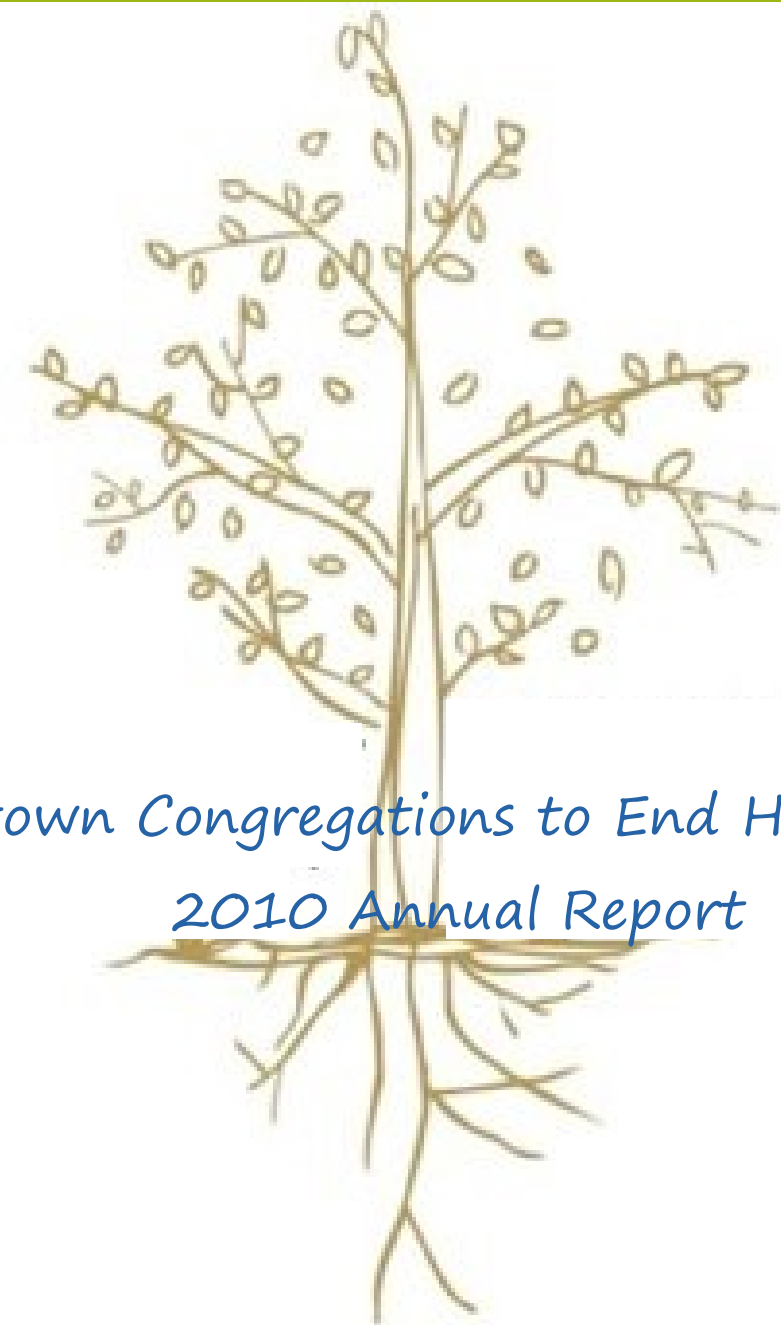


# *Moving Forward Sowing Hope*



*Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness  
2010 Annual Report*

# Highlights from the 2010 Year

*DCEH focuses on shifting from an immediate needs approach to long term solutions through a combination of education, advocacy and action. Through learning and volunteer opportunities for congregants, community partnerships, and development of effective strategies and programs, the DCEH is committed to impacting the community around us to decrease homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County.*

*This year we have sown hope in preventing and ending homelessness by:*

- The DCEH raised \$130,000 within a month, along with the Downtown Business Council and created the Currie Avenue Partnership. The case workers hired with these funds have housed over 110 people as of December 31, 2010, moving them off the street and into an apartment.

