

Voice of the Poor

Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2009

3:30 Ron Meyer's office, 3636 N. Central, Ste 700 Phoenix, AZ

Attending: Terry Wilson, Debbie DiCarlo, Lucy Howell, Ron Meyer, Francisco Alatorre, Kathy Jorgensen, Father Bill Fitzgerald, Frank Barrios, Tom Finnerty, Inge Casey and Ruth Ballas

Opening Prayer Fr. Fitz

The committee prayed the special prayer written by Father Fitz for Voice of the Poor at the Annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering.

Old Business

Frank Barrios gave an update on City of Phoenix budget cut hearings and activities of the Alliance (a group of non-profits from the inner city who have been active in trying to decrease cuts made to programs serving Phoenix low income residents). One frustration has been the lack of cuts in the public safety area (police and fire) which compose 2/3 of the City budget. Some programs have been reinstated – senior centers and after- school programs. The stimulus package has not yet been taken into account.

Tom Finnerty noted that '09 budget cuts by the State to DES will be disastrous for those dependent on the safety net. The picture is grim. Tom read a list of programs being cut and reminded members that the '09 budget cuts are telescoped because there is only 5 months left in this fiscal year.

Tom also covered a number of bills up this week (House only, Senate not hearing bills until budgets are completed):

Kathy volunteered to attend the hearing on HB 2269 requiring 30 day notification to tenants and return of depositis when a property is sold or goes into foreclosure.

HB 2237 AHCCCS eligibility – additional requirements placed on staff for eligibility (ie legal status)

HB 2238 Fraud prevention

HB 2091 which eliminates base year requirement for charitable tax credit for non-profits serving the working poor will be heard in House Rules today.

Governor Brewer has already stated that she will accept the funds.

Constant Contact: Lucy reported that Inge, Kathy, Chris and herself had met with David Staudacher earlier in the month to learn about the possibilities of the e-mail program called Constant Contact. The SVdP Communications Department uses this program. It is possible that VOP could use it at no

additional charge to manage our database. The program would give us the ability to gauge readership of VOP materials as well as returned e-mails. The program includes various templates which could be tailored to VOP and could become a recognizable part of future messages

New Business:

Democratic Caucus: Frank Barrios reported on a meeting of the Democratic Caucus. They are asking for stories of the impacts on Arizonans of the budget cuts. Democrats are holding hearings outside of Phoenix. There is concern about rumbling among some Republicans that they will not accept federal stimulus dollars. Governor Brewer has already stated that she will accept the funds.

Washington Congressional Visits at CSG (Ron Meyer):

On trip: Debbie DiCarlo, Ruth Ballas, Frank Barrios, Lucy Howell, Terry Wilson, Fr. Sean Carroll, S.J. (Kino Border Initiative, Nogales), Ron, Meyer, Sr. Mary Rogers, D.C. (Tuba City)

Office assignments based on congressional districts/constituency:

Fr. Sean Carroll—Giffords

Frank —Mitchell, Pastor

Ruth —Mitchell

Lucy —McCain

Ron —Kyl

Ron will complete schedule. List of SVdP Conferences of Charity by congressional district will be part of the packets from SVdP given to each office.

Dinner @ 5:00 PM on Monday at the hotel. Final team assignments given out - 3 teams 2 to 3 per team

Talking points:

Each team will be responsible for covering points given by the USCCB (2 domestic – healthcare and global warming impact on the poor and 2 international – foreign aid and travel to Cuba) as well as the one sheet on AZ issues – fair share for AZ (Section 8, LIHEAP, CBDG, Head Start); healthcare; homelessness with emphasis on Housing First and immigration – address family reunification issues first).

Lucy will have the packets of SVdP information. Important to remember to thank members who have helped us – Ed Pastor (LIHEAP and fair share), Sen. Kyl (LIHEAP), Rep. Mitchell and Franks (LIHEAP).

National VOP Meeting on Monday night, 2/22:

Lucy and Ron will be running this meeting for Deborah Payne whose mother is ill. 90 have indicated they wish to attend (likely that attendance will be far less since this is after dinner). Lucy passed out

draft agenda. She will have handouts duplicated in D.C. Father Sean Carroll will speak about the Kino Border Initiative , also National President Joe Flannigan and National Executive Director, Roger Playwin. Reports will be given on VOP activities in the 8 national regions.

Other business:

Francisco Alatorre (Director, Special Ministries) has been told that the \$8000 a month going to SVDP Family Assistance Ministry for eviction prevention (supplemental funds for Conferences who refer costly cases to the Watkins Center) is safe through this fiscal year. This means that the last check will be in June '09. Lucy has determined that the fund has been swept and 51 agencies (including SVdP) have this program at risk going forward.

Kathy talks about Saturday morning conference on Jan. 11 - Navigating the Benefit Maze. She would like to hold another workshop on April 18 with topic to be determined

Next meeting 3/16 back at Watkins

Inge recommended the book The Way of the Prisoner by Jens Soering. Lucy asked Inge to fill the committee in on her various activities at our next meeting on March 16 at Watkins Center.

Fr. Fitz led the closing prayer