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METROPOLITAN AREA RELIGIOUS COALITION OF CINCINNATI

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT for 2009

I.

JUDICATORIES' SHARED PLANNING CONFERENCE 2009 FOR 2010

JUDICATORIES SHARED PLANNING CONFERENCE met, November 13, 2009. All representatives looked at five possible concerns: Justice Reform, Homelessness/Affordable Housing, Public Education, Regional Governance, Changing Demographics and Development, and Employment/Job Creation and Training. After much discussion MARCC delegates chose to work on two concerns in 2010:

- Employment/Job Creation and Training
- Homelessness/Affordable Housing

II.

MARCC COALITION OF JUDICATORIES WORKED ON 2.5 CONCERNS in 2009

1. COLLABORATIVE PLAN/JUSTICE REFORM

Collaborative Plan

Increased Community/Police Cooperation and Public Safety

- MARCC convened meetings to increase cooperation as the key to more effective Community/Police enforcement by clarifying the purpose and advocating for one support service network shared by three public safety initiatives - Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence - a strategy to reduce the number of homicides in the city, Out of the Crossfire – a trauma unit hospital based program to serve gunshot wound victims and reduce the number of retaliation shootings in the metropolitan area and The Partnering Center: CeaseFire Cincinnati – a community anti homicide project in Avondale and Walnut Hills. MARCC representatives and some judicatory congregations were involved in one of the three programs in some capacity.
- Advocated for public safety initiatives, such as CIRV, OOTC and CeaseFire Cincinnati to be included in the Quality of Life section in the City/County Consolidated Plan.
- MARCC asked to continue to serve on City Manager Advisory Oversight Group for plan.
- Convened African American Clergy Leaders to meet with Cincinnati Police Chief to advocate for a fair resolution and to monitor the Citizens Complaint Authority process in response to Celeste Thomas vs. Officer Thomas Plummer - Use of Force Tasing Case.

Justice Reform

- Worked on and advocated through the Policy Committee of the Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network., for a state-level Certificate of Good Conduct that would reduce or

eliminate barriers to employment for people with old or irrelevant criminal records, and create incentives for employers to hire rehabilitated ex-offenders.

- MARCC continues to advocate for training and job placement funding as the interfaith representative to the South West Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board, which provides state funding for persons who need job training, employment support, or job leads, as well as funding for summer youth employment programs.
- Learned about employment barriers and advocated for their removal in the construction workforce through participation on City-County Employee Readiness Committee for The Banks and Metropolitan Sewer Projects; and Cincinnati Public Schools Building Task Force for a Community Labor Project Agreement.
- Educated delegates and advocated for a reduction in Civil Service Code barriers for ex-offenders seeking jobs in the city and county.
- Advocated through MARCC Board President's participation on the Hamilton County Criminal Justice Commission for the Mediation Services Project a program whose purpose is to avert conflict in the community and minimize the need for intervention by the criminal justice system for low level disputes.

2. HOMELESSNESS/AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Emergency Shelter

- MARCC representative served on the Steering Committee of the Homelessness to Homes Planning Process responsible for development of an emergency shelter plan for single persons who are homeless in Cincinnati.
- Worked with other community organizations advocating for City Council to re-established emergency shelter and housing as human service priorities for City Funding of Human Services.
- Identified and advocated for funding to keep open the Cold Shelter in Over-the-Rhine.
- Advocated for funding for the Jimmy Heath House, 22 units of permanent supportive housing located in Over-the-Rhine for people with chronic addictions.

Planning Processes

- Advocated for Homeless to Homes recommendations to be included in the City of Cincinnati/Hamilton County Consolidated Plan, as well as an increase in affordable rental units.
- Advocated to keep Metropole tenants in the Downtown Community by outlining this concern in letters to Housing & Urban Development at the Federal, State and Local offices encouraging HUD to insist developers adopt a plan that would include a comparable structure(s) located downtown for Metropole tenants to move to in order to insure affordable housing units for these tenants and diversity downtown.
- Participated in Agenda 360 by serving on the Inclusion Committee and advocated for affordable housing with a priority for those persons with disabilities.

Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority

- Recommended and advocated for improvements in the plan to renovate the Faye Apartments, a public housing development in Cincinnati.
- Advocated for the following changes in CMHA Fiscal Year 2009 Plan; maximize all available funds for Public Housing Authority units; oppose the retention of the Working Family Preference for both Housing Choice Vouchers and Public Housing programs - requirement of full-time "continuously employed" for 12 months or six months which

places additional hardships on those whose work has disappeared or is irregular; a advisory council widely representative of the community to advise and support efforts to maximize the housing options for those with low incomes.

- Researched, convened and advocated for a change in the leadership of the CMHA Board through the appointing body, Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas.

.5 CONCERNS

Human Services

- Advocated for restoration of City's Human Services Policy, and for retaining funding (.6%) for human services in the City's General Fund 2010 Budget and for no reduction in Human Services Budget for 2010.

Public Education

- MARCC delegates voted to support all four Hamilton County public school levies on the November Ballot – Cincinnati, City of Reading, Mt. Healthy and Winton Place Public School Districts.

METRO CINCINNATI INTERFAITH YOUTH PROJECT

The Metro Cincinnati Interfaith Youth have been growing over the past year. Led by intern Melynda Johnson until her graduation in June, highlights from the early part of 2009 include a visit to the Underground Railroad Freedom Center for educational programming on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, and a day of service at French Park where youth cleaned up a playground and helped with gardening and beautification. A Code of Regulations was also developed by Ms. Johnson and approved by the Coordinating Council, made up of several denominational representatives.

At the end of the summer, MCIY kicked off the 2009-2010 school year with an Orientation/informational meeting at the Mayerson Jewish Community Center, the program now led by MARCC Administrative Assistant Lisa Huneke. Huneke led the group through the rest of 2009 meeting with the youth twice a month, having one service project and one educational meeting per month. In October MCIY had an interfaith leadership training given by a representative from Interfaith Youth Core, and took five youth to the Interfaith Youth Core's Chicago Conference: "Leadership for a Religiously Diverse World." In November a group of MCIY youth served dinner at the Drop Inn Center, and in December our youth helped prepare and serve dinner and run evening activities with homeless families through Interfaith Hospitality Network. The MCIY closed their year with an interfaith holiday party.

The program has grown in numbers over the past year. We hope to continue to grow the program with the help of the new MARCC intern, Adria Whitlow, from University of Cincinnati Graduate School of Social Work.

III. ANNUAL MEETING IN 2009

MARCC'S 41st ANNUAL CONVENTION (February 10, 2009) met at Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority, 1635 Western Avenue in Cincinnati, to attempt to understand our Homelessness/Affordable Housing concern, specifically absence of affordable rental units. Members

had dinner, heard the President’s report, adopted a Budget and elected Officers for 2009 and listened to James Cunningham, Director of Housing and Urban Development for Southwestern Ohio, presentation on Housing Assistance Trends in Hamilton County. MARCC officers for 2009 were:

President	Mr. Adam Hall (Archdiocese of Cincinnati)
Vice President	Mr. Pat Coyle (Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio)
Vice President	Rev. Dan Weyand-Geise (United Church of Christ)
Secretary	Ms. Mary Jean Pierson (Unitarian-Universalist Council)
Assistant Secretary	Rev. Jermaine Armour (Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance)
Treasurer	Mr. Terynso El-Amin

IV. DELEGATES COUNCIL IN 2009

Judicatories sent Delegations to monthly DELEGATES COUNCIL MEETINGS where they

- learn about MARCC concerns on which they may need to vote later on and
- vote (each Judicatory has one vote) on major involvements.

Delegates Council met 10 times in 2009 (including the MARCC Annual Meeting and Judicatories’ Shared Planning Conference, which took the place of February and November Delegates Councils).

