



Catholic Community of Pleasanton Social Justice Newsletter

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CCOP Teams Building New Habitat Neighborhood in Oakland

For the past five years CCOP parishioners have been joining other East Bay church members in building affordable homes for lower income people in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

The last two years have seen the completion of



twenty new homes at the Edes Avenue site near the Oakland Coliseum. Any CCOP person over eighteen may work on the Saturday morning teams, and tools are provided. No prior construction work is required. Car pools are formed from the parish church when needed, and there is much camaraderie among the CCOP workers, who share their experiences on the way home. Zeferino (Zef) Jimenez has worked on Habitat Saturdays three times. According to Zef the highlight of the experience is working side by side with the people who are going to live in the houses. Zef says that these new homeowners have to put in a certain amount of work or "sweat equity," and they are people trying to better themselves. He met a father-owner and his son on one work occasion and enjoyed swinging a hammer side by side with them. The next work date for Habitat is February 21. For further information or to sign up for a Habitat Saturday, parishioners can call Diane Ravnik at 425-9477.

Parishioners To Help S.F. Homeless On February 11 In Homeless Connect

Homeless Connect is a project sponsored by the Mayor's Office in San Francisco to bring one-stop services to the homeless in the city. CCOP volunteers have been participating in this comprehensive one-day program, which is held every two months at Bill Graham Auditorium in downtown San Francisco.



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Homeless men and women are recruited from the streets and social security, employment, and veterans services are offered them where applicable, as well as medical and dental care, eyeglasses, haircuts, and other help by the participating agencies and volunteers. Volunteers may choose among the jobs available. CCOP parishioner Diane Ravnik worked as an Escort, taking people to the services they most wanted. She recalls a memorable experience escorting one homeless man who was delighted to hear that she came from a church group, because somehow he had a faith connection too---that made them both feel comfortable. Normally the CCOP volunteers have gone to San Francisco by BART. The next Homeless Connect will be held on February 11. To volunteer, parishioners can call Suzanne Slupesky at 352-8447.

Nystroms Visit Israel/Palestine With Interfaith Group



In August of 2008 Margaret and Gustavo Nystrom of CCOP spent two weeks in Israel and Palestine with an interfaith peace delegation of fourteen Christians, Jews, and some Muslims seeking to learn first-hand about the struggles in the area. Says Gus, "We met with human rights workers, Israelis and Palestinians of all kinds, stayed in a Palestinian refugee camp, visited Israeli kibbutzim near Gaza, went to Israeli and Palestinian universities, and explored religious sites." By way of background, most recently Hamas, which had won the election in Palestine and formed the Palestinian government, kicked Fatah out of the Gaza Strip, leaving the West Bank under the control of Fatah and the Gaza Strip under the control of Hamas. In summing up their experience, Gus states, "The occupation of Palestine is a very tough military occupation which restricts the rights of Palestinians to travel, meet, worship, build, farm, fish, drill for water, etc. In the eyes of the Israelis, the severity of the occupation is justified by Israel's need for security." "But," he continues, "in the eyes of the Palestinians and United Nations declarations, the occupied territories should be ruled by International law."



Thinking About Social Justice? Check out:

Hope's Boy: A Memoir,
by Andrew Bridge

"...an affecting, moving memoir...a poignant cry for rethinking our foster care system."

Alex Kotlowitz, author of
There Are No Children
and The Other Side of
The River