

Brockton Interfaith Community

What is Brockton Interfaith Community?

Did you know:

- There are over 1000 foreclosed homes in Brockton
- It costs \$43,000/ yr to keep a person incarcerated in MA
- As of 2006, over 50% of the Brockton Population claimed to be a minority.

Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC) was created in 1990 by area clergy that were troubled by the pressing needs and concerns in the city of Brockton. BIC has since expanded and grown into a powerful regional organization with 12 religious institutions, the Cape Verdean Association of Brockton, and Stonehill College as members. Protestants, Catholics, and Jews work hand in hand through BIC. The ethnic and racial diversity of our organization only lends to our strength, with Caucasian, African-American, Latino, Cape Verdean, and Haitians represented.

It is BIC's goal to improve the lives of those in Brockton through

building the leadership of ordinary citizens. With the belief that our faith unites us instead of divides us, we work toward bringing hope and change to those around us.

BIC is governed by a Board of Directors made up of two delegates from each member congregation. With the board's leadership and with training from the BIC organizers, congregations build leadership teams to do outreach within their congregation, neighborhood, and community organizations through home visits and house meetings in order to determine the self-interests of the community, the concerns, and the passions.

A member of the PICO National Network And MCAN, Massachusetts Communities Action Network.



BIC MEMBERS

Central United Methodist * Cape Verdean Association of Brockton * Chapel of Our Savior * Christ Congregational Church * Messiah Baptist Church * Trinity Baptist Church * Pearl St. United Methodist Church * Pentecost United Methodist Church * Prince of Peace Lutheran Church * St. Patrick's Church * Stonehill College * Temple Beth Emunah * Our Lady of Lourdes * Universalist Unitarian of Brockton

Inside this issue:

Street Outreach Workers	2
Community Policing	2
ESOL	3
A farewell to Wes Lathrop & a few words from Wes	3
CORI	4
Vote NO on Question 1	5
Prop 2 1/2	5
Teen Center	5
Upcoming Events	6

The Issues

On May 28th of 2008 an Action was held at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. An Action is a way to take public business public in the form of an open meeting, which is meant to hold ourselves and public officials accountable.

At this meeting over 300 people gathered to meet with Mayor Harrington and Police Chief Conlan on 4 key issues: Street Outreach Workers, Community Policing, an increased number

of ESOL classes, and the passing of a local CORI Ordinance.

Mayor Harrington and Chief Conlon agreed to all of our requests.

However, an Action and agreements do not mean our work is complete.

Actually, at times it seems it has just begun.

Brockton Community Members at May 2008 Action



Street Outreach Workers

"I never thought I could be part of an organization that changes how the government works."

Adelino Vicente
St. Edith Stein
Executive Board Member
City Wide meeting
Aug 14, 2008

Over a year ago BIC began working on the implementation of positions for paid street outreach workers following the examples of Lowell, Fall River, New Bedford and Lynn.

Street outreach work is defined as intensive relationship building done by trained, street-smart individuals who form relationships with youth not attending after school programs or participating in other positive activities.

Though positions exist that do outreach work, BIC feels that this type of relationship building is necessary in a city of our size and with our need.

At the action, Mayor Harrington agreed to hire at least 1 street outreach worker, defined in this way if Brockton receives level funding from the Shannon Grant, a Grant BIC worked to have increased by \$1 mil. However, if there is an increase, there exists the possibil-

ity of up to 4 positions.

At the beginning of August, BIC leaders met once more with Mayor Harrington to discuss the Shannon Grant. He again committed to placing 4 positions for street outreach workers into the Shannon Grant application as well as to meeting with BIC in October when the finalized budget arrives from EOPS, the Executive Office of Public Safety.

Get involved

Contact: Janine Carreiro
At 508-587-9550
Email:
Brockton_interfaith@yahoo.com

Or a member of your LOM/ LOC:
Local Organizing Ministry or
Committee

BIC has worked on a number of occasions to increase the amount of funding put into the Shannon Grant, a grant used for gang violence prevention.

Community Policing

The work on finding a new way to organize the police department began over a year ago. BIC members and the community realized that the increase in violence meant that something was not functioning as well as it could be. With a few trips into Providence, RI, it was decided that an attempt should be made to model our department after theirs. Both Mayor Harrington and Chief Conlon also made the trip to Providence to observe the department there.

It is our goal to see to the decentralization of the police department, a move from a centralized hub of service to a city broken down into more manageable pieces. Once the city is divided into new sectors, certain officers

will be assigned to work in each of these zones. This will open up the opportunity for mutual relationships to be built between the police and the community as well as allowing the police to see potential problems as they may arise.

The final step would be to see substations set up in each sector. These substations would be mini police stations that, through a computer system, would be linked to the main station.

