



## Ninth Annual Report May 2014

Our ninth year saw continued growth: as we begin our 10<sup>th</sup> year we have nearly **200** members, **700** on our mail list and more than **600** who follow us on Facebook. In March we expanded our social media reach by creating a Women's Voices Twitter account.

We conducted a survey of our membership which provided direction to our Program Committee in choosing monthly programs and speakers.

As reported last year, for the first time we asked for funds to help us in our advocacy work. We received donations from many individuals to support our **Campaign for Common Sense Gun Solutions**. The contributions were used to purchase a full page ad in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch on Mother's Day and print 4,500 flyers based on the ad which were distributed at the Laumeier Art Fair Mother's Day weekend. The campaign received media attention and articles in local newspapers featured our work to bring attention to gun violence as a public health issue affecting children.

**The Campaign for Common-Sense Gun Solutions** committee planned and presented 3 ½ hour forum: *Safe & Sound: Smart Strategies to Protect Children from Gun Violence*. Our keynote speaker, James Mercy, PhD, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, and local panelists spoke and answered questions at the JC Penney Conference Center at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. More than 250 people attended and social workers in attendance received continuing education credits. The forum received media attention with articles in the Post-Dispatch and other print media, and coverage by radio and social media. Carol Wofsey, forum chair, worked with a committee of 13 to bring this program to our community.

Hosting a major forum required funds in excess of our modest budget which is based on dues from our members. After making the bold decision to hold a major forum we sought and received grants totaling \$8,000 from the Deaconess Foundation, Incarnate Word Foundation and Des Lee Collaborative Vision Initiative at UMSL. We worked in partnership with Vision for Children at Risk.

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 legislators, attended meetings and rallies. More than 25 members participated in these activities led by our committee chair Jeanne Bubb.

*Our Board in 2013-2014 provided leadership for Women's Voices:*

**President:** Mary Clemons    **Vice President:** Lise Bernstein  
**Secretary:** Judy Arnold    **Treasurer:** Barbara Richter  
**Elected Directors:** Bethany Curtis (marketing); Mary O'Reilly (advocacy);  
Barbara Paulus (membership)  
**Appointed:** Jeanne Bubb (education); Ruth Ehresman

Barbara Richter, treasurer, has maintained our financial records.

Lise Bernstein, vice president/president-elect, led the board in long range planning and the development of policies and procedures to clarify the work of our board and committees.

Judy Arnold, secretary, provided minutes for our meetings, wrote summaries of our monthly programs and maintained our archives. Judy researched and developed our position paper on minimum wage and right to work.

Jeanne Bubb, education director, stepped in to fill this position when a vacancy occurred. Jeanne directed the meeting where our monthly programs were chosen and has worked with the program coordinators. She has prepared guidelines and procedures to clarify the work of the education director and committee.

Bethany Curtis, marketing director, prepared our monthly e-newsletter and worked with our webmaster, Chery Green, who keeps our website current and lively.

Ruth Ehresman, appointed director, has provided advice and direction based on her extensive work on social justice issues.

Mary O'Reilly, advocacy director, led advocacy committee meetings and developed policies and procedures for our advocacy work.

Barbara Paulus, membership director, developed procedures for welcoming guests and members at our monthly meetings and policies related to our dues collection. Barbara tracks our membership growth and writes our new members.

As president, I attended committee planning meetings and represented Women's Voices with our partner organizations. I wrote letters to the editor, letters to legislators, and submitted testimony to legislative committees. I accepted several invitations to make presentations about the Affordable Care Act and to talk about the work of Women's Voices.

As I complete my term as president, I would like to thank all the board members I have worked with and the members and friends of Women's Voices for providing me with this wonderful opportunity to represent Women's Voices while raising my voice for social justice.

