

Voice of the Poor
Western Region Report to National Meeting
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www.voiceofthepoor.org

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We have 80 Vincentians on the Western Region VOPNET – 15 from Boise meeting! Thank you!

[Save the Date 2009](#)

Make plans now to attend the **2009 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering!**

February 22-25, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill! For the past several years, Vincentians from across the country have participated in this series of meetings hosted by the USCCB and 19 other Catholic organizations. This is a great way to jump start Voice of the Poor in your council. Partial scholarships are available through the SVdP Western Region. Contact Lucy Howell at howishome@aol.com or (602) 695-1604

NEW! NEW! Hot off the presses from Sister Kieran!

Available now from the National Council Catalog (online at www.svdpusa.org) is a wonderful new resource for Voice of the Poor use in Conferences or your parish. Voice of the Poor Workbook (#1300) is \$2.50 each. Also available is a Voice of the Poor DVD (#1301) for \$10. Available for FREE is the 41/2 minute video on poverty made for SVdP by DePaul University "Poverty in America" (#6010). A great way to introduce advocacy to your Conference!

What is happening in Seattle? Council Committee Formed!

From Jim Bloss/Chair, Voice of the Poor Committee/Seattle SVdP Archdiocesan Council:

- We just pulled together our new Seattle Archdiocesan Council VOP Committee, consisting of reps. from the 5 Western Washington District Councils that are part of the Seattle Archdiocesan Council. Our first face-to-face meeting will be held in the very near future so that members can be polled about VOP priorities. We will discuss and develop possible near and long term objectives for review and, hopefully approval by the Archdiocesan Council.
- Once we receive word that the proposed National VOP Legislative Agenda has been approved at the National meeting in Louisville, it will be used by our new VOP Committee to develop our own Archdiocesan Council Legislative Agenda. We hope to present this to our archdiocesan council for consideration in November.

- Our committee will be discussing the Annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Feb. 2009. Historically we've sent one or two people to this event. It would be wonderful if we could fund full attendance by members of our new VOP Committee!
- We are incorporating an introduction to VOP in our Ozanam Formation classes. At Sister Kieran's request, Tom Link will be giving a presentation of our formation program, showing some of the things we've done to modify the presentation, not changing the key/basic concepts but doing things like the VOP add on.
- We continue to collaborate with other Catholic agencies in many shared efforts/issues. We are members of the Catholic Advocacy Network, a collaboration between ourselves, the WA. State Catholic Conference (WSCC), the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center, Archdiocesan Mission and Peace & Justice offices, Catholic Community Services and teleconference members from Catholic Charities in Spokane and the Yakima Diocese. One mutual effort is the annual Catholic Advocacy Day where we gather Catholics from all over WA. state to visit our legislators emphasizing Catholic social justice issues as related to pending legislation.

What is happening in Marin County? Collaboration!

From Steve Boyer, Executive Director, SVdP District Council of Marin County

- We are working with the Marin Organizing Committee (MOC) to help energize our membership and build relationships within each of the Conferences. Our goal is to expand our effort to help build relationships between the Conferences and reach out to other faith communities throughout Marin County, CA. Through the MOC, some of our staff and volunteers along with members of other faith communities and organizations are reaching out to elected officials *to tell the stories of those we serve. It has been very educational for the elected officials and their staff.*
- One project the MOC is working on is to create an Open Shelter in the County. Currently, all emergency shelter space (which are quite limited and have waiting lists) have barriers. None are truly "Open" to anyone. When someone comes to us asking for shelter, we cannot get them in to any of the existing shelters. All we can do is to refer them to a waiting list. For the family shelter, it's a three month wait.

What is happening in Arizona? Initiative Campaign! LIHEAP!

- Arizona voters will consider nine initiatives in November. Three of them are opposed by the Phoenix SVdP Diocesan Council. One would keep payday lending in AZ forever by amending the State constitution to remove the legislative "sunset date" (a fact conveniently omitted from the \$11 million campaign now being run in the state by the payday lending industry).
- Efforts to increase Arizona's share in federal emergency utility assistance (LIHEAP) have failed once again. Members of the congressional delegation are in support but we are up against older states in cold climates.
- Our Diocesan Council VOP committee meets monthly. We will be updating our VOPNET following SVdP elections as well as our legislative agenda.

See you in Washington in February!