At the end of July, BIC leaders met with Chief Conlon to discuss how things are moving along. In January of 2008, the Brockton Police Department received and implemented a new computer system. This system is allowing the department to track and better organize the occurrences in the

city. Furthermore, through a computerized system in new vehicles officers will have the possibility of filing reports without actually having to return to the station.

The Chief has also assured us that, through an intensive process, they are determining the best way to divide the city into the **4 sectors**. Officers will be assigned to each sector for a minimum of **1 year**. This will allow them to build relationships with the local community.

And finally, the first ComStat meeting, a meeting at which the heads of each sector will sit and discuss the situation in the city with the Chief, is set for mid September



Rev. Montjane and Police Chief Conlon at Action in May 2008.



ESOL

English for Speakers of Other Languages

After meeting with staff at the Adult Learning Center, Massasoit, and Training Resources of America-Brockton, BIC leaders found that once again the waiting list for ESOL classes has crept to above a 1000.

There is speculation that this list could be a bit inflated, however, after completing a number of

1on1s it has come to light that many people do not even put there name on the waiting list knowing that it can take up to two years.

With this in mind, BIC approached Mayor Harrington for funding to open at least 1 more ESOL class.

Though he agreed to help fund

this class, to date concrete steps on both BIC and Mayor Harrington's part have not yet happened.

The committee working on this issues foresees a listening campaign, one in which we go into our own congregations and see what the true needs are of those who worship with us and those in our community.

BIC Nehemiah Update:



During Phase I of Nehemiah, 8 condo style homes were built for first time home owners who moved into their new homes in 2007. These houses were for Brockton families earning 70 to 80% of the median income.

We're happy to say that Phase II construction on 8 more homes is scheduled to

begin this fall. Anyone interested in more information should attend one of the following informa-

This WILL BE the **LAST** round of homes being built by BIC Nehemiah. Please spread the word!!!

**Phase II Lottery Information Sessions
Sept 16 @ 7 pm @ St. Patrick's Church
OR
Sept 27 @ 6:30 @Main Library**

On Thursday Aug 14th, Wes Lathrop stepped down as Executive Director of Brockton Interfaith Community after over 3 years of service. Though he has left Brockton, he has not left our extended PICO family.

Wes will begin work as an organizer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at the beginning of September as well as returning to school in the spring to complete a master's degree in Community Organizing.

At his final City Wide meeting, Leaders came together to present Wes with personal letters, a frame with some recent pictures of his time and a copy of Isaiah 65 written in the Brockton fashion that has been the pillar of our campaign.

Once again, we just want to say thank you, Wes Lathrop. Thank you for helping our Leaders develop their talents and for helping Brockton take STEPS from a City of Fear to a City of Hope.

A few words from Wes:

I want to say, thank you for the special city wide meeting we had a couple of weeks ago. I will never forget it!

And thank you for all your kind words in the letters you wrote me. I will keep them close by and look to them when I need encouragement.

May God by with you as you journey together to push toward the vision of community laid out in Isaiah 65!

Wes

We bid farewell to Executive Director Wes Lathrop



Executive Director, Wes Lathrop, evaluating the last Action with leaders.

CORI:

Criminal Offender Record Information

Isaiah 65: 17

For, behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind.

Why Isaiah 65?

In Isaiah 65 the Lord promises his people a new world, in a sense a utopia. For the past 9 months, this vision of a new world has been the pillar on which BIC has based its campaign. As we work, we strive to reach this new world, a world of Hope and not one of Fear

Over the past year the members of the Brockton Interfaith Community have become more aware and very concerned about the situation that former offenders face once they reenter society.

Unfortunately, though much time was spent on a statewide initiative, it did not pass during the 2007-2008 session. We feel that it is now crucial for the city of Brockton to pass their own local ordinance, following the examples of Boston and Cambridge.

At the moment there is widespread access to CORI. Many businesses do not know how to read a CORI, therefore leading them to exclude qualified candidates. Furthermore, records have been known to be erroneous as well as the fact that they continue to carry non-convictions.

As a faith based organization we believe that everyone deserves forgiveness and a second chance. As members of the community, we see the true danger of adding constraints to an already difficult

situation. The likelihood of an ex-offender to re-offend is increased greatly if they do not find a steady job. Economically, having people work and become tax payers is better for our state economy than paying \$43,000/year to have them incarcerated.

We foresee a few key points to a city ordinance. It would effect city jobs and vendors that do business with the city. The exception to this would be the police, fire, and school departments. **This reform will not affect current sex offender policies.**

Laid out in the ordinance would be the following: The city/vendor would review the qualifications of an applicant and determine if the applicant is otherwise qualified for the relevant position before conducting a check, otherwise a check would not be run. Moreover, the city/vendor would not conduct a CORI check unless a check was required by law, or the city made a

good faith determination that the relevant position was of such sensitivity that a CORI report was warranted.