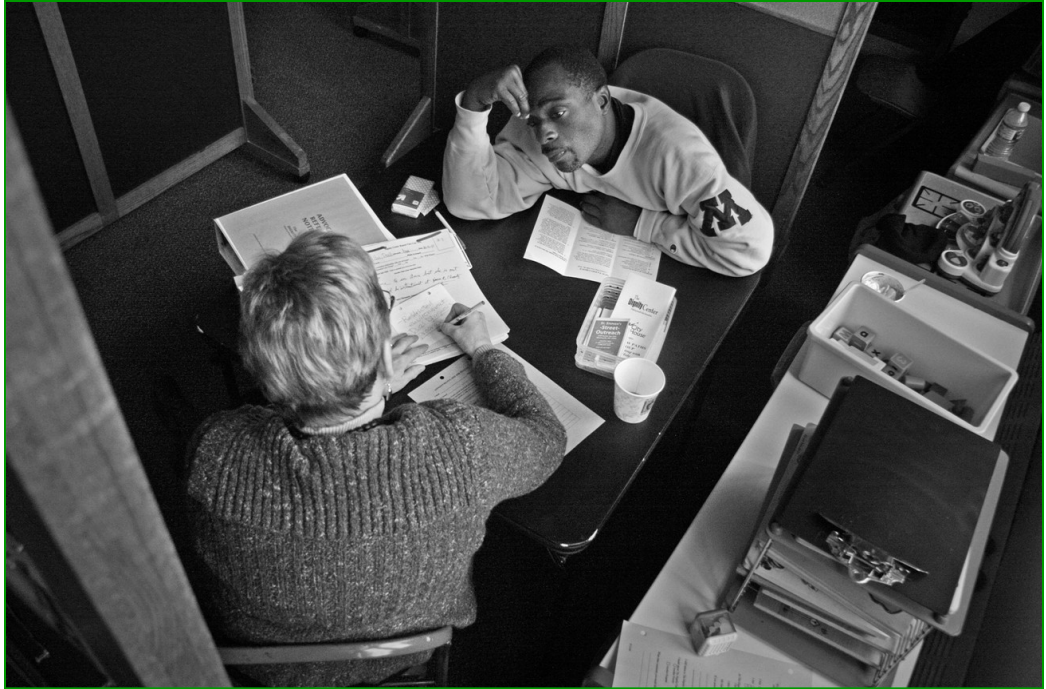


Photo by Peter Koeliman

- The Gubernatorial Forum drew over 350 people to listen to eight candidates for Governor debate on the issues of housing, health care, and jobs, which all impact people experiencing homelessness. This event educated our congregational members on policies of ending homelessness, as well as educating the candidates running for Governor about DCEH and the community's commitment to ending homelessness.
- Two Advocacy Workshops were held during the legislative session of 2010. The trainings educated congregants on how to do effective advocacy while working for justice. A total of 90 participants attended the forums.
- As of December 2010, we have over 850 advocates from the DCEH congregations in our advocacy network.

## MEMBERS OF THE DOWNTOWN CONGREGATIONS TO END HOMELESSNESS

AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY, GETHSEMANE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, HENNEPIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, MASJID AN-NUR, MASJID AL-IKHLAS, PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. MARY'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH, TEMPLE ISRAEL, WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

HEADING HOME HENNEPIN, PLYMOUTH CHURCH NEIGHBORHOOD FOUNDATION

## OFFICERS OF THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

**ROLF LOWENBERG-DEBOER**, CHAIR, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
**JOAN MILTENBERGER**, CO-CHAIR, ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH  
**DOUG MITCHELL**, TREASURER, WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
**ANN CARLSON**, SECRETARY, HENNEPIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**JANICE ANDERSEN**, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, **JULIA FREEMAN**, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, **REV. KRISTEN JACOBSON**, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, **ROLF LOWENBERG-DEBOER**, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, **REV. DENNIS SANDERS**, FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, **CAROL KOEPP**, FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY, **SANDY OBARSKI**, GETHSEMANE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, **ANN CARLSON**, HENNEPIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, **KRISTYN EBERT**, HENNEPIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, **KAMMILAH EL-AMIN-SHABAZZ**, MASJID AN-NUR, **ARELENE EL-AMIN**, MASJID AN-NUR, **CONNIE MARTY**, PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, **SANDRA ANDERSON**, ST. MARY'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, **JOAN MILTENBERGER**, ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH, **MARCY FROST**, TEMPLE ISRAEL, **REV. DOUG MITCHELL**, WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## INTERFAITH TEAM MEMBERS

