



THE URBAN NETWORKER

The Episcopal Urban Caucus

Ministries of Reconciliation,
Social Justice and Peace

Founded 1980

- Check our website at:
episcopalurbancaucus.org

Inside this issue:

SCHOOL VIOLENCE—Patricia Abrams

HEALTH PLAN APPROVED—Diane Pollard

TIM YEAGER to be Peace Fellowship Speaker

EUC Brings Arts to Harvey Milk HS - Nell Gibson

ENEJ Workshops
Michael Maloney

2010 Assembly Plans

Fall/Winter 2009

SCHOOL VIOLENCE - Patricia Abrams

Recently Chicago has been in the news for excessive school violence. Maybe it was because Chicago was being considered as a possible site for the 2016 Olympics. But youth violence is not just a Chicago issue, nor is it a Black issue. It is an American issue; from Denver to Texas, New York to California, and Ohio to Chicago, stories are coming forth on youth and violence and we are stunned. The question I have is, "Why?" Why weren't we as a nation stunned when we allowed a generation of mothers to carry and give birth to children while using drugs? Why weren't we stunned when children were being raised without the guidance of parents, and gangs became their families? Why weren't we stunned when single parent households became the norm and the family and community structure of support disappeared?

Could it be because in our

effort to be so accepting of everything and everyone doing their own thing we forgot that children, all children, **need** the support and guidance of a caring family and/or community? In order for children to grow and develop in ways many of us did, similar structures need to be in place. Many times I have heard my generation speak of how everyone in the community knew them and took on the responsibility as a "parent" to all children, and if they did something mischievous, they not only would be disciplined by that adult, but that adult would call their parents and tell them of the incident, and they would be disciplined again.

While the way children were being raised a generation ago was not perfect, children were, for the most part, cared for because people knew the consequences of not raising children properly. There were and are

research-based findings and longitudinal studies of the early years of serial killers, rapists, etc. that support today's assumptions and beliefs that most of them experienced trauma or abuse as children. While previous ways of raising children have not been perfect, our parents assumed a level of responsibility for the well-being of their children. (cont'd on p. 2—School Violence)



Photo from the Art Room of the Harvey Milk Public School in New York City. EUC volunteers work at Harvey Milk, a school not plagued by violence.

Photo courtesy of: Nell B. Gibson

CHURCH APPROVES HEALTH PLAN—Diane Pollard

At the 76th General Convention in Anaheim this summer, the General Convention of The Episcopal Church approved Resolution A177, establishing the **Denominational Health Plan for Episcopal dioceses**, congregations, and official agencies. This action comes after three years of research and analysis by the Church Pension

Fund and its affiliate, the Episcopal Church Medical Trust. The Denominational Health Plan will be administered by the Church Pension Fund through the Medical Trust.

The resolution includes the provision that each diocese will establish its own policy for congregations regarding the required employer cost-sharing

for healthcare benefits, and that cost-sharing policy must be the same for both clergy and lay employees working 1,500 hours or more per year (full-time), thus eliminating disparity in the funding of healthcare benefits between full-time clergy and lay employees.

The plan will be implemented gradually over (cont. on page 2)



EUC Harvey Milk School volunteer, Susan Brynes of St. Luke in the Fields. Susan (left) with student, teaches Photography

Photo courtesy of Nell B. Gibson

EUC BRINGS ARTS TO HARVEY MILK HIGH SCHOOL

At the 2008 EUC Assembly a resolution was passed which asked the Urban Caucus to develop ministries to students, parents, teachers and administrators of public schools that seek solutions to the crisis affecting the public school system in our cities and to develop a model of that ministry in one of our cities.

Since January of 2009, Coordinator, Nell Gibson, has developed the model ministry with the Harvey Milk Public School in New York City. With volun-

teers from St. Luke in the Fields, Holy Apostles and St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, an Arts Enrichment program which offers Music and Photography, has been taught by EUC volunteers.

Susan Byrnes, of St. Luke in the Fields, heads the Photography program and Jeannine Otis of St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery (and also a member of The Episcopal Church's Standing Committee on Liturgy and Worship) heads the Music program.

