Unleashing Faithful Leadership for Health

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PICO Center for Health Organizing
ISAIAH and PICO

- **ISAIAH** is a faith-based community organization of 100 member congregations. ISAIAH is a vehicle for people of faith and communities of faith to act collectively and powerfully for racial and economic justice in MN.

- **PICO** (People Improving Communities through Organizing) is a national organizing network of 55 organizations in 19 states working for racial, social and economic justice.
Overview

❖ What is Community Organizing?
❖ Working at the Intersection of Faith, Race and Power
❖ Putting it Into Practice: Building a Faith Movement for Paid Leave Policies in Minnesota
Seeing a Wider Set of Relationships

Community Organizing

A set of **disciplined and strategic** practices to **build democratic and collective power** to assure the conditions in which a community or communities can thrive.
Core Strategies of Community-Based Organizing

- Grassroots Leadership Development
- Building Democratic, Sustainable and Community-Driven Organizations
- Theory of Change Grounded in Building Power to make change
Power and Politics

- **Power** is “The Ability to Act”
- Power operates in the public sphere, the realm of “politics”
- **Politics** derives from Aristotle’s definition of the “polis”—“The political community”
We are *political beings*: There is part of us that emerges only to the extent that we participate in public life

—Aristotle, Arendt, Adams, Friere, M. Luther King, etc.
FAITH

- Human Dignity and Encounter
- Radical Love, Public Love
- The Call to Participation in this World. Now.
- Its all possible and its our choice.
Faithful tell Dayton: Erase gaps

As the recount winds down, a coalition of church and religious groups urged the front-runner to work from the governor’s office toward educational and economic opportunity for all.

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All but declared the next governor of Minnesota, DFLer Mark Dayton on Sunday promised a gathering of more than 1,500 Minnesotans of faith to strive to make the state a place of equal opportunity for all.

“That’s my commitment,” Dayton said at the Minneapolis Convention Center to members and representatives of about 100 churches and religious organizations from around the state. “I share that [vision] with you. Now let’s go do it.”

Dayton’s comments, which drew a standing ovation, came at an event that was part religious revival gathering and part political and economic forum.

Sponsored by ISAIAH, a Twin Cities religious coalition, the “20,000 Voices for One Minnesota” project was intended to bring...
ALL CHILDREN ARE SACRED
Organizing Faith Communities

- Taking Faith Seriously.
- Understanding Faith Communities/Institutions are Complex and Have Their Own Interests
- Going Deep Takes Work and Skill
- Unleashing Faith Communities is Very, Very Powerful and Potent
Uncompromising Commitment to Grassroots Leadership Development

Building Democratic, Sustainable and Community-Driven Organization

Theory of Change Grounded in Building Power to make change
Leadership Development: Why Paid Leave?

❖ For Power...Rural Minnesota, 8-10 key regions in state
❖ 18 months of Listening and Relationship Building
❖ 65 Clergy
❖ 10 communities
❖ 47 congregations
❖ Caring for Our Families Emerged As A Common Story and Struggle
Leadership Development: Why Paid Leave?

- 1:1 Trainings
- Powerful Invitation Trainings
- Week Long Leadership Training
- House Meetings
- Listening Campaigns in Congregations
ISAIAH: A Vehicle for Power

- Aligning our Communities (Greater MN, Suburbs and Urban Core) for Common Strategic Action—A Campaign!
- Negotiation and Alignment with Partners and Stakeholders: Building the Minnesotans for Paid Family Leave, partnership with Minnesota Dept. of Health
- Amassing Resources, but owned/accountable to member leadership—Research, Communications, Policy
Moving City and State Social Movements for Paid Leave over 3 years

Mpls. may delay action on sick-leave proposal
Outcomes So Far... 

- Legislation Introduced and Moved in 2015, over 1500 faith leaders engaged.
- Fiscal and Implementation study contracted and conducted in 2015-2016
- State Employees granted 6 weeks paid leave in 2015, cities followed suit
- Small Business Coalition Built for Paid Leave, robust at city and state level
- Municipal Campaigns for Paid Sick Days in Mpls and Saint Paul launched—Almost done in Minneapolis, June target for Saint Paul
- PFL top issue in 2016, will likely get a vote in Senate
- Election issue in 2016