**KATHY ANDRUS**, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, **STEVE KURBAUGH**, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, **PAT WAMSER**, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, **GAYLE DUSTRUD**, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, **ROBERTA GROENING**, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, **JERRY EDWARDS**, FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY, **TRACY MAY**, FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY, **LOU SCHOEN**, GETHSEMANE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, **MARY ANN MURREY**, HENNEPIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, **KAY NELSON**, HENNEPIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, **JAN NEVILLE**, PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, **ROBERT FISCHER**, PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, **KATIE DAY**, ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH, **ANN PANNIER**, ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH, **NANCY ALFTON**, WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, **NANCY ULVESTAD**, WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, **MONICA WESTERLUND**, WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# Financial Report

	2010 Budget	31-Dec 2010	Over (Un) Budget
Beginning Balance	22,820.37	11,183.50	22,820.37
Contributions:			
Downtown Congregations	50,000.00	21,700.00	(28,300.00)
Private Foundations	7,500.00	-	(7,500.00)
Religious Sources (Denominations)	7,500.00	7,450.00	(50.00)
Other Sources	3,882.00	18,205.56	14,323.56
Total Contributions:	\$ 68,882.00	\$ 47,355.56	(21,526.44)
Expenses:			
Salaries	41,000.00	40,999.91	(0.09)
Payroll Tax	3,126.00	3,035.34	(90.66)
Health/Dental/Disability	6,016.00	6,084.34	68.34
Retirement	3,075.00	982.33	(2,092.67)
Total Salaries & Benefits	\$ 53,217.00	\$ 51,101.92	(2,115.08)
Other Expenses:			
Bookkeeping In Kind	-	-	-
Audit/990	300.00	-	(300.00)
Organizational Development	700.00	-	(700.00)
Telephone Cell	1,000.00	828.04	(171.96)
Telephone Office In Kind	-	-	-
Professional Expenses (Annie)	350.00	334.43	(15.57)
Professional Expenses (Heidi)	950.00	932.33	(17.67)
Rent In Kind	-	-	-
Security In Kind	-	-	-
Utilities In Kind	-	-	-
Computer/Office Equipment	800.00	423.87	(376.13)
Postage	300.00	-	(300.00)
Liability/Workers Comp Insurance	1,000.00	233.20	(766.80)
Printing	265.00	72.26	(192.74)
Program Expenses	10,000.00	5,066.38	(4,933.62)
Total Other Expenses	\$ 15,665.00	\$ 7,890.51	(7,774.49)
Total Expenses	68,882.00	58,992.43	(9,889.57)
Net Balance Surplus/(Deficit)	22,820.37	(453.37)	(23,273.74)



Photo by MCTC Student

- The DCEH held two Panhandling Events, which were community discussions on how we respond to panhandling and what will end it. Together, the events drew over 500 people, with media coverage from WCCO, MinnPost, MPR, and Fox News. The first event was hosted by the Basilica of Saint Mary and the second by Plymouth Congregational Church.
- Augustana Lutheran Church and St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church joined the DCEH in 2010 and raised our number of congregations from 13 to 15 member congregations. Together, we move forward as we are working and creating a strong impact on our community.
- The Steering Committee is forming an Education Committee with oversight of educational events in our congregations as well as the task of creating a major Faith Summit for the Twin Cities faith communities.
- In partnership with the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, over 50 members of the DCEH congregations met with legislators to discuss affordable housing, healthcare, jobs, and more at the annual Day on the Hill event.
- In Senate District 41, the DCEH piloted an organizing model. With two volunteer district leaders, they organized 16 advocates, who contacted their three legislators for a total of 43 times on the issue of homelessness.
- The congregations providing direct services have been building relationships, enhancing communication, and evaluating our services in light of the "managing to ending" continuum for services.
- In partnership with Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), a photo exhibit was created with photos from students of MCTC called *Scratching the Surface*, which are pictures of the direct services provided by downtown congregations of the DCEH.



