



PENINSULA INTERFAITH ACTION

PIA Community News and Views

JUNE/JUNIO 2010

Immigrants Use PIA to Press for Justice

At the start of 2010, PIA joined PICO National Network in pressing Congress directly for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. In January, PIA leaders hand-delivered 700 letters to the offices of Anna Eshoo and Jackie Speier, which called for such reform. Forty PIA leaders then joined 800 from Bay Area PICO affiliates in San Francisco on February 22nd to make this same request of the Senate in a meeting with Diane Feinstein's staff. PIA also flew eleven leaders to Washington, DC on March 21st, to join tens of thousands of immigrants and allies, calling on President Obama to make good on his promise for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. PIA committees also hosted several local events in early 2010 to support new immigrants. St. Athanasius Church in Mountain View hosted a pair of prayer vigils in March, each

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April 30 '10 immigration march
"PIA leaders join youth from United Diversity in a pilgrimage for immigration reform."

East Palo Alto Rent Control, Measure H

For the past three years, half the renters in East Palo Alto (EPA) were vulnerable to an unethical "predatory equity" scheme involving sudden rent increases of 10%-30%, frivolous lawsuits, and personal harassment by Page Mill Properties, which bought 1800 rental units and then achieved a stunning vacancy rate of 25% before it went bankrupt in February 2010. The scheme sought to replace low-income tenants with ones who could yield a higher return on investment.

To protect EPA residents from such schemes in the future, *East Palo Alto Rent Control, Measure H* went on the June 8th ballot. PIA leaders from Faith Missionary Baptist Church and St. Francis of Assisi Church held a public forum on April 7th to rally community action for Measure H and to hold city officials accountable for effective administration of the measure. Seventy-five people gathered and pledged to support Measure H. PIA leaders stepped up to organize phone banks. They recruited volunteers from many churches, developed lists of registered voters, wrote calling scripts, and trained volunteers. The measure passed by a margin of X to Y, and PIA leaders are now prepared to defend the ordinance from future attacks or neglect.



At a public meeting on April 07, PIA leaders call trying to create a healthy, just and livable East Palo Alto for all.

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Immigration Reform

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attended by more than eighty people, to support the PIA delegation going to DC. St. Francis of Assisi Church in East Palo Alto hosted a Know Your Rights workshop for 80 new immigrants on March 14th. The Congregational Church of San Mateo hosted a Know Your Rights workshop for 30 new immigrants on May 15th. Finally, the “Diversity United” youth committee associated with St. Matthew’s Church led a pilgrimage of 75 youth and PIA supporters through the streets of San Mateo on May 2nd, calling for comprehensive immigration reform.

Mission of PIA

Peninsula Interfaith Action helps ordinary people achieve extraordinary results for their communities. Using the values of democracy and diverse religious traditions, PIA helps people create more affordable housing, better neighborhood schools, adequate access to healthcare, improved economic opportunities and strong public safety. PIA's 30 member congregations create a powerful organization representing 19,000 families from diverse religious, racial, and economic backgrounds.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

PARTICIPATE

Local organizing in congregations is the heart of PIA's work. If your congregation has a PIA Local Organizing Committee, get involved. If your congregation is not yet working with PIA, talk to your clergy about exploring a relationship with PIA. Call PIA at 650-592-9181 for more info.

CONTRIBUTE

PIA seeks to build a stronger base of individual donors. Your giving affirms PIA's work and makes our organization more self-sufficient. PIA needs the support of individuals, businesses and organizations who want to invest in our mission.

Because PIA is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, donations are tax-deductible. A donation may be sent in the envelope included in this newsletter or you may contribute via credit card on our website, www.piapico.org. Any amount is appreciated!

From Local Organizing to National Healthcare Reform

by Barbara Erbacher

PIA leaders are celebrating National Healthcare Reform, taking pride that PIA – through PICO – contributed greatly to measure’s passage into law. Moreover, PICO played a critical role in the successful inclusion of an affordability standard for low-income people in the legislation.

The groundwork for national health reform was laid by local organizations like PIA, who have worked for years for similar reforms at the local level. In 2006, PIA convened a public meeting between Supervisor Jerry Hill and 400 PIA leaders. That meeting launched a county-wide effort to create a local healthcare solution. The collaborative effort by PIA, labor, businesses, non-profits, hospitals, public health officials, and the Board of Supervisors eventually produced the county’s new Access and Care for Everyone (ACE) program, which now serves 21,000 people. Unfortunately, ACE cannot serve 40,000 adults who qualify for it, due to a lack of resources. Realizing that local healthcare solutions would be nearly impossible to achieve without national healthcare reform, PIA joined allies across the nation in early 2008 to press for an affordable national solution. Since that time, PIA leaders have supported this effort with two large public meetings of 200 and 400 people, nine community forums of 20-50 people, 44 research and lobby visits with public officials, 7 delegation visits

