



IDENTIFYING & DEVELOPING LEADERS



ORGANIZING NEIGHBORHOODS

BUILDING CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



ORGANIZING UPDATE THIRD QUARTER 2013



FIGHTING DISINVESTMENT

Vacant Property and Blight

MVOC leaders and organizers continue to work closely with Youngstown City officials on implementation of the foreclosure bond. By October, \$870,000 has been collected, and the first bond-funded demolition is in process on the city's south side (Lucius Avenue). Leaders are also working with the City and Youngstown State University to collect and aggregate data showing potential correlation between foreclosure induced vacancy and the city's demolition needs.

Leaders are also working with Senator Joe Schiavoni on drafting and introducing a Homeowners Bill of Rights (HBOR): legislation that would simplify Ohio's foreclosure process by requiring a single point of contact and yes/no answer on principle reduction before foreclosure proceedings can begin. HBOR is the most far-reaching foreclosure accountability legislation that the state has seen since the housing crisis began, and will provide local families with a better chance to keep their homes.



Youngstown Neighborhood Capacity

This summer, Youngstown Neighborhood Leadership Council (YNLC) leaders began meeting to address needed changes in the city's demolition policy to increase procedural transparency. In September, the group met with Demaine Kitchen, point person for the city's demolition program, where they secured demands including making contracts available online and incorporating citizen feedback into the demolition process.



MVOC has spent years organizing for the successful implementation and operation of County Land Reutilization Corporations (CLRCs) in Ohio. Leaders have lobbied for their establishment and worked with public agencies for their efficient operation. In July, YNLC leaders approached the Mahoning County Land Bank, requesting that at least one meeting be scheduled at a time and location that is convenient for residents: not only were their demands met – they were exceeded – with a commitment to schedule an evening Annual Meeting open to the public in January 2014.

Leaders also initiated a foreclosure outreach and education campaign for Mahoning County, supported by churches and neighborhood associations, that provides information for underwater homeowners and invites them to two upcoming meetings addressing foreclosure in our community.



Warren Neighborhood Capacity

Leaders with the Warren Neighborhood Leadership Council (WNLC) had their hands busy this summer, holding Warren officials accountable for the strategic and successful use of Moving Ohio Forward demolition funds. Nearly 50 neighborhood leaders attended a closed meeting with Mayor Doug Franklin and city officials in July, and WNLC held follow-up meetings every three weeks with Safety Service Director Enzo Cantalamessa. As a result of this partnership, the city is now on-track to spend all allotted MOF funds, placing them in a better situation to receive Hardest Hit Funding from the State of Ohio in 2014.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Criminal Justice and Racial Equity

In July, members of the Mahoning and Trumbull Fair Hiring Teams joined our partners in Akron at a 300-person public meeting to adopt fair hiring policies at the City of Akron that ease the process of employment for returning citizens (those with a misdemeanor/felony conviction). MVOC leaders are seeking to pass similar pieces of legislation in Youngstown and Warren. Currently, nine cities and counties across Ohio have adopted policies to expand employment access for returning citizens.

MVOC also successfully organized Youngstown City Council to pass a resolution urging the state legislature not to vote in favor of the proposed Stand Your Ground legislation that unnecessarily expands Ohio's existing self-defense laws. Leaders then joined several hundred OOC members from across the state at an Anti-Stand Your Ground rally in Columbus.

Oil and Natural Gas Exploration

The Communities United for Responsible Energy (CURE) campaign has been organizing in Trumbull and Columbiana counties around issues related to horizontal drilling (fracking). This summer, CURE leaders held a joint meeting in Salem with the EPA and Sierra Club to address issues related to fracking in their community, and welcomed over 60 Salem residents at a screening of 'Triple Divide', a documentary film investigating the impacts of the industry on water sources in the United States.

Anti-Human Trafficking

Members of the Northeast Ohio Coalition on Rescue and Restore (NEOCORR) continued agency visits with an additional five social service agencies to educate providers on the dangers of trafficking in our community and the service needs of victims. Leaders also participated in a S.O.A.P. (Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution) outreach project in Akron during the Bridgestone Invitational golf tournament in July. S.O.A.P. volunteers distributed 8,000 bars of soap with the National Human Trafficking Hotline number to 56 local hotels and motels during the event.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Caring Across Generations and Retirement Security

Grassroots ambassadors from the Caring Across Generations (CAG) campaign joined Members of Congress at a rally in Washington DC to protest the scaling back of entitlement programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid as a result of the government shutdown. Leaders also participated in a 350-person town hall meeting where Gloria Hobbs told her story of struggling to meet basic needs while on these programs.

MVOC leaders also joined State Senator Capri Cafaro this summer as she introduced a new bill to expand Ohio's Medicaid program. Grassroots ambassadors and leaders continue to make phonecalls and legislative visits supporting the expansion of Medicaid in Ohio, and are collecting 6,000 signatures as part of a statewide effort to put the legislation on the ballot.





GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

Leadership Training and Development

In July, MVOC co-sponsored the fifth annual Weeklong Leadership Training with the Ohio Organizing Collaborative (OOC). Nearly 90 leaders from across Ohio, as well as Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania, came to the University of Akron for six days of training. The OOC Weeklong program provides reflective learning on personal narrative and opportunity, as well as hands-on training and concrete tools for community organizing - from running effective meetings to building a successful long-term campaign.

MVOC also hosted a two-day training for 18 leaders in September. This session grounded leaders in their opportunity story and story of self, and provided tools including 12Is, Identifying Issues and Problems, and building campaign strategy.

Throughout the remainder of the third quarter, MVOC provided nine small group trainings with 109 leaders. These sessions included training on leadership, organizing, public meetings, and strategic planning.

Staff Training and Development

In September, organizers and staff attended a statewide meeting, where they received training on core values, leadership skills, and continued professional development.

Our MVOC family welcomed Spencer Thomas Soldan, son of organizer Rebecca Soldan and her husband Bill, born in August; and Karis Iman McKee, daughter of Eres and Board member Rev. Christopher McKee, born in September.



Mahoning Valley
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