It is our hope that in passing this ordinance, affecting approximately 1000 vendor jobs, we will offer another opportunity for a new beginning for ex-offenders. This, we feel, would make our city a much safer place by reducing re-offenses.

At the Action in May, Mayor Harrington agreed to sign an ordinance if it arrived on his desk.

To get the ordinance passed, however, we need 6 out of 11 of the City Council members to vote in favor of it. To date, we've met with 6. At the moment, the ordinance sits with the Council's lawyer. They all seemed very favorable and we hope to see a finalized ordinance passed sometime in November.

Does CORI change matter to you?

Contact: Janine Carreiro
At 508-587-9550
Email:
Brockton_interfaith@yahoo.com

Or a member of your LOM/ LOC:
Local Organizing Ministry or
Committee

Fr. Cloherty
Parish Priest at Our Lady of
Lourdes Church and a member
of BIC since 1990.



Vote NO on Question 1: Repeal of State Income Tax

On November 4th, there will be three statewide questions on the ballot. Question 1 of these if passed would eliminate the state income tax. The effects of this? Devastating.

An elimination of the state income tax would mean a 40% decrease in the state budget. This in turn would lead to major cuts in city aid, reducing our already

limited police and fire departments. It would lead to increases in property taxes to offset a part of these cuts as well as major cuts in state services-- youth violence prevention programs, health care for many of the uninsured, job training programs, environmental, elderly, parks, housing, all other human service programs, etc.

In the coming weeks, each LOC/LOM will be deciding how and if they would like to work on the Question 1 campaign.

We are in dangerous territory here. In 2004, 45% of voters opted in favor of this bill. We are all asked to remember that knowledge is power! Educate those around you.



The money would be used to hire approximately 12 additional police officers and pay for additional police patrols.

Also this November, there will be 3 citywide questions on the ballot. Each question is for a specific override. Estimating by the average value of a single family home in Brockton, the overrides would amount to:

Question 1.
Police, \$21.42; Fire \$9.54
total \$30.96

Question 2.
Library, \$5.72
total \$5.72

Prop 2 1/2

Question 3.
Schools, \$61.28
total \$61.28

This is an average increase of **\$97.76** per household. This is a permanent override.

The money would be used to hire approximately 12 additional police officers and pay for additional police patrols as well as for additional firefighter staffing and fire fighting funding; Money

for additional staffing and materials in the library system, and Money for the School Department for Education Reform Act and transportation spending.

Each of the questions is separate and stands on its own and must be approved independently of the other questions.

Again, it will be decided by each LOM/LOC whether or not they're interested in working on any aspect of this override.

Teen Center

Over a year ago, many BIC leaders expressed interest in seeing another teen center started in Brockton. There are so many youth and yet so little to do.

Since the Action in May, more leaders have taken the opportunity to head into Dorchester to

visit St. Peter's, a Catholic Charities run center. To date, this appears to be the model that most are excited about seeing implemented here.

At this moment, the Youth Committee is beginning to branch out to incorporate new faces into

their work as they begin to take concrete steps towards seeing a new teen center realized.

Research meetings are being set up as we speak and we'll be sure to update all members as soon as possible.



Upcoming Events

Brockton Interfaith Community

65 West Elm St
Brockton, MA 02301

Phone: 508-587-9550

E-mail: Brockton_interfaith@yahoo.com

We like to keep our members as informed as possible so here are a list of upcoming meetings. They are subject to change depending on Leaders availability so please feel free to contact us at :

Brockton_interfaith@yahoo.com or at 508-587-9550.

*Haitian Church of God Exploratory Sat Sept 20 @ 10 am
(Haitian Creole)
Sat Sept 20 @ 5 pm
(English)*

*Fundraising Committee Mon Sept 22 @ 6 pm
@ BIC*

*St. Pat's LOM Wed Sept 24 @ 7 pm
@ BIC*

*Our Lady of Lourdes LOM Thurs Sept 25 @ 7 pm
@ OLL*

BIC Nehemiah Sept 27 @ 6:30pm

Lottery information Session @ Main Library

*Say NO to Quest 1 Kickoff Tues Sept 30 @ 6:30 pm
@ Messiah*

*Pearl St LOM Wed Oct 1 @ 7:30 pm
@ Pearl St*

*Strategy Team Tues Oct 7 @ 6:30 pm
@ BIC*

*Trinity Baptist LOM Thurs Oct 9 @ 7 pm
@ Trinity*

*Executive Board Tuesday Oct 14 @ 6:30 pm
@ BIC*

*Messiah LOM Sunday Oct 19 @ 1 pm
@ Messiah*

*City Wide Thurs Oct 23 @ 7 pm
@ Temple Beth Emunah*

SEPTEMBER 2008

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCTOBER 2008

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER 2008

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						