

## *A Year of Growth*

Our eighth year saw us grow in numbers and influence. We began the year with 130 members and now have 160. There are 600 women on our email list. In May, 2012, we had 350 friends on our Facebook page; we now claim 500 followers. Several of our monthly programs drew the attention of the media; they were publicized/covered by NPR, the Post Dispatch and the online Beacon.

We have matured as an organization. The Board began a process of leadership development which will expand the opportunities for participation by our members.

We are no longer shy about asking for funds to help us in our advocacy work. If we are going to speak out, we need to be sure that we can be heard. For the first time in our history we asked for contributions to advance our new Campaign for Common-Sense Gun Solutions. This new effort was approved by our Advocacy Committee: Susan Hayman, Barbara Finch, Chery Green, Barbara Richter, Lise Bernstein, Ruth Ann Cioci, Mary Clemons and Jeanne Bubb, Chair.

We continued our Advocacy for Health Care, focusing on expanding Medicaid in Missouri as called for in the Affordable Care Act. Our members wrote letters, sent testimony to legislative committees, made calls to constituents and legislators, attended rallies, and joined others at a lobby day/rally in Jefferson City. More than 25 members participated in these activities. Committee members are: Barbara Richter, Jeanne Bubb, Susan Hayman, Linda Lieb, Joyce Clark, Joyce Borgmeyer, Bunnie Gronborg and Mary Clemons.

Our members interested in environment issues helped us draft a resolution opposing a bill that would undermine the Renewable Energy Standard Act. Earlier efforts to curb predatory lending were put on hold as a proposed initiative failed to reach the ballot.

Our newest advocacy effort, the Campaign for Common-Sense Gun Solutions, will launch its efforts on Mother's Day weekend under the direction of committee members Barbara Finch, Lise Bernstein, Jeanne Bubb, Beverly Rehfeld, Carol Wofsey and Ruth Ehresman.

Our members voted to take a position opposing a ballot initiative that would change the way Missouri appoints appellate judges. We also endorsed a ballot initiative to raise the tobacco tax in Missouri. Our members voted overwhelmingly to support our position paper on gun violence.

## *In 2012-2013 Women's Voices:*

**Supported/Endorsed the following new organizations:** Show-Me a Brighter Future; Missouri Medicaid Expansion Coalition; Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

**Continued to work with partner organizations:** Invest in Missouri coalition; Missouri ProVote; Missouri Budget Project; Jewish Community Relations Council; Jobs with Justice; Missouri Health Care for All; PROMO; Missouri Association for Social Welfare; Freedom of Choice Council

**Co-Sponsored/helped plan or showed up to support:** Missouri Alliance for Retired Americans Medicare anniversary event; Vigil for Leadership Conference of Women Religious; Investing in Missouri's Future: The Impact of Budget Reductions on Education and Health; Community Against Poverty Volunteer Fair; PROMO equality day; Missouri Freedom of Choice Council lobby day; Gun Violence forum.

**Beat the Heat:** came out in 105-degree temperature to celebrate the Supreme Court decision to uphold the Affordable Care Act.

**Sent Action Alerts:** successfully asked Governor Nixon to veto voter photo ID enabling legislation; called on members to support inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in local nondiscrimination ordinances; invited members to kick-off press conference for new Medicaid Expansion coalition; invited members to rally for common sense gun regulations; contacted legislators to ask them to oppose SB 26, a tax law which would lower corporate and personal income tax but increase sales tax; asked members to contact the committee hearing a Medicaid expansion bill and asked members to attend a lobby day in Jefferson City in support of Medicaid expansion.

**Invited the following organizations to co-sponsor our programs:** The Women's Political Caucus and the National Council of Jewish Women were sponsors of our election wrap-up program; The Danforth Center for Religion and Politics provided funds to bring Sandra Fluke to St. Louis and worked with us on planning events for her visit; the National Council of Jewish Women-St. Louis Section, Missouri Association for Social Welfare, Social Justice Program at Eliot Unitarian Chapel, Missouri Health Care for All, Metropolitan Congregations United, and Physicians for a National Health Program-St. Louis co-sponsored our program on Medicaid expansion.

