After your parish group finished the Beyond the Boundaries Discussion Series, were there questions on what to do next? Groups report the dialogue helped develop relationships based on mutual interests, shared experiences, and trust. Their discussions heightened awareness of issues and the principles of our faith, energizing people with a keen desire to make a positive difference.

But, the issues can seem so broad, intertwined, and overwhelming, that it’s difficult to know where or how to start. A challenge we face is to be fully aware of the injustices that God calls to our attention and to accept the grace to collaboratively develop and implement strategies to change inequities.

The best way to progress is to develop a plan. This plan does not need unique solutions. It often works better if

Continued on page 2

Workshop with Reverend Eric Law, November 5 at St. Gabriel’s Parish Hall 8:15-check in; Workshop- 8:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

A special opportunity to hear Rev. Law provide an overview of guiding principles on respectful communications and share his insights on collaborative techniques to both honor and benefit from differences. Table groups will use case studies, applicable to various situations that challenge our ministries, to apply the principles in developing practical steps to achieve positive relationships.

Participants were so enthusiastic about Rev. Law’s workshop last April that we are confident you will find this workshop well worth your time. The location is convenient, just off Beltway Exit 17. St. Gabriel’s Parish Hall is located at 6950 Dogwood Road, Woodlawn. Fee - $30; financial assistance available. RSVP: 410/947-7215 or www.pfmjpi.org.

A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. On the one hand, we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life’s roadside, but that will be only an initial act.

One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life’s highway.

True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.

A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth.

A Time to Break the Silence, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr

What’s Next—continued

Inside this issue:

What’s Next— 2
Our Community 2
BtB Parish Groups 3
St. Bernadette’s BtB Group 3
Churches without Boundaries 3
BtB Housing Strategy 3
Calendar 4
groups can join in current efforts, capitalizing on the talents of members. Sometimes a bigger task than addressing the issues is to determine what we can do—both individually and collectively—to take action to change injustices in our community. What talents and expertise are available among members of the BtB Discussion group, parish, or community? The strength of the group depends on each person’s willingness to contribute their skills, even going beyond their comfort zone, to work for positive change. What potential solutions did your group identify? Are these ideas an outgrowth of a collaboration for a more realistic approach and outcome? A clear purpose, coupled with a willingness to go beyond our own boundaries, to work collaboratively reflecting diversity, is key for each group’s success. Affordable housing in mixed-income neighborhoods, the top priority of most participants and a basic necessity, is the key focus for Beyond the Boundaries. Education, jobs, fair wages, transportation, and other interdependent areas are also vital for providing equitable opportunities.

BtB groups throughout the region join together to advocate for equitable policies and practices within jurisdictions, and at state and federal levels. Groups also undertake a variety of advocacy work within their local area, working with other faith or community groups. These coalitions, based on mutual interests, yield more effective results with decision makers. (See “BtB Parish Groups” for examples of group activities.) Beyond the Boundaries’ role is to link participants with advocacy opportunities to address causes of injustice.

How can we help you move forward? We’re available to help you determine the best ways to continue a dialogue, raise awareness within your community, and address the challenges that affect all of us.

Contact us at 443/623-1355 or BeyondtheBoundaries@archbalt.org

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House Keys 4 Employees is a new program intended to help Maryland workers purchase a home in this state. Eligible homebuyers may receive a zero percent deferred loan of up to $5000, matching participating employer’s $5000 contribution, towards a down payment and closing costs.
Beyond the Boundaries Parish Groups

St. Bernadette’s BtB Group sponsored several BtB Discussion Groups over the past few years. Last year, they began a new Core Group to take part in the BtB Discussion Series. Their dialogue was so successful that they are continuing with presentations on local issues to involve more parishioners. They also participated in advocacy for the County affordable housing legislation with an effective letter-writing campaign. Their current focus is drug prevention and treatment. St. Bernadette’s will sponsor:

Drug Prevention: Causes & Remedies
Speaker: Fran Phillips,
Anne Arundel County Health Office
November 30, 7 p.m.
St. Bernadette’s Parish Hall,
801 Stevenson Road, Severn
(just a few minutes from the beltway, off I-97).
Fran will outline what causes people to turn to drugs, and the best resources for addiction problems. Participants will be invited to dialogue on how to apply BtB principles to counter drug abuse.
Info: Call 410/544-1007 or 410/987-1371

Churches without Boundaries was formed by the BtB Core Group from St. Mary’s, Annapolis as an inclusive coalition of faith representatives who collaborate to raise awareness and change systemic injustices in the Greater Annapolis area. CwB brings together over a dozen faith groups in this diverse, inclusive coalition.

Committees were formed to address issues most important to the members. These are: Affordable Housing, Education, Health Care, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, and Youth Recreation Committees.

Committees develop advocacy strategies and engage all members who, in turn, engage their respective, diverse faith communities to promote justice. This method broadens support for a more effective coalition.

Members and their faith groups played a significant role in the passage of Inclusionary Zoning legislation for the City of Annapolis—a major accomplishment! CwB, along with BtB leaders, led the Workforce Housing Coalition for legislation in Anne Arundel County. Members and their churches were actively involved in advocacy for affordable housing with letter campaigns, meeting with public officials, attending hearings, and testifying. The CwB Housing Committee continues to build understanding of the need for affordable housing advocacy, preparing for the next legislative effort. (The next Housing Committee meeting will be held in early November. Call 443/623-1355 for details.)

Each committee has notable successes in advocating for just practices and policies. CwB continues to grow and exert influence for the best interest of all in the community.

Churches without Boundaries is sponsoring:

A Faith Approach to Discrimination
November 10—7 p.m.
St. John Neumann Social Hall
620 North Bestgate Road, Annapolis

Beyond the Boundaries Housing Strategy

BtB is moving forward to promote affordable housing in mixed-income neighborhoods throughout the Archdiocese. Region leaders will invite leaders from each parish to develop a strategy to promote affordable housing for their jurisdiction.

We’re seeking people willing to work for equitable housing policies. Are you able to increase understanding of the need for affordable housing within your parish and community?

Your contribution is welcomed. Call 443/623-1355 to see how you can make a difference.
November 5: “Effecting Positive Change” Workshop with Rev. Eric Law. Check in: 8:15; workshop 8:45 a.m.—3 p.m. Rev. Law will share insights on ways to improve communications and value our differences, in an interactive presentation. Table groups will take part in group dialogue, using case studies that reflect situations we face daily, to further respectful communications and develop strategies for positive change.
Location: St. Gabriel’s Parish Hall; 6950 Dogwood Road (Woodlawn), Baltimore.
The $30.00 fee includes breakfast and lunch. Financial assistance is available.
Register online at www.PFMjpi.org or call 410/947-7215.

November 10, 7 p.m., “A Faith Approach to Discrimination” sponsored by Churches without Boundaries. Featured speakers will consider the history of discrimination and how it affects our lives now. Table group dialogue will generate ideas to remedy unjust situations.
Location: St. John Neumann Social Hall, 620 North Bestgate Road, Annapolis.
For more information, call 443/623-1355.

November 30, 7 p.m. Drug Prevention: Causes & Remedies with Fran Phillips, Anne Arundel County Health Office. Fran will outline what causes people to turn to drugs and the best resources for addiction problems. Following questions and answers, participants will take part in a dialogue to consider ways to prevent and treat drug addiction problems.
Location: St. Bernadette’s Parish Hall, 801 Stevenson Road, Severn (just a few minutes from the beltway, off I-97).
Sponsored by St. Bernadette’s Beyond the Boundaries Group. For information, call 410/544-1007 or 410/987-1371

www.archbalt.org/beyondboundaries