

Fall 2008 Vision 2020 E-Newsletter

The Vision 2020 Campaign is a collaborative effort of the [Wisconsin Community Action Program Association \(WISCAP\)](#), the [Wisconsin Council on Children & Families \(WCCF\)](#) and the [Wisconsin Head Start Association](#). Visit www.2020wi.org for more information.

Welcome to all of you who have recently become part of the Vision 2020 Campaign! Already, more than 1,200 individuals and nearly 100 organizations have become part of this campaign to end child poverty in Wisconsin! Help grow this campaign by taking just a minute to forward this e-newsletter to your friends, colleagues, and neighbors and encourage them to join you in becoming part of this perfect vision for Wisconsin.

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1. WISCAP's Poverty Matters! Conference

On September 18th & 19th, nearly 300 people from around the state gathered in Appleton for the Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP)'s Poverty Matters! Conference (formerly known as the Women & Poverty Conference). In addition to Jodie-Levin Epstein from the Center on Law & Social Policy, Department of Children & Families Secretary Reggie Bicha and Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman, the conference featured numerous informative, insightful, thought-provoking speakers and workshops, including a plenary presentation by the inspirational leaders of the Fox Cities Project Promise Poverty Coalition. This was the largest attendance at WISCAP's annual poverty conference ever, and participants praised the "energy, excitement & sense of optimism," the opportunity the conference provided to remember that "We are all working to fight poverty in so many different ways and this gives us a chance to come together, learn from each other, and return to our sites energized."

For more information about this conference and future WISCAP events, visit www.wiscap.org

2. Updates from Vision 2020 & Anti-Poverty Groups Around the State!

As you'll see from the numerous updates below, anti-poverty activity is happening all over the state! Send us information about what your organization & community are doing to raise awareness about poverty and to work collaboratively to find and implement solutions. We'll post your event information on the Vision 2020 website and include updates & information about how to get involved in the Vision 2020 e-newsletter.

Dane County:

The Dane County Poverty Task Force – created by the Dane County Board of Supervisors and charged with analyzing local poverty data and coming up with recommendations to address child poverty in Dane County - has been appointed by the County Executive and has started to meet. The chair of this Task Force is Greta Hansen, the Executive Director of Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin.

For more information about the Dane County Poverty Task Force's progress, direction and activities, contact Greta Hansen at: 608-246-4730 ext. 217 or ghansen@cacscw.org.

Eau Claire County:

Over 130 people attended the ChangeMakers Summits held in August & September in Augusta and Eau Claire. Participants included elected officials, representatives from local churches, businesses, educators, and concerned community members. The summits increased awareness of poverty and provided an opportunity for participants to identify gaps and barriers in the community and formulate ideas for grassroots solutions. 89% of participants indicated that the summit successfully worked to engage them in impacting poverty. The top local solutions identified were: expand economic development efforts to attract jobs paying living wages (Augusta) and support community-based treatment for offenders instead of incarceration (Eau Claire).

For more information or to find out how to get connected to the next steps in the Eau Claire area, contact Julie Keown-Bomar at (715) 839-4712 or Julie.Keown-Bomar@co.eau-claire.wi.us.

Fox Cities:

The Project Promise Poverty Coalition of the Fox Cities will hold its Annual Report to the Community on January 16th from 10am-Noon at the Performing Arts Center in downtown Appleton. The Governor has been invited to speak and Department of Children & Families Secretary Reggie Bicha will be attending. In Project Promise's first year, the group has created a website (projectpromisefoxcities.org), designed committees to address specific areas, and spoken to various community groups to raise awareness about poverty locally. The Information & Analysis committee has been working on furthering the work of the Poverty Root Cause Analysis Project that was started in partnership with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. The Awareness and Education committee has created a Speaker's Bureau that will continue to promote the Coalition and bring awareness to others in the local community. The Action & Impact committee has been working on identifying local literacy efforts and how the Coalition could support their work as well and what else in the area of literacy can be done at the local level to help eliminate poverty. They are also planning an Interfaith Focus on Poverty Week that will take place next year.

For more information about any of Project Promise's activities, contact Andrew Konkel at Cap Services, Inc. at akonkel@capmail.org.

Kenosha County:

The Kenosha County Emergency Services Network (ESN) endorsed the Vision 2020 campaign several months ago and is hard at work formulating its action plan and next steps. They have already formed a new partnership with Carthage College and with Jen Jackson, a Kenosha County Board Supervisor, to highlight poverty issues. Members of the ESN gave an educational update on poverty data to the County Board's Human Services Committee and they have been asked to return to present more information. The group is also planning a community book read on a book related to poverty and is beginning the process of working with the Kenosha Library System to plan this community event.