## In 2013-2014 Women's Voices:

**Supported/endorsed** the following new organizations: Advocating for Our Future: A Working Agenda for St. Louis Children; Cover Missouri Coalition; Dump Veolia Campaign

**Worked in coalition with:** Invest in Missouri Coalition; 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; Vision for Children at Risk; YWCA; Moms Demand Action; Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence; National Council of Jewish Women-St. Louis Section

**Co-Sponsored/showed up to support:** Community Against Poverty Volunteer Fair; PROMO equality day; Anti-Discrimination ordinances in Kirkwood, Webster Groves and St. Louis County; Missouri Freedom of Choice Council lobby day; Gun Violence forum; Social Justice Fair, St. Louis University

**Marched** in the Gay Pride Parade

**Sent Action Alerts:** successfully asked Gov. Nixon to veto a bill that would nullify federal gun laws; contacted Missouri House Speaker in regard to the gun bill prior to the veto session; successfully asked our legislators to uphold the Governor's veto of the gun bill; successfully urged our legislators to uphold the veto of a bad tax bill; urged our members to write testimony for hearings on Medicaid eligibility and reform; alerted our members to support early voting petitions and gather signatures; set the record straight on misleading information on job losses due to the Affordable Care Act; asked members to call their senators to support Medicaid expansion

**Wrote letters and commentaries:** More than 35 letters and commentaries published on topics of gun violence, health care, child care, domestic abuse, education, income disparities, the environment, and hunger

**Took Positions** to support raising the minimum wage and in opposition to right to work laws

**Collected Signatures** for a petition to bring early voting to Missouri

**Honored** founding member Ruth Ann Cioci for her service and commitment to Women's Voices

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

**Enough is Enough Stuff** (Coordinated by Ruth Ann Cioci)

Speakers: **Madelyn Cioci**, waste prevention specialist, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

**Supremely Disenfranchised?** (Coordinated by Dianne Modrell)

Panelists: **Rita Heard Days**, St. Louis County's Democratic elections director and former state senator; **Judge Judy Draper**, associate circuit judge in St. Louis County

Moderator: **Denise Lieberman**, senior attorney, Advancement Project's voter protection program

**The Affordable Care Act: Promises, Possibilities and Pitfalls** (Coordinated by Health Care Advocacy Committee)

Panelists: **Ryan Barker**, vice president, health policy, Missouri Foundation for Health; **Doug Neville**, attorney and manager of the Employee Benefits Practice Group, Greensfelder, Hemker and Gale; **Johnetta Craig**, MD, MBA, chief medical officer, Family Care Health Centers

Moderator: **Samantha Liss**, health reporter, St. Louis Business Journal

**Women's Night Out For Girls Night Out** (Coordinated by Cindy Bumb)

Speakers: **Darlene Sowell**, CEO of Neighborhood Houses; **Mariesha Martin**, director of Girls Night Out

**The Justice Gap** (Coordinated by Barbara Finch and Judi Jenetten)

Speakers: **Daniel K. Glazier**, executive director and general counsel, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri; **Thomas Harvey**, co-founder and executive director of Arch City Defenders

**The Incredible Shrinking Middle Class** (Coordinated by Barbara Finch and Ruth Ehresman)

Panelists: **Mark Rank**, PhD, Herbert S. Hadley professor of social welfare at Washington University; **Robert A. Soutier**, president of the Greater St. Louis Labor Council, AFL-CIO  
**Mary Ann McGivern**, writer and founder of the Peace Economy Project

Moderator: **The Rev. Rudy Pulido**

**From Abuse to Independence** (Coordinated by Marilyn Ratkin and Donna Nix)

Speakers: **Michelle Schiller-Baker**, executive director, St. Martha's Hall;

**Bridget McDermott Flood**, executive director, Incarnate Word Foundation

**Safe & Sound: Smart Strategies to Protect Children from Gun Violence** (coordinated by Carol Wofsey)

Keynote Speaker: **James Mercy, PhD**, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Atlanta

Panelists: **David Jaffe**, MD; **Saaid Khojasteh**, MD; **Lt. Janice Bockstruck**, Metropolitan St.

Louis Police Department; **Tiffany Anderson**, EdD, superintendent, Jennings School District

Moderator of conversation with families affected by gun violence: **James Clark**, Better Family Life

Respectfully submitted

**Mary Clemons, president**

Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice