



ISAAC — DOING JUSTICE

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

May 2010, revised

The Beloved Community

In 1963, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. noted that in America, Sunday is the most segregated hour of the week. ISAAC has developed a program that helps us work through our segregation. The year-long program, *Being the Beloved Community*, pairs congregations and organizations that are different in their race/ethnic group, location, age, religion, denomination, etc. The first part is two facilitated dialogues, *Close Encounters of the Human Kind*. Here are reflections from St. John's Guild and Fire Historical & Cultural Arts Collaborative.

Javon Vincent (*Fire, HS senior*):

My partner in the first Encounter, Bob Dunbar (St. John's, grandparent) drew a little racket and ball in his book about himself. We were both interested in tennis!



Amy Peterson (*St. John's, grandparent*): My partner was Anisia, a teenage mother who said it gave her hope that I'd been a single mom too. She said, "When Amy talked about blending her family and her husband's family, that gave me hope because that's what I want." These kids want to create a better future.

Jasmine Simmons (*Fire, HS senior*):



I like the way Jomil Wells (ISAAC organizer) thought the whole program out. It was nicely put together. Everybody had a say so. It feels good to know you can get together and hear each other's opinions.

cont. p. 4



Right now, state legislators are proposing cuts to education that will increase class size, close schools, lay off teachers, make our textbooks more and more outdated, and more! As people of faith, we believe we need to invest in our children, and we believe the legislature must do what is right.

The congregations and organizations of ISAAC want to impress upon elected officials and candidates that Michigan believes in education! We are advocating for stable and adequate funding for education from birth to grade 12. The legislature can do it!

Legislators concerned about jobs and business in Michigan need to hear these facts from economist Tim Bartik, who is a member of our *Action for Education Coalition*:

- ♦ **Workforce skills are what drives where businesses choose to locate!** A well-educated workforce is the best way to attract new business to our state.
- ♦ **Good third grade test scores boost property values!**

cont. p. 4

ISAAC Chooses Top Priorities: Youth Development, Education Housing!

Close to 400 people participated in an exciting evening of passionate presentations, lively caucusing, three rounds of voting and new people joining task forces on the three issues chosen.

The twenty member congregations and organizations present had difficult choices to make at the ISAAC 2010 Issues Convention on May 6 at Edison Environmental Science Academy.

Out of six important concerns, only three could be chosen. Youth Development won in the first round of voting after a particularly powerful skit by youth from Open Door Ministries.



Education won easily in the second round, and Housing won in the third round with Economic Development very close behind.

All are welcome to join one of the new task forces. Task forces will be listening to people with expertise on their issue, identifying winnable policy changes and asking decision makers to support these changes at the **ISAAC Public Meeting on October 21.**

ISAAC 2010 Banquet — Streets of Hope

The **2010 Streets of Hope Banquet** drew over 400 people to the Bernhard Center on March 20. The keynote speaker was **Che Madyun**, an inspiring community organizer featured in the book, *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood* and the documentary, *Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street*.

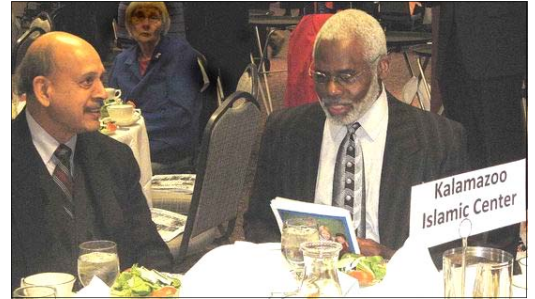
Thanks to the tireless efforts of board members, the generosity of member congregations, and the giving spirit of local businesses, non-profits, civic leaders, and institutions **over \$36,000 was raised!** These funds will allow the congregations and organizations of ISAAC to continue to work together to build a more just community. A big thank you goes out to all of our donors, guests, board members, award recipients, and presenters!



New ISAAC members, Dept. of Peace, Wesley Foundation, Phi Beta Sigma and UU Community Church symbolized their covenant with ISAAC.



CHE MADYUN
Keynote Speaker



Shaghil Husain & Robert Saleem, Kalamazoo Islamic Center

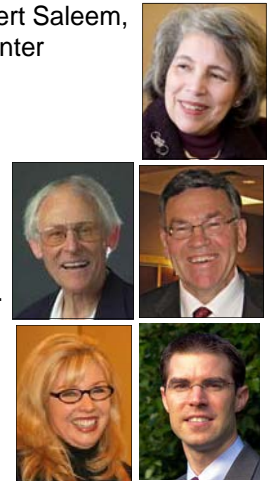


Sponsorship Awards: PNC Bank, Kathy Jones, and Kalamazoo Public Schools, Mollie Peterson



Truth Tone Records & Meagan McNeal

Candidates present included Rep. Alma Wheeler Smith for Governor, City Com. Don Cooney for U.S. Rep. Lorence Wenke for State Senate, Rep. Tonya Schuitmaker for State Senate, City Com. Sean McCann for State Rep.



Elected Ally of the Year Award: Sen. Tom George (accepted by Rob Bricker) & Rep. Robert Jones



Dr. Charles Warfield presents Public Ally of the Year to Dr. Michael Rice, KPS Superintendent



Andrea Huff accepts the Founders Award for People's Church from Rev. Linda MacDonald



Rachael Tanner and Kathy White present the Leader of the Year to Tobi Hanna-Davies

Be a G.E.M.!!