# Letter from the Congregational Organizer

Dear Colleagues and Friends of DCEH,

The work of the DCEH is both holy work and hopeful work, as we are called to be repairers of the streets and to eliminate inequality. Ending Homelessness restores and repairs the world which has been created for us to share and be active participants. What brings us together across faith traditions is that each of our traditions implores us to be in the world and to seek justice.

*In Islam, one of the Five Pillars is the duty of Zakat, which is the giving of alms. It is considered a personal responsibility for Muslims to ease economic hardship for others and eliminate inequality.*

*Tikkun olam is a concept in Judaism which means “repairing the world” that has come to connote social action and social justice. This phrase is in a Jewish prayer that has been traditionally recited three times a day. For some, this phrase means that Jews are responsibly for the welfare of the whole society.*

*In Unitarian Universalism, four of the 7 principles that congregations affirm and promote comprise compassion, service and social justice. They are: the inherent worth and dignity of every person, justice equity and compassion in human relations, the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all, and respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*

*In the biblical scriptures of Christianity, story after story, as well as the life of Jesus, model and teach the concept of compassion, justice, and service. Jesus summed up the ten commandments, which are the 10 laws by which people should obey and live, in what he deemed the two greatest commandments: “love God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and with all your strength” and to “love your neighbor as yourself.” (Bible, Mark 12:28-31).*

So we continue to seek and move towards what our traditions require us to do and be in the world. We continue to sow hope. The DCEH has provided us a focus and way to live out our faiths and to bring the hope from our faiths into the world.

In my two years as the congregational organizer, the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness has grown in ways that we only imagined when I first started. The more we continue to grow, the more impact we have in our community, especially this past year, for example:

- Raising money together for the Currie Avenue Partnership.
- Raising our voices to save the General Assistance Medical Care Program that provides health care for those making less than \$8,000/year.

The more impact we have, the more hope we sow in Minneapolis. This year we sowed hope for over 150 people who moved off the streets, for 70,000 people on General Assistance Medical Care, and for over 3,000 people who are actively engaged in this topic in our congregations.

Often from the homeless advocates, I hear how thankful they are that the DCEH exists and that it is important work in the city. I, too, am thankful for each of the members of our congregations who support this work generously through volunteerism, giving, educating themselves, or advocating with friends or with legislators. Our presence and action in the community is helping to move the community forward in its understanding of the impact that homelessness has on our society and how cost effective it is to end rather than manage it through charity and shelter.

Our hopes for the next year are to step up the level of engagement and digging deeper, pruning our branches to grow straighter, and continuing to sow hope in ending homelessness.

Salaam, Shalom, Peace,  
Heidi Johnson McAllister  
DCEH Congregational Organizer



Photos by MCTC: Jacob Walter and Kate Maxwell Williams.

## DCEH Bike Program Launches in 2010

*In April of 2010, the DCEH launched the Bike Program, which gives bikes to people who are searching for employment, currently employed, or in school. The DCEH collects adult donated bikes and are then repaired by volunteers at Mr. Michael Recycles Bicycles, a bike shop in St. Paul with which we partner. Bikes are given away at Central Lutheran Church, The Basilica of St. Mary, St. Olaf Catholic Church, and the Dignity Center at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church.*

On Saturday, September 25, the annual “Sofas & Spokes” furniture and bicycle drive was held at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church. Throughout the morning 2 ½ dock trucks of furniture were collected to benefit the DCEH Outreach programs. Couches, tables, chairs, dressers, and other pieces were donated. In addition to the furniture, almost 40 bicycles of various sizes and styles were collected to assist those in need with transportation to work, school, and medical appointments.

***Jack currently has a variety of part-time “handyman” jobs all over Minneapolis and St. Paul. The bike he received through the DCEH Bike Program will assist him in maintaining employment, which will in turn allow him to keep his housing and focus on staying sober.***

*Since its launch in April the DCEH Bike Program has given away 38 bikes to people like Jack. In order to receive a bike, recipients also must attend a safety and repair class where they learn the rules of the road and how to repair a flat tire. Additionally, they receive a bike helmet and lock. Classes will resume in the spring of 2011, and we hope to give away even more bikes and to continue to provide those in need with an affordable and sustainable mode of transportation.*

## Direct Services Collaboration

The **DCEH congregations with Direct Service Programs** are working to shift the paradigm of managing homelessness to ending homelessness in a variety of ways. Over the past year the eight members of the Direct Service Provider Team (DSP) have created a list of indicators for the purpose of discussing whether programs with direct services to people experiencing homelessness and poverty are working to manage or end homelessness. This is a difficult but essential process as we collaborate in moving from charity to justice. Following this process, we will have more clear ways in which to collaborate.

### Community Comes Together for Panhandling Conversations

Congregants in our DCEH congregations have wondered how to respond to panhandlers. In collaboration with St. Stephen's Outreach and zAmya Productions, the Direct Service Provider subcommittee hosted a program that addressed facts and myths about people who panhandle, and the experience of those who panhandle and those who encounter panhandlers. 350 people attended this interactive event at the Basilica of St.



Photo by MCTC Student

Mary in Minneapolis and together discussed how to address panhandlers when you come upon a person asking for money.



Photo by MCTC Student

*The second panhandling event occurred at Plymouth Congregational Church with eight community leaders sharing detailed impacts and solutions. These leaders represented: the Minneapolis police, Downtown Improvement District, Heading Home Hennepin, a downtown realtor, a downtown business, two St. Stephen's Human Services community educators who had panhandled in the past and a congregational leader. One Hundred Fifty people received insights from the panel of experts and tools to share with their congregations, businesses and community organizations on encountering panhandlers.*

### DCEH Exploring Shared Client Database

The direct service agencies affiliated with DCEH use various methods to track client activity. Some track client support on computers, while others use older methods. We assume many of the clients are coming to several or perhaps all of our congregations, however, we have no way of knowing who is seeing whom. Given our goal to collaborate rather than compete, the service providers have agreed to work together to create a common, internet based database. Currently, we are seeking out three options for a database system that will meet our needs. When complete, this new, shared database will be accessed via the Internet, resulting in the opportunity to see what various agencies are doing on a client's behalf and create a shared care plan.

## Letter from the Steering Committee Chair

Dear Friends,

I feel a profound sense of gratitude as I ponder the accomplishments of the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness in 2010. I am eternally grateful to the God we all worship for bringing us together and blessing our efforts to create a healthier community. I am especially thankful for the leadership of Heidi Johnson McAllister, our congregational organizer, and Janice Andersen, former chair of the steering committee.

I also feel a deep sense of hope. Our 15 member congregations along with our community partners, Heading Home Hennepin and Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation, are collaborating in ways that are, in my view, God led. As people of faith we share many common values; working for justice, I believe, is at the very core of each of our respective faith traditions. We share a united hope for a community where every person can perceive a bright future and where everyone has access to decent and affordable housing. We agree that this involves collaboration between government, business, faith communities, and non-profit organizations.

Our work is:

- Shifting from managing to ending homelessness, moving from charity to justice.
- Internally, working within our respective congregations to engage congregants.
- Externally, working with the whole community to end homelessness.

We are sowing hope by reaching out, coordinating, and serving immediate needs with our direct service programs. We are moving forward by advocating for systemic change, so that the long term needs of real people in our community can be met. In educating the public on the subjects of homelessness and poverty we make known the issues, and we present opportunities for engagement. In all of this we strive for human dignity, and indeed, wholeness. The purpose of all of our efforts, from direct services to advocacy for systemic change, is wholeness.