Last June the spring term students displayed photographs they had taken and performed musical numbers in a talent exhibition. On January 20, 2010, the fall term students will exhibit photographs and perform.

On November 4, 2009 the two classes combined for a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to view the works of Robert Franks. The EUC Arts Enrichment program is one of the school's more popular offerings. -Nell B. Gibson

"Changing times and methods of disciplining children changed but parents were never instructed on how to put these methods into practice"

Our parents also believed in the "spare the rod, spoil the child" method of discipline and teaching. The times and the methods of disciplining children changed but today's parents were never instructed on how to put these new methods into practice. Therefore most children are not disciplined, even children from two parent homes with resources who are not faced with the other societal issues. This is evident

when one watches the t.v. program "Super Nanny". Most parents have no idea of their roles and responsibilities on raising children. So why are we stunned?

Many organizations and churches are trying to help this current generation of children who are missing parents. We also have the fastest growing senior population, those who are raising grandchildren because their biological parents

are on drugs, died at a young age due to drug misuse and other health complications or are in prison, (many times as a result of crimes linked to drug use). And what of the children? What are the long term impacts on these children who have been raised by a relative and without the support and love of the larger community, encouraging and supporting them? What are the long term effects of being (cont'd p. 3)

SCHOOL VIOLENCE (continued) Patricia Abrams

CHURCH APPROVES HEALTH PLAN (cont'd) —Pollard

the next three years, with all required employers participating by January 1, 2013. This schedule provides a three-year time frame for domestic dioceses, congregations, and institutions to make decisions and manage change appropriately. Eighty-seven dioceses will be participating in the Denominational Health Plan by January 1, 2010.

During the Church Pension Group's Church-wide Healthcare Benefits Feasibility Study,

much work was done regarding benefits for Province IX (Columbia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Puerto Rico and Venezuela). A program to provide benefits that meet the needs of non-domestic dioceses is being developed in collaboration with these dioceses.

At a time when the country is finally recognizing the need to provide healthcare for all of its citizens, the action of the General Convention and the

Church Pension Fund leads the way in the effort. As a trustee of the Church Pension Fund, I am particularly proud of this action of the Church.

— Diane B. Pollard is a Trustee of the Church Pension Fund and Treasurer of the Episcopal Urban Caucus

GOOD TEACHERS NEEDED

Last October in an Op-Ed piece *New York Times* columnist Nicholas D. Kristof, wrote that good schools constitute a far more potent weapon against poverty than welfare, food stamps or housing subsidies. But, he said, teachers' unions have too often resisted reform and stood by as generations of disadvantaged children were cemented into an underclass by third-rate schools.

When students are impoverished and marginalized with uncomplaining parents they will be allowed to endure the kinds

of teachers and schools we would never tolerate for our own kids, said Kristof.

He acknowledged that there are many other obstacles to learning including lack of safety, alcohol and narcotics, troubled homes and uninterested parents. But he said there is mounting evidence that even in such failing schools, the individual teacher makes a vast difference.

Research, Kristof continues, has underscored what matters most in education—more than class size or spending or any-

thing—is access to good teachers. He said a recent study had shown that if black students had four straight years of teachers from the top 25 percent of most effective teachers, the black-white testing gap would vanish in four years.

Good schools, he said, are the central front in the war on poverty, the civil rights issue of our time. Half a century after *Brown v. Board of Education*, says the columnist, isn't it time to end our "separate but equal" school system?



EUC Harvey Milk Music volunteers from left: Nell Gibson, (student in hat) Renoly Santiviago, Vanessa Zannis, Jeannine Otis & Lucy Sexton.

Photo courtesy, Nell Gibson

SCHOOL VIOLENCE (cont'd from page 2) Abrams

born addicted? I suggest we are experiencing these effects. I also think that this situation will not go away until we as adults get involved as the village and raise our children so that they respect and trust adults and we become those with whom they can share their dreams as we support them and help them to achieve those dreams.

