

PICO National Network | Unlocking the Power of People

PICO Network News

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

REBUILD LOUISIANA

Louisiana Governor and Clergy Sign Rebuilding Covenant

Louisiana Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco stood before more than 75 PICO LIFT ministers, a thousand of their congregants, and numerous elected officials to sign a covenant that would involve all of them in the rebuilding of southern Louisiana. The covenant calls for PICO LIFT clergy to lead the way in working with the local, state and federal government to make sure that Louisianans are hired for the jobs necessary to rebuild the state, that host families receive assistance, and that displaced families be guaranteed the right to return to their homes.

Thirty PICO leaders and staff travel to Louisiana

PICO leaders and staff began arriving in Louisiana in mid-September to help PICO LIFT and its six Louisiana affiliates create a voice for displaced families and host communities in the rebuilding of New Orleans and the state. Read about what they are hearing and seeing on PICO's new blog at <http://reflections.piconetwork.org>.

PICO creates a new Rebuilding Louisiana Fund

PICO has created a special fund to support organizing efforts by Louisiana families to ensure that they have a voice in how their cities and state are rebuilt. Funds can be sent to PICO, 171 Santa Rosa Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610 Attn. Rebuild Louisiana.

WINS AND CAMPAIGNS

Healthy Families

PICO federations ask Congress to strengthen, not cut, public health investment

PICO federations are asking their members of Congress from 100 congressional districts and 18 states to drop plans to cut Medicaid spending by \$10 billion. PICO wants Congress to focus on covering more children and making Medicaid available to families displaced from their homes due to hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

PICO research estimates that more than 1 million children could lose Medicaid coverage

PICO released a research report entitled "DO NO HARM" on September 12, 2005. The report estimates that the changes to Medicaid proposed by the National Governor's Association would result in between 500,000 and 1.5 million children losing health-care coverage. The full report is available at www.piconetwork.org.

PICO California presses Governor to sign Children's Health Legislation

PICO California's 19 local and regional federations are flooding Governor Schwarzenegger with phone calls and letters and holding press events across the state urging him to sign legislation that would make it possible to cover every child in California with health insurance. The Governor has until October 9 to sign or veto

the PICO-sponsored legislation, which was passed by the California legislature in September.

Good Schools

California passes new law disclosing inequities in teacher salaries and school spending

PICO California, along with EdVoice, Public Advocates, and The Education Trust-West won passage of a new law that requires districts to disclose each school's actual budget, including how much it pays its teachers. This legislation is the first step in a campaign to eliminate spending policies that concentrate inexperienced teachers in the poorest schools.

Native Alaskan parents demand better education for their children

Three hundred Native Alaskan parents from Anchorage Faith and Action Congregations Together (AFACT) met with the Anchorage School Superintendent to denounce the failure of the school system to meet the needs of Native Alaskan students. The meeting was the culmination of months of research and visits with families and resulted in initial commitments by the school district to retrain teachers, engage Native parents, and work with AFACT to improve instruction provided to students.

Orlando urges Congress to keep parent voice in Head Start

Orlando FOCUS is leading a campaign to persuade Congress to preserve Parent Policy Councils in Head Start programs nationwide. FOCUS leaders won support from Senator Bill Nelson and Representative Rick Keller, who spoke on the House floor on the issue at the request of the organization. FOCUS is concerned that changes in Head Start will undermine parent involvement, one of the most successful elements of the program.

Youth Development

Teens help strengthen their communities

Contra Costa County Interfaith Supporting Community Organization received recognition for its model youth-organizing project. The full article is available at http://ga3.org/ct/j1_F3YE1HXdV/.

Hometown Security

New Vision of Hope for Curbing Violence in San Francisco

Four hundred San Francisco Organizing Project members rallied to create systemic reforms to help curb youth violence in San Francisco. Two San Francisco Supervisors and officials from four city departments committed to implementing a new vision of juvenile justice and economic opportunity for the city.

Housing Opportunities

Affordable homeownership in Brockton, Massachusetts

The Brockton Housing Authority awarded bids for the first eight condominiums to be built in the city for working families as part of an effort by Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC) to expand homeownership in the city. BIC raised more than \$2 million from religious denominations and congregations and worked for the past four years to build support for the housing initiative. This is the first phase of what BIC

leaders view as a long term effort to stabilize city neighborhoods through homeownership and make it possible for low and moderate-income families to own their own homes. BIC is a member of the Organizing and Leadership Training Center, which is affiliated with PICO National Network.

Camden residents push for recovery to reach neighborhoods

More than 500 people attended a Community Action meeting organized by Camden Churches Organized for People, in partnership with Concerned Black Clergy of Camden City to present a Progress Report on Camden's Recovery on the third anniversary of the landmark Camden Recovery Act's being signed into law. CCOP presented the results of a formal survey completed by 953 people over the past six weeks that asked residents to evaluate progress made in key areas such as public safety, education, employment and community development, well as the City's performance in promoting communication and community participation in the process.

Rochester builds support for regional agenda

Over 500 people met with Rochester mayor candidate on July 28 to present the RochesterOneMonroe Community Agenda. The agenda is a wide ranging document that addresses issues related to neighborhood development, safety, youth and regional cooperation. Topping the agenda is creation of a county-wide Neighborhood Trust fund. The winner of the September 13th Democratic primary, Bob Duffy, invited IA leaders to be part of his transition team and has said that, if elected, he would be the first to capitalize the fund with a \$1 million grant from the city.

OTHER NEWS

PICO Central America moves forward

Members of the PICO Central America Regional Sponsoring Committee (Bishops representing each country in Central America) are organizing clergy trainings sessions across the region to build local sponsoring committees in all six countries. In September, 60 clergy, religious, and lay leaders from the Diocese of Izabal on the Atlantic Coast of Guatemala voted at the conclusion of a two-day training to form the first local sponsoring committee. Contact Uli Schmitt at uschmitt@piconetwork.org for more information.

PICO Louisiana is hiring experienced organizers

PICO LIFT (Louisiana Interfaiths Together) has immediate openings for experienced community organizers who want to be part of a historic opportunity to help working families and congregations influence the rebuilding of New Orleans and Louisiana. A job description and application information is available at http://ga3.org/ct/71_F3YE1HXdH/.

Job opening for Director of United Interfaith Action in Fall River/New Bedford

United Interfaith Action is hiring a new director. UIA is a regional affiliate of the Organizing Leadership Training Center, a member of PICO. A job description and application information is available at http://ga3.org/ct/lp_F3YE1HXdT/.