We are all together in this work of ending homelessness. We are making an impact both within our respective faith communities as well as in the greater community. Although our work of ending homelessness is both challenging and complex we believe we can end homelessness. We share the powerful hope that we can live in a society that truly cares for its most vulnerable members, for those living on the margins.

I have witnessed the DCEH reaching out to folks in need, reaching out to each other, and reaching out to the community. It is in this collaborative spirit that we move forward, that we sow hope, and that we engage in the community. May we continue this great work in 2011 and beyond!

Peace!

Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer  
Director of Community Ministry, Central Lutheran Church



## Advocacy Efforts



### Gubernatorial Forum Draws 300 People to Hear from Candidates

On May 24, 2010, the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness held a Gubernatorial Candidate Forum in the sanctuary of Temple Israel. DCEH initiated the Forum which was co-sponsored by the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition and supported by ten additional religious and community groups that work on issues of homelessness and poverty. Eight candidates were present to

answer questions about their plans to address key issues affecting homelessness and poverty in front of the 300 people who were in attendance. The Forum was skillfully moderated by the Rev. James Gertmenian, Senior Pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church, and was recorded by The Uptake and posted on the DCEH website for viewing.



Photos by Alison Kileen

### Two Advocacy Trainings Teach Advocates about Building Relationships with Legislators

On January 11, 2010, over 70 members of our congregations came together at Central Lutheran Church to be updated on the Heading Home Hennepin Plan to End Homelessness and to be briefed on the upcoming legislative session in connection to ending homelessness. Cathy ten Broeke gave a very thorough update to the goals of the 10 year plan for our advocates. We had Jeanne Fox speak from the MN Council of Non-Profits about working with the legislature and building relationships with our legislators for the long haul. Advocates sat by legislative district and had informal conversations to build interfaith relationships across congregations. From many of the participants, we heard that they appreciated conversation across congregations.



Photo by Annie Harm

Our second Advocacy Training brought a more intimate group together to focus on Joint Religious Legislative Day on the Hill. It was a hands-on training to relieve the fear of an in person conversation with

*On November 19, 2010, Temple Israel held a Social Action Shabbat. David Snyder of Jewish Community Action spoke about the importance of working across communities to address social justice issues. Congregants were able to view the Scratching the Surface photo exhibit before and after the service in our lobby and adjacent social hall. As a follow up to the worship service, a Social Action dinner was held on Sunday, November 21, 2010. Representatives of several social service and advocacy organizations spoke to participants, who then had an opportunity to sign up for projects of interest to them.*

In the evening of the Sabbath to End Homelessness at the Basilica of Saint Mary, 150 people gathered to learn about the continuum of caring for folks experiencing homelessness, the continuum of shelter to permanent supportive housing. During this forum, 15 youth showed the video they created about homelessness with interviews of people formerly homeless. After the video, both Monica Nilsson of Saint Steven's Outreach and a staff from Common Bound Community spoke about the reasons homelessness exists and the way to end it in our community.

### DCEH Inspired Events and Work Within Congregations

*On a Friday 1:30pm Prayer Service at Masjid Al-Ikhlbas in December, the Imam Dr. Hamdy El-Sawaf spoke during his sermon about homelessness and the call for Muslims to be active members of the DCEH community for ending homelessness. This sermon raised awareness about homelessness in Minneapolis and around their*



Photo by Joe Bjorndal

*congregational building by sharing stories and statistics. After a remarkable prayer service, 8-10 attendees stayed around for further conversation and more information. A special offering was collected in honor of DCEH.*

Central Lutheran Church's advocacy continued to grow in 2010. Three forums relating to homelessness were held on Sunday mornings: DCEH interviews, zAmya, and Martha Stortz. In addition, two DCEH community events were hosted by Central: an advocacy workshop and a zAmya presentation as part of the November Sabbath for Ending Homelessness. The number of advocates increased to 83, and the participation in Day on the Hill and Project Homeless Connect increased to 13 and 16 respectively. An active Heading Home Central team of 10 people created Smart goals relating to legislative advocacy, community education, awareness raising, and community organizing. This team, led by Ann Oyen, staffs the Take 5 tables, does legislative research, attends and reports on events, helps with the Central website, and continually looks for ways to engage Central's members in advocacy work.



