

INTERFAITH COUNCIL FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

COLLECTIVE IMPACT REPORT



SUMMER & FALL 2023



ICPJ hosted a Peace Circle on November 4th as a supportive gathering to mourn the loss of Palestinian and Israeli lives with reflection, love, music, and food. Twelve community members shared offerings with the larger group as we circled up around a bonfire and felt the warmth of connection in a time of grief.

ADVOCACY

OUR WORK IS ABOUT BUILDING CAPACITY FOR INDIVIDUALS TO CREATE THE CHANGES WE NEED AND TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS WHERE JUSTICE CAN BE SEEN IN OUR LAWS AND POLICIES.

>>> HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT

ICPJ joined the Winter Shelter Task Force and organized with other grassroots housing activists and unhoused neighbors. Together, we advocated to allocate \$2.18 M of the ARPA Financial Equity Center to respond to the housing and homelessness system to support winter sheltering. This included direct cash assistance for up to 1-year to families and individuals currently experiencing homelessness or housing instability; eviction prevention and diversion; winter shelter staffing and site support; short-term emergency hotel stays; and funds for unbanked and underbanked housing barrier reduction support.



>>> CARAVAN TO SUPPORT DRIVER'S LICENSES FOR ALL LEGISLATION

The [Drive Michigan Forward Coalition](#), of which ICPJ is a member, organized & advocated for driver's licenses for all Michigan residents regardless of immigration status. In October, ICPJ joined activists in Detroit to rally to move legislation forward.

>>> DRIVING EQUALITY ORDINANCE

ICPJ organized support for the "Driving Equality Ordinance" in Ann Arbor to bring an end to pretextual traffic stops. Except where the violation is of a nature or magnitude that poses immediate risk of harm to person(s) or property, AAPD cannot stop or detain drivers or occupants based solely on minor violations.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

TO ORGANIZE WITH THE COMMUNITY, WE NEED TO CREATE SPACES WHERE LOCAL ACTIVISTS, ADVOCATES, AND CONCERNED HUMANS ARE ABLE TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS. IT IS THROUGH THESE RELATIONSHIPS THAT WE FIND THE COURAGE AND TENACITY TO STAY FOCUSED ON THE LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF PROJECTS THAT DON'T ALWAYS MOVE AS QUICKLY AS WE'D LIKE.

2023 HARVEST DINNER

November 8th, we honored community leaders who live the values of ICPJ and work toward our collective vision: **Alex Thomas, Fed Up Ministries, Anna Lemler, Ann Arbor for Public Power, and the Graduate Employees' Organization.**

MOVING WASHTENAW EQUITY PARTNERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS INTO ACTION

The [Washtenaw Equity Partnership Report](#) was released and a Bridge Team was formed to put together an implementation plan for this in-depth and community wide effort. ICPJ secured a grant for a Michigan Justice Fund Fellow to create our organizing campaign plan. We hosted a virtual event to introduce the basics of the WEP report and to name the recommendations that ICPJ sees a role for our members and organizations to carry forward:

- Driving Equality Ordinances throughout county
- Continued support for Care Based Safety as an unarmed response organization to respond to mental health and other community needs
- Participatory Budgeting to involve community members in true decision-making about how shared resources are allocated
- Promoting Housing First policies such as Source of Income Accountability to insure that landlords are not discriminating against renters due to receiving public or other support
- Advocating for the creation of an Overdose Prevention Center to save lives and provide easy access to necessary resources for recovery

VOTERS ORGANIZING THROUGH ENGAGEMENT (VOTE) CAUCUS CONVENING

The VOTE Caucus brought together groups focused on voter education, outreach, communication, fighting suppression, and de-escalation at the polls. As we head in the 2024 election season, we need to be better prepared and connected.

HOUSING | HARM REDUCTION | UNARMED RESPONSE

We mobilized our networks to address the ongoing demand for an emergency shelter, as well as an urgent, emergent need that escalated during the summer in downtown Ypsilanti. Attendees learned about ongoing efforts to build momentum to change the narrative at the County and municipal levels.



EDUCATION

WE RECOGNIZE THAT AS WE PUSH FOR DEEPER SYSTEMIC CHANGE THAT WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND HISTORIES OF RESISTANCE, TO DISCOVER NEW TOOLS, AND TO FOLLOW POLICY DISCUSSIONS THAT IMPACT OUR COMMUNITIES.

