



## Ad Hoc Immigration Commission Meeting Report August 19, 2009

### **Present:**

#### **Commission Members:**

Bill Dudley (Cincinnati), Terry Flanagan (Cleveland), Tom Mrosko (Cleveland), David Bloomfield (Columbus), Michael Rodriguez (Steubenville), Sr. Ellen Lamberjack, OSF (Toledo), Eugenio Mollo (Toledo), Mark Astorino (Youngstown), Joe Fleming (Youngstown), Jim Tobin (Catholic Conference)

#### **Resource Persons:**

Jeff Stewart (IWP), Brian Corbin (Youngstown), Sr. Rita Mary Harwood (Cleveland), Kathleen Donnellan (Cincinnati), Sr. Francisca Aquillion, OLC (Steubenville), Mark Huddy (Columbus), Jerry Freewalt (Columbus), Angela Johnston (Columbus)

### **Unable to Attend:**

Anthony Wolters (Romanian), Mark Evans (Cincinnati), Tony Stieritz (Cincinnati), Gene Johnson (Cincinnati), Michele Santin (Steubenville)

### **I. Current Situation**

After introductions, Jim Tobin and Jeff Stewart presented background information regarding the current situation in Ohio.

Jim presented a historical timeline of the Ohio Catholic Conference's actions regarding immigration issues, beginning with resettlement efforts and the Campbell Soup Compromise, and ending with the recent meetings with ICE officials and the creation of the commission (see attachment A).

Jeff stressed the ongoing need for legal representation, a bond fund, and assuring medical treatment for detainees. While the large raids are less apparent, undocumented immigrants continue to be arrested at increasing rates. The IWP program has 11-17 cases per week of persons seeking assistance, especially for bond relief. ABLE reports around 10 per week.

### **II. Need for Bond Loan Program**

Bonds continue to be set at around \$5,000. The courts are less willing than ICE to renegotiate the amount. IWP has had some success in getting bonds reduced to around \$1,500. The families struggle to come up with even this reduced amount. Notaries too often, exploit families in this situation.

### **III. Need for Legal Representation Fund**

Too many immigrants sign away their right to an attorney. Too many cannot afford legal representation. The current number of attorneys trained in immigration law remains low. Our emerging CLINIC programs help, but funding remains difficult.



IWP has had some success in getting legal representation based upon 1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3. The attorney reduces their expense by a third, IWP pays a third, and the family pays a third.

Eugenio indicated that immigration legal programs are in need of help in obtaining pro-bono lawyers, as well as funds for retaining “specialists” on issues such as mental health. Such specialists need to be quickly brought in from other states. Written testimony often runs around \$400.

#### **IV. Need for Humanitarian Assistance**

Families are most impacted when the chief wage earner is immediately detained and/or deported. The Youngstown diocese took up a special collection after several raids and assisted families with rent support, utility assistance, counseling, translation services and care management.

Similar humanitarian assistance is needed throughout Ohio. Perhaps it can be administered through our diocesan Social Services and several of our Hispanic programs.

After the Painesville raids in 2007, St. Mary parish offered “sanctuary” to many families. A humanitarian fund could assist should such a need again occur.

#### **V. Preliminary Recommendations**

Participants brainstormed ways to raise money (see attachment B). Consensus emerged regarding the following:

1. \$750,000 is the targeted fundraising goal.
2. The fund will provide humanitarian assistance to Ohio immigrant families and emphasize family unification and emergency assistance.
3. The fund will provide for three projects:
  - (a) Revolving Bond Loan program (\$250,000);
  - (b) Legal representation program (\$250,000);
  - (c) Immigrant family emergency assistance program (\$250,000).
4. Funds are recommended to be raised through the following:
  - (a) Voluntary parish second collection during the USCCB’s National Migration Week, January 3-9, 2010 and January 2-8, 2011. Perhaps a different date can be pursued.
  - (b) Special appeals to select Church and community groups including: St. Thomas More Society, Knights of Columbus, law firms, Hispanic related businesses, and rural businesses.
  - (c) Applications to Foundations including CCHD and Religious communities.
  - (d) “Special benefits” including soccer tournaments and Latino festivals.

5. The Catholic Conference should contract with a “project director” skilled in fundraising, grant writing and project development.

(a) Fundraising should be done in consultation and/or collaborative with diocesan development offices.

6. Bond Fund Program:

Features of the \$250,000 bond fund include:

(a) Emphasis on family unity

(b) No interest bond

(c) 1-1 1/2 year pay back period

(d) Family must meet certain criteria and guidelines including moral character [e.g. no domestic/child abuser, drug trafficker, coyote], family need, primary parent, connection to one of our programs.

(e) Administered through a contract with IWP

(f) Perhaps some funding can occur through a “link deposit” with diocesan funds.

7. Legal Representation Fund Program

Features of the \$250,000 Legal Representation Fund include:

(a) Work with CLINIC, ABLE and other legal groups to increase the number of attorneys trained and willing to provide lower cost and/or pro-bono services to immigrants facing deportation.

(b) Promote a plan where clients pay 1/3, the project pays 1/3 and the attorney reduces their fee by 1/3.

(c) Provide training programs to attorneys.

(d) Provide for “specialists”.

(e) Provide statewide networking and coordination.

