



News and Views

When School's Out — Where do kids eat? FUSD Pilots a New Answer



On June 1, 2004 a wonderful thing is happening in Fresno. A grand collaboration between Fresno Unified School District Food Services, Burroughs Elementary School, Parents, the community, hungry kids who are 'off track' or out for the summer, and neighborhood kids between 0-18

are creating a solution to 'When School's Out-Where do kids eat?'. This innovative program will allow kids to eat brunch at 11 am at Burroughs School, before regular 'in school' lunch time.

Principal Bill Walker was asked by Fresno Metro Ministry's Child Nutrition Summer Lunch committee if he would be willing to serve brunch to hungry kids in the neighborhood as part of the Summer Lunch program. In Fresno Unified School District nearly 85% of the children qualify for free or reduced price lunches, and during the summer

only about 4,000 are able to take advantage of the School Nutrition Program intended for hungry kids who are on school break. Most children at the Burroughs school qualify for free lunch. Bill responded that he would love to do

that but would need help with two issues. One, would FUSD Food Services be willing to do this extra meal; and two, who could supervise the extra brunch time? He had no staff available to serve meals, count kids, and oversee kids coming into the cafeteria from off campus. The Summer Lunch committee got busy and contacted Billie Richardson, Director of FUSD Food Services. She said she would find a way to serve hungry kids lunch, and work with her site staff at Burroughs. She then talked to Principal Walker, and the first barrier was solved. Next, Metro's Hunger & Nutrition project staff spoke with Gretchen Donahue, CBET/ESL teacher of parents at Burroughs and with Martha Rivera at the school Resource center. Would the parents be interested in being the 'Summer Brunch at Burrough's Supervisors'? The parents were enthused about a nutri-

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tious lunch that would help stretch their family budgets by serving a healthy meal to their children, and about the opportunity to help their neighborhood community. These parents participate in the New Leaders for Better Health program with Fresno Metro Ministry, and are working on a garden project at Burroughs with support from Western Growers and California Alliance with Family Farmers through Metro's Hunger & Nutrition Project. They know first hand how important and difficult it is for low income families to put healthy food on their tables.

This program, a first-ever-model for Fresno Unified School District, begins June 1st,

Save the Dates!

Annual Meeting
Thursday, June 24
5.30—7:30 pm

Crop Walk to End Hunger
Sunday, October 24

Annual Thanksgiving Concert
Sunday, November 21

34th Anniversary Dinner
Thursday, December 2

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Children's Health Expansion Initiative

Statewide, over 4.5 million people remain uninsured, of which 1 million are children under age 19. In Fresno County, approximately 26,000 children are without health insurance. Approximately 18,000 of these children are eligible for Healthy Families or Medi-Cal, but do not re-enroll for many reasons.

Fresno Metro Ministry has received a one-year planning grant funded by First 5 Fresno County and the California Health Care Foundation to develop a Children's Health Initiative plan for implementation the

following year (s). Innovative approaches and key components of the Children's Health Initiatives include 1) the creation of a seamless, "one-stop-enrollment" for families to receive coverage, 2) the expansion of Healthy Families/MediCal outreach and enrollment activities and 3) the addition of a new insurance product available to all children up to specific income limits, regardless of their immigration status (Healthy Kids program). Inclusion of family coverage is a desired outcome for this project, but more challenging.

Since early 2000, at least 20 other counties have initiated and/or implemented a local health expansion initiative. Leaders in this effort include Alameda, Santa Clara, San Francisco, Riverside, San Mateo, San Joaquin and others. The potential for major health policy reform at the state level is possible as counties begin to proactively address a failing health care delivery system by new and innovative approaches. Stay tuned to progress in Fresno County!

SJV Air Quality Action Day 2004

On May 4, 2004 over 70 air quality advocates from throughout the state headed to the Capitol for the first "San Joaquin Valley Air Quality Action Day." Their goal: to educate state legislators on how the Valley's dirty air is affecting their communities and to inform policymakers of important bills that would help clean the Valley's air.

It was the perfect time to hold SJV Air Quality Action Day, as May was National Clean Air Month and May 4th was World Asthma Day.

Valley residents of all ages and backgrounds started the day very early, boarding a "low emission" bus at 6:00am in Fresno and carpooling from Visalia, Earlimart, and Westley, in order to take part in this historic event. Once in Sacramento, Valley air quality advo-

cates joined forces with representatives from throughout the state to meet with Senators, Assembly members, and their staff.

Participants wore t-shirts that read "Help Us Clean Our Air!" on the front and had news clippings of air quality related articles on the back. This caused the group to get a lot of attention while they walked through the halls of the Capitol—all who saw them immediately knew their cause.