SHORT HISTORY OF STRUCTURAL RACISM

ICPJ hosted Ayo Magwood of Uprooting Inequity for a virtual series on Structural Racism. The four part series covered:

- The Origins of Race and Racism (Colonial Era)
- Historical Roots and Contemporary Expressions
- Remediating Structural Racism
- Reflection and Action (led by ICPJ Co-Directors Dez and Eleanore)

More than 100 people registered for the event and resources -- and we raised more than \$3,700 in support of this work! Thank you to all of the participants & contributors!

REFLECTIONS ON FAITH, HOPE & HEALING

October 19th The Interfaith Roundtable of Washtenaw County, A Brighter Way, and ICPJ co-hosted a live, very personal evening of reflection, storytelling, and faith from formerly incarcerated people from Washtenaw County facing the barriers and challenges of re-entering society from prison.

CONSUMPTION, WASTE & THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The Caucus for Waste, Consumption, and the Climate Crisis (CWCC) has been an active member of the new annual Ann Arbor Climate Action Teach-In. This has included tabling at events as well as creating [a video that outlines our areas of work](#) to help the wider community know how to engage in our advocacy efforts.

DIRECT ACTION

EDUCATION, COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ADVOCACY, AND CAPACITY-BUILDING WORK IS SO IMPORTANT TO HELP US ACHIEVE THE FUTURE THAT WE IMAGINE. AND NONE OF IT CAN MOVE WITHOUT DIRECT ACTION TO HELP US LIVE WHAT WE WANT TO SEE, AND TO PUT OUR PEOPLE POWER AT THE FRONT OF LEADING CHANGE.

COALITION FOR STATEWIDE RENTER'S RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY

ICPJ joined with others in the Michigan Tenants Assembly to share education about Rent Stabilization and to advocate for a repeal of the state's Rent Control Preemption. Members of the group organized the Rent Is Too Damn High rally on September 5th, which has now become a coalition in support of a tenants rights legislative package.



LATIN AMERICA CAUCUS

In September 11th, the 50th Anniversary of the Coup in Chile, the ICPJ Latin America Caucus co-hosted speaker Peter Kornbluh, the Director of the Cuba and Chile Documentation Project and a Senior Analyst at the National Security Archive. He spoke on the history and impacts of this attack on democracy and the ways that the people have fought for justice.

In October, LAC hosted an event "Honduras: Human Rights Crisis and Forced Migration" with Blanca Esmeralda Valladares and Mary Anne Perrone.

[Visit event recordings online.](#)

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CAPACITY BUILDING

WE KNOW THAT THE CURRENT SYSTEMS ARE PERPETUATING RACIAL AND ECONOMIC INJUSTICE. WE KNOW WE NEED TO BUILD NEW SYSTEMS, NEW WAYS OF COLLECTIVE BEING. WE BRING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS INTO COLLABORATIVE SPACES TO HELP BUILD THE FOUNDATION FOR WHAT COMES NEXT. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WORK TO STRENGTHEN THE SKILLS OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF TODAY AND TOMORROW.

➤➤➤ FACILITATOR'S LAB COHORT

We launched our first **Facilitator's Lab Cohort**! We spent 8 sessions with a group of veteran and new facilitators sharing resources and learning new practices together. We covered topics like facilitator flexibility, centering racial and economic justice, storytelling, and vulnerability, conflict, and trauma. Two members from the cohort are going to be leading our first **Compassionate Community Conversation** series with members of First United Methodist Church. Look out for more information for a future cohort.

➤➤➤ FACILITATION FOR JUSTICE & EQUITY

Downtown Ypsilanti saw an increase of systemic and structural injustices made visible over the summer. Members of the unhoused community started sleeping under an awning at one of our collaborative partners, Growing Hope. As community tensions rose, ICPJ was asked to join with a restorative justice practitioner to **facilitate a community meeting to openly address the conflict**. The majority of people who attended the packed event left feeling heard and like they had a better understanding of the different perspectives in the community. We were able to identify a number of solutionary areas of focus & work continues based on connections made.

Our collaborative partners, Dispute Resolution Center, asked Co-Director Desiraé to **co-facilitate focus group sessions** with their stakeholders as they go through their strategic planning process. Desiraé also joined a hiring committee for our collaborative partner, the Ginsberg Center, for their Community Partnerships Manager.