

Notes from Voice of the Poor Planning Meeting
Monday, November 27, 2006
3:30 p.m.
Vincentian Support Services Conference Room

Attending: Chris Anderson, Father Bill Fitzgerald, Inge Casey, Kathy Jorgensen, John Feit, Ron Meyer, Walt Gray, Tom Finnerty and Lucy Howell

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Father Fitz from his new North American Prayerbook.

Tom Finnerty gave an overview of the results of the election in Arizona. The addition of a few Democratic seats will result in a more conciliatory approach between the legislators and Governor Napolitano who re-election won by a 65% margin. State Senate is now 17 R's and 13 D's; State House is now 33 R's and 27 D's. The ability to over-ride vetoes by the executive is unlikely. Two measures supported by SVdP, First Things First and raising of the minimum wage passed. All measures related to immigration opposed by SVdP were passed overwhelmingly.

Tom suggests that VOP members meet with legislative leadership in early January to present our agenda: Senator Bee, Senator Vershoo were mentioned. New members should also be contacted. This will be on VOP's next agenda.

Father Fitz asked if SVdP works with Bread for the World. This is being encouraged at the national level by President Joe Flannigan. Four years ago, VOP had a letter writing campaign with Bread for the World on TANF. Members asked about resources available through the Work Force Investment Act, sites and services, as something that should be communicated to Conferences as a resource. Ron Meyer and Chris Anderson mentioned that their Conferences have resource lists that are updated for use with clients. The PIG (People's Information Guide) put out by AZCAA is badly out of date.

Kathy Jorgensen reported on the Healthcare Conference she attended. One interesting comment is that one poll of people without health insurance indicated they would take a pay cut in order to have health coverage. Chris Anderson reported on the ongoing meetings of a coalition looking at services for recently released prisoners. Chris also attended the annual conference on homelessness put on by the AZ Coalition to End Homelessness and remarked about the connection between homelessness and having been in prison.

John Feit and Lucy will meet with Councilman Greg Stanton to discuss the low number of Section 8 vouchers allocated to Phoenix and hear his strategy for raising the issue with our congressional delegation. Other issues to be raised include alternate sites for transitional shelters and lobbying at the federal level for legislation providing funding for services for the Continuum of Care concept to address homelessness.

The new Phoenix SVdP website is up and running with a separate button for VOP. Items will be added as sent to Susan deQueljo. Inge is working on the new VOP e-mail system and hopes to be ready soon to begin the transfer from Howishome.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Lucy Howell