Over 25 of Metro's New Leaders for Better Health participated in the Action Day. During the meetings they were able to tell personal stories of how the Valley's dirty air affects

their health, truly putting a face to the problem of poor air quality.

The legislators and their staff were generally receptive to our message and expressed their commitment to clean air for the Valley. The groups had a special

treat when Senator Dean Florez gave them a private tour of the Senate Floor, taking them down to where the Senators actually vote on bills!



Detail from t-shirts worn on Air Quality Action Day 2004

The Action Day was organized by the Central Valley Air

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Community Food Assessment Underway in Fresno

Fresno Metro Ministry's Fresno Fresh Access Community Food Assessment is an exciting project to raise awareness of hunger and food issues in the county; improve access to nutritious, quality, and affordable food; increase utilization of federal nutrition programs; and expand the programs' use of fresh, local produce. The scope of the project is ambitious, and noteworthy for its use of a neighborhood-based survey conducted by diverse community residents. The data will be evaluated by political district to provide a foundation for shaping local policy. After the assessment is completed in Fall of 2005, Metro's Hunger and Nutrition project hopes to develop a Fresno County Food Policy Council.

A review of surveys so far seems to show in some neighborhoods there is a lack of living wage income and lack of affordable healthy fresh foods close by. A CSU Fresno student that con-

ducted the surveys observed that, "food choices are made based on convenience. A lot of people are shopping after work and food cost tended to be associated with the retailer people chose." Another volunteer surveyor adds, "most people seemed most interested in stretching their food dollar."

If successful, Fresno Fresh Access will promote a strategy for reducing high hunger and obesity rates by improving access to good, local produce, particularly in low-income areas of Fresno city and in smaller communities in the county. Best of all, the widespread community engagement will have a long-lasting impact on improving food security in Fresno County.

We are still looking for active volunteers to help us survey neighborhoods in Fresno County. Please contact Edie or Phoua for more information at 485-1416 or join us at the monthly Community Food Assessment group meetings on the 2nd Monday of each month.

Volunteers needed to support Metro's monthly activities.

Give the gift of your time!

Metro needs volunteers to assist with tasks related to our Hunger and Nutrition program, and our Healthcare program. If you have interest in supporting Metro's work by volunteering your time on a one-time or regular basis, please contact Carmen at phone 485-1416 or e-mail

carmen@fresnometmin.org.

You are welcome to join the committed team of Metro volunteers! Enjoy the fellowship and the feeling of contributing your time to valuable community projects!



You are invited to attend Fresno Metro Ministry's Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 24, 2004

5:30 - 7:30 pm - A light supper will be served

Special Feature: Planned Charitable Giving

During the second hour of the meeting, a representative of the local Leave a Legacy group will present basic information about planned giving and the goal of increasing philanthropy in our community. Learn how supporting local non-profits you care about can have significant benefits for you, the donor, as well. Referrals to financial professionals for assistance with individual needs will be available.

RSVP with the enclosed invitation, or e-mail Carmen@fresnometmin.org

When School's Out — Where do kids eat? FUSD Pilots a New Answer (continued from front cover)

at 11 AM, serving *Brunch at Burroughs* in the Cafeteria to any neighborhood child not in school 0-18 years old, no questions asked. This is a great example of the USDA Food and Nutrition Services School Meals program working, and working well in the local community. The creativity and commitment by FUSD Food Services and Burroughs School staff, parents and kids to being ready to learn all year round is commendable. Because Burroughs is a year

round school site, Billie Richardson, Director of FUSD Food Services, plans to run this "Summer Bunch" program at Burroughs year round. More smart kids will have access to smart food.



SJV Air Quality Action Day 2004 (continued from p. 2)

Quality Coalition (CVAQ), of which Metro is a founding member. The Sierra Club office in Sacramento served as the group's headquarters and was even the site



of a birthday party—we had three birthdays in our group to celebrate!

The bills that the CVAQ Coalition have identified as being helpful in cleaning the air are the following:

SB 999 (Machado) ~ *Restructures the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Governing Board to more accurately reflect the Valley's population distribution and adds three public members (one of which must be a health professional) to the Board.*

AB 3104 (Firebaugh) ~ *Funds programs such as Carl Moyer, the Lower-Emission School Bus Program, and an Asthma Education*

Fresno Metro Ministry Staff:

Rev. Walt Parry

Executive Director

Laurie Primavera, RN, MSN

Healthcare Coordinator

Rev. Ken Smiley

Cross-Cultural Clusters

Edie Jessup

Hunger and Nutrition Coordinator

Phoua Moua

Hunger and Nutrition Assistant

Carolina Simunovic

Environmental Health and Outreach

Carmen Pauls Wiens

Office Manager

Ellie Stokle

Bookkeeper

Program through fees on diesel and gasoline fuels.