<u>Month</u>		<u>Speaker</u>
January	Homelessness/Affordable Housing “Housing Foreclosures”	Stephanie Moes, Esq., Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati
February	ANNUAL MEETING (Housing)	James Cunningham, Director Housing & Urban Development SW Ohio
March	Collaborative Plan/Justice Reform “Employment Barriers”	Sherry Kelley Marshall, President/CEO SW Ohio Workforce Investment Board
April	Justice Reform/Homelessness “Stimulus Funding”	Milton Dohoney, City Manager, City of Cincinnati
May	Metro Cinti. Interfaith Youth “Update on Service Projects”	Melynda Johnson, MARCC Intern UC Graduate School of Social Work
June	Justice Reform “Civil Service Code Impact On Hiring Ex-Offenders”	Hilary Bohannon, Director, Human Resources City of Cincinnati
July/August	No meetings	
September	Affordable Housing “Consolidated Plan”	Michael Cervay, Director Department of Community Development

and Planning, City of Cincinnati

October	“Public School Levies And State Funding”	Mary Ronan, Superintendent Cincinnati Public Schools
November	FALL PLANNING CONF.	
December	Comprehensive Plan	Margaret Wuerstle, Chief Planner, City of Cincinnati

V. EXECUTIVE BOARD IN 2009

Judicatories each sent a representative to weekly meetings in which they and MARCC’s elected officers

- advise and oversee staff, learn from outside speakers, decide how to impact agreed upon priority concerns, and shape recommendations to Delegates Council;
- bring counsel from their Judicatory, take information to their Judicatory, and recruit from their Judicatory for Coalition meetings.

One hour, weekly EXECUTIVE BOARD meetings enable MARCC to learn ahead of time, make decisions in time, and maintain Judicatory accountability.

VI. JUDICATORIES SHARED PLANNING CONFERENCE IN 2009

Judicatories each sent delegations to their Shared Planning Conference (12 November 2009) in the Mayerson Building at Hebrew Union College – Cincinnati Campus. Following a fine meal from Sr. Judy Tensing’s organization Partners In Progress, Judicatories worked their way in an intense structured process, through five possible Concerns, in order to decide to focus in 2010 on

- EMPLOYMENT/JOB CREATION and TRAINING
- HOMELESSNESS/AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

VII. MARCC NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Each year Judicatories are contacted to send a representative to the MARCC NOMINATING COMMITTEE, which met December 9, 2009.

- Judicatory representatives reported who will represent their Judicatory on MARCC’s Executive Board, and
- together they nominated a slate of officers to serve in 2010.

MARCC’s Nominating Committee for 2009 was chaired by (Jewish Community Delegate) Ms. Barbara Glueck. The committee will present their report to MARCC’s 23 February 2010 Annual Meeting.

VIII. OTHER MEETINGS

In 2009, along with the work on two priority Concerns, MARCC continued a number of communication-, relationship-, trust-building efforts:

MARCC

- interpreted the religious community, its Judicatories and congregations, to the wider community;
- interpreted the wider community, its institutions and processes, to the religious community;
- electronically sent information about their shared priority Concerns to Judicatories and their congregations;
- convened and attended meetings with other groups & leaders who shared our 2009 Concerns;
- provided mailing lists & labels to non-profit, non-partisan community groups who want to communicate with Judicatories and congregations,
- and through it all, we strove to improve the quality of civic discourse in metropolitan Cincinnati.

IX. CHANGES

MARCC is incorporating the necessary changes to meet the challenges of our current century and economy thanks to the support of a tireless Executive Board, Delegates and Staff.

- Developed and launched the MARCC Web Site, www.marconline.com, to educate, inform, advocate and provide access to research and other web sites for judicatories, their congregations and the broader community.
- Called upon individuals from member judicatories to contribute to increase its funding due to changes in judicatory districts and a historic economic recession.
- Transitioned from general bulk mailings to electronic mailings through e-mail.

I want to thank our Executive Board for their patience and hard work; my predecessor, the Reverend Duane Holm for his counsel; Delegates Council for showing up with their compassion and desire to learn; Lisa Huneke, our administrative assistant for her organizational skills and leadership skills with Metro Cincinnati Interfaith Youth; and to all MARCC members for their willingness to contribute their resources to help MARCC weather the financial impact of “The Great Recession” and continue to follow our interfaith coalition mission “to forgo the luxury of separate ways when a common path can be found ... when a clear conviction perceives a truth that must be spoken”.

Margaret A. Fox
Executive Director
MARCC