Visit PIA on the Web at
www.piapico.org

TAKING BACK THE DREAM

by Karyl Eldrige

On February 21st, PIA leaders gathered at Peninsula Sinai Congregation in Foster City for a workshop entitled “Taking Back the Dream.” The purpose was to discuss the many housing-related problems confronting our communities and ways that PIA can have an impact on them. After a faith reflection on the meaning of “home” by Carol Marchi of St. Bartholomew’s Parish, PIA leaders shared information about the work they have done in recent years in their respective communities to increase and expand Below Market Rate ordinances, promote jobs-housing linkage fees, support mandatory mediation ordinances, and advocate for the creation of a housing trust fund for San Mateo County (HEART). The workshop included two outstanding presentations: one by Ann Gressani of the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California and another by Keisha Woods of Northern California Urban Development. As the afternoon progressed, PIA leaders identified several key concerns ripe for local organizing, including: the need for a revised rent control ordinance in East Palo Alto, the need to defend current Below Market Rate ordinances from attacks by developers, and the limited funding on the Peninsula for housing counselors who can help homeowners prevent foreclosures. PIA has a housing committee that meets monthly and represents several PIA congregations that are working in various ways to help families stay in their homes. To join in this exciting work, please call Nadya for the next meeting date, at (650)592-9181, Ext. 10.



Feb 27 '10 Housing Workshop “Nearly forty community leaders from PIA and allied organizations convene to discuss housing policies on the Peninsula.”

PIA Creates Connections in Local Schools

by Leslie Vallerga and Becky Sanders

With patience and persistence, two local organizing committees (LOCs) in PIA are improving student support systems in districts that serve their families.

The PIA LOC of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Redwood City is completing its third year supporting a tutoring program at Roosevelt Elementary School, including recruitment of tutors. From the vantage point of classroom volunteers, PIA leaders determined to improve the quality of substitute teaching in the school district. The LOC succeeded in implementing a substitute-teacher training program this year, and the District Administration plans to repeat the training next year. Additionally, the LOC is working with PICO California to press for improvements in school financing. The hard work of this PIA committee was recognized in the spring by an award from the San Mateo County Reading Association.

On Sunday, May 2, 2010, the PIA committee at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church of Palo Alto hosted a meeting between two school board members and 175 community members to discuss what schools can do to promote the social-emotional health of teenagers, following a contagion of youth suicides in Palo Alto. School Board members Barb Mitchell and Barbara Klausner listened to testimony and fielded questions, but made no clear commitments to take leadership on the issue. St. Mark’s LOC will continue to work with school officials to set social-emotional health as a “focus goal” for the district next year and to develop programs that connect every secondary student in the district with at least one adult on campus.



May 2 '10 St. Marks Action “Matthew and Andrew Mendoza testify on the need for greater community connect-edness in Palo Alto high schools. (Photo: Bill Wang)”

Heroes Luncheon 2010:

It was a privilege to gather representatives from the faith community, foundations, corporations, non-profits and government to honor those who work to build just communities at PIA's ninth annual Community Heroes Awards Luncheon on April 23, 2010. Thank you to everyone who attended the event and to the 140 people who contributed to congregation tables.

PIA honored Assemblymember Jerry Hill, California State Assembly, District 19, as PIA's Public Sector Community Hero, for his tireless efforts tackling healthcare.

PIA also honored Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, Mr. Christopher Dawes, President & CEO accepting the award, as PIA's Private Sector Community Hero, for their outstanding commitment to community through collaboration, outreach and advocacy.

Even more special, PIA honored 16 extraordinary individuals from local congregations who have worked effectively for justice on the Peninsula:

Matt McEvoy, Catholic Community at Stanford

Pat Kolbe, Church of the Good Shepherd & St. Peter Church, Pacifica

Diane Rolfe, Congregation Beth Am, Los Altos Hills

Joan Kilroe, Congregational Church of San Mateo

Alvin Spencer, Faith Missionary Baptist Church, East Palo Alto

Sydney Brown, First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto

Leslie Carmichael, Los Altos United Methodist

Church & Woodside Road United Methodist Church, Redwood City

Javier Castorena, St. Athanasius Church, Mountain View

Ross Weir, St. Bartholomew Church, San Mateo

Roberto Gomez, St. Francis of Assisi Church, East Palo Alto

Gail Grant, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Palo Alto

Jacinto Hernandez, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish/Our Lady of the Rosary, Palo Alto

Yvette Jimenez, El Buen Pastor Episcopal Church, Redwood City

Peter Cross, Unitarian Universalists of San Mateo

Patricia Girardi, Roosevelt Elementary School, honored by Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Redwood



