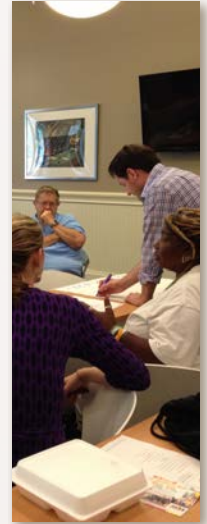




IDENTIFYING & DEVELOPING LEADERS



ORGANIZING NEIGHBORHOODS

BUILDING CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



ORGANIZING UPDATE SECOND QUARTER 2013



FIGHTING DISINVESTMENT

Vacant Property and Blight

In late March, the City of Youngstown began enforcing groundbreaking legislation co-written by the Youngstown Neighborhood Leadership Council (YNLC) to levy a \$10,000 cash bond on any bank foreclosing on a home that becomes vacant. This bond is then used as security to ensure the maintenance of that property, up to and including demolition. As of July, 46 bonds (\$460,000) have been collected, going a long way towards helping the city and its residents continue to fight blight related to foreclosures in our community. It should be noted that Youngstown is the third city in the U.S. to pass this legislation (following Springfield, MA and Canton, OH) and is currently **the only city in the nation** actively and successfully enforcing it. MVOC is working with four other cities across Ohio to write and pass similar legislation, including the city of Warren, where City Council unanimously passed bond legislation on June 26.



In June, leaders also testified in Columbus for S.B. 16 (formerly S.B. 109). The bill, sponsored by Senator Joe Schiavoni, is based on legislation drafted by MVOC's Patti Dougan to protect individuals and groups from trespassing while remediating blight on vacant and abandoned property. This bill is expected to leave committee and pass before year's end.

Youngstown Neighborhood Capacity

In April, leaders with MVOC's Youngstown Neighborhood Leadership Council (YNLC) hosted 300 residents at We The People, a public forum at Union Baptist Church. Each mayoral primary candidate committed to a series of demands written and presented by leaders, including placing grassroots leaders on public committees, scheduling public-friendly tax incentive meetings, and working to secure local control for fracking.



YNLC has also been working to move the aforementioned foreclosure bond legislation statewide, redistricting City Council wards, and ensuring A-F grading and grassroots involvement in the 2014 update to the vacant property survey which will be undertaken by the City of Youngstown.

Warren Neighborhood Capacity

The Warren Neighborhood Leadership Council (WNLC) continues to wage its war against blight: advocating at City Council meetings for six weeks to pass two pieces of vacant property legislation. On June 26, the Vacant Property Registration and Foreclosure Bond passed unanimously. WNLC leaders are now working with the administration to ensure the timely and effective enforcement of this important legislation.



Simultaneously, WNLC has been holding City officials accountable for the use of Moving Ohio Forward funds, for which leaders strongly advocated last year. Warren received \$1.7 million to address demolition in 2012, but has failed to complete any tear-downs with the funding. This means that hundreds of demolitions for which the WNLC worked hard to secure funding may be in jeopardy. Leaders successfully demanded that the City efficiently spend all funds, agree to follow the strategic demolition plan, commit to sharing a full demolition list, and update residents on progress.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Tax and Corporate Accountability

This spring, MVOC organizers and leaders talked with 30 social service providers, labor unions, clergy, business and public officials, and community stakeholders about a potential Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with Penn National. More than 20 leaders joined for a CBA workshop in April and joined a broad coalition to identify economic, workforce development, and social needs stemming from the Austintown racino.

Together, the group drafted a CBA proposal, and a contingent of core leaders traveled to Toledo to meet with Penn National executives to learn more about the company's community outreach and gain commitments for negotiations to benefit local residents. This summer, leaders will invite elected officials and industry executives to a public meeting showcasing CBAs as a cornerstone of responsible economic development.

Criminal Justice and Mass Incarceration

Over 80 leaders and students attended screenings and facilitated discussions of 'The House I Live In' at YSU and Emmanuel Lutheran Church. This critically-acclaimed documentary examines the political and economic corruption that has driven the War on Drugs and devastated poor and minority communities. Leaders also gained commitments from each of Youngstown's mayoral candidates to support local fair hiring policy at MVOC's We The People public forum in April. Fair Hiring committees were created in both Trumbull and Mahoning counties, and leaders are campaigning to implement these policies locally.

Oil and Natural Gas Exploration

In 2004, state law stripped local governments of regulatory power over the oil and gas industry, with all decisions now made at the state level. MVOC partnered with the Committee for Local Control in Youngstown this spring to support a Community Bill of Rights, securing commitments from all Mayoral candidates to seek changes to the existing state law.

Organizers have also been traveling across eastern Ohio, meeting with grassroots leaders and attending concerned citizen meetings. Statewide, OOC partnered with Ohio Citizen Action to organize first responders to support legislation which would bring Ohio into compliance with the federal Emergency Planning Community Right to Know Act: ensuring that all first responders are aware of chemicals used in large-scale industrial activities, in order to develop a plan to respond in case of an accident.

Anti-Human Trafficking

Members of the Northeast Ohio Coalition on Rescue and Restore (NEOCORR) held three trainings this spring for two dozen leaders. Coalition members also advocated for H.B. 130: legislation that extends protection to victims and expands the statute of limitations under which trafficking charges may be leveled. Leaders lobbied the Governor's and Attorney General's offices, and secured broad support - including that of State Senators Cafaro and Schiavoni, and State Representatives Gerberry and Letson - all of whom joined leaders at a press conference in June.





HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Healthy Communities

MVOC organizers and leaders partnered with the Ohio Justice and Policy Center, the Sentencing Project, the AMOS Project, and OOC to hold a forum on mass incarceration and health in Columbus this April. Over 100 people attended 'Public Safety, Public Health, Prosperous Communities' which featured Cecelia Klingele who detailed a health impact assessment in Wisconsin that successfully tied increased drug treatment to decreased imprisonment in that state. Organizers are currently creating a leadership table in Ohio to address health issues tied to incarceration.

Retirement Security

This spring, the Caring Across Generations and Retirement Security campaign involved 242 residents and leaders in 17 trainings on Medicaid expansion, Social Security, Medicare, and prescription price reduction.

At the state level, leaders testified in front of House and Senate finance committees and made 5,515 phone calls that resulted in 1,037 transfers or commitments to call regarding Medicaid expansion. Though pulled from the state budget by the House and refused by the Senate, Governor Kasich used his line-item veto against the ban to introduce the expansion.

At the federal level, organizers and leaders met with Senator Sherrod Brown, attended a briefing with Senator Bernie Sanders, held legislative meetings and delivered cards to Senators Brown and Rob Portman, all in favor of expanding the Affordable Care Act's Balancing Incentive Program (BIP) in Ohio. This campaign was instrumental in winning \$170 million for Ohio - one of only 16 states selected - to expand home- and community-based care for seniors and the disabled who are covered by Medicaid.



GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

Leadership Training and Development

In the past three months, MVOC organizers ran eight small group trainings with 142 leaders participating. These included sessions on campaign leadership, neighborhood organizing, public meetings, strategic planning, communications, and movement building.

Faith Engagement

Ohio Prophetic Voices' Northeastern Ohio table held their quarterly meeting at Warren's Emmanuel Lutheran Church in June; work continues on community issues, clergy development, and immigration reform.

Staff Training and Development

MVOC staff attended a statewide meeting in May. Organizers received training on core values, leadership skills, and professional development.



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