For more information about the activities in Kenosha County or to get involved, contact Pam Halbach at 262-657-0840, ext. 15 or pam.halbach@rkcaa.org.

La Crosse County:

In October, in addition to the ongoing work of the La Crosse County Poverty Task Force, the group co-hosted (with WCCF) a successful candidate forum on Poverty & Economic Opportunity in La Crosse. The forum featured State Senator Dan Kapanke and challenger Tara Johnson, Cheryl Hancock (who was seeking a seat in the State Assembly), and Representative Jennifer Shilling. The forum, held in the La Crosse County Human Services building, was moderated by Dick Mial, editor of the La Crosse Tribune, and by members of the La Crosse-area League of Women Voters. Several of the candidates said that the questions (about homelessness, job creation, access to education & training, health care and the causes of poverty) were the hardest they had to answer at any of their many candidate forums. Read the La Crosse Tribune's coverage of the forum here:

<http://www.lacrossetribune.com/articles/2008/10/30/news/z04poor.txt>.

For more information about the La Crosse County Poverty Task Force or future anti-poverty events in the La Crosse area, contact Renee Weston at 608-785-6095 or weston.renee@co.la-crosse.wi.us

Milwaukee:

SDC's Job & Resource Fair and 2nd Annual Symposium on Poverty

On December 9th, the Social Development Commission (SDC) is hosting its 2nd Annual Symposium on Poverty. The event features Marc Lamont and Dr. John A. Powell and will be held at the Midwest Airlines Center, with reception starting at 5 and dinner at 6pm. The cost is \$40/person. The event is titled "Building the Bridge of Hope" and aims to empower Milwaukee County residents with the resources to move beyond poverty. Learn more and register at www.cr-sdc.org.

That same day, December 9th, from 10am-2pm, SDC is also hosting a Job & Resource Fair – also at the Midwest Airlines Center – which will feature workshops and numerous vendors with access to jobs, employment service, health care awareness, financial literacy, education, driver's license recovery, onsite interviews with child support enforcement agents, senior services, legal services, housing resources, community & human services, and more. Admission to the Job & Resource Fair is free & open to the public.

Contact Diane Robinson at (414) 906-2804 for more information about the Job & Resource Fair or the Symposium on Poverty.

Make It Work Milwaukee Coalition:

The Make It Work Milwaukee Coalition took an active role in advocating for health and human services and transportation in the Milwaukee County Budget. Our focus was on preserving funding for services and opposing fee increases – and the budget passed by County supervisors does both. We will continue to monitor the process as the County Executive moves forward with possible vetoes. Continuing priorities include the need for a dedicated funding source for transportation, as well as major concerns about the County's failure to provide timely and accurate help for people applying for and maintaining benefits (Foodshare and Medical Assistance)..

For more information about the Make It Work Milwaukee Coalition's activities & meetings, contact Barbara Beckert at 414-773-4646 or barbarab@drwi.org.

September Poverty, Economic Opportunity & Cities Breakfast

On September 17th, nearly 100 people gathered at the Milwaukee Center for Independence for a breakfast discussion on Poverty, Economic Opportunity & Cities, featuring Jodie Levin Epstein of

the Center for Law & Social Policy. The event was hosted by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and WCCF and was co-sponsored by Community Advocates, the National Association of Social Workers-WI, 9 to 5 National Association of Working Women, SEIU and the Social Development Commission.

Levin-Epstein described how, after years of being invisible, topics related to poverty are back on the agenda nationally, in statehouses around the country, and in local policy discussions as well. Noting that “poverty is purple,” she pointed out that unlike many issues which have featured starkly partisan debate, poverty is emerging as an issue that is not owned by one party or the other and that can create a “big tent” approach to ensuring opportunity for all. Following Levin-Epstein’s remarks, George Lightbourn of the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute and State Representative Tamara Grigsby (D, 18th District) shared data, perspectives and ideas on moving forward on poverty issues. The discussion was moderated by Deborah Blanks of the Social Development Commission.

