plans outlined by graduates of the ***Crossing Borders: Migration, Theology, and the Human Journey*** series. **The St. Nick's List** became more "dynamic" with a search box for finding names and services, and photos of the service providers were added. A **First Year Anniversary Party** was held on May 22 after the 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Masses at which many service providers and users of the List met. A pilot program for the Hispanic members of SNL "**How to Articulate Your Employment Skills to an English Speaking Audience**" was held on November 12 at Oldershaw Hall led by **Daniel Maloney**.
- **Attended Training for Accompaniment Team**, part of The Interfaith Post Detention Support Network. Learned how to offer support and hospitality when detainees are legally

released from ICE Custody. **Began building a St. Nick's immigrant post detention support team.**

- **Began attending the Ministry to Deportees** at McHenry County Jail - **Daniel Maloney.**

ADVOCACY

- **Facilitated the Justice for Immigrants Postcard Campaign: Parishioners signed postcards urging** elected representatives to enact compassionate comprehensive immigration reform (March 2010). **Cards were delivered in person** to Representative Jan Schakowsky's office (820 Davis) on March 15th. Others were mailed to Senators Burris and Durbin's offices.
- Participated in the city-wide **May 1st Chicago Family Unity Rally** to support immigration reform and an end to deportations. Anna Boekstegen reported the largest crowds she had ever seen at a rally. **Obama! Escucha! Estamos en la lucha!**
- 140 signatures were collected on a DREAM Act petition on September 25/26 and sent to Representative Kirk and Senator McConnell's offices.
- With great leadership and support from parish staff, parishioners and committee members called Mark Kirk's offices and other legislators to **call for passage of DREAM Act** (December 2010).
- **Cooperated with the Justice for Immigrants: The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform** to host a "**DREAM Sabbath**" Event on September 25 at St. Nicks. Collected 126 signatures on a petition to President Obama asking him to use his executive authority to protect vulnerable populations such as DREAM Act eligible students and parents of U.S. citizen children.
- **St. Nicholas** officially joined the **Interfaith Immigrant Welcoming Congregations** (at a launch celebration on October 23, 2011); a faith-based network of congregations and schools that have actively pledged to stand with immigrants facing deportation and detention, and to promote just and humane immigration policies – through prayer, educational opportunities, advocacy, and direct service. This interfaith coalition will help our parish continue to learn, grow, and stay connected with others working on this issue from a faith-base.

BUILDING SOLIDARITY

- P & J members continue to make an effort to **attend the 7:15am vigil at the Broadview Detention Center** on the first Friday of the month. The vigil was moved to ICE headquarters at 101 Congress Parkway in Chicago during renovations at Broadview. In solidarity with the Broadview vigil, **the rosary is prayed at St. Nicholas Church at 7 a.m. on Fridays**, an outgrowth of Sisters Pat and Joanne's visit, but spearheaded by Josefina Catellanos.
- **Collaborated with Sharing Committee members** in their efforts to promote microfinance in Haiti and in planning the annual Sharing Fest that benefits our international sister parishes. **Hosted the Multi-Parish Peace & Justice Group** at St. Nicks in January inviting Rosalie Murphy to talk about our parish's involvement in the micro-finance program in Haiti. Continued involvement with **Sharing Fest.**
- **Promoted a workshop offered by micro-finance expert Kim Wilson** (Spring 2010).

- **Launched Intercambio.** This 5 week pilot program, which was held from July 31 to August 28 not only provided language support for both English and Spanish speakers, but also built bridges between members of the Spanish and English communities.

COLLABORATING WITH OTHER PARISH MINISTRIES

Collaborated with the Adult Faith Formation Committee to invite **Sr. Jamie Phelps** to offer reflection and a faith enrichment presentation on **Martin Luther King's** legacy, Sunday, January 17 at the 9am Mass and afterwards in Oldershaw Hall.

Women and the Diaconate:

- **Drafted a letter** to Fr. Bill Tkachuk recognizing this as a pressing justice issue within our church, (March 15) signed by 20 of our members; Fr. Bill responded favorably to our concerns.
- **Spearheaded an ad hoc group** and subsequent working groups to facilitate, study, and decide what action (still in progress) might be taken to support a woman diaconate candidate at St. Nick's.
- **The steering committee** prepared a position paper regarding bringing women into the diaconate which was sent to **Cardinal Francis George**. Met with him to discuss this on September 16. The meeting was positive and productive. The committee prepared education materials for our parish based on the document which also included the background of St. Nick's involvement in the issue.

Lenten Offerings 2010: pulled together a list of opportunities for alms giving, prayer and social action to highlight key justice issues and local organizations; shared in written format in the bulletin and on the parish website.

EVENTS

- **Iraqi Student Project:** Welcomed back parishioners (July 26). Gabe Huck and Theresa Kubasak to share about their most recent work with Iraqi young adults in Damascus. [Welcomed them back for sharing in July of 2011.](#)
- Invited **Sally Ryan** to offer **Labor Day Sunday 2010 reflection.** Invited **Kim Bobo**, executive director of Interfaith Worker Justice to offer the **Labor Day Sunday 2011 reflection.**
- **Participated in the 4th of July Parade.** **Took part in the Parade again.**
- **Attended the United Power for Action and Justice Rally** on October 16 regarding "Unfinished Business: Completing Health Care Reform in Illinois."



Provided funds for the following efforts*

**funds are provided from annual dues paid by members*

- \$100 bus fare to D.C. immigration rally (March)
- \$ 200 - honorarium for Sr. Jamie Phelps (January)
- \$300 - honorarium for Rev. Daniel Groody (October)
- \$125 - parish directory listing (December); [\\$125 for listing \(December\)](#)
- [\\$50 – stipend for Kim Bobo's Labor Day talk \(September\)](#)

Letter writing and other efforts:

January: Prisoners of conscience in Burma, Iran, and Mexico

June: National Religious Campaign Against Torture

August: In gratitude to U.S. orders of religious women and to Papal Nuncio

September: DREAM Act to Kirk and McConnell

November: Petition to support repeal of the death penalty in Illinois is in support of SB 3569 and HB5687.

January: Promoted St. Nick's List at Coffee Cake Sunday.

March: Petition to our U.S. senators to help fight drastic cuts to funding for refugees.

May: Helped with first anniversary party for St. Nick's List.

June: Petition signing in regard to torture awareness month.

September: Petition signing to President Obama regarding the DREAM initiative.