

METROPOLITAN AREA RELIGIOUS COALITION OF CINCINNATI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT for 2008

I.

JUDICATORIES' SHARED PLANNING CONFERENCE 2008 FOR 2009

JUDICATORIES SHARED PLANNING CONFERENCE met, November 18, 2008. All representatives looked at four possible concerns: The Collaborative Plan/Justice Reform, Homelessness/Affordable Housing, Public Education, and Regional Governance, Changing Demographics and Development. After much discussion MARCC delegates chose to work on two concerns in 2009.

- Collaborative Plan/Justice Reform
- Homelessness/Affordable Housing

II.

MARCC COALITION OF JUDICATORIES WORKED ON 2 CONCERNS in 2008

1. COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT/JUSTICE REFORM

Collaborative Agreement/Justice Reform

Increased Enforcement

- Emphasized community oriented policing by meeting with public officials, city administration and community leaders on public safety initiatives.
- MARCC convened meetings to increase cooperation as the key to more effective enforcement by clarifying the purpose of three public safety initiatives - Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence, Out of the Crossfire and Partnering Center CeaseFire Cincinnati and recommending the same support service network be shared by all three.

Collaborative Plan

- Informed members of MARCC on all parties progress through Monitor and Rand Reports.
- Informed Judicatories, city manager and public officials regarding possible need for an advisory committee to act as oversight structure following end of agreement.
- Supported and encouraged city to expand the public safety program CeaseFire Cincinnati into another neighborhood (Walnut Hills).
- City Manager asked MARCC to participate on Traffic Stop Task Force to try to come up with solutions to combat racial disparities occurring on stops as cited by Rand 1-3 Evaluation Reports.

End of Agreement in August 2008

- Emphasized what Cincinnati accomplished together and the need to continue a plan.

Collaborative Plan Post Agreement

- MARCC asked to serve on City Manager Advisory Oversight Group for plan.

- Cincinnati Collaborative Steering Committee asked MARCC to co-convene Clergy Engagement Process to address negative perception by African American community regarding policing in the community.

Consent Decree on Recruiting, Selection Promotion

- Convened meetings between City Manager and African American Judiciary Leaders to understand what is required and the challenges in promoting minority officers.
- MARCC convened Minority Clergy at the request of the Cincinnati Police Department Recruiting Division to ask for assistance in recruiting minorities to CPD.

Justice Reform

- Sent rep, Arlene Katz – past president of MARCC, to serve on Hamilton County Juvenile Justice Committee.
- South Western Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board (SWORWIB) asked MARCC to co-convene congregations to host Job Club Training to support persons difficult to employ find and retain jobs. Those persons are the formerly incarcerated, and minorities limited by training and the absence of job opportunities, one example of what congregations can do regarding restorative justice.
- SWORWIB requested Mayor who appointed MARCC executive director as interfaith representative to their board.

2. PUBLIC EDUCATION

School Finance

- Executive Board and Delegates Council heard from School Board President, Treasurer on public school funding formulas, Interim School Superintendent, and Representative from Governor's Office on public school funding
- MARCC published newsletter with article educating judicatories and congregations on CPS March School 7.95 Operating Levy which passed.
- Staff worked with Knowledge Works staff, parents, school board treasurers from other counties in Southwestern Ohio

Search Process for New CPS Superintendent

- MARCC proposed a process used by UC be used in CPS Search for a new Superintendent.
- CPS Board asked MARCC to send a representative to serve on the Citizens Advisory Search Committee for the New Superintendent. Alice Perlman – JCRC Delegate to MARCC, was asked to serve and will continue until the task is complete in 2009.
- Sent letter of support to School Board and Citizens Advisory Committee encouraging them to begin a new superintendent search.

½ CONCERN

Human Services

- Advocated for restoration of City's Human Services Policy, and for retaining funding (.6%) for human services in the City's 2009 budget as approved in the Biennial Budget for 2007-08
- MARCC testified at Council hearings in support of Human Services Policy with funding restored at 1.5% of City General Budget.

- Staff advocated for leadership team in Develop Cincinnati and fair process for newly appointed Human Services Commission; their review of the need and efficacy of Human Services and the delivery of those services to residents of Cincinnati.
- MARCC sent rep, Alice Skirtz past president of MARCC, to serve on the Social Services Committee of the City Planning Commission to confer on changing zoning text definitions of “religious assembly” and “social service program terms” in the municipal zoning code. Recommendations were made by the Social Service Committee to the planning staff. The official report to be submitted to the City Planning Commission was postponed until 2009.
- Continuum of Care Homelessness to Homes planning process, which follows up Council Member Qualls Ordinance calling for a overall emergency shelter plan for single homeless people, asked judicatories in December to send a representative to the Steering Committee for this planning process. MARCC sent one of its vice presidents, Pat Coyle – Judicatory Representative from the Episcopal Diocese, to serve.

METRO CINCINNATI INTERFAITH YOUTH

Metro Cincinnati Interfaith Youth is a group of high school youth MARCC was asked to convene by one of its judicatory members, The United Church of Christ in 2007. MCIY is modeled after the Interfaith Youth Core, founded by Eboo Patel, a Muslim who wrote Acts of Faith. This is a group of Muslim, Christian and Jewish - and open to other faiths - youth who continue to meet bi-monthly from September through April to do community service, reflect, share ideas and develop friendships. Their community service projects have taken them to the Drop Inn Center, Peasley Learning Center, and the CAIN Child Care Center Program; they have visited with Imams, Rabbis and Pastors and met in mosques, synagogues, churches and temples. They have shared dinners and discussed topics of import regarding their faith, politics and social concerns. And sometimes they just socialize. Log onto Facebook and search for Metro Cincinnati Interfaith Youth to tune in on their DVD which they presented to Delegates Council in June. MARCC’s intern, Melynda Johnson, a University of Cincinnati Social Work Graduate Student, acts as the program manager and works with the Coordinating Committee (Christian, Muslim and Jewish Representatives) and the leadership team (Brad Seligmann - Xavier University, Nuri Tawwad - Cincinnati State College and Sarah Warren - JCRC staff).