For a copy of Levin-Epstein’s presentation, contact Vicky Selkove at vselkove@wccf.org

Rock County:

The Vision 2020 momentum is growing in Rock County. An initial forum was held in June to explore the potential of a Rock County effort. Nicole Harrison from the Fox Cities area shared the Project Promise experience and successful initiative. Currently a local planning group is formulating a plan to build awareness about children and poverty in Rock County, to generate energy in response to local issues, and to identify action steps to address child poverty concerns. Interested community members are welcome to join the effort. The group is hosting a December 9th Rock County Vision 2020 Community Leaders Awareness Breakfast in Beloit, featuring U.S. Representative Tammy Baldwin.

Contact Marc Perry (mperry@community-action.org), Cheryl Hutchison (chutchison@cfsheadstart.org), or Connie Robers (crobers@cfsheadstart.org) for more information about the Rock County Vision 2020 group or to RSVP for the December 9th breakfast event.

Sheboygan County:

On October 1st, UW-Extension-Sheboygan County, the Every Family Coordinating Council, the Family Resource Center of Sheboygan County and WCCF hosted a candidate forum on Poverty & Economic Opportunity on the UW-Sheboygan County campus. The forum featured: Representative Dan LeMahieu (R, District 59), Representative Terry Van Akkeren (D, District 26) and challenger Alex Pieper; and Representative Steve Kestell (R, District 27). The candidates responded to questions about poverty, child care, health care, affordable housing, jobs & wages, and education from moderator Al Hardersen, Dean & CEO of UW-Sheboygan and also questions from the audience. This was the first time advocates & service providers in the Sheboygan-area remembered having candidates for state office answer questions specifically about poverty-related issues. The event was covered by the Sheboygan Press newspaper, including a live stream of the entire event, which can be found here:

<http://www.sheboyganpress.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=videonetwork&videoID=875959525&GID=61D7J9DS/dM9PS4I/hiKv5S9IVJ3s0vNUPmvyL7B2FI%3D>

For more information about the candidate forum or future Sheboygan County poverty activities, contact Mary Jo Tittl at 920-892-6706 or mjtittl@frc-sc.org, Jane Jensen at 920-459-5901 or jane.jensen@ces.uwex.edu or Julie Perkovich at jperkovich@hsshebco.org.

Waushara County:

The Waushara County Vision 2020 group is holding its kickoff event on November 17th. The event, titled, “Family & Community Town Supper (FACTS)” is focused on Vision 2020: Ending Poverty in Waushara County. The event is a free dinner presentation & discussion.

To learn more about the Waushara County Vision 2020 group, future activities, and hear how the kickoff event went, contact Jan Novak at 920-787-6550 or jan.parkstreet@co.waushara.wi.us.

3. Wisconsin Receives Grant to Host Governor's Summit on Poverty & Economic Opportunity

In late September, Wisconsin was awarded a grant by the National Governor's Association (NGA) to host a Governor's Summit on Poverty & Economic Opportunity. Nine other states were given funding to host similar summits on poverty. The summit must be held before April 30, 2009. Read more about the summit here: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/press/2008/092408_wi_receives_grant.htm

4. Audio Conference Call on Poverty Task Forces

On Monday, November 24th, from 3-4pm EST, the Center for Law & Social Policy (CLASP) is hosting an audio conference titled, Poverty Task Forces: the Experience of 3 State Advocates. The audio conference call is designed for advocates to ask questions of their peers about lessons learned in establishing & working with a poverty task. Featured speakers from Connecticut, Minnesota and Illinois will discuss the pros and cons of their various state approaches as well as the broader issue of 'why bother with a task force' and the impact of the current economic situation on the pursuit of such a task force.

The call is free and easy to participate in. Register here: http://www.clasp.org/audio_registration.php?id=551. For more information, contact: Angela Parker, CLASP Audio Conference Coordinator (202) 906-8032 or aparker@clasp.org

5. Save the Dates!

Get those 2009 Calendars out & make sure to mark off the following dates in March! WCCF's 2009 Advocacy Camp & Speak Up for Kids! Day will be held in Madison Tuesday & Wednesday, March 17-18th, 2009. Advocacy Camp will go all day Tuesday, March 17th and the morning of Wednesday, March 18th. In the afternoon of the 18th, Advocacy Camp participants will be joined by others who want to raise their voices for kids at the State Capitol. More information coming soon!

Visit www.2020wi.org for more information about the Vision 2020 campaign, new studies/research on poverty-related topics, and breaking news and events.

Contact Vicky Selkove at vselkove@wccf.org or (608) 284-0580, ext. 326 for more information about the Vision 2020 Campaign.