SB 1888 (Florez) ~ *Establishes the Pesticide Drift Exposure Act to ensure that the victims of pesticide exposure receive immediate, comprehensive, and respectful attention during and following pesticide exposure. Provides training for medical personnel, establishes a pesticide medical fund, and requires counties to establish protocols for responding to pesticide drift.*

If you would like to participate in the next Air Quality Action Day or other Air Quality events that Metro hosts, please contact Carolina Simunovic at (559) 485-1416.

Conversation with Rev. Dave Finster (continued from back cover)

impact on the quality of life for everyone in our community.”

Affordable housing and problems associated with absentee landlords are two issues which members of the First Congregational Church are currently addressing through involvement with Faith in Community. Historically, the congregation has had long-

term involvement with Poverello House, Fresno Metro Ministry, and the Crop Walk to end hunger each autumn.

With twenty-four years of experience in the ministry, Dave thoroughly enjoys preaching and leading worship. Dave recognizes a strong connection between pastoral care, and his interest in mobilizing for constructive social change in the community. He recalls Martin Luther King stating once that all he wanted to be was a good pastor. For Dave, there is a clear link between concern for parishioners, concern for the whole person, and concern for right relationships within the whole community. “King’s pastoral concerns led him to the civil rights movement,” Dave says. “My

concern for people in my congregation includes people who need healthcare and jobs, and the concern does not stop at the door of the church but extends to people who need healthcare and jobs throughout our community.”



Dave makes a point at the Town Hall Meeting on state budget cuts held at First Congregational Church on May 20.

Social Justice Curriculum Available for your Congregation

The California Council of Churches and Catholic Charities of California present a six-week curriculum “First Fruits for California’s Working Poor” for use in congregations. Topics include: Personal and Theological Values, Public Policy, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKS). More information and copies of the curriculum are available through Fresno Metro Ministry.

The next Organ Concert Recital to raise funds for refurbishing the organ at the Big Red Church will take place on June 27.

Dave’s aspirations for his term of service with First Congregational are as varied as the many contributions he has made in ministry in the past. At First Congregational, he is particularly interested in creating a safe, welcoming, inclusive environment – “an environment worthy of trust,” he says. Dave is cultivating ways for the youth to take part in the leadership of the church through a Youth Council, and affirms the important role of music and the arts in the life of this congregation as efforts are underway to restore the organ at the Big Red Church.



Metro Ministry Updates

Rev. Walt Parry, Executive Director

“New Leaders for Better Health” Expand Their Voices

Metro’s project to help the voice of unserved and underserved be heard on health and hunger issues continues with their meeting with **Dr. Robert Ross, president of The California Endowment** on June 17. In May, ninety of the “New Leaders” met with



Assembly Member Sarah Reyes to tell her about their health care needs and to get her advice on get-

ting their voice heard. In March the group met with **Dr. Edward Moreno, Fresno County’s Public Health Officer.**

Previously they met with the top staff at **University Medical Center** regarding their experiences of seeking health care. UMC noted all their concerns, and reported back

to them regarding progress that is being made. Metro will be working with New Leaders and several local health care providers in helping low-income and often other-language residents **navigate and improve the local health care system.**

It is members of “New Leaders” from Burroughs School who are volunteering to make the “**Brunch at Burroughs**” program possible.

“2004-2005 Making Connections”

Community Resource Directory Available

Thanks to staff and volunteer work and the financial support of four community sponsors, sixty-three “Friends of Making Connections”, and forty-two advertisers, the updated 138-page directory of helping services has been published. Copies are available for \$7.00 each from the Metro Ministry office. Postage is \$3.00 each if mailed. This is the 13th edition of “Making Connections” which Metro compiles, has printed, and distributes in fulfillment of its mission that people receive the services they need.

F.U.S.D. URGED TO DEVELOP HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

The Metro Ministry-coordinated Child Nutrition Task Force recommends that Fresno Unified School District create a Healthy School Environment Policy Committee. That Committee can improve the health and education of the students, task force

members reason. They recommend that the FUSD Policy Committee include representation from community organizations. The Committee as envisioned would address issues such as hunger, malnutrition, obesity, diabetes, soda contracts, candy sales, utiliza-

tion of locally grown fresh produce, and physical education and activity.

*“Working together
to build a
better community”*

New Kaiser Permanente Child Health Plan

Children age 18 and under who are not eligible for either Medi-Cal or Healthy Families and are in families with incomes under 300% of poverty are eligible for a new capped Kaiser Permanente health insurance plan. The monthly premiums would be either \$8.00 or \$15.00 per child enrolled. Applications can be secured from the Metro office. Immigration status is not a barrier in eligibility.