Immigrant Family Emergency Assistance Fund

Features of the \$250,000 emergency assistance fund include:

(a) Pool of money distributed and administered locally by diocesan social services and/or Hispanic programs

(b) Priority for family unification needs related to detainment and/or related to deportation.

(c) Fund would utilize the “case management” model of service.

(d) Collection and/or distribution of funds will seek ways to collaborate with local projects and not “compete” against diocesan or parish based funding proposals.

## **VI. Overall Project Needs**

1. Raise money and build capacity (legal representation)
2. Focus on immigrant families and children (not just Hispanic)
3. Develop guidelines for the three proposed funds: bond, legal representation and emergency family assistance. The total fund raising goal is \$750,000.
4. Develop education/promotional plan that includes:
  - (a) Need for project
  - (b) Personal stories
  - (c) Responses to hard questions especially those related to legal status
5. Develop project timeline and assessment of administrative needs
  - (a) Resource personnel to administer project and funds
6. Receive approval from the Ohio Bishops
  - (a) Initial report October 8, 2009

## **VII. Next Steps**

- **Conference call, Thursday, September 17, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Call in number is 1-866-489-0573, \*1182613 \***
- **Review meeting report materials and recommend additions/corrections.**
- **Submit new ideas**
- **Submit changes to contact information.**
- **Submit mileage for reimbursement.**
- **Jeff Stewart will work on guidelines for the funds**
- **Brian Corbin and Sr. Rita Mary will look into ways to promote/recommend a voluntary second collection during immigration week, as well as possible new dates to move immigration week activities.**

## **Attachment A: Catholic Conference of Ohio Timeline Regarding Immigration**

**1960's**

**1970's**

**1980's**

**1990's**

**2000's**

### **1960's - Resettlement Programs**

- Cubans, 1960's through today.
- Many other ethnic groups resettled, including Southeast Asians and Somalians

### **1970's – Migrant Worker Programs**

- 1970's through today
- Many MRS offices started and ended

### **1980's – Campbell Boycott and Tri-Party Agreement**

- 1985 Ohio Bishops went on record as supporting the Campbell boycott. This led other Catholic organizations, including CCUSA, to follow suit. A historic FLOC led compromise followed in 1986.

### **1990's – Immigrant Worker Project Planned and Established**

- Ohio Catholic Rural Conference in partnership with Diocesan Hispanic Ministry coordinators, Catholic Conference of Ohio, Department on Social Concerns, and CCHD form the “We Gather and Stand Together” project. The Immigrant Worker Project, under Jeff Stewart, emerged from this project in 1999.

### **2000's – Parish Pastoral Ministry to Hispanics Expands, Legislative Advocacy Efforts Increase.**

- Ohio bishops issue pastoral statement on immigration entitled “God’s Welcoming Presence”, February 2001.
- Tri-diocesan Immigrant Project emerges between the Dioceses of Youngstown, Columbus and Cleveland (Steubenville will join later). Bishop Tobin leads a project delegation to the Dominican Republic and Guatemala in 2004.
- Catholic Conference of Ohio convenes efforts to address documentation for Ohio drivers’ licenses (2003-2004).
- Legislative efforts continue throughout dioceses to oppose proposals to declare English as the official language, and oppose legislation that heightens state enforcement of immigration.
- Strong advocacy continues throughout dioceses to promote comprehensive immigration reform at the national level.
- Ohio Bishops issue statements of concern regarding state immigration enforcement: September 6, 2006, February 2008, and September 2008.
- Ohio Bishops issue statement in support of Federal Immigration Reform June 27, 2007.
- Ohio and Michigan Bishops meet with ICE officials to pursue humanitarian treatment for detainees and increased concern for their families. February 2009. Ohio follow-up meetings occur in March and May 2009.
- Ohio and Michigan Bishops establish Ad Hoc Commission on Immigration August 2009.



## **Attachment B: Ideas for Raising Money; Brainstorming Results**

- **Voluntary parish collection during National Immigration Week**
  - Perhaps the date can be changed from the first week in January?
- **Outreach/appeal to St. Thomas More Society**
  - Collection during Red Mass
  - Mail/phone appeal to members
  - Seek donations and pro-bono work
- **Outreach/appeal to Catholic organizations with history of support for immigrants**
  - Ethnic organizations/societies
  - Religious congregations
  - Knights of Columbus
  - St. Vincent De Paul societies
  - DCCW
  - Priest's Councils
- **Outreach/appeal to Catholic donors**
  - Known generous donors to Catholic causes (charities, parishes, diocese)
  - Catholic Latino leaders
- **Outreach/appeal to business/community leaders with interest in Immigrants**
  - Businesses that advertise in Latino publications, e.g. Smuckers
  - Associations such as Farm Bureau, Farmers Union, hospitality, nursery, manufacturing, livestock, etc.
  - Latino/ethnic associations
- **Outreach/appeal to national, international, ecumenical organizations**
  - Ohio Council of Churches
  - Latin American Consulates
  - CCHD, MRS
- **Benefit events**
  - Soccer tournaments
  - Fiesta
  - Dinner galas/auctions/corporate sponsors
  - CCUSA bike event
- **Ohio Bishops**
  - Matching dollars
  - Link-deposit loans from dioceses
  - Appeal requests signed by Bishops
  - "Start-up" funds
  - Possible contributor/donor lists
  - Convening of diocesan development directors for project advice, direction and resources

## Immigration Commission Members

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