

THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE OF ROCHESTER

+People of Faith Working Together For Justice in Public Policy+
Board Meeting of January 15, 2009

Attending: D.Bird, P.Brayer, S.Chamberlin, G.L'Esperance, M.Hickey, R.Herman, N.Jaschik, E.Johnson, D.McNitt, I.Morrison, F.Razvi, G.Strother, B.Swan, D.White, and M.Wienk.

1. Opening Reflection- By D.McNitt.

2. Minutes- Motion by D.McNitt; seconded by B.Swan to approve the minutes of the 12/18/08 meeting. Approved unanimously

3. Web Site Fees Advanced by Todd Goddard- T.Goddard has refused to accept reimbursement for the fees he has paid in connection with the TIAR web site. He considers them a contribution to the work of TIAR. We note this with great appreciation.

4. Nominating Committee- G.L'Esperance reported. All of the current board members called, whether or not their terms expire in 2009 or later, have agreed to continue to serve with the exception of Peter Peters. He will not continue because he is serving as an interim minister in Canandaigua, NY and will be unable to attend board meetings. He will continue as a TIAR member and will remain active on the Poverty Task Force. A few board members remain to be contacted. A small number of board appointments will be available. Recommendations for those positions should be sent by e-mail to G.L'Esperance as committee chair.

5. Membership Committee- D.Bird reported. There were 132 members at the end of the summer. D.Bird distributed a "TIAR New Member Recruitment Plans" document. Each board member is requested to recruit five new TIAR memberships. For those not in attendance, copies of the TIAR brochure are available from D.Bird. These brochures should be given or mailed to the person to be recruited along with a personal note and possible a return envelope. If any questions, contact D.Bird.

6. Single Payer Health Care Plan- M.Wienk moved; P.Brayer seconded a motion for TIAR to support the concept and principle of a single payer health care plan and for TIAR to act in all reasonable ways to implement and support the concept. Approved unanimously An example of a possible plan is HR 676 currently pending in the House of Representatives.

7. "Faces of Poverty" DVD Marketing Committee- R.Herman reported. The committee met on 1/12/09. It held a brain storming session which resulted in a lengthy list of approaches some practical; some far fetched. Future meetings will refine the process with action taken on some of listed items. The committee requested that board members join in seeking a volunteer professional public relations consultant so we can more effectively communicate with the media. This will also help in publicizing the annual meeting.

8. Immigration- G.L'Esperance reported. She noted that much immigration reform activity has been on hold awaiting the actions by the new administration and the new Congress. She distributed a single page statement, "Interfaith Statement on Humane Immigration." The text appears at the end of these minutes.* D.McNitt moved; F.Razvi seconded a motion to adopt this statement. Approved unanimously.

9. Outreach- M.Hickey reported. The purposes of this committee are: A. Strengthen our connections with appropriate organizations, including colleges, who share our values and concerns. B. Strengthen and expand our connections to faith communities to broaden our contacts within those communities to better accomplish our goals and programs.

***Interfaith Statement on Humane Immigration Reform-**

Our diverse faith traditions teach us to welcome our brothers and sisters with love and compassion — regardless of their place of birth.

The Hebrew scripture tells us: "The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33-34). In the Christian Gospel, Jesus tells us to welcome the stranger, for "what you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do to me" (Matthew 25:40). The Qur'an tells us that we should "do good to...those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet" (4:36). The Hindu Taittiriya Upanishad tells us: "The guest is a representative of God" (1.11.2).

We witness the human consequences of a broken and outdated immigration system: exploitation, separated families, the escalation of community fear due to indiscriminate raids, and local police acting as federal immigration agents. Humane immigration reform would help put an end to this suffering, which offends the dignity of all human beings.

Therefore, we call on the new Administration and 111th Congress to commit to uphold human rights and family unity as a priority of all immigration policies:

- 1) Prioritize family unity for those separated due to lengthy visa backlogs
- 2) Create a process for undocumented immigrants to earn their legal status and eventual citizenship or lawful permanent residency after satisfying reasonable criteria
- 4) Expand legal, safe, and orderly avenues for workers who seek to migrate to the United States for work, and cease discrimination and unfair hiring or firing practices.
- 5) Restore due process protections and reform detention policies to respect human rights

Vast resources are used for fence construction, mass arrests, detention, and deportation of immigrants who contribute to the U.S. economy and culture. While we need to identify and prevent the entry of persons who commit dangerous crimes, all immigration laws must respect the dignity of every person with humane treatment.

As people of faith, we call attention to the moral dimensions of immigration policy. We are dedicated to immigration reform because we value family unity, justice, equity, compassion, and love.

Proposed to and adopted by The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester
1/15/09

Adapted from the Interfaith Platform for Humane Immigration Reform
Friends Committee on National Legislation