



EYE ON JUSTICE

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SISTERS AND ASSOCIATES
ST. JOSEPH OF LYON/

“FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD”

THE PEOPLE’S PLAN

About four years ago with no input from the community, the city of Lewiston announced a revitalization plan called the **Heritage Initiative** that would have divided the downtown with a thruway, thus removing 25% of the population. On this account a group of concerned residents started to meet regularly to see what the people wanted. The city desisted from the project, but this group continued to meet and decided to call themselves **The Visible Community**. In the past year this group rallied the participation of over 400 residents through door-to-door surveys, visioning sessions, phone calls and community events. The results, called **The People’s Downtown Master Plan**, will be presented to the City Council in April. This process brought forth four specific priorities:

- ◆ Expand affordable public transportation
- ◆ Improve and create more safe, well maintained, truly affordable housing
- ◆ Establish an accessible and free community center for persons of all ages
- ◆ Increase job opportunities and job training for downtown residents.

This People’s Plan also sets out an action plan taking the residents’ dreams and making them a reality. Many assets in the community have been identified, including organizations and institutions that could help achieve much of what the plan sets as goals. Now the **Visible Community** hopes that this plan will serve as yet another space to bring people from different backgrounds together to better understand each other’s dreams and struggles.

**JUSTICE AND PEACE TEAM : Robert & Nancy Hurd, David Champion,
Patricia Hackett-Mason, Claire Lepage, csj**

*They always say time changes things,
but you actually have to change them yourself.*

Andy Warhol

ELIMINATING POVERTY OFTEN EMPOWERS WOMEN

Sometimes we wonder how we could put our justice priorities into practice, yet if we look around, others are doing just that. After the holidays St. Philip's Church in Auburn made a collection to help people in need, especially to buy heating oil. In two weeks they raised \$5161.00 which paid for seventeen heating oil deliveries and two house mortgage payments. Here are a few expressions of gratitude.

Thank you so much to the people of St. Philip's. Not only did you help my parents get oil, and stay warm, but more importantly, you gave my Mom HOPE at a time that she is fighting depression. You don't know how much that means to our family.

Thank you for the help with the oil. We still can't believe that you would help us. We don't even go to your church, and you just helped us. I have felt like GOD was missing from my life. This feels like GOD really cares.

I work full time and my income would never allow me to qualify for public assistance. But with all the medical bills, being a single mother and the high cost of everything, I just can't get caught up. You don't know how much this means to me.

I'm scared, I'm sad and I don't know what else to do...This is such a hard place to be. I don't want this {illness} to be happening to our family. I want my husband to be better. I want our lives to be normal again. Thank you to the church community. We sincerely appreciate the oil monies that will assure we have heat.

Very often when we contribute to the elimination of poverty, this automatically empowers women as you have just read; and at the same time, this can also make people aware that God really loves them.

Nancy Hurd, Associate

THE GREAT AWAKENING

by Jim Wallis

Jim Wallis received thousands of e-mails from people claiming to have lost their faith. The primary reasons stated included television preachers, bad religious fund raising, pedophile priests, cover-up bishops and White House theology. But he also sees the tide turning as we enter a time of revival manifested by people, intent on deepening their spirituality, with or without religious affiliation. *This new generation of believers are waking up and catching fire with the gospel again.*

Wallis believes that anytime there is a revival of faith, new communities, new forms of worship, new music, new models of service and new calls for justice arise. *The movement almost always originates outside the established church structures, but eventually begins to infuse new life into them.* This awakening includes the recognition that spirituality and social justice are intertwined. Many people are rediscovering the rich tradition of Catholic writings on social justice issues. Diverse faith groups are coming together in common cause, to deal with the growing injustices that prevail throughout our nation.

Jim Wallis also talks about how early Christians living in the Roman Empire were called atheists because they would not accept the many gods of Rome. He suggests that contemporary Christians need to reject some of our national gods such as materialism, consumerism and hedonism. This book truly provides a very readable and thought provoking account of the changing face of American spirituality.

Reported by Bob Hurd, associate

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right; stand with them while they are right, and part with them when they go wrong.

Abraham Lincoln

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Very often I wonder how I am going to put *into action* a ministry which represents my faith in my community. I read about people going off to foreign countries or even the deep south to help build a hospital or assist young, pregnant women or people with the HIV/Aids virus. I wanted to do something in my immediate world. I kept wondering, discerning that there must be something. It's probably right in front of my eyes and I don't realize it. Then the light bulb went off! It was indeed right in front of me. A great way to help a woman and her family.

For the past twenty years, I have owned/operated a Christian Daycare. A young mother of two wanted to continue with her college education and complete her degree. She did not have a sitter, nor could she afford an additional fee for childcare. I felt it was my opportunity to give back to my community. I wanted to help this young woman to better herself. I did not want her to worry about money or her children's care while she attended classes.

It is wonderful to hear the positive feedback as she attends her classes. The children are also enthusiastic to see me come to their home. I will continue to do this until the end of the school year. I'm excited to see her move up the corporate ladder! I'm glad I was able to have a small part.

Maybe there's an opportunity for you too! Good luck searching.

Patty Hackett-Mason, candidate for associate

A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess. A. Philip Randolph

HOW DO YOU LIVE OUR PRIORITIES?

In this issue of **Eye on Justice**, we members of our Province Justice & Peace Team have shared our experiences of seeking to live our priorities, Wouldn't it be interesting to hear how you, our sisters and associates, experience these same priorities? They are all part of our **Orientation**, and *Living Just Relationships* is the bottom line. How about sharing one of your stories! Maybe we could all do something special to celebrate Earth Day on April 22nd. Thanks, Claire