

UNITED INTEFAITH ACTION OF SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS



Annual Report 2010-2011



United Interfaith Action (UIA), a faith based organization, promotes social and economic justice and improves the quality of life of all residents in Southeastern Massachusetts with a specific focus on the cities of New Bedford, Fall River and Dartmouth, by recruiting and training clergy and lay leaders to act on issues of greatest concern, and by founding social action on the teachings of our different faith traditions



Fr. Paul Bernier, Rector of Saint Mary's Catholic Cathedral, prepares to open the proceedings with prayer at UIA Public Action. April 3, 2011. Saint Mary's Cathedral School. Fall River, Massachusetts

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*Jack Livramento
President of the Board*

Dear friends and supporters,

I send you greetings on behalf of the Board of Directors and the member organizations of United Interfaith Action (UIA).

We have come to the end of a very active and successful year, reaching milestones both in Fall River and in New Bedford. We want to share those victories with you, because they were reached in part with your support. We also want to thank the clergy in our churches and synagogue, our dedicated staff and intern, all the leaders integrated into the different leadership teams, and all the members of our congregations who responded to the call for justice action after public action. Thank you everyone, for you have made it possible.

We also would like to thank the elected officials in Fall River and New Bedford for their willingness to enter into a constructive conversation with UIA for the benefit of all residents. Working together, we will be able to improve the region for all of our families.

This Annual Report is but a summary of the work that was done during the year, a mere introduction into the work of UIA, but it does not represent the countless hours of planning, and the countless conversations that took place to share our inner vision and commitment with one another.

As most of you know, both Rev. Scott Spencer, our Director and Lead Organizer based in Fall River, and Daniel Lesser, our Organizer based in New Bedford, have plans to leave us as the new fiscal year begins. Their excellent organizing work will stay with us, and we will be able to build upon it to improve our communities in the future. Thank you Scott and Daniel for your commitment, please come and visit often. And thanks to Liz Aeschlimann, who worked as an intern in New Bedford, and will probably stay with us during the next year.

Right before the end of the year our Board of Directors was expanded, from 7 members to 17 members, and for the first time in many years we have a Board that represents all the leadership teams in both cities and in all the member congregations. We are excited about the consolidation of this new Board, and about the potential that this Board has to mobilize communities and to deepen into our common vision for the whole region. Join me to welcome all of our new Board members!

We hope that you will renew your commitment to UIA for the new year. Despite the social crisis in which we live, we have exciting times ahead of us at UIA.

In Solidarity,

Jack Livramento
President of the Board



*Rev. Scott Spencer
Director/Lead Organizer*

Dear friends,

I am happy to report to all of you that we have completed a very successful year, with strong public actions, great participation on the part of clergy and lay leaders from our local congregations, and very strategic commitments on the part of elected officials in New Bedford and Fall River to shape our communities for the better.

As many of you know, I have decided to go back to active ministry within the United Church of Christ, and I will be leaving UIA on July 8th. We are currently seeking a new Director to come and lead the organization. We are confident that we will hire someone competent to play that role.

It has been my privilege to work with all of you for the last three years. Thank you for all of your support to the work that we did together. We have certainly put our faith into action in the last three years. This month of June saw effective public actions and your mobilization at our local congregations, to create social change for the future.

At the end of this fiscal year we were able to expand our Board of Directors and to make it representative of all the different leadership teams in the organization. I believe that is a key development for the future, and hope that the Board will be consolidated after I leave. This new Board of Directors has a great potential to coordinate all the organizing work being implemented, and to organize public actions that include both New Bedford and Fall River.

I would also like to thank Daniel Lesser, our Organizer based in New Bedford, and Liz Aeschlimann, our intern based in New Bedford, for their hard and efficient work. It was very nice to be part of this team that has come to the completion of this fiscal year.

I will not be a stranger, hopefully I will provide counsel and assistance to the new Director as the person is hired and takes over the position. UIA will always be close to my heart.

