

AMENnewsletter
American Metropolitan Equity Network
For more information on Gamaliel's metro equity campaigns,
contact Laura Barrett, associate director, at 314-443-5915.

Issue 2, November 2003

2004: The Year of Rolling Thunder

GF's voter education and civic participation initiative kicks off at 2003 NLA

During the campaign to smash the system of apartheid in South Africa, the opposition movement organized a series of meetings and mass protests across the nation calling for the reordering of national priorities to include the majority of the South African people. That series of mass meetings became known as "Rolling Thunder."

Some Gamaliel affiliates are already moving into their Voter Education initiatives. Here are some highlights.



*The spirit moved one leader of
Hartford's Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice
at their public meeting in October.*

Illinois groups set registration drives

Metro Alliance of Congregations affiliates AARON, JACOB, CNO, SSAC and Pilsen are each developing a voter registration and participation plan for member congregations. The affiliates have even begun targeting precincts in which to focus their work.

MAC has developed a training schedule for core teams and is meeting with key allies such as ACORN and SEIU, MAC anticipates making 50,000 voter contacts in Aurora, the south suburbs and Joliet, and in Chicago during the March 2 primary election. They will set contact goals for the general election in the near future.

‘Value your Vote, Vote your Values’ campaign in Wisconsin

WISDOM has set a goal to collect 30,000 Voter Pledge cards that are headed “Value your Vote and Vote your Values.”

WISDOM will track these 30,000 voters throughout the election cycle, supplying them with issue education materials as well as doing get out the vote activities with this group. WISDOM and MICAH have already gathered 5,000 cards at the MICAH public meeting! Milwaukee has important local elections for mayor and county executive coming up, so early action is essential.

Other Wisconsin affiliates have held three GOTV leadership trainings, three more scheduled. WISDOM is working with several key allies, including Wisconsin Citizen Action and the Labor Council of AFL-CIO.

Missouri clergy caucus develops list

Metropolitan Congregations United (MCU) held a meeting of its clergy caucus in which 35 pastors committed to get their membership lists to MCU.

MCU has formed a sponsoring committee, which includes MCU leaders, Center for Community Change, AFSCME, NAACP, Partnership for America’s Families, Jobs with Justice, SEIU, and Instead of War. They gathered more than 5,000 voter registration cards at their public meeting Nov. 16.

Check out Metro Equity and Voter Workshops at NLA!!

Gamaliel Transportation Platform

- 1. Increase funding for public transportation,**
- 2. Strengthen public involvement and accountability for transportation planning process.**
- 3. Enforce and strengthen constitutional and civil rights protections.**

Promote community development that addresses the negative impact of transportation projects for at risk



Iris Comer confronts a Northwest Indiana state legislator at Interfaith Federation’s October 2003 public meeting.

From the Chair

By Iris Comer

Gamaliel Transportation Chair

A proposed version of the second largest appropriations bill in Congress, tentatively titled SAFTEA, has passed out of the Transportation and Infrastructure committee that Sen. Bond chairs. The bill is not a very positive vehicle; it loosens Clean Air regulations and incorporates none of the Gamaliel platform.

While Gamaliel affiliate MCU-St. Louis will work with Sen. Bond to improve his part of the bill, the real action is now shifting to the Banking Committee. Gamaliel leaders and organizers from PA, MI, NJ, CT, NY should contact the following Senators to talk with them about the Gamaliel platform and writing our platform into their part of the SAFTEA bill: Santorum, Stabenow, Corzine, Dodd and Schumer.

You should also bring up co-sponsoring the Housing Trust Fund bill in conversations with these senators and their staffs. It's the Housing and Transportation subcommittee, so senators should be aware of both initiatives.

The bill will likely come to the Senate floor in the first part of the year. Then a general alert will go out to everyone; we will need everyone in the fight.

No matter whether your senator or congressman is on any of these key committees, conversations with elected officials and their staff about the Gamaliel Transportation Platform are always helpful and can win more dollars for public transit!

We have more time to work on the SAFTEA bill than we expected, which gives Gamaliel leaders a chance to incorporate our transportation work into Rolling Thunder and claim credit for the terrific transportation advocacy that our network has been spearheading!

Please get involved with Gamaliel's Transportation committee – e-mail me, iriscomer@yahoo.com, or call me at 219-801-9877. Laura Barrett, our organizer, is available at lrbrrtt@aol.com, 314-443-5915.

From Where I Sit

By Mike Kruglik

Director of the Metro Equity Department

Here's how the Metro Equity Department will work to make Rolling Thunder a success starting at NLA and throughout 2004:

- At the National Leadership Assembly in Milwaukee, the Metro Equity Department will help coordinate the following workshops with the aid of our Strategic Partners and allies:
 - Voter work:* Putting Teeth Into Our Bite in 2004: Core Teams do GOTV , Making Thunder at the Polls.
 - Metro Equity:* Metro Equity 101, Reclaiming Urban Land and Fix It First, Opportunity-Based Housing, Transportation Equity, Fiscal Equity I and II, and Community Benefits Agreements.
- We will coordinate a workshop on GOTV for leaders and organizers February 2-3 at Techny Institute.
- We will coordinate trainings for core teams in their home cities with nationally known and Gamaliel trainers.
- We will consult with local groups on their metro equity demands for their Rolling Thunder meetings.
- We will provide national coordination for the Voter Education and Civic Participation parts of Rolling Thunder through fundraising, technical assistance and training coordination.

Rolling Thunder - what a sound and fury it will make - rallying the righteous and striking fear into the heart of oppressors across our country!

Metro Equity Roundup

18,000 Gamaliel leaders gathered at public meetings to push metro equity demands this fall!! One group not only got legislators to agree to reform sprawl-promoting policy – they got the local paper to editorialize in favor of metro equity! Congrats to Hartford's ICEJ!!