Artículos en Español

Traductora: Laura Sánchez

Inmigrantes presionan para que haya justicia a través de PIA

Al comienzo de 2010, PIA se unió a PICO National Network para presionar al Congreso directamente a fin de conseguir una reforma de inmigración amplia. En enero, líderes de PIA entregaron en persona 700 cartas a las

oficinas de Anna Eshoo y Jackie Speier, en las misivas se pedía la reforma de inmigración. Luego, cuarenta líderes de PIA se unieron a otros 800 líderes de organizaciones afiliadas a PICO en San Francisco. El 22 de febrero, hicieron ese mismo pedido al Senado, en una reunión con el personal de Diane Feinstein. El 21 de marzo, PIA auspició el viaje de once líderes a Washington DC, quienes se unieron a decenas de miles de inmigrantes y aliados, en un evento en el que se pidió al Presidente



30 de abril, marcha a favor de la reforma migratoria. "Diversos jóvenes líderes de PIA se unieron por la causa.

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Thank You

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Individual Giving Campaign:
 PIA's most renewable form of funding comes from individuals. In order to encourage sustained and increased giving from individuals, PIA's Development Committee has formed both an "individual ask" team and a "house party" team to plan activities to increase individual giving to PIA. If you are interested in learning more about this effort, or to join these teams, please call Lisa Hicks-Dumanske at PIA, 650-592-9181.

Campaña de donantes individuales:
 El método de financiación más removable de PIA es el de las donaciones individuales. Con el fin de animar las donaciones continuas y a la vez incrementar las donaciones individuales, el comité de desarrollo de PIA ha formado un grupo de "individual ask" y otro de "house party" para planear actividades con el objeto de incrementar el apoyo individual a PIA. Si usted está interesado en aprender más sobre este esfuerzo, o para unirse a estos equipos, por favor llame a Lisa Hicks-Dumanske en PIA, 650-592-9181.

You can support PIA financially by sending a check in the envelope enclosed in this newsletter or you can go to our website, www.piapico.org, to the "Donate" page and make a donation with your credit card. Any amount will be appreciated!

Inmigrantes presionan para que haya justicia a través de PIA

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Obama que cumpliera su promesa de una reforma de inmigración amplia. Los comités de PIA también llevaron a cabo varios eventos locales a principios de 2010 para apoyar a los nuevos inmigrantes. La iglesia St. Athanasius Church en Mountain View realizó un par de vigiliyas de oración en marzo y a cada una asistieron más de 80 personas para apoyar a la delegación de PIA que partió a Washington DC. La iglesia St. Francis of Assisi Church en East Palo Alto efectuó un taller denominado Conozca sus derechos para 80 nuevos inmigrantes; el taller tuvo lugar el 14 de marzo. La iglesia Congregational Church de San Mateo llevó a cabo otro taller de Conozca sus derechos para 30 nuevos inmigrantes el pasado 15 de mayo. Por último, el 2 de mayo, el comité juvenil "Diversity United" se unió a St. Matthew's Church para dirigir una peregrinación de 75 jóvenes y simpatizantes de PIA por las calles de San Mateo, el objetivo fue pedir una reforma de inmigración amplia.

De la organización local a la reforma nacional
del sistema de salud
por Barbara Erbacher

Los líderes de PIA celebran la aprobación de la reforma nacional al sistema de salud y se enorgullecen de la enorme contribución que PIA, a través de PICO, hizo para la aprobación de la ley. Además, PICO jugó un rol crucial en la correcta inclusión del estándar de accesibilidad para personas de bajos recursos en esta ley.

El trabajo de base para la reforma nacional al sistema de salud lo realizaron organizaciones locales como PIA, que ha trabajado durante años en reformas similares a ese nivel. En 2006, PIA organizó una reunión pública entre el Supervisor Jerry Hill y 400 líderes de PIA. Esa reunión generó un esfuerzo en todo el condado para crear

Medida H, control de la renta en East Palo Alto

Durante los últimos tres años, la mitad de los inquilinos en East Palo Alto (EPA) se encontraban vulnerables ante un plan inhumano de "equidad depredadora", relacionados con aumentos a la renta del 10 al 30%, demandas infundadas y acoso por parte de Page Mill Properties, la compañía que compró 1800 apartamentos de alquiler y luego tuvo una vacante impresionante del 25%, antes de declararse en bancarota en febrero de 2010. El plan buscaba reemplazar a los inquilinos de bajos ingresos con otros que pudieran generar un retorno más elevado de la inversión.

A fin de proteger a los residentes de EPA de planes como ese a futuro, la Medida H de control de renta de East Palo Alto se incluyó en la boleta electoral del 8 de junio. Líderes de PIA de las iglesias Faith Missionary Baptist Church y St. Francis of Assisi Church organizaron un foro público el pasado 7 de abril para conseguir apoyo de la comunidad para la Medida H y para responsabilizar a los funcionarios municipales para realizar una eficaz administración de la medida. Setenta y cinco personas se reunieron y prometieron votar por la Medida H.

