



ISAAC — DOING JUSTICE

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

Sept 2009

President's Message

AUGUST 13, 2009 WAS A HISTORIC MOMENT in Kalamazoo as the citizens of the Northside, Edison and Eastside came together downtown to take action on issues that face our community.

ISAAC was the bridge that connected people—youth and elderly, people from many traditions—in this process of reclaiming our neighborhoods.



Kalamazoo County will become a more just community by the actions of individuals that reside in our community. Therefore, ISAAC initiated a campaign to identify individuals that are G.E.M.s in our community.

What's a G.E.M.? 

- Someone who **Gives Every Month** to invest in ISAAC.
- Someone who commits to give whatever they can on a monthly basis.

ISAAC is looking for 50 new G.E.M.s to continue to rewrite history in Kalamazoo. ISAAC needs you to be a G.E.M.! See page 3.

Overseer Daniel Cunningham
President of ISAAC

Tina Burch's Story

The impact of state-supported preschool



Tina Burch with her family, DeVanne II, De'Jah, both 7, Kristina, 13, and DeVanne Burch, Sr.

PEEP* MADE ME A MORE INVOLVED, MORE CARING PARENT. I have two children who went through the PEEP program, my daughters, who are now 7 and 13. I learned to make every moment a teachable moment. If I'm cooking, I have them help me cook. If I'm reading the paper, that makes them want to read. Instead of yelling, I know it's better to talk to them calmly. If PEEP helped me be a more involved and caring parent, think how many others they've changed!

I'm part of the Great Start Collaborative Parent Coalition. When they told us about the state cuts to PEEP, I became personally enraged. There are so many other things we can do besides cuts on our children! A luxury tax, a tax on cigarettes,

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*PEEP (Pre-kindergarten Early Education Program) is the Kalamazoo Public Schools state-supported preschool.

Unity for Justice: ISAAC 2009 Covenant Celebration!

New congregations and organizations join ISAAC!
New & current members commit to *work together to build a more just community*

Thurs, Oct 29
6:30 Doors open
7:00 Program begins

at **Tabernacle Church of God in Christ**
3210 Virginia Ave.
Kalamazoo 49004

➔ From downtown, go north on Riverview, turn right on Mt. Olivet, turn left on Virginia

Review: Our History
Revive: Our Faith
Remember: Those who have gone before us
Renew: Our Commitment
Reclaim: Our Community!

COME!

August 13 Victories

at the Eastside, Northside & Edison
Combined Neighborhood
Public Meeting

In July, 100 ISAAC Porch Patrol volunteers knocked on doors to listen to residents talk about their neighborhood concerns. Next, task forces met with community leaders to find solutions. Then, community leaders made public commitments to the solutions below at the Aug 13 Public Meeting. As you read this list, please consider making a contribution to sustain this work.

- WMU & KVCC will develop mentoring courses for their students so they receive credit for being a Big Brother or Big Sister.
- Kalamazoo Parks & Recreation will facilitate teen-led planning of new youth activities for our neighborhoods.
- City of Kalamazoo will improve lighting by making repairs and trimming trees.
- City of Kalamazoo will demolish abandoned houses prioritized by residents.
- Residents will participate in the Citizen Police Academy and Kalamazoo Public Safety will plan anti-racism training for their staff.
- Plans to build an Eastside Recreation Center by 2014 continue.

Throughout this process, new leaders emerged from neighborhoods and congregations—all excited to reclaim our communities as holy ground. This powerful work was accomplished by leaders volunteering their time and talents. We need you to join with us.

Please consider becoming a G.E.M.!



Save the Date!
Sat, March 20, 2010
ISAAC Banquet

Tina Burch's Story *from page 1*

beer, paying extra to go to a ballgame or a fair or to get your nails done—I'd rather do that than cut programs for kids.

I decided to go to my pastor, Dr. Addis Moore, and I explained the cuts to him. I asked if Mount Zion could sponsor a bus to Lansing to talk to our legislators. They need someone talking to them about all the families that can't afford preschool!

I set up a table at church, and talked with church members as they were coming by. Another member and I had a sign-up sheet and asked people to go to Lansing. Surprisingly, we got quite a few.

Twenty-three people from Mt. Zion, ISAAC, United Way and Great Start Collaborative went on the first trip on August 13, with Mount Zion donating the bus. We had at least a hundred letters from church members to give to our legislators.

On the second trip a Gazette writer and photographer went with us. We had about 60 more letters. We got to talk to Senator Tom George and Representative Larry DeShazor. They sympathized, but didn't promise.

If they cut funding for PEEP, they're taking a step backwards! Somebody has to be there to speak for the kids. Kids don't have a voice. Someone has to speak up!"

If PEEP helped me be a more involved and caring parent, think how many others they've changed!

If they cut funding for PEEP, they're taking a step backwards!

ISAAC has collected hundreds of letters from church members and partnered with the Great Start Collaborative, Greater Kalamazoo United Way and others to organize multiple trips to Lansing, a prayer vigil and a phone campaign to our legislators and Governor.

You may not have been able to join us in going to Lansing. But that doesn't mean you don't value children! You can match your resources and your values by becoming a G.E.M. Your monthly contribution will support our efforts to give every child in our county the education that will lead to a bright future

What else you can do: Call these four legislators' offices once a week until Oct 1. One of their aides will take your message.

What you can say: "I want Senator... or Representative... to oppose budget cuts to preschool." You can tell your own story about why this issue matters to you.

Legislators to call:
Sen Mike Bishop, Senate Majority Leader, 877-924-7467
Rep Andy Dillon, Speaker of the House, 888-737-3455
Sen Ron Jelinek 866-305-2121
Rep George Cushingberry



One of the many trips to Lansing to support preschool funding. Wayne County delegates join ISAAC delegates, Tobi Hanna-Davies, Beth Myers, Rev. Carol Richardson, and Demarra Gardner.

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

Use the enclosed envelope
or contact ISAAC to invest
by Visa or MasterCard, electronic
funds transfer, check or cash

269-341-4213
isaac@isaackalamazoo.org

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

~ ~ ~

ISAAC asked these G.E.M.s... Why are you a G.E.M.?

"I would hate to risk
forgetting something
as important to my
community as
ISAAC. Automatic
monthly giving
makes it easy to put
my money where my
faith is!"



Suzanne Coleman,
Christian Church-Disciples of Christ

*I believe in ISAAC!
ISAAC has given
me so much—what
I want the
future to be for my
kids and grandkids.*



Brenda Stubbs
Galilee Baptist Church

*Unless I "program my giving", other
demands suffocate
the good that my
wife and I can do
through the justice
agenda of ISAAC.
I believe ISAAC is
the "walk side" of
the Church's "talk
side". (Affirming
the importance of both!)*



Rev. Don DeYoung
Bethel Reformed Church

*I give because I
know how my gift
will be added to
others so that the
important work of
ISAAC can be ac-
complished.*



Al Dixon
St. Barnabas Epis-
copal Church

*I've been associated with ISAAC almost
from its birthing and truly believe in its
approach to justice
and organizing.
That is why I have
personally chosen to
financially support
it. This and only
this is what God
asks of us: "To act
justly, love tenderly and walk humbly
with God." Micah 6:8*



Dcn. Joe Schmitt
Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo

Vote YES Nov 3 On the City of Kalamazoo Public Transit Millage



**SUPPORT
METRO TRANSIT**

**Your Yes Vote Secures
Transit WITHOUT Higher
Property Taxes**

Since Kalamazoo County
property owners now pay
0.4 mill, City of Kalamazoo
property owners are being
asked to pay only 0.6 mill,
for a total of just 1.0 mill
for the next three years.
**That's LESS THAN the
2007-08 millage!**

www.publictransitnow.com

**Another reason to
support ISAAC's work
for social justice!
Be a G.E.M.!**

ISAAC

*Interfaith Strategy
for Advocacy & Action
in the Community*

Gamaliel Foundation Affiliate

Arcus Depot
412 East Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3888
(269) 341-4213
Fax: (269) 341-4218
isaac@isaackalamazoo.org

THANK YOU
to our major funders
for investing in ISAAC!

Arcus Foundation
gay & lesbian fund

Kalamazoo
community foundation™

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Be a G.E.M.!!
 What is a G.E.M.?
 See page 3.

Victories for the Eastside, Northside & Edison Neighborhoods



**Big Brothers
 Big Sisters
 mentors**
 Chet Hart



**New Mentoring
 Partnership**
 Jason Ford &
 Desmond Wells
 with Dr. Katharine
 Cummings, WMU
 School of Education



Teen-planned programs
 Commissioner Sean McCann



Soloist
 Jasmine
 Franklin



New Partnerships
 Lori Mercedes,
 Hispanic American
 Council & April Lee,
 Open Door COGIC



**Infrastructure
 Progress**
 Bertha White



**ISAAC Combined Neighborhood Public Meeting
 Aug 13 at The River Church
 Imam Leslie Malone, Bilal Islamic Center, opens the meeting**



**Teen-planned programs—
 Youth leaders**



**Quality
 Preschool**
 Shay Cobb



**Police/Community
 Relations
 Partnership**
 Rose McKenney,
 Janice Campbell,
 Commissioner Jack
 Urban, Pat Sanders



Listening Campaign
 Amy Peterson, CJ Jones



Ice cream celebration!