**For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also
Matt. 6:21**

If you treasure social justice,
Give Every Month to invest
in ISAAC as we work together with
congregations and strategic partners
to build a more just community!

| Monthly Amount | GEM Investment Level |
|----------------|----------------------|
| \$5-24 | Emerald |
| \$25-49 | Ruby |
| \$50-100+ | Diamond |

Contact ISAAC to invest
by Visa or MasterCard, electronic
funds transfer, check or cash

269-341-4213
isaac@gmail.com
or donate on line
www.isaackalamazoo.org

If you are already a G.E.M., can
you increase your investment?

ISAAC

*Interfaith Strategy
for Advocacy & Action
in the Community*

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President's Message



Streets of Hope — it is more than just a statement; it is a mindset for this community and beyond to embrace inwardly and show outwardly. During our annual banquet, Che Madyun, a well-known organizer in Boston, presented inspiring tools for us on how to pursue this mindset.

ISAAC thanks the community for their involvement in our **Issues Convention** Thursday, May 6, 6:00 - 9:00 pm at the Edison Academy. This convention created the space for the community to express their areas of concern

about our neighborhoods.

Be a part of the work,
Be a part of the solution!!!
ISAAC members and non-members together are building The Beloved Community envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This includes pairing disparate groups. Together, they expressed concerns about our neighborhoods. The Leadership Board chose six of the most frequently expressed concerns for the Issues Convention.

Again, I want to say thank you to all those who contributed by being a part of the ISAAC Annual Banquet and know we can build a stronger and more vital community with God's help.

**Overseer Daniel Cunningham
President of ISAAC**

THANK YOU to our 2010 Keystone Sponsor

THANK YOU to our newest G.E.M.s!

Clyde Flora
Nancy Kovach
Elizabeth Lane-Davies
Matthew Laney
Dawn McLaren
Nadine Godin-Nassaney
Kathleen Garland Rike
Martha Warfield
Shawn Welker
Kellye Wood

THANK YOU to our major funders for investing in ISAAC!

Arcus Foundation
gay & lesbian fund


Kalamazoo
community foundation



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.

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Beloved Community from p.1

George Peterson (*St. John's grand-parent*): We found common ground, and established respect for one another. The two groups—very different—came together. That's basically what ISAAC does well—bringing groups together.

Samara Woolfolk (*Fire, HS senior*):



The movie at the second Encounter was upsetting—about white flight. But there was an unexpected turn-around. I respected that lady for standing up. It was really gutsy.

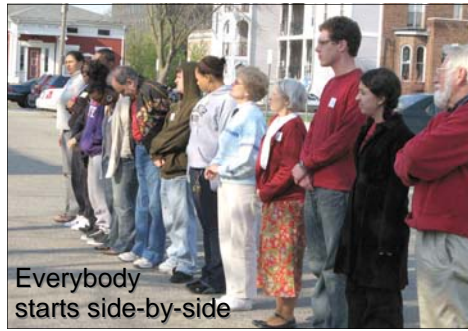
Amy: The video was powerful, about the suburb of Philadelphia and Camden NJ that stopped blockbusting and succeeded in reversing white flight. The residents found common ground and created “intentional integration!”

Javon: I hope Kalamazoo will follow in its footsteps. I wish we had more events for citizens, with more diversity, and could bring more industry here, like in the movie.

Javon: The “Privilege Walk” was interesting, to see how many of us from Fire were in the bottom and the rest were in the top. It shows we have a lot of work to do.

George: I've always known that I had a privileged life, but the “Privilege Walk” was insightful. The African American adults ended up further back than the younger African Americans, yet despite being so far back, they accomplished a lot.

Amy: I've been telling people about it. Michelle Johnson, one of the co-founders of Fire, articulated the generational difference, with fewer barriers for the teenagers than she and her co-founder Denise Miller had experienced. Michelle also pointed out, “In spite of those barriers, I have a PhD and Denise has a Master's!”



Everybody starts side-by-side



The Privilege Walk is an intense activity demonstrating the ways our inherited privilege from our race, gender, class, and other social factors determine who "wins the race" towards prosperity in America. Statements are made and participants step forward or back if it applies to them. Such as: If one or both of your parents went to college, step forward. Or: If you were raised by a single parent, take a step back. At the end, we can see that disparities in our society affect all of us and drive us apart from one another. In the photo above, many of people of color were towards the back and many white people were towards the front.

Samara: My experience with ISAAC was interesting. I never did anything like that before. It gave me a different look at how things are in our community and society.

Javon: It's good that we met and understood where each and every person's coming from.

Jasmine: It feels good to work with another organization!

Check out the ISAAC Website!
www.isaackalamazoo.org

Order a yard sign—Another Family for Education!

Sign up to advocate in Lansing for education!

Read more about **Being the Beloved Community**

Check out the new interactive calendar

Donate! Or become a G.E.M.!

Education from p.1

Families look for neighborhoods with high test scores when they move to a new place. Good schools improve our economy!

We need you to help!

1. **Make calls to Lansing** every Thursday—check the website for the latest numbers to call.

2. **Go to Lansing with us** on one or more Wednesdays from now until July 1st.

3. **Put up Another Family for Education yard sign**—get yours today!

4. **Host advocacy training** for your parent-teacher organization, congregation, non-profit board.

5. **Meet with legislators** locally.

6. **Join the ISAAC Early Childhood Education Task Force**, 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 7:00–8:30 pm at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 247 W. Lovell, downtown Kalamazoo. Open to **all** in the community.



Regena Nelson and Ron Crowell from UU Community Church in Portage role play talking with legislators about education cuts.

In the parable in Luke 18:3, the reluctant judge finally did what was right because the widow kept asking! We must keep asking!

Another Family
for
Education!



www.isaackalamazoo.org