Los líderes de PIA organizaron llamadas de propaganda. Reclutaron a voluntarios de otras iglesias, crearon listas de votantes registrados, escribieron guiones de llamadas y capacitaron a otros voluntarios. La medida pasó por un margen de X a Y y los líderes de PIA están ahora preparados para defender la ordenanza contra futuros ataques o negligencia.



En una junta publica el 7 de abril , lideres tratan de crear un East Palo Alto justo, saludable y habitable para todos.

Por Mary Klein



Eleanor Rossevelt dijo: “Nadie puede hacerlo sentir inferior sin su consentimiento”. En PIA, ponemos a prueba los límites de esa frase todos los días. La prueba más evidente se da cuando extendemos la capacidad de

personas comunes para trabajar de igual a igual con funcionarios públicos y otras personas influyentes de la comunidad. La forma menos evidente se da cuando extendemos nuestras suposiciones sobre nuestras propias limitaciones. Recientemente, varios líderes de PIA tomaron el rol de “líder organizador”. Están capacitando a otros líderes de PIA en el arte de la organización comunitaria y, de esa manera, extienden al máximo tanto sus propias capacidades como el alcance de PIA. Otros líderes se están haciendo cargo de la recaudación de fondos de base y, de esa manera, desafían sus propias inquietudes acerca del dinero y además aumentan la sostenibilidad de PIA. Tal vez lo más importante sea que algunos líderes desafían sus suposiciones inconscientes acerca de “los otros”. En las asambleas, reuniones, entrevistas uno a uno, aprenden a conocer las influencias inconscientes del racismo, clacismo, sexismo, etc. en sus propias relaciones

Con paciencia y persistencia, dos comités de organización local (LOC) de PIA mejoran los sistemas de apoyo a los estudiantes en los distritos que sirven a sus familias.

El LOC de PIA de Universalist Fellowship de Redwood City cumple su tercer año de apoyo al programa de tutoría de la escuela primaria Roosevelt Elementary School, apoyo que además incluye el reclutamiento de tutores. Desde la posición del salón de clases, los líderes trabajan para mejorar la calidad del programa de maestros suplentes en el distrito. El LOC está implementando un programa de tutoría y más está trabajando junto a PIA para mejorar la financiación



REANUDACIÓN DEL SUEÑO

Por Karyl Eldrige

El 21 de febrero, líderes de PIA se reunieron en Peninsula Sinai Congregation en Foster City para participar en el taller titulado “Reanudación del sueño”. El objetivo del taller fue discutir los diversos problemas de vivienda que enfrenta nuestra comunidad, así como la manera en que PIA puede tener un impacto en dichos problemas.

Luego de una reflexión espiritual sobre el significado de la palabra “hogar”, hecha por Carol Marchi de la parroquia St. Bartholomew, los líderes de PIA compartieron información acerca del trabajo que han realizado en los últimos años en sus propias comunidades, con el fin de ampliar ordenanzas de viviendas a un costo por debajo del mercado, promover impuestos generados por los empleos (*linkage fees*), apoyar ordenanzas obligatorias de mediación y abogar por la creación del fideicomiso de viviendas en el condado de San Mateo (HEART, en inglés).

El taller incluyó dos presentaciones excelentes: una



PENINSULA INTERFAITH ACTION
1336 ARROYO AVENUE
SAN CARLOS, CA 94070-3913
PHONE: (650) 592-9181

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From the Director's Desk



“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent,” said Eleanor Roosevelt. In PIA, we test the limits of this expression every day. Most obviously, we stretch “ordinary people” to work as equals with

elected officials and other community power brokers. Less obviously, we stretch with our own assumptions about our own limitations. Recently, several PIA leaders stepped up into the role of “organizing leader.” They are training other PIA leaders in the art of community organizing and so, are stretching their own abilities as well as PIA’s reach. Other PIA leaders are bravely stepping into the role of grass-roots fundraising for PIA and so, are challenging their own deep discomforts about money and are increasing PIA’s sustainability.

Perhaps most importantly, a number of PIA leaders are actively challenging their own unconscious assumptions about “the other.” In assemblies, caucuses, and one-to-one conversations, they are learning to recognize unconscious influences of racism, classism, sexism, etc. in their interpersonal interactions. They are learning to withhold their consent from seeing anyone in terms of inferior / superior. This life-long task is essential to meaningful community organizing.

Peninsula Interfaith Action

1336 Arroyo Avenue
San Carlos, CA 94070-3913

Phone: 650-592-9181

Fax: 650-592-9183

E-mail: piapico@sbcglobal.net

Visit us on the web at www.piapico.org.