

***Thus says the Lord:
Heaven is my throne and the earth is
my footstool; what is the house that
you would build for me, and what is
my resting place? All these things my
hand has made, and so all these
things are mine...*** —Isaiah 66:1-2a

God has created an abundant and beautiful planet to be home for people and all living creatures. Many of us have a place in this world we call our own, a place where family gathers and meals are shared, and where we rest at the end of each day. **But not everyone.**

Some have no place to cook a meal, no place to sit back and rest their feet, no place to call home. We see their faces, if we dare look as we pass them on the street. We feel compassion. But what can we do?

Some congregations wanting to make a difference are, together with their neighbors and communities, listening to needs, discovering where inequities and injustices lie, and working together to find solutions. Often this becomes ecumenical work that engages churches, businesses, local agencies, government representatives, and policy makers. Coming together as **Congregation Based Community Organizations** (CBCOs), the members join with people whose voices are often ignored to seek solutions and advocate for change.

CBCOs are making a difference.



In Washington, D.C., the *Washington Interfaith Network* (WIN), is comprised of Protestant and Catholic congregations, synagogues, a mosque, and community organizations. WIN

advocated for the Housing Production Trust Fund and has celebrated how this Fund has been used to produce more than 9,000 units of affordable housing.

In Kentucky, *Citizens of Louisville Organized and United Together* helped increase the city's trust fund to \$10 million annually and have advocated for a dedicated, ongoing source of revenue.

In Story County, Iowa, *AMOS Institute of Public Life* is working on permanent supportive housing for people with mental illness and support for immigrant families.



In San Rafael, California, tenants worked with *Marin Organizing Committee* (MOC) to fight against a sudden increase in rent. The 40% increase within 60 days would have put many families at risk of displacement or homelessness. MOC is advocating for stronger protections for tenants in Marin county.

In North Carolina, after years of negotiation with *Durham CAN*, county commissioners have agreed that of 437 apartments they plan to build on county lots, more than half the units will be designated as affordable housing.

Congregations who serve in their communities, advocating together to lift a voice for justice, often find the vibrancy of their own congregations built up. Considering the call in Matthew 25 to see Christ in those who are hurting, bound, hungry or homeless, perhaps these congregations have found a way to help build a house—a place of rest—as if for the Lord.

A portion of One Great Hour of Sharing gifts supports the work of CBCOs as they strive to make homes available for those who may have no other attainable option. The CBCO program is managed by the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Community organizing training opportunities are available for those who would like to get involved. Email php@pcusa.org or call (502) 569-5388 for more information.



Learn more about the ministries of the
Presbyterian Hunger Program.
www.pcusa.org/hunger



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