



ISAAC — DOING JUSTICE

An interfaith organizing network of congregations and strategic partners working together to build a more just community

May 2011



New President's Message Pastor Milton Wells elected March 15

I AM SO PLEASED TO WELCOME OUR NEW DIRECTOR, BRENDAN FLANAGAN AND OUR NEW ORGANIZER, JEREMY ORR TO ISAAC. They both stood out in the excellent pool of candidates we had for the position of ISAAC Director.

Brendan and Jeremy are coming at a great time. We need to rally our members to **40 DAYS OF ACTION!**—our response to the state budget cuts. Every congregation and organization is needed to take an action, or more than one!

Remember the words of Isaiah: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"



Departing Director's Message Rachael Tanner leaves July 29

I WILL BE ATTENDING GRADUATE SCHOOL THIS FALL to pursue a Master's Degree in City Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. I have been preparing to be an urban planner since 2005. That year, my third at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, I enrolled in a class that read *Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* by Dr. Thomas J. Sugrue. The book produced an epiphany in me. In a few hundred pages, the author delineated how the forces of economics and policy, racism and history, political decisions and social pressures collided, colluded, conflicted, and converged to create present-day metro-Detroit. Through this course, I finally understood the pressures driving people to the suburbs of Kalamazoo. I also understood I wanted to alleviate these pressures and change the future of urban America.

I felt I had seen the Ghosts of Cities Past, Present, and Future: If something is not done, then the same

(continued on page 3)



New Director's Message Brendan Flanagan starts May 2

I AM VERY EXCITED TO BEGIN MY WORK AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ISAAC and the opportunity to collaborate with leaders in the community to enhance the quality of life of the people here in Kalamazoo. I am coming to Kalamazoo from Northwest Indiana where I have been working in a variety of roles. During the 2008 Presidential election season I was a Field Organizer for the Obama for President Campaign. Prior to that, I was involved

(continued on page 4)



New Organizer's Message Jeremy Orr starts mid May

GREETINGS ALL! IT IS MY HONOR TO BE JOINING THE ISAAC STAFF HERE IN KALAMAZOO. I arrived here by way of Detroit, where I was born and raised. Having done my undergraduate (Bachelors in Family Community Services) and graduate (Masters in Criminal Justice) work at Michigan State University, it was my heart's desire to stay put here in economically hard-hit Michigan and help serve struggling citizens in regions throughout

(continued on page 4)

40 DAYS OF ACTION!

We need citizens willing to step up and travel to Lansing to let the legislature know we want to invest in education!

1. **SIGN UP** for one of the following days:

Wednesday April 27, May 4, 11 or 25

Register at: ISAAC, 341-4213

Or **STAR POWER RALLY!** THURSDAY May 19

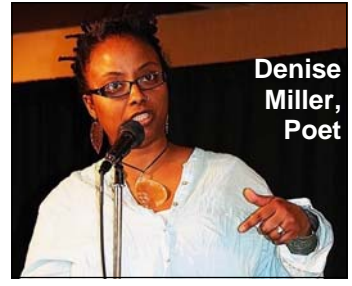
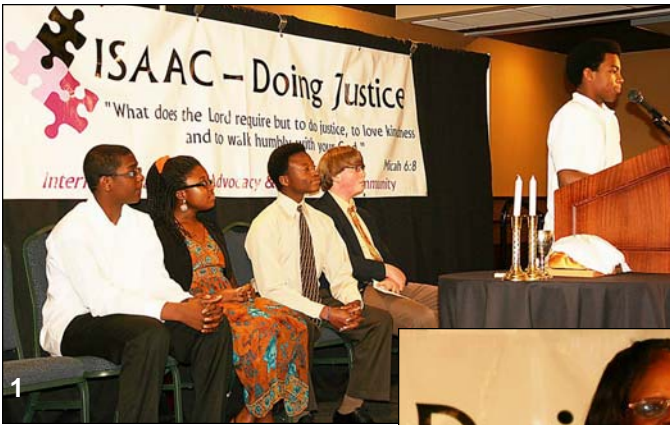
Register at: <http://greatstartforkids.org/star-power>

We will depart at 8 am each day and return by 3:30 pm.

2. **"TAKE" A DAY** for your congregation or organization to be responsible for an action—for example:

Prayer Vigil • Funeral for the Future • Teach-In •
Farmer's Market • Art Hop • Cradle to Prison • Letters •
Signs at Busy Intersections • Press Conference •
Media Gimmicks/Skits • Town Hall Meeting •

→ Contact ISAAC, 341-4213, isaackalamazoo@gmail.com



ISAAC 2011 Banquet

- 4. State Senator Tonya Schuitmaker
- 5. ISAAC Leader of the Year: Shay Cobb
- 6. Ally of the Year: Kal. United Way. ISAAC President Rev. Milton Wells & CEO Mike Larson



- 1. Youth from Greater Faith Empowerment Center who led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 2. ISAAC Bertman, youth from Temple B'nai Israel blesses the meal.
- 3. Dave Tomko, Regional President of PNC Bank accepts Presenting Sponsor Award.



- 8. Major Sponsor Awards: Kalamazoo Public Schools, People's Church, Poverty Reduction Initiative, Great Start Collaborative, Prudential Insurance
- 9. Call to Education Action by Rochelle Habeck-Hunt, LaShana Jones & Pastor Milton Wells.
- 10. ISAAC Founders Award: Open Door Ministries COGIC. Deacons Ralph Jones and Yolanda Thrash.

THANK YOU!