Governor's State Budget Revise Drops one Softer Shoe; second Shoe to Drop May be Heavy

After taking away millions of dollars from local communities by reversing the Motor Vehicle Fees, the new Governor's May Revise neither made drastic health and education cuts, nor did it resolve the ongoing budget crisis. However there are cuts there, including cuts to Federally Qualified Health Clinics such as United Health Centers and Sequoia Health Care Foundation. United predicts it can lose up to \$856,000 each year if the Revise cuts are implemented.

The second shoe to drop will be in August when proposals will be made to "reform" Medi-Cal. Those cuts may be heavy.

Fresno Delegation to Thailand Refugee Camp Was Topic of Metro's 75th Community Health Care Roundtable

It was an expanded version of a "welcome wagon". Fresno welcomed these soon-to-be residents even before they moved to Fresno. Our delegation traveled to a refugee camp in Thailand to welcome them. Approximately 3,000 Hmong in the camp are expected to make Fresno their home.

Four members of Fresno's delegation reported on their trip at Metro's May Community Health Care Roundtable. In addition to making friends, the delegation did

health screenings to better understand the needs once the new residents arrive. One Powerpoint slide used in the presentation showed Board of Supervisor Chair Susan Anderson taking temperatures, blood pressure, pulse, and weights. Many photographs were of the children in the camp, several depicting their desperate need for dental care. The Powerpoint used in the Roundtable will be posted on the Metro website at www.fresnometroministry.org

The Community Health Care Roundtables are held the third Thursday of each month from 7:30 a.m. through 9:30 a.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church at 3973 N. Cedar Avenue. Everyone is welcomed to participate. Reservations are not necessary.



Additional notes ...

Ed Perez is on medical disability leave from the Metro Staff. The proposal for a **Police Auditor** for the City of Fresno remains unimplemented at the time of this writing. Fresno County reorganized what had been its **Human Services System**. Metro continues to advocate for more integrated County services, but had opposed the previous administrative structure as a barrier to that needed integration. The Selma "one-stop-shop" was however created by the Human Services System, and has been effective. **Rev. Ken Smiley** of the Metro staff led **Cross-Cultural Clusters** with the staff at Juvenile Hall. The plan is the staff will then lead the residents in clusters. The clusters help participants understand and appreciate the cultures of others, their own cultures, and builds caring relationships. The California Assembly voted to discontinue **finger imaging** for food stamps. **Metro's Hunger Forums** continue to be held the second Wednesday of each month at noon at Trinity Lutheran Church.

Conversation with Rev. Dave Finster: Response to social justice issues are a natural outgrowth of pastoral care for this new Fresno minister



Rev. Dave Finster returned to Fresno after serving with the Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in a variety of communities ranging from suburban California to rural South Dakota. His twenty-four year journey as a minister has been punctuated with opportunities to respond to social justice issues on the community level wherever he has served.

Dave grew up in the Bay area. The first congregation where he served following seminary training at the Pacific School of Religion was the South Berkeley Community Church, an intentionally integrated congregation since 1943. While serving in the 1980s in his second pastorate, the Japanese Congregational Church of Fresno, Dave became active as a board member with Fresno Metro Ministry.

From Fresno, Dave was called to serve in South Dakota. After five years of ministry in the rural community of Belle Fourche, South Dakota, Dave, his wife Patsy and daughters Eleanor and Jenny returned to the Bay area. Dave pastored at the Niles

Congregational Church for eleven years. During this time, he worked with members of the congregation, neighbors, and the city council to address the growing needs of homeless persons in the community. The Tri-City Homeless Coalition was formed, eventually providing leadership for the establishment of a homeless shelter and eventually transitional, low-cost housing. In response to the needs of children in the socio-economically diverse community, a nursery school associated with the Niles Congregational Church for neighborhood outreach was replaced by a full service day care center affiliated with the Tri-City Children's Center.

With each pastorate, Dave has not only preached and provided leadership for congregational life; he has served as a catalyst for community response to local social justice issues.

In September 2003, Dave and family returned to Fresno where he began as Minister at the "Big Red Church," First Congregational Church U.C.C. (2131 North Van Ness Boulevard). Back in Fresno, Dave continues to identify and respond to needs in the community. "My personal agenda is similar to Metro's agenda," Dave says, citing access to healthcare and mental health

insurance, and the focus on clean air as issues important to him. He also identifies lack of affordable housing and living wage standards as key concerns in Fresno, emphasizing the link between problems of homelessness, lack of mental healthcare, and high unemployment. "All of these are social justice issues," Dave says, "including being able to find a job that pays decently. We forget that we are connected; one person's poverty affects everyone else in the community. Affordable housing and access to healthcare will have a positive

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better community.**