III. ANNUAL MEETING IN 2008

MARCC’S 40TH ANNUAL CONVENTION (28 February 2008) met at Woodward Career & Technical High School to attempt to understand our Public Education priority, specifically the Minority Achievement Gap. Members had dinner, heard the President’s report, listened to former Ohio State Senator C.J. Prentiss - Governor Strickland’s Appointee on The Achievement Gap, adopted a Budget and elected Officers for 2008:

President	Bishop Maurice Jackson (IMA)
Vice President	Mr. Adam Hall (Archdiocese of Cincinnati)
Vice President	Mr. Pat Coyle (Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio)
Secretary	Rev. Larry Pigg (Disciples of Christ)
Assistant Secretary	Mr. Alan Chandler (American Baptist)
Treasurer	Rev. Dan Weyand-Geise

IV.
DELEGATES COUNCIL IN 2008

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 2008 (including the MARCC Annual Meeting and Judicatories' Shared Planning Conference, which took the place of February and November Delegates Councils).

January	Justice Reform	July	No meeting
February	ANNUAL MEETING (Education)	August	No meeting
March	Public Education	September	Public Education
April	Collaborative Plan	October	Collaborative Plan
May	Collaborative Plan	November	FALL PLANNING CONF.
June	Metro Cinti. Interfaith Youth	December	Public Education

V.
EXECUTIVE BOARD IN 2008

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.

Tight (1 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 2008

Judicatories each sent delegations to their Shared Planning Conference (18 November 2008) in the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Kenwood, Hamilton County. Following a fine meal from Sr. Judy Tensing's organization Partners In Progress, Judicatories worked their way in an intense structured process, through four possible Concerns, in order to decide to focus in 2008 on

- COLLABORATIVE PLAN/JUSTICE REFORM and
- HOMELESSNESS/AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

VII. MARCC NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Each year Judicatories are contacted to send a representative to the MARCC NOMINATING COMMITTEE, which met January 7, 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 2009.

MARCC's Nominating Committee for 2008 was chaired by (Past President) Mr. Bill Woods. The committee will present their report to MARCC's 10 February 2009 Annual Meeting.

VIII. OTHER MEETINGS

In 2008, along with the work on two priority Concerns, MARCC continued a number of communication-, relationship-, trust-building efforts:

MARCC 40th ANNIVERSARY

- an interfaith celebration of music, spirits, food and conversation
- Public officials and heads of organizations gave testimony to MARCC's role in the metropolitan area with humor and honor.
- Bishop C. Joseph Sprague, first executive director of MARCC, read off all the names of the founders of MARCC and those who have carried on the remnant of their foresight.
- The first time St. Peter in Chains Cathedral "rocked and swayed" with the sweet notes of a Jazz quartet.
- Thanks to Archbishop Pilarczyk, Fr. Bramlage, Bishop Breidenthal, the Jewish Federation, and the Anniversary Planning Committee

MARCC

- interpreted the religious community, its Judicatories and congregations, to the wider community;
- interpreted the wider community, its institutions & processes, to the religious community;
- sent newsletters & information about their shared priority Concerns to Judicatories and their congregations;
- convened and attended meetings with other groups & leaders who shared our 2008 Concerns;
- provided mailing lists & labels to non-profit, non-partisan community groups who want to communicate with Judicatories & congregations,
- and through it all, we strove to improve the quality of civic discourse in metropolitan Cincinnati.

IX. CHANGES

MARCC is still transitioning thanks to the support of a tireless Executive Board, Staff and Delegates.

- Taking time to understand what will best serve MARCC in the future before filling the position of Administrative Assistant paid off with the hiring in May of Lisa Huneke, our new Administrative Assistant;
- Getting marcconline.com, a temporary soon to be permanent Web Site that will educate, inform, advocate and provide access to research and other web sites for judicatories, their congregations and the broader community.
- The creation of an Endowment, three funds to honor three leaders in MARCC, Paul Long, Duane Holm and Charles Tobias; the purpose being to insure Religious Community interfaith leadership and involvement in the social concerns of our Regional Metropolitan community.

I want to thank and acknowledge our outgoing President Bishop Maurice Jackson for his courage and commitment to social justice in the face of health challenges. Through it all Bishop Jackson never wavered in his diligence and concern to give all he had to make MARCC the best it could be in service to our metropolitan area. In gratitude, I thank Adam Hall for stepping in to fill the role of President. He did this with respect and honor for his colleague, Bishop Jackson, and he has given his energy, clarity, fairness and support to MARCC. I want to thank our Executive Board for their patience, Friday morning discussions and wisdom; Reverend David Lowry for his counsel and leadership on setting up the MARCC endowment; 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 millennium technology skill set, willingness to grow and patience; Melynda Johnson for her compassion, flexibility, and steadfastness; and to all MARCC members for their willingness to give and respond to our 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”.

In gratitude,

Margaret Fox
Executive Director
February 10, 2008