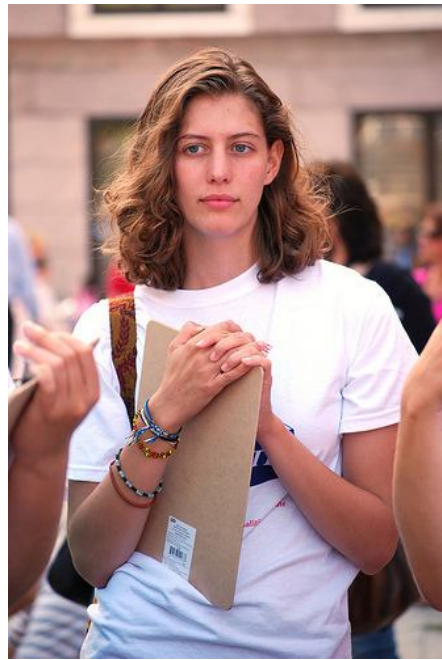
Best wishes to all of you. Keep your commitment strong for the times require it.

In Solidarity,

Rev. Scott Spencer
Director / Lead Organizer



*Daniel Lesser
New Bedford Organizer*



*Liz Aeschlimann
Organizing Intern in
New Bedford*

Daniel Lesser, UIA Organizer in New Bedford, will move on during the next fiscal year to become the Director of the Essex County Community Organization (ECCO), based on Lynn. Our best wishes go with Daniel as he begins his tenure as the Director of that organization.

Liz Aeschlimann worked as an Organizing Intern in New Bedford during the fiscal year that comes to an end. Hopefully, Liz will continue to work with UIA during the next fiscal year.

Thank you both for your excellent organizing work!

Board of Directors

(June 30th, 2011)

Officers:

Jack Livramento, President

Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Church
New Bedford

Dorothy Lopes, Vice President

Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Church
New Bedford

Marian (Toosie) Margolies, Treasurer

United Parish Church of Christ
Fall River

Rev. Don Mier, Secretary

First Baptist Church
Fall River

Fall River Representatives:

Carol Coie, Member

St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral

Felix Gonzalez, Member

St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral Hispanic Apostolate

Yvette Mancini, Member

St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral

Philomena Medeiros, Member

St. Michael's Catholic Church

Donna Morrell, Member

St. Joseph's Catholic Church

Lorraine Sherry, Member

St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral

Arlí Da Silva, Member

Christ Is Life Presbyterian Church

New Bedford Representatives:

Beth Andrews, Member

Tifereth Israel Congregation

Maria Ayala, Member

Our Lady of Guadalupe @ Saint James Catholic Church

Mike Blais, Member

Grace Episcopal Church

Peggy Dias, Member

Saint Lawrence Catholic Church

Mark Medeiros, Member

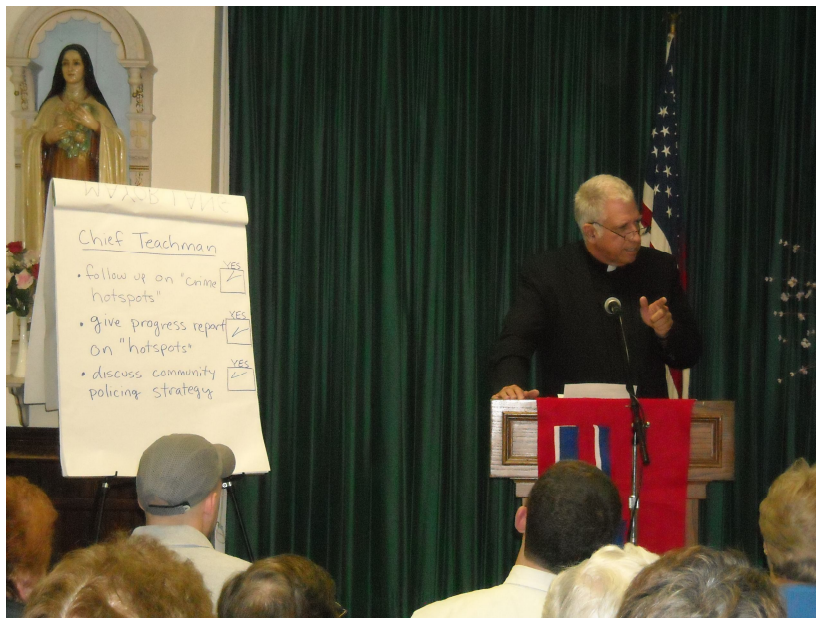
Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church

Sister Marianna Sylvester, Member

Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church

Mission

United Interfaith Action (UIA), a faith based organization, promotes social and economic justice and improves the quality of life of all residents in Southeastern Massachusetts with a specific focus on the cities of New Bedford, Fall River, and Dartmouth, by recruiting and training clergy and lay leaders to act on issues of greatest concern, founding social action on the teachings of our different faith traditions



Fr. John Oliveira, Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church, addresses the participants at a UIA Public Action on public safety in New Bedford.
June 2010

Reforming the Public School System in New Bedford



Rabbi Raphael J. Kanter, of Tifereth Israel Synagogue, begins the Public Action proceedings with prayer.