## Interfaith Team Continued

The First Unitarian Society dedicated all activities on Sunday, November 21 to educating the members on issues of homelessness and poverty. That date will go down in the congregation's history as one of the most weather-challenged and most programmatically successful Sundays in recent history. Heidi Johnson McAllister and Cathy ten Broeke spoke at a forum updating us on the history and current status of efforts to end homelessness and reduce poverty. Our guest pulpit speaker, Mikkell Beckmen, Exec. Dir. of St. Stephen's Social Service, framed his thoughts about the historical context around the issue of homelessness in, *Chilled by Greed- Homelessness and Public Policy*. A social justice offering was taken in support of DCEH, making it possible for FUS to more than double last year's support. Proceeds from a soup lunch went to St. Stephen's social Services. The photo exhibit, *Scratching the Surface*, was on view all day.



Photo by Joe Bjordal

For two weeks in November to celebrate the Sabbath for Ending Homelessness, St. Olaf Catholic Church hosted the exhibit, *Homeless Is My Address, Not My Name*. In this unique exhibit of photographs of persons experiencing homelessness along with their stories, which could be heard on cell phones, parishioners and visitors to the church could, in a sense, "meet" a homeless person. The stories reveal their courage in their many efforts to gain self-sufficiency in the face of so many obstacles.

Leading up the 2010 Sabbath for Ending Homelessness, Plymouth Congregational Church kicked off a *Journey to Housing Justice* Campaign with the adult forum with Cathy ten Broeke, Heidi Johnson McAllister, and Annie Harm. Over 80 people from Plymouth attended the forum and the room was buzzing with conversation with the Journey to Housing Justice passport leaving in many hands. Over 160 passports were given between the adult forum and the Sabbath for Ending Homelessness Sundays in early November. The passport provides opportunities for folks to participate, to educate themselves, to volunteer, and to take action. If 75 passports are returned in 2011, \$20,000 will be given to Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation for affordable housing by a pledge of an anonymous donor.



Photo courtesy of St. Olaf Catholic Church

an elected official. Nancy Maeker from A Minnesota Without Poverty led the training and for the fourteen attendees, the event was helpful to understand the purpose of a Day on the Hill event and the importance of follow up conversations. The attendees were grateful for the training as they walked away feeling more comfortable contacting their legislators.

## DCEH Pilots a Grassroots Organizing Effort in Senate District 41

The Advocacy Committee piloted a District Leader program in 2010. The purpose was to give DCEH advocates living in the same senate district a chance to meet and do inter-faith work together on DCEH issues. Our pilot district was Senate District 41 where volunteer District co-Leaders (DL) from Westminster Presbyterian and Plymouth Congregational Churches led 16 advocates in a variety of actions. They hosted a get-acquainted event for advocates where they met each other and learned about the program.

On a rotating basis, advocates contacted their legislators, wrote letters to the editor, and met with public officials. Each participant received DCEH Action Alerts as well. In 2010, four letters to the editor were submitted and two were published, a total of 25 letters or emails were sent to Rep. Downey (10), Rep. Rosenthal (3), and Sen. Michel (12). Additionally, 18 phone calls were made to their offices. One-fourth of the sixteen advocates were experienced advocates, one-fourth were new to advocacy and the rest were somewhere in-between. As DLs, the co-leaders were developing the participants to be advocates.

This fall, we began the 2011 year program by training our DLs in December. This year, the program will be in two senate districts: 41 and 43. The "veteran" DLs are returning and are helping to mentor a new DL from the Basilica of St. Mary. The members of the Advocacy Committee support the DLs throughout the session.

*For one who has been deliberately on the margins of political activism, being a District Leader has been empowering. Taking oneself from "someone needs to do something" opinions to thoughtful letters and phone calls seems easier when working with good background materials and a group of like-minded comrades – I think we feel responsible to each other as well as to the task. It is especially meaningful to work across several faith communities, participating in the Downtown Congregations (plural!) to End Homelessness.*

*Receiving occasional replies from legislators and meeting face to face with them at the JRLC Day on the Hill taught strong lessons in what representative democracy is about. It's hard to judge what short-term impact our advocacy may have, but we must believe that building relationships among advocates and with legislators can make a difference over the long haul. That effort builds community, and it strengthens each of us.*

*-Diana Warner, District Leader, Westminster Presbyterian*

## Advocacy Efforts Continued

### DCEH Advocates Met With Their Legislators

Over 50 members from the congregations of DCEH attended the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition Day on the Hill with 750 people from all over the state of Minnesota. Each of our congregants participated in a program in the morning with the Keynote Speaker, Rabbi Harold Kravitz. After a noontime rally in the rotunda, each participant spoke directly with their legislators and with neighbors who live in their districts.



Photo by JRLC Attendee

### The Advocacy Action Network Expands

2010 was our second year of the Take Five Table, and we have begun to expand our work with the Take Five Table by creating the table as a connecting hub to homelessness by having opportunities for education, advocacy, and volunteering, but also to have updates on Nicollet Square and the Currie Avenue Partnership. Also expanding was the advocacy network with over 700 congregational members as part of the action network. This year, we had 15 action alerts, which included the following topics:

- **State Level:** Welcome Legislators to the Legislative Session, General Assistance Medical Care (three times), Protect Safety Net Programs (three times, one of the three actions was to write letters to the editor), Save General Assistance and Emergency General Assistance (twice, one action asking to save these programs, one action thanking legislators for saving these programs).
- **National Level:** Hate Crimes Against the Homeless Statistics Act, Support for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance, Funding for the National Housing Trust Fund, Ending Homelessness Nationally.
- **Local Level:** Maintain Funding for Minneapolis Housing Trust Fund, Thank You to County Commissioners for Support of Heading Home Hennepin.

## Interfaith Team

### Sabbath to End Homelessness: Moving Forward, Sowing Hope

As a core goal of the Interfaith Team, we raise awareness within our congregations and engage members in understanding the causes of homelessness. With the second annual Sabbath to End Homelessness (STEh), the Interfaith Team planned activities and education for engaging members within the DCEH congregations, which were:

- The zAmya Theater Project production for all the DCEH members to attend, with over 80 people that attended and learned about the reasons homelessness occurs and to discuss how to end homelessness together!
- Three articles were written to be used as education within congregational newsletters. The topics were the reasons homelessness exist, the cost of homelessness, and ways to get involved.

### Sabbath Events in Congregations

Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church organized 5 adult educational programs focusing on different aspects of homelessness. One of the "best received" programs was a panel of Dignity Center clients who spoke about their journeys out of homelessness. They described the multiple issues they had to overcome in order to become stable and talked about the helpful support and structure provided by their Dignity Center Advocates. These stories of transformation helped the audience see that homelessness can be ended if homeless people are supported in their journeys. Additionally, Hennepin Avenue hosted the *Scratching the Surface* photo exhibit for one week during their Sabbath events.



Photo by MCTC Students

*Westminster has participated in DCEH's first two Sabbath to End Homelessness efforts. In both 2009 and 2010, a homelessness/DCEH display was put up in the church's main showcase to convey key information to members of the congregation. In both 2009 and 2010, Rev. Tim Hart-Andersen focused his sermon on homelessness. In 2010, we also had a moment for mission during the two services which highlighted DCEH's efforts. In 2010, our social justice forum following the service that day featured Cathy ten Broeke and Gail Dorfman, who did an excellent job of conveying the current state of homelessness in Minneapolis and the strides that are being made. Leading up to STEh 2010, we had an information table after the 10:30 a.m. service. After the STEh worship service, the DCEH information table was buzzing with activity, with many people requesting additional information.*