President Obama said, as part of Dr. King's Holiday celebration, "never under estimate what one person, one voice

can do." We each must get involved. The change that we are seeking is within us and our children need us. Much effort and attention is now being placed on this issue as our children are being killed daily in our streets probably more than are being killed in the wars we're are fighting abroad. Now that Chicago will not be the home of the 2016 Olympics, will the spotlight dim once again on the plight and reality of our children? -- That is, until

something horrific happens that commands our attention? Or, will we demand that resources and policies be put in place to save our children now?

Patricia Abrams is Mid-West Regional Director for the Union of Black Episcopalians, a 2009 General Convention Deputy and a member of the Episcopal Urban Caucus.

**"The 2010 EUC
Assembly theme
is—ANTI-
VIOLENCE:
KEEPING OUR
KIDS ALIVE"**

2010 ENEJ WORKSHOPS—Michael Maloney

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

This workshop will explore issues of economic justice and the environment. Speakers will include Mike Schut, noted author and Economic Justice and Environment staff for The Episcopal Church, and representative of Faith in Place, a Chicago-based environmental group.

IMMIGRATION AS A JUSTICE ISSUE

This workshop will present a faith perspective and current status of immigration reform. Speakers will include Dianne Aid, ENEJ President and Interfaith Coalition for Immigration Reform. Ana White from the Episcopal Church Center, and representatives of such groups as Interfaith Worker Justice and New Sanctuary, Chicago.

ORGANIZING FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE IN PROVINCE V

ENEJ leaders will meet with Assembly participants from Province V to begin organizing a Province V economic justice network. This workshop will also include a presentation on how to use ENEJ resources in organizing for economic justice.

THE EPISCOPAL URBAN CAUCUS

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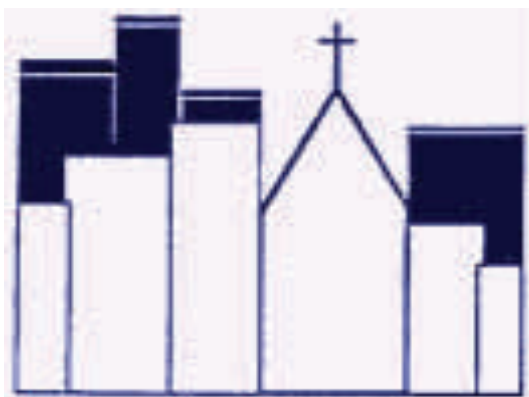
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**The 2010 Assembly:
February 24-27, Chicago, IL**

THE EPISCOPAL URBAN CAUCUS—Founded 1980



2010 EUC ASSEMBLY IN CHICAGO

The 2010 EUC Assembly will take place at the Allerton Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, 701 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611.

All rooms (single, double, youth) will go for \$99 per night. Online hotel reservations will be available beginning the week of December 21, 2009. Materials for Assembly reservations will be in the mail and online the week of December 21st as well.

The early bird Assembly Reservation deadline is January 22, 2010.

The Allerton Hotel is one block from the Diocesan Offices and St. James Cathedral.

The theme for the 2010 Assembly is - Anti-violence: Keeping Our Kids Alive

TIM YEAGER TO BE EPISCOPAL PEACE FELLOWSHIP SPEAKER

Tim Yeager (long time EUC member) is slated to be the Episcopal Peace Fellowship speaker on Thursday, February 25, 2010.

Yeager, a Chicago Labor Union Leader who is a member of the National Executive Council of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, and Chair of the Peace and Justice Committee of the Diocese of Chicago. Time is Financial Secretary/Treasurer of the National Organization of Legal Service Workers, UAW Local 2320, which represents over 4,000 lawyers and other workers in legal services, human services and non-profit advocacy organizations around the US.

GLORIA BROWN LUNCHEON

The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice will hold the Gloria Brown luncheon on Friday, February 26, 2010. As was the case in 2009, the 2010 luncheon will replace the Saturday morning Gloria Brown breakfast held in past years.

The purpose of the Episcopal Urban Caucus is to be an instrument of the Gospel exercising radical discipleship in Church and Society, and to hold the feet of the Episcopal Church to the fire of social justice.