UIA Education Public Action. June 2011.
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School,
New Bedford, Massachusetts

Need

New Bedford's public schools are in crisis. In graduation rates, performance, and equality, New Bedford ranks near the bottom of the state on nearly every indicator of educational quality. Just 53.5% of high school students graduate in four years; Hispanic and African American students consistently score 6-10% below White students on MCAS scores; moreover, the student growth percentage (SGP) in the New Bedford, measuring how much students improve, is one of the lowest five in the state (39% SGP in English Language Arts, 40% SGP in Math).

In May, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released a district report highlighting serious concerns in all areas investigated, including leadership, governance, curriculum, assessment, financial management, professional development and student support.

Strategy for Change

As a grassroots organization, United Interfaith Action, a collaborative of 16 congregations representing more than 15,000 families in New Bedford and Fall River, we heard the truth of these statistics in the stories of our people. After 200 conversations with parents, students, teachers, and community members, we formed a team of leaders across six congregations in New Bedford, and began to look deeper at the problem. Research in New Bedford, Oakland and Boston, led us to the model of small autonomous schools as a way to encourage innovation, empower teachers and principals to adapt to the needs of their students, and create models of excellence for the entire school district.

On June 20, 2011 to demonstrate the large-scale community support for this approach, UIA's member congregations organized a 600-person community meeting where we asked the Superintendent, Mayor, and several School Committee members, to commit their support for small autonomous schools for New Bedford. They each made public commitments to do this that night.

The next phase of our work will occur in two stages: policy and implementation.

Small Autonomous Schools (SAS) Policy

Between now and October, UIA will work with the Superintendent, Mayor (who serves as Chairman ex officio of the School Committee), and three School Committee representatives, to come to consensus on a New Bedford Small Autonomous Schools Policy. Through a series of working group meetings, which each of the officials committed to participate in, all parties will define the parameters of New Bedford SAS, agree on the procedure for soliciting and evaluating SAS design proposals, and chart the path forward. To guide this process, we have engaged Dan French from the Center for Collaborative Education as a technical expert on SAS, meeting facilitator, and primary policy writer.

The Superintendent, Mayor and School Committee have agreed to a vote on the Small Autonomous Schools policy at a School Committee meeting in October.

Small Autonomous Schools Implementation

Once the New Bedford Small Autonomous Schools Policy is formally adopted by the School Committee, UIA will work with the School District and expert technical assistants to implement the policy and support the creation of excellent schools including:

- Publicizing the opportunity to design SAS and building capacity for strong, representative design teams
- Holding informational meetings to train potential design teams on the requirements and options for SAS
- Convening committee to review SAS proposals according to process established in Small Autonomous Schools Working Group
- Working with Budget Office to prepare them to allocate funds to SAS
- Working with Human Resources Department to prepare them for SAS hiring process
- Building New Bedford School Department capacity to support SAS

We foresee this stage of support and capacity building for the first wave of SAS lasting from November through September of 2012.

Defending Immigration Rights in New Bedford and Fall River



Rev. Gerson Anunciacao, Pastor of Christ Is Life Presbyterian Church, addresses the participants at Public Action



UIA Immigration Rights Public Action at Christ Is Life Presbyterian Church / First Baptist Church. June 18, 2011
Fall River, Massachusetts

Need:

Over the last 4 months, UIA's leadership has increasingly discerned the need to devote more staff support to train and organize the recent immigrant groups within our member congregations. Further, the UIA leadership believes that these growing immigrant communities are being left out of the local decision-making process politically and that without a trained grassroots leadership, the voice of these communities will not be heard. This project will seek to make the hopes and concerns of immigrants in New Bedford, Fall River, and the region a factor in the formation of public policy, budget decisions, essential services, as well as basic civil and legal rights.

