

# CATHOLIC HOUSING INITIATIVE OF THE EAST BAY

## FIRST YEAR REPORT: SEPTEMBER, 2003

On the feast of Corpus Christi, June 2, 2002, Bishop John Cummins issued a pastoral letter to the Diocese of Oakland, describing the housing crisis in the East Bay, and calling Catholics to prayer, study, and action on housing. This report is a summary of how the Catholic Housing Initiative and the 87 parishes of the diocese have responded to Bishop Cummins' call in this first year.

### TRAINING AND MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED:

- FIFTY-FIVE parishes were trained in the Catholic Housing Initiative process in the summer and fall of 2002.
- ONE HUNDRED "Tools for Reflection and Action" with scriptural, theological and community resources were distributed at our SIX ENGLISH TRAININGS, and placed on the Catholic Housing Initiative web site ([www.oakdiocese.org/housing/housing.htm](http://www.oakdiocese.org/housing/housing.htm)).
- FIFTY resource packets with information on landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities, counseling and financial assistance were distributed at our FIVE SPANISH TRAININGS.
- SIXTY-FIVE parish representatives and TWELVE technical advisors received monthly bulletin announcements on current housing issues and opportunities for advocacy.
- FIVE Homily Helps on the housing crisis were produced on request and placed on the Catholic Housing Initiative web site. ([www.oakdiocese.org/housing/housing.htm](http://www.oakdiocese.org/housing/housing.htm))
- Materials on PROPOSITION 46, the "Housing and Emergency Shelter Trust Fund Act of 2002", were distributed to each parish. Parishes and coalitions held informational events, rallies, and made phone calls in support. Prop 46 was approved on November 5, 2002.

### NEW COALITIONS FORMED:

EIGHT new coalitions were formed as a direct result of the Catholic Housing Initiative:

- In HAYWARD and FREMONT these city-wide coalitions of parishes advocated for stronger inclusionary policies. Thanks to their efforts, each city passed a 15% INCLUSIONARY ORDINANCE, meaning that now 15% of all new construction will be affordable to moderate, low and very low income households. These coalitions advocated for a STRONGER HOUSING ELEMENT in each city, and are now working to implement these plans for affordable housing. In HAYWARD, funding was also secured for INCREASED RENTAL INSPECTIONS and TENANT and LANDLORD EDUCATION.
- In ALAMEDA, the city-wide coalition of parishes is working to modify Measure A so that higher density, more affordable housing can be built. They hope to hold an INTERFAITH PRAYER SERVICE as a part of this challenging campaign.
- In OAKLAND and PIEDMONT, THREE St. Vincent de Paul conferences have come together, and now NEW SERVICES AND RESOURCES are being provided for homeless families and individuals. In FREMONT, NEWARK, and UNION CITY, the SEVEN parish conferences are opening a new drop-in VISITATION CENTER.
- In LAFAYETTE, MORAGA, and ORINDA, the Catholic parishes have formed "Lamorinda Housing Advocates". They meet monthly, have joined with the League of Women Voters and other housing advocates to TESTIFY for more affordable housing at public hearings, and have sponsored TWO HOUSING FORUMS with a total attendance of ONE HUNDRED FORTY people.
- In CONCORD, FOUR parishes and the HISPANIC MINISTRY CENTER have come together to IMPROVE HOUSING INSPECTIONS, IMPLEMENT the affordable component of the city's HOUSING ELEMENT, support construction of TWENTY-EIGHT transitional apartments on Lisa Lane in Pleasant Hill.
- In PITTSBURG, ONE parish joined with labor unions and other non-profit organizations to advocate for increased funding and a 15% inclusionary policy for affordable housing.

## **DIRECT SERVICE CONNECTIONS**

- TWENTY parishes reported improving their connections with direct service agencies. THREE participated in a winter shelter program, FOUR involved a local agency in their advocacy effort, FIVE became Habitat for Humanity covenant parishes, SIX increased their financial assistance to local housing programs, TWO furnished family apartments.

## **EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY EVENTS**

- SIXTEEN Educational Events took place in ALL FIVE REGIONS of the diocese. FIVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY people attended these events
- SIXTEEN Advocacy Events took place in FOUR regions of the diocese. TWENTY-SEVEN parishes participated in these events, and FOUR HUNDRED and FIFTY people.
- Successes include: stronger housing elements, beginning the implementation of these elements, increased inclusionary units, and funding for first time homebuyer programs.
- On May 9, 2003, our two bishops joined with ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE elected officials, pastors, and parish representatives at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Policy Breakfast to hear Fr. John Coleman discuss key themes from Catholic Social Teaching as they relate to the moral and ethical issues involved in the housing crisis.

## **LAND DEVELOPMENT**

- FIVE parishes are currently involved in or interested in constructing affordable housing on their property, a potential for ONE HUNDRED AND THREE more affordable units.

## **OUR PARTNERS**

The successes reported above would not have been possible without the assistance and cooperation of the following organizations, which provided technical assistance, community organizing skills, a passion for this issue, and an eagerness to include others in their work.

- Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County
- Franciscan Charities
- St. Mary's Center, Oakland
- Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County
- COR – Congregations Organizing for Renewal (Southern Alameda County)
- Renewed Hope, Alameda
- OCO – Oakland Community Organizations
- CCISCO – Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization
- FESCO – Family Emergency Shelter Coalition - Hayward
- Shelter, Inc. of Contra Costa County
- League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley
- Tri-Valley Interfaith Poverty Forum
- East Bay Housing Organizations
- Greenbelt Alliance
- Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California

## **IN THE COMING YEAR**

We hope to build on this base of awareness and organization in the coming fiscal year by:

- providing on-going resources, training and education for parishes
- identifying needs and solutions for homeless families and individuals
- providing information and assistance to parishes wishing to develop their land
- building awareness and support in our communities for solutions to the housing crisis

You are welcome to join in our efforts by contacting Maurine Behrend, (510)768-3164, [maurineb@cceb.org](mailto:maurineb@cceb.org) .