



“Building Communities Together”

A Networking Tool of HUD's Center for Community and Interfaith Partnerships

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Center Launches Justice Conference Series

The Center for Community and Interfaith Partnerships will host the second in its series of ten regional conferences entitled: “Commitment to Justice: Creative Partnerships for Renewed Hope in Our Communities” on **December 8 and 9, in Nashville, Tennessee**. The conference is targeted to the needs of community and faith-based organizations, which Secretary Cuomo has recognized are “the voice of conscience in the struggle for economic rights.” The conference, co-sponsored by HUD's Tennessee State Office, will explore ways in which grassroots groups can contribute to greater social, economic, and racial justice in economically distressed areas.

Community development organizations, faith-based organizations, and community

leaders from throughout the Southeast region (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee) are encouraged to take advantage of this valuable opportunity to learn more about HUD programs and other resources available for community development initiatives. Registration for the conference (excluding meals) is free. **To obtain more information or to register, call 1-800-308-0395.**

The kickoff of the “Commitment to Justice” conference series, held in Syracuse, New York on October 27 and 28 was highly successful. The Syracuse conference was convened by HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo and Congressman James T. Walsh and co-hosted by the Center, the Office of Community Planning and Development,

the New York HUD Offices, and several local non-profits. The “Commitment to Justice” in Syracuse brought together approximately 350 community organizers, neighborhood activists, and members of grassroots community and faith-based organizations of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

Over the coming year, the Center and HUD will be hosting similar conferences in Chicago, St. Louis, Houston, Denver, Seattle, Sacramento, Boston and the mid-Atlantic region. Watch upcoming newsletters for information about the conference in your region.

Secretary Cuomo Convenes Faith and Policy Forum

On Tuesday, November 30th, the Department of Housing and Urban Development will host the eighth forum in its **Community 2020** series: *The Role of Faith and Justice in Public Policy*. Initiated by Vice-President Gore, the purpose of the 2020 seminar series is to examine key policy issues in a forward-thinking manner by facilitating a discussion involving key academics and practitioners.

Confronted with the socio-economic challenges of the approaching millennium, public focus on the potential for faith-based organizations to provide affordable housing, economic opportunity, and social

services has dramatically intensified. Consequently, the already significant role of the faith community in community revitalization is poised to increase. Several presidential candidates have outlined ambitious proposals for expanding the role of faith-based organizations and congregations. As a result, now is an opportune time to critically examine the impact faith has on social policy, and look toward the future role of congregations, faith and justice in countering poverty, homelessness, hunger, drug abuse, violence and other challenges facing our communities.

Secretary Cuomo will be joined by an distinguished panel of speakers including:

The Honorable Reverend Emanuel Cleaver, former mayor of Kansas City, Missouri; **Dr. Yvonne Delk**, former Executive Director, Chicago Renewal Society; and **Rabbi David Saperstein**, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

The forum will begin at 5:00 pm at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street SW. **Seating is limited, please RSVP to 1-800-647-4963 or 202-708-5029 no later than C.O.B. November 24th**. Please make plans to arrive early as the doors will open at 4:15 p.m. We hope you can join us for this important event.

Featured Best Practice

The faith-based collaborative of the **Jackson, Michigan Ministerial Alliance** combines local government and law enforcement with the faith organizations in rural communities. The 27 predominantly African-American churches are working to transform a vacant school building into a center of community pride and revitalization.

The former 81 room high school, referred to as the "Towers" by locals, has become an urban war zone, used by drug dealers and gangs as a hangout. Members of the Alliance recognized that as long as the school remained vacant, homeownership and business development rates in the surrounding community would continue to fall.

The state of Michigan had reclaimed the property to take care of back taxes. The Alliance developed a comprehensive plan to rehabilitate the property into a commercial space for local entrepreneurs with a recreation component for residents of the community. On the basis of this plan, the state allowed the Alliance to purchase the abandoned school for one dollar.

Alliance Contact: Pastor Melvin Lewis, 734/484-1747

HUD Contact: Fredric Washington, 313/226-6280 x8230.

This information has been edited from the 1999 Best Practices on HUD's web site at www.hud.gov/whatwork.html.

Look to Next Month's Issue of
"Building Communities Together"
for the unveiling of a new format in the
Center's Anniversary Issue.

Important Resources

Cast your vote for the "People's Choice Award" winner of the National Homeownership Week poster contest. You can view the posters and cast your vote on line at www.hud.gov/postercontest/public/pubposts.html

HUD and the National Homeownership Partners sponsored the poster contest as part of National Homeownership week, which took place from June 5th through 12th, 1999 and involved hundreds of communities across the country hosting events to highlight the importance of homeownership. This year's theme, "**Make the American Dream a Reality**" was designed to increase the visibility of community-

building efforts and develop and reinforce local partnerships hard at work throughout the country. HUD's partners in the poster contest effort included Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, YWCA, 4-H, Big Brothers Big Sisters, faith-based youth groups and educational organizations.

School age children from all ten HUD regions submitted posters in the contest. The national winner will have his or her artwork displayed on next year's National Homeownership Week poster. Regional winners will have their artwork displayed on HUD's Kids Next Door website at www.hud.gov/kids/kids.html.

Center Introductions

The Center would like you to help welcome several new additions to our staff.

We are very happy to have Jennifer Quinn to fill the critical position of Deputy Director. Prior to joining HUD, Ms. Quinn spent four years as an attorney at Steptoe & Johnson in Washington, DC. For several years she was the Chairperson of Operation Crackdown, a group of volunteer attorneys who provide free legal services to Washington, DC community-based organizations seeking to eliminate crackhouses from their neighborhoods. Under her leadership, Operation Crackdown received the Council for Court Excellence's Justice Potter Stewart Award, and Ms. Quinn was recognized as Young Lawyer of the Year by the Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

Shannon Hefter is a new Presidential Management Intern in our office. She is a native of Detroit and has been very involved in faith-based organizations for several years. Her last position was with the Archdiocese of Michigan. Rhonda Dallas is our new Graduate Intern from Emory Univ., Chandler School of Theology. She has worked extensively on Community Outreach and Womens Economic Development Projects in Georgia and South Africa.

We are very fortunate to have the rich backgrounds of these talented three to assist us in HUD's efforts to engage community and faith-based non-profits in partnership with the Department and other groups.

Joseph Hacala, S.J., Director
Jennifer Quinn, Deputy Director
Loyd LaMois, CB Fellow
Heidi Chapman, Communications
Brian Siebenlist, Research
Billy Terry, Special Projects
Shannon Hefter, Special Projects
Rhonda Dallas, Graduate Intern
Yvonne Brown, Information Specialist