—to the 500 people who attended the **ISAAC 2011 Banquet, "The Community that Could!"** Many people said, "This was the best banquet ever!"
 —to the 116 banquet sponsors who supported ISAAC's work for justice by placing an ad in the Banquet Book!
 —to everyone who became a GEM (Give Every Month), donated, and joined the Action for Education!
 —to all the congregation and organization leaders and youth who helped make the Banquet such a success!
 —to the Major Sponsors for their extra generosity: Prudential Insurance, Great Start Collaborative, Kalamazoo Public Schools, People's Church, Poverty Reduction Initiative, and most especially, to our Presenting Sponsor, **PNC Bank!**

Kalamazoo County
Great Start Collaborative
An early childhood system building program



**Invest in me,
 I may be your boss one day.**

All Kalamazoo County children (0-5) have the social, emotional, physical and intellectual foundation to be successful in education and in life.



The Great Start Collaborative was created to assure that every young child in Michigan has a great start and arrives at the kindergarten door healthy and ready to succeed. As a community we want to support families in assisting the children to reach their greatest potential and be a contributing, productive member of the future workforce.

**Early Childhood --
 Our Best Investment**

Contact the Great Start Collaborative at (269) 385-1580 or jeatmon@kresa.org www.kresa.org

THANK YOU to our funders for investing in ISAAC!



**Kalamazoo
community foundation**



**Loring S. Silmore
FOUNDATION**



Fetzer Institute



**UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
FUNDING
PROGRAM**

a denominational grantmaking program
funds generously provided by the UU Watch Program at Solstice Rock



**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

2010 Neighbors In Need




Rachael Tanner, Consulting Director - *from p.1.*
 forces that destroyed Detroit will continue to destroy cities now and into perpetuity. By the time the course ended, I knew: (1) I wanted to be an urban planner, contributing my talents to the development of vibrant, equitable, and sustainable urban communities in the U.S., and (2) planning requires more than land, ideas, and financing; it requires an organized citizenry advocating for policy changes and participating in the political process. So, I began organizing.

Upon completion of my degree, I plan to work in the private or nonprofit sector on neighborhood and commercial center revitalization in depressed urban areas. These areas require visionary planners working *with* communities to pioneer new ways of living.

Between now and the end of July, I will be Consulting Director, guiding Brendan into his new role and providing training for Jeremy as well. I will continue to work full time until July 29.

There are two easy ways you can support ISAAC during this transition. First, when Jeremy or Brendan gives you a call, please return it and take time to meet one-on-one. Secondly, you can make a donation to ISAAC, or better yet, host a house party this spring or summer to invite your friends, colleagues, family and neighbors to meet Brendan and Jeremy, learn about ISAAC and make a contribution. It's fun, easy, and a great way to do justice!



Prudential
 Growing and Protecting Your Wealth®

*Prudential
 wants to thank
 ISAAC
 for taking a stand
 and making a
 difference.*

(Robert) Bryan Burkey, CFP®, CLU
 Manager, Financial Services
 The Great Lakes Agency, Agency Distribution

3250 West Centre Avenue, Suite A, Portage MI 49024
 Tel 269 327-0720 Ext 6134 Fax 269 327-1689
robert.burkey@prudential.com
www.prudential.com/us/r.burkey

Brendan Flanagan, new Director— *from page 1*

with various local political and issue-based campaigns, including work with U.S. House Representative Peter Visclosky. Most recently, I was a Field Organizer for the Indiana Democratic Party and Coordinator of Organizing for America. All of these positions involved a great deal of work with community leaders, elected officials, unions and leaders of various faith communities.

I believe the times demand that we continue this tradition and mobilize our organization to create a better future for the members of our community. These positions and experiences have led me to develop a strong commitment to working collaboratively with people in the community. The State of Michigan and the city and county of Kalamazoo are facing many economic issues. The tradition of ISAAC has been to work with all sectors of the community in order to address issues of concern. I believe the times demand that we continue this tradition and mobilize our organization to create a better future for the members of our community.



A strong community is our greatest asset.

We believe communities are built on the goodwill and energy of the people who belong to them. That's why we're proud to support ISAAC's pursuit of advocacy and social justice.

STOP BY ANY BRANCH
PHONE 1-877-CALL-PNC
VISIT pnc.com



©2014 The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

YOU are the leader you've been waiting for!

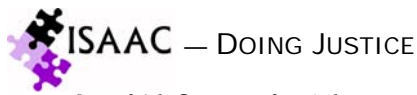
ISAAC Grassroots Training: Building Powerful Congregations and Organizations!
Gull Lake — Fri May 13, 5:30 to Sat May 14, 3:00
→ Call ISAAC before April 29, 341-4213

Jeremy Orr, new organizer — *from page 1*

this great state. I come to ISAAC having left a position as a Project Manager & Community Organizer for the Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation; a non-profit community development corporation in inner-city Detroit. Prior to that job I worked in a number of public service capacities: as a political Field Organizer for former U.S. Congressman Mark Schauer (Jackson), in economic development as the Community Initiatives Coordinator for the Prima Civitas Foundation (Lansing), on workforce development issues with Corporation for a Skilled Workforce as a Community Organizer (Ann Arbor), and even as a Legislative Aide in the Michigan House of Representatives.

I look forward to working side-by-side with all of you as we seek to strengthen our communities and lay the groundwork not just for a better future, but for a better present.

With that said, you can believe that I am no stranger to the economic, educational, and social injustices that we're facing here in Kalamazoo. I am readily prepared and excited about organizing with ISAAC. I look forward to working side-by-side with all of you as we seek to strengthen our communities and lay the groundwork not just for a better future, but for a better present. Let our work together begin!



Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy & Action in the Community
412 East Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3888
269-341-4213 www.isaackalamazoo.org