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PICO Network News

PICO National Network | *Unlocking the Power of People™*

Monday, February 4, 2008

HEALTHY FAMILIES

[PICO affiliates take fight for affordable health coverage to states](#)

Building on the foundation laid during PICO's national SCHIP campaign, PICO affiliates in California, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Missouri, Vermont, and New Jersey plan to step up statewide efforts in 2008 to expand health coverage for children and adults. With the presidential election in full swing, the hope is to continue generating pressure on both a local and state level in order to create an "upward momentum" that will lead to substantial change at the national level.

[Read more >>](#)

[Vermont Interfaith Action reaches out to state's faith communities on new health plan](#)

In December, Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA) began a statewide outreach campaign to engage faith communities to educate and enroll members in Catamount Health, Vermont Health Access Program (VHAP), and Medicaid. In 2006, VIA, together with allies, won passage of the Catamount Health Care bill, Vermont's state-sponsored health care program for uninsured adults. [Read more](#)

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IMMIGRATION

[Hmong Leaders in California help alter provision of the Patriot Act](#)

Over 1,800 Hmong leaders from throughout San Joaquin County gathered on December 15 to call on their elected officials to remove them from being listed as "terrorists" in the Patriot Act. Eleven days later, President Bush signed HR 2764, which contained specific language stating that Hmong shall not be considered a terrorist organization. In the 1960s, Hmong were recruited by the CIA to fight a covert war against the Laos government. The Patriot Act denies entry to the U.S. to those who have engaged in unlawful activity against their country. As a result, many Hmong across the U.S. have been denied driver licenses and permanent resident status. [Read more >>](#)

[PICO Bay Area launches Citizenship & Civic Engagement Campaign](#)

On January 20, 2008, 600 people gathered to launch one of the first citizenship drives in the PICO Bay Area Citizenship and Civic Participation Campaign. The campaign is designed to urge the 387,604 legal permanent residents in the Bay Area to become citizens and to instruct them in how to participate effectively in civic and political life. This historic coordinated campaign will include 25 citizenship drives in 12 different cities in five counties across the Bay Area. [Read more >>](#)

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

[Interfaith Action helps win \\$400 million housing fund in New York](#)

PICO's Rochester affiliate, [Interfaith Action \(IA\)](#), celebrated New York Governor Eliot Spitzer's announcement of the creation of a \$400 million Housing Opportunity Fund in his state of the state address in January. Since 2004, IA has been working with city officials to create a housing trust fund in Rochester. As part of this strategy, IA has partnered with allies in the Empire State Housing Alliance to convince key state officials to adopt this strategy to fund neighborhood renewal. [Read more >>](#)

GOOD SCHOOLS

[Denver school superintendent agrees to student-based budgeting](#)

On January 15, over 250 people from [Metro Organizations for People \(MOP\)](#) in Denver held a public action meeting with the Superintendent of Denver Public Schools, Michael Bennet, and three school board members. At the meeting, Superintendent Bennet agreed to a number of MOP proposals, including a commitment to implement student-based budgeting for low-income students in the district. [Read more >>](#)

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

[Baptist church kicks off new effort to revitalize Flint, MI](#)

On January 31, [Flint Area Congregations Together \(FACT\)](#), PICO's new affiliate in Michigan, held its first public action meeting at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church. At this high-energy meeting attended by more than 100 people, residents gave powerful testimony about how their solid residential neighborhood is being eaten away at by blight, abandoned properties, and foreclosures. This meeting was the first step in what FACT clergy and leaders expect to be a long-term campaign aimed at revitalizing the city of Flint and the surrounding region. [Read more >>](#)

SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

[Camden Churches win new police leadership](#)

Less than two months after New Jersey Attorney General Anne Milgram stood before 800 members of [Camden Churches Organized for People \(CCOP\)](#) and refused to commit to a clear timeline to hire a new police chief and civilian

director, the tide has turned. In December, the Camden City Council passed an ordinance creating the position of a Civilian Police Director, responding to one of CCOP's primary recommendations. And then in January, Attorney General Milgram appointed a new Police Chief and an interim Police Director until a national search is completed. Both appointees have indicated their support for stronger police-community partnerships and have begun implementing local Problem-Solving Community Policing demonstration projects. [Read more >>](#)

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

[Leaders focus on connections between education and youth violence](#)

PICO affiliates in California have a long history of engaging in both youth and education organizing. Currently, 16 of the 19 PICO affiliates in California are organizing in either or both of these areas. Recently, PICO leaders from throughout the state have begun exploring the connections between their efforts to improve educational opportunities for youth and their work to find innovative solutions (including jobs, mentoring, recreational activities) to address the rise in gang and youth violence in their communities. In February, youth and adult leaders from throughout the state will come together at the state Capitol for a series of meetings with key officials with responsibility for education and youth policy. [Read more >>](#)

JOBS

[PICO federations in cities across the nation have job openings](#)

Visit www.piconetwork.org/ab_careers.html to see current jobs and learn more about working in the PICO network.

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