*Our Board in 2012-2013 provided leadership for Women's Voices:*

**President:** Mary Clemons **Vice President:** Jeanne Bubb

**Secretary:** Karel Hippert **Treasurer:** Barbara Richter

**Elected Directors:** Lise Bernstein; Susan Hayman; Helen Houille; Barbara Paulus

**Appointed Directors:** Barbara Finch; Bethany Curtis

Barbara Richter, treasurer, has maintained our financial records; Susan Hayman received dues and other payments and deposited them in our bank.

Jeanne Bubb chaired our Advocacy Committee and Barbara Paulus our Membership Committee.

Karel Hippert provided minutes from our meetings and wrote summaries of our educational programs for our website. Bethany Curtis prepared our e-newsletter, Loud & Clear, and has made improvements to the format and design. Helen Houille created our information display board.

Lise Bernstein led the Board through a process of defining Board roles and job descriptions. This activity will help us move forward as an organization as we plan for the future.

Barbara Finch, as program chair, worked with committee members to provide our outstanding programming, and has coordinated efforts with Chery Green, our webmaster, to keep our website current and lively.

Jeanne Bubb, Barbara Finch, Susan Hayman, Karel Hippert and Helen Houille have completed their terms on the Board and declined re-nomination.

As president, with the permission of the Executive Committee, I wrote letters to papers, legislators and public officials concerning issues on which Women's Voices has taken a stand. In addition, I submitted testimony to several legislative committees to support or oppose bills that would affect the well-being of Missourians.

On behalf of Women's Voices, I attended planning meetings with the Missouri Medicaid Expansion Coalition and the Invest in Missouri coalition.

I was pleased to accept invitations to make presentations with colleagues on the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid expansion in Missouri and on Medicare as affected by the Affordable Care Act. I participated in a panel discussion of the movie "The Waiting Room" and wrote several columns for the Occasional Planet blog.

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

**Trends in Urban Education** (Coordinated by Lise Bernstein)

Speakers: **Dr. Kelvin Adams**, superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools and **Kelly Garrett**, executive director of KIPP St. Louis

**The State of Incarceration: Problems and Progress in Missouri's Prisons** (Coordinated by Bev White)

Speakers: **George Lombardi**, director of the Missouri Department of Corrections, **Gary Fuhr**, Missouri state representative (R-97), **Rory Ellinger**, Missouri state representative (D-72), and **Robert McCulloch**, St. Louis County prosecuting attorney

**Election Wrap-up: Fired Up Or Fed Up?** (Coordinated by Barbara Finch)

Panelists: **David Robertson**, professor of political science, University of Missouri-St. Louis; **Jim Ross**, political operative and candidate consultant; **Jo Mannies**, political reporter, St. Louis Beacon  
Moderator: **Denise Lieberman**, attorney and Missouri Voter Protection Advocate for the Advancement Project

**Experience College Bound** (Coordinated by Nancy Cooksey)

Speaker: **Lisa Orden-Zarin**, founder, College Bound; **staff members** and **students**

**Human Trafficking: Real and Right Here** (Coordinated by Sibylle Ott)

Speaker: **Laura Gardner**, life skills director, The Covering House

**Making Our Voices Heard: Women's Rights Today**

(Coordinated by Ann Ruger, Barbara Finch and Linda Lieb )

Speaker: **Sandra Fluke**, attorney and activist

**Is The Lamp Still Lit?** (Coordinated by Ann Ruger)

Speaker: **Suzanne LeLaurin**, vice president for individuals and families, The International Institute of St. Louis; **Ranga Nepal** and **Shatha Naja**, refugees, now employees of the International Institute

**Inside Track: Medicaid Expansion in Missouri** (coordinated by Women's Voices Health Care Committee)

Panelists: **Alan Freeman**, director of the Missouri Department of Social Services; **Kit Wagar**, Affordable Care Act specialist, Office of the Regional Director, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; **Steve Renne**, vice president of children's health and Medicaid advocacy, Missouri Hospital Association  
Moderator: **Sidney Watson**, professor of law, St. Louis University, Center for Health Law Studies

Respectfully submitted

**Mary Clemons, president**

**Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice**