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# PICO Network News

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

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

## HEALTHY FAMILIES

### [Colorado expands health coverage to 55,000 uninsured children](#)

PICO affiliate [Metro Organizations for People](#) (MOP) in Denver, together with allies in the 2010 Cover All Kids Initiative, achieved a major victory in April with the passage of two pieces of legislation that together will expand health coverage to 55,000 uninsured children across Colorado. Since launching its cover all kids campaign in February, MOP leaders and clergy have been working to pass SB 160 - which will expand Colorado's State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) - and SB 161 - which will remove administrative barriers to applying for Medicaid and SCHIP. [Read more about how MOP helped win coverage for 55,000 uninsured children >>](#)

### [Kansas City wins victory in "Roadmap" to cover all children](#)

For two years, PICO affiliate [Communities Creating Opportunity](#) (CCO) in Kansas City has been pressing the state of Missouri to enhance outreach and enrollment efforts for kids' health care programs as part of their "roadmap" for covering all children. CCO leaders celebrated a victory recently when the Missouri House of Representatives appropriated \$11.8 million to fund an outreach and enrollment strategy called presumptive eligibility. [Read more about the presumptive eligibility outreach strategy >>](#)

### [Building a hospital by hand in Rwanda](#)

Leaders from PICO's affiliate in Rwanda - [Congregations Rebuilding Community in Rwanda](#) (CRCR) - made history recently by being the first grassroots organization in the country to drive a major decision about the government's allocation of resources. In December, CRCR leaders from the rural community of Mumeya won 11 million Rwandan Francs (approximately \$20,000 USD) from the Ministry of Health for the construction of a health clinic in their community. They also won a commitment from the government to include the clinic in the national health plan. [Read more about CRCR's work and watch a video from Mumeya >>](#)

## HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

### **Residents call on banks to meet with homeowners to halt foreclosures**

Leaders from Holy Rosary Church – a member of PICO affiliate [Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization](#) (CCISCO) in Antioch, CA – organized a rally to bring attention to the lack of response from banks as community residents face foreclosure on their homes. Despite numerous attempts to make contact with the banks, many hard-working and employed homeowners have not received face-to-face meetings to discuss their home loan terms. CCISCO leaders are calling on banks to hold meetings with community members who wish to modify their loans. [Read more about CCISCO's work to bring banks to the table >>](#)

### **Community leaders in Queens organize for just development**

In April, PICO affiliate Queens Congregations United for Action (QCUA) in New York City joined with other community-based organizations and workers in Queens to call for the just redevelopment of Willets Point, a 61 acre area of land currently home to 250 businesses with over 1,300 workers. The city is proposing to move out the businesses and redevelop the area; however, the plan does not include viable alternative work options or compensation for the displaced workers nor real affordable housing. QCUA leaders are calling on city officials to include low-income housing and new job training for workers. [Read more about QCUA's action for just development >>](#)

## **GOOD SCHOOLS**

### **Flint congregations win support for educational improvement plan**

On May 4, PICO affiliate [Flint Area Congregations Together](#) (FACT) in Michigan organized a forum for candidates running for the Flint Board of Education, asking them to work closely with members of the community to address issues of school violence, low student performance, and high dropout rates in the city's schools. Leaders from FACT asked the candidates to commit to working with FACT and other community partners to develop an educational improvement plan by the end of 2008 to reduce dropout rates and improve student performance, as well as support programs to reduce violence in the schools. [Read more about FACT's work to improve schools in Flint >>](#)

### **Parents call for city leadership in light of school budget cuts**

With Governor Schwarzenegger expected to cut school funding by as much as 10 percent this summer, members of the [San Francisco Organizing Project](#) (SFOP) have been working to ensure that schools across the city continue to receive adequate funding. On April 28, parent leaders from Sanchez Elementary School, a member of SFOP in the city's Mission District, organized a town hall meeting with over 250 concerned parents and community members to ask county officials and the Mayor's office to release funding from the city's Rainy Day fund to make up for the an anticipated loss of \$40 million in state funding. [Read more about how parents are fighting the budget cuts >>](#)

### [San Bernardino youth help prevent plan to lay off 155 teachers](#)

Last week, youth leaders from PICO affiliate [Inland Congregations United for Change](#) (ICUC) in San Bernardino won a major victory when the school board decided unanimously to revise their original plan to lay off 155 teachers, saying that they would cut \$31 million of the district's budget without laying off the teachers. ICUC youth had been working intensively over the past few weeks to stop the budget cuts and ensure that the school board take measures to avoid laying off teachers. [Read more about how ICUC youth helped changed the district's plans >>](#)

## SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

### [L.A. Church beats the odds in struggle against liquor license](#)

On April 15, the parishioners of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in East Los Angeles celebrated a victory in their struggle to uphold a city ordinance preventing the sale of alcohol within 500 feet of a school or religious institution. For six years, parishioners had been fighting a developer's plan to build a 22,000 square foot pizza parlor/video arcade – that would sell wine and beer – on a piece of property surrounded by a child care center, a high school with 2,600 students, and an elementary school with 830 students. After the parish joined PICO affiliate [L.A. Voice](#) for assistance, the owners of the business decided to rescind the license. [Read more about how the Sacred Heart parishioners beat the odds >>](#)

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

### [Over 300 Sacramento youth gather as part of campaign to change neighborhood](#)

Over the weekend of April 25-26, more than 300 youth from the Meadowview section of Sacramento gathered for the 1st Annual Meadowview Youth Leadership Conference. A diverse neighborhood in south Sacramento, Meadowview is plagued with high levels of gang activity and violence. Youth and adult leaders from PICO affiliate [Sacramento Area Congregations Together](#) (ACT) organized the conference as part of a broader campaign to inspire the youth to believe in their own leadership and ability to make change in the community. [Read more about ACT's partnership with the Meadowview neighborhood >>](#)

## JOBS

### [PICO launches new online job board](#)

Visitors to PICO's careers page can now search for jobs, submit their resumes online, and sign up to receive future job announcements. Visit [www.piconetwork.org/ab\\_careers.html](http://www.piconetwork.org/ab_careers.html) and sign up to receive regular updates on jobs in PICO.

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