

HCC Report - June-December 2008

The HCC continued its work of parish education and participation in a variety of social justice topics.

1. Death Penalty Abolition

- Terry McCaffrey is working on a forum on the death penalty based on a video on the subject.
- Members participated in a Death Penalty Prayer Vigil at Lytton Plaza on November 9.
- A petition is being circulated that asks the district attorneys of Santa Clara County to disclose the high costs of seeking the death penalty, adding economics as yet another reason to ban the practice.

2. JustFaith programs

A JustFaith module on climate change and the environment ran for 8 weeks in the fall of 2008. Eight people completed the program and committed to leading a greener life. All attendees have been invited to the JustFaith Alumni meeting to be held on Jan. 20th, where we will debrief on the Climate Change module and consider the next module we want to implement: Prison Reform or Spirituality.

3. National Religious Campaign Against Torture ("Banners Across America")

"Torture Is Wrong" banners were placed once again outside our 3 church sites starting Jan 11th and will be removed the day before the inauguration.



Torture is Wrong

4. St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) Society

- Our parishioners generously donated about \$30,000 during the fiscal period Oct '07-Sept '08. We also had generous help from other sister conferences. Approximately, 42% of our money went to help with rent, 13% to hotel, 12% to utility, 11% to food vouchers, 4% to gas cards, 5% to prescription and 7 % to miscellaneous (classes, bus tickets, car repair, phone, etc). We gave approximately 130 bags of food to drop in clients.
- Throughout the year, the SVdP Society organizes food aid for needy people in Palo Alto and East Palo Alto. The need for food aid is increasing this season due to the recession.
- Thanksgiving Food Drive -- our youth group helped sort and pack 350 boxes of food at St. Francis of Assisi Church in East Palo Alto. Many parishioners showed up to help with the door-to-door delivery of those boxes.
- On November 30, the youth group helped to sort and move the food collected in the OLR church foyer to Dermody Center, where it is stored until needed at the South Palo Alto Food Closet. The food collected at the SAG site was taken to Downtown Food Closet and East Palo Alto.
- The Giving Tree program was a big success and we also collected un-redeemed gift cards as Christmas gifts for teenagers. During the Christmas week, members, youths and other parishioners helped to sort, pack, and deliver food boxes as well as toys to needy families in East Palo Alto. . 419 families and 1056 children were able to have a brighter Christmas as a result of these efforts.



Giving Tree at STA



*Our
Helpful
Youth
Group*



Hard at Work

- As in past years, St. Francis' SVdP organized summer camp for East Palo Alto children at Hidden Villa. Eighty-one children attended with full scholarships. Members were recruited to provide transportation.



Summer Camp Fun

- Since June, fifteen more layettes were delivered to new babies in East Palo Alto. These were beautifully packed by members of the youth group.
- A committee was formed to investigate how George's computerized program for defining delivery of food aid can be updated and made more user-friendly. The objective is to create a program that can be used by volunteers; at present, George is the only one who can use the program.

5. Day Worker Center

The day worker center is also strongly affected by the economy and has many more workers than available jobs. The center has bought the place on Escuela and permits are being negotiated, but the center will probably have difficulty raising enough money to make the new site habitable within the next year.

The Day Worker Center is both a charitable and a justice outlet for our parish. The day-to-day operational policies are determined by the workers themselves and the workers tip the cooks for their lunches. The workers are taught English, assimilation into our culture, and leadership skills. As part of its community outreach efforts, workers are teaching the other workers on the street, painted the parking lines at St. Joseph's, cleaned up the gardens at the Senior Citizen Center in Mountain View, held two blood drives, and assembled new desks for Huff Elementary School. They have given more than 5,000 hours of service in 2008 and received the Mountain View's Mayor's Award for Human Services Contribution.



6. New Blood

We welcomed four new committee members following the Time and Talent drive.

7. Voter registration

A voter registration table was set up at the Parish Picnic and also at the HCC sign up table during all the Time and Talent events.

THE HCC AND SVdP WANT TO ESPECIALLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE YOUTH GROUP FOR THEIR HELP IN MANY OF THEIR PROJECTS.