Another reason that UIA is initiating this project is the demographic changes occurring in the region. Latinos represent the most dramatic change. In New Bedford (a city of approximately 92,000 people), the Latino community has grown to 10.2% in 2010. In Fall River (a city of approximately 93,000), the Latino community has grown to 3.3% in 2010. (Nationally, Latinos comprise approximately 12.5% of the population of the U.S.) (source – 2010 US census bureau) There are no recent figures on the Brazilian communities of Fall River and New Bedford. But 2 active UIA member congregations in Fall River serve approximately 400 families in Roman Catholic and Protestant congregations with estimates of approximately another 3,000 Brazilians in Fall River alone.

Finally, in this project UIA cannot ignore the national "backdrop" on our local work for immigration rights and reform. There is a clear need for short-term protection of immigrants in the workplace and in their communities, but also the longer-term and systemic need for serious immigration reform in the United States. When combined with recent anti-immigrant policies in Arizona and other states, the fear and pressures on immigrants in this region are causing severe stress for individuals and families.

Goals and Objectives:

1. Strengthen the leadership capacity of recent immigrants to speak on their own behalf

- Immigrant leaders within 4 predominately Hispanic or Brazilian congregations are being recruited
- On-going leadership training is being implemented to develop basic community organizing skills such as identifying issues, mobilizing other community members to participate in public meetings and advocacy efforts, researching possible solutions, negotiating with responsible officials

2. Build an understanding and respect for recent immigrant communities

- Opportunities are being organized for recent immigrants to “tell their story” to others within their congregation and from other congregations and the wider community through the local media and other strategies to build relationships across ethnic barriers
- A broader base of support is being built for recent immigrants from business, social service, and government to be civically engaged

3. Organize locally to address issues of basic rights and programs for immigrants

- Public meetings between the Mayors and the Chiefs of Police of local Police Departments and recent immigrant communities are being held to build a working relationship of trust so that public safety concerns are raised, so that witnesses of crime come forward, and so that racial/ ethnic profiling can be prevented
- Public meetings with Congressional and Senate representatives to advocate for fair and just policies for recent immigrant communities are also being organized



Rev. Don Meir, Pastor of First Baptist Church, addresses the participants at UIA Public Action on Immigration Rights. November 18, 2010
Fall River, Massachusetts



Fall River Mayor William Flanagan addresses the participants at UIA Public Action

Advocating for Youth Rights and Public Safety



Fr. Ed Correia, Pastor of Saint Michael and Saint Joseph Catholic Churches opens the UIA Public Action with prayer



Odette Amarelo addresses the participants at UIA Public Action, while Fall River Mayor William Flanagan listens. St. Michael's Catholic School. June 14, 2011

Over the last year, the clergy and lay volunteer leaders of United Interfaith Action (UIA) have identified the issue of public safety and youth rights as essential to the needs and aspirations of the communities of New Bedford and Fall River. Also over the last year, UIA's member congregations have held 2 Public Actions, one at Saint Mary's Catholic School on April 3, 2011 and one more at Saint Michael's Catholic School on June 14, 2011 to present requests to our elected officials for improvement of local public safety, and for the enhancement of youth opportunities. Together, both actions mobilized more than 1,100 members.

The findings made during the last year reaffirm a commitment on the part of UIA and its member congregations through the years to address these issues. In past years, UIA was able to leverage \$11 million in state funding for the Shannon Grant for gang intervention and suppression strategies, in collaboration with other partner organizations across the state. The Shannon Grant funds made possible a Street Outreach Worker program, now active in New Bedford & Fall River, and also made possible more funding to increase the capacity of police departments to suppress criminal activities.

This project seeks to continue UIA's work on this community issue through the following strategies of community mobilization and public policy advocacy: 1. Improve public safety for senior citizens living in our communities; 2. Lower the drop-out rate by identifying dropped out students and developing an intervention strategy to help them get back to school; 3. Increase maintenance and care of public parks, and other recreational facilities for youth; and, 4. Increase the communication and relationship between senior citizens and youth and police and traffic officers active in the local communities.



Rev. Matt Stewart, Pastor at Church of the Holy Spirit Episcopal
Addresses the participants at UIA Public Action at
Saint Michael's Catholic School. June 14, 2011.
Fall River, Massachusetts



Carol Coie addresses the participants, while Senator Rodrigues
prepares to state his commitment. UIA Public Action at
Saint Mary's Catholic School. April 3, 2011.
Fall River, Massachusetts

Long Term Accomplishments

Over the years, our work has led to greater access to after-school programs, a reduction in waiting lists for Adult Basic Education and Job Training, more community police officers, and increase funding for violence prevention and intervention efforts. Some specific examples of what UIA has accomplished include:

- ✓ 40 new after-school programs in New Bedford and Fall River
- ✓ \$28 million for Adult Basic Education and Workforce Training
- ✓ \$100,000 of funding for ABE/ESOL in Fall River
- ✓ Increased hours of operation for the libraries of New Bedford & Fall River
- ✓ Increased the New Bedford police force by 14 community police officers
- ✓ \$11 million in state funding for the Shannon Grant for gang intervention and suppression strategies
- ✓ A Street Worker program, now active in New Bedford & Fall River
- ✓ A decentralized police strategy in New Bedford
- ✓ A \$2 million increase in YouthWorks, which funds summer jobs for teenagers
- ✓ Improved high school transportation system in Fall River and early intervention strategies as part of UIA's drop-out prevention campaign
- ✓ State funding through the Department of Public Health for youth violence prevention programs in Fall River and New Bedford

Un-audited Financial Statements As of June 30th, 2011

Net Worth - As of 6/30/2011 As of 6/30/2011

Account	6/30/2011 Balance
ASSETS	
Cash and Bank Accounts	
Checking	63,697.16
TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts	63,697.16
TOTAL ASSETS	63,697.16
LIABILITIES	
	0.00
OVERALL TOTAL	63,697.16

Cash Flow 7/1/2010 through 6/30/2011

Category	7/1/2010- 6/30/2011
INFLOWS	
Income	
Donations	6,577.90
Dues or Interest Income	9,564.75
Local Grants	136,000.00
Non - Local Grants	27,000.00
Travel Reimbursement	1,677.50
TOTAL Income	180,820.15
TOTAL INFLOWS	180,820.15
OUTFLOWS	
Expense	
Benefits (Health-Dental-Pension)	29,765.90
Cell Phone	1,389.19
Employee-Staff	
Consultant Services	1,680.00
Staff (Salaries)	
TOTAL Staff (Salaries)	97,365.17
TOTAL Employee-Staff	99,045.17
Financial Secretary	1,148.00
JOI Fellow	4,030.00
Meeting Expenses	687.10
Office Supplies & Postage	1,088.68
Office Telephone-Internet (FR & NB)	1,976.71
Payroll Service	781.20
PICO (Annual Contract)	7,300.00
Staff - Leadership Training	209.19
Travel	11,632.90
TOTAL Expense	159,054.04
Reimbursements	1,791.70
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	160,845.74
OVERALL TOTAL	19,974.41

Member Congregations
(June 30th, 2011)

New Bedford:

- ✓ Congregation Tifereth Israel
- ✓ Grace Episcopal Church
- ✓ Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church
- ✓ Our Lady of Guadalupe at Saint James Catholic Church
- ✓ Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church
- ✓ Saint Anthony of Padua Catholic Church
- ✓ Saint Lawrence Martyr Catholic Church

Fall River:

- ✓ Christ is Life Brazilian Presbyterian Church
- ✓ Church of the Holy Spirit Episcopal
- ✓ First Baptist Church
- ✓ Saint Mary's Catholic Cathedral
- ✓ Saint Mary's Cathedral Brazilian Apostolate
- ✓ Saint Mary's Cathedral Hispanic Apostolate
- ✓ Saint Joseph's Catholic Church
- ✓ Saint Michael's Catholic Church
- ✓ United Parish United Church of Christ
- ✓ Upper Room Ministry

Dartmouth:

- ✓ Saint Julie Billiart's Catholic Church (*In exploratory process*).

AFFILIATIONS:

- ✓ Massachusetts Communities Action Network (MCAN)
- ✓ PICO National Network.

UNITED INTEFAITH ACTION OF SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS



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United Interfaith Action (UIA) of Southeastern Massachusetts
is a nonprofit organization under the laws of the State of Massachusetts,
and a tax-exempt organization under the 501(c)3 provision of the Internal Revenue Code.
All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.