

## *We Flourish and Change*

This seventh year became the first that one of the founders was not president. With the help of the Board and committee members I can report that the year was exciting and successful.

We have improved our **communications**. Our new improved newsletter format has shorter articles linking to longer articles posted on our website. We send out flyers prior to our monthly meetings and use illustrations in our mailings. Chery Green continues to make our website one of the finest in the area.

Although our membership remains static at about 130, we have increased our following on **Facebook**. At the beginning of the year we had 256 friends on our Facebook page; now we have over 350.

Our Advocacy Committee led by Jeanne Bubb and Ruth Ann Cioci and with members Susan Hayman, Barbara Finch, Chery Green, Barbara Richter and Mary Clemons, reviewed and evaluated our advocacy activities and provided guidance to the Board.

The Advocacy Committee recommended and the Board approved a new project on **Predatory Lending** to gather signatures on a petition to lower payday and car title loans to 36% interest. Members also wrote letters to the editor and legislators and Barbara Finch was interviewed for an article in West End Word. Member Ruth Ann Cioci began attending the Unbanked Task Force to learn about possible alternatives to payday loans.

We continued our **Advocacy for Health Care Reform**: A letter to our mail list asking for signatures endorsing Missouri Health Care All principles and asking for health stories resulted in 43 new signatures and several health stories. Members testified at a senate health care exchange hearing in St. Charles. With Missouri Health Care For All we coordinated 8 educational programs on the Affordable Care Act. We co-sponsored two major public health care forums in March. Over 80 attended an educational forum March 13 and 200 came to the public meeting on March 25 with 9 state legislators.

Our members voted to take a position that high-quality, affordable child care should be available to all Missouri families that need it. Our **position paper** is posted on our website.

## *Leadership of Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice, 2011-2012*

### OFFICERS/BOARD MEMBERS

President: Mary Clemons      Vice President: Barbara Richter  
Secretary: Judy Arnold      Treasurer: Linda Carey

### BOARD MEMBERS

Jeanne Bubb; Barbara Finch; Susan Hayman; Helen Houllé  
Ex-Officio: Joanne Kelly Good      Appointed: Jane Cocalis

Linda Carey had to resign as treasurer due to a busy travel schedule. But because of her organizational skills and the willingness of Barbara Richter to learn, our records are in good shape and up-to-date. Susan Hayman receives and deposits our dues and other payments.

Jeanne Bubb chaired our Advocacy Committee and Helen Houllé our Membership Committee.

Jane Cocalis passed our Newsletter preparation on to Bethany Curtis. Thanks to both for keeping our lines of communication open and informing our readership of our activities.

Judy Arnold, Joanne Kelly and Barbara Finch have completed their terms on the Board. Judy prepared our minutes and posted them, along with committee reports, on the member area of our website. Joanne Kelly and Barbara Finch, two of our founders, have chosen to step down. Barbara Finch will remain our Program Chair.

As president, with the permission of the Executive Committee, I wrote letters to papers, legislators and public officials on behalf of our members concerning issues on which Women's Voices has taken a stand.

I attended, with Board approval, a leadership training retreat conducted by Missouri Jobs With Justice. I was part of the strategic planning process for Missouri Health Care for All which provided an opportunity to meet with health care allies and work to improve programming for our advocacy for health care reform.

One of my most exciting events of the year was being invited to speak at the Missouri Alliance for Retired Americans senior health forum attended by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. I was able to present the benefits of the Affordable Care Act for seniors and mention that I represented the 550 women who are our subscribers and members.

*In 2011-2012 Women's Voices also:*

Supported/Endorsed: PROMO to secure sexual and gender equality in St. Louis County; Coalition for Missouri's Future to oppose a 10% sales tax and elimination of income tax; Missourians for Responsible Lending to curtail predatory lending; Invest in Missouri Coalition to promote the well-being of Missourians; Coalition to Restore Economic Security for Missouri's Families to raise the minimum wage to \$8.25 an hour; Missouri Action Coalition, a Non-Nursing Stakeholder, to resolve challenges facing nurses and to build upon nurse-based approaches to improve the way Americans receive health care.

Co-Sponsored: Community Against Poverty Volunteer Fair; PROMO equality day; Missouri Freedom of Choice Council lobby day; and had a table display at the Community Coming Together – A symposium on Diversity in Kirkwood.

Worked with Rebuild Foundation as the students in Hyde Park completed a photo class. During the summer we posted selected photos on our website, some of which were featured in The St. Louis American, the Post Dispatch and exhibited in Old North St. Louis gallery. Our involvement ended when we determined that the focus of the project had changed from our original intent to display the photos to a wider geographical area.

Rallied/Protested: at the offices of Senator McCaskill and Senator Blunt and Congressman Akin to protect Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security; at Clayton High School to support the students and oppose the Westboro Baptist Church rally against the Gay Straight Alliance club; over 25 of us gathered at Senator Blunt's office to protest his stand against women's right to contraception.

Marched in Harvey Milk and Pride parades.

Asked/Urged: Governor Nixon to veto voter photo ID enabling legislation; Missouri Legislators to listen to citizens concerning health insurance exchange hearings; Missouri Legislators to oppose voter photo ID legislation.

Enjoyed Special Events: toured the Griot (St. Louis Black History) Museum; prepared a holiday meal and provided gift bags to women at Shalom House Shelter; attended a Mustard Seed Theater production of Athol Fugard's *Playland*, directed by Deanna Jent.

## *We Continue to Learn*

Many thanks to the Program Committee and the members who coordinated the following programs:

### **Photo Project Documents North St. Louis History, People, and Progress**

(Coordinated by Barbara Finch)

Speakers: **Kim K. Lenz**, Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church; **Dayna Kriz**, Rebuild Foundation; **Andrew Raimist**, Architect, Photographer and Educator

### **Health Insurance Exchanges Offer Lower Costs, Clear Choices**

(Coordinated by the Health Advocacy Committee)

Speakers: **Dr. Sidney Watson**, attorney and specialist in health care law and health care access for the poor; **John M. Huff**, Director, State of Missouri Department of Insurance; **Amy Smoucha**, Health Care Organizer, Jobs With Justice

### **Help For The Homeless in St. Louis** (Coordinated by Joanne Kelly Good)

Speakers: **Rosemary Terranova**, director of St. Louis County Family and Community Services; **Lowry Finley**, manager of Veterans and Homeless Programs, St. Louis County

### **Strategies for Eliminating Poverty** (Coordinated by Barbara Finch)

Speaker: **Michael Sherraden, PhD**, Youngdahl Professor of Social Development and Director of the Center for Social Development at Washington University

### **Addressing Hunger at Home and in Haiti** (Coordinated by Nancy Cooksey)

Speakers: **Marianne Frapwell**, Meds and Foods for Kids development officer  
**Kari Hartel**, a registered dietitian with Operation Food Search

### **The High Cost of Cheap Meat** (Coordinated by Ruth Ann Cioci)

Speaker: **Kathleen Logan Smith**, Executive Director  
Missouri Coalition for the Environment

Our January program was canceled due to snow and will be presented June 7: **A Powerful Voice for a Child in Foster Care** (Coordinated by Lise Bernstein) Meet a CASA advocate (Court Appointed Special Advocate) and learn about Voices For Children.

At our April meeting we honored and thanked **Amy Smoucha** for her work with us on health care reform. We wished Amy well as she begins her new position as a Field Organizer with Families USA.

Respectfully submitted  
Mary Clemons, President  
Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice