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“People say, what is the sense of our small effort? They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time”

Dorothy Day



About Us:

- We do not support candidates
- We support issues
- We invest in ourselves through membership dues and individual donors
- We focus on long term systemic change
- We train leaders who in turn become active in their congregations and communities

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## What is VOICE-Buffalo?

### Mission

VOICE-Buffalo is a community of congregations and neighborhood groups across the Buffalo Region dedicated to strengthening member groups and revitalizing Western New York, especially its distressed neighborhoods.

### History

Congregations joined together to stop the violence on the West Side of Buffalo in 1996. In 1999 over 30 Congregations came together in our first Public Action. Since then, VOICE-Buffalo has held action meetings of 300 - 1,800 people and has task forces researching and pursuing public policies in the areas of justice, regional development, housing and parks, and safe streets.

### New Beginning

In 2009, VOICE-Buffalo hired a new Lead Organizer. We will be holding a Local Training of 60 New Leaders September 12, 2009

information at [www.voice-buffalo.org](http://www.voice-buffalo.org)



**GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING TO CHANGE  
WESTERN NEW YORK**

Lead Organizer: Louisa Pacheco

345 Franklin Street  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
Phone: 716-842-6571  
Fax: 716-842-6573

Email: [office@voice-buffalo.org](mailto:office@voice-buffalo.org)  
[www.voice-buffalo.org](http://www.voice-buffalo.org)

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*Faithfully bringing forth justice*

- Training Leaders
- Acting Locally
- Building Regionally

### **Taking Faith Beyond the Four Walls**



VOICE-Buffalo supports a Strong Public Option, and Health Care for All!

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## Strategies for Change

VOICE-Buffalo recognizes:

- Local actions with congregations and neighbors are essential
- Policies that negatively impact local neighborhoods must be addressed

## Local Grassroots Organizing

In February 2003, VOICE-Buffalo implemented Project Holy Ground. **Its purpose is to strengthen congregations, connect people to the community, and bring stability to neighborhoods.**

- St. Joseph University Roman Catholic Church has formed a collaborative to work on absentee landlord issues and housing renovation. They worked with DOT and NYS Thruway on the surface design of the reconstruction on Main Street in the University district.
- Second Chance Ministries has worked tirelessly to revitalize the Charlie Perkins Park and the surrounding neighborhood. The park is on a top list for revival, and 2 vacant houses were demolished.
- Holy Cross is working to end gang violence on the Lower West Side.
- Unitarian Universalist of Amherst has worked with Gateway Longview to collaborate together on quality of life issues.

## Regional Organizing

For too long we have gone without a plan to combat Western New York's issues as a whole. In the Inner City we see blight, abandonment and disinvestment. In the inner ring suburbs we are beginning to see vacant strip malls, abandonment, and roads that need repair. VOICE-Buffalo knows we need a plan. That plan needs to address the social well-being of all WNY Residents—from the refugee population to the working class laborer, to the middle class business person.

## Transportation / Sprawl Task Force

- Promoting better public access to jobs
- Changing policies that drive development of sprawling communities
- Developing a set of principles that can serve as a framework for regional equity and growth
- Ending abandonment and disinvestment in the inner city and inner-ring suburbs

## Major Accomplishments

- Twelve drug houses known as "The Dirty Dozen" were demolished in the neighborhood around Our Lady of Loretto Church
- The Blue Cans: A five point-rodent control Program was implemented in collaboration with the City of Buffalo that included citywide distribution of secure garbage containers, baiting of properties before demolition and increasing rodent control personnel
- 8 Holy Ground Churches are working in their neighborhoods to address local issues
- VOICE-Buffalo was instrumental in getting the Genesee St. reconstruction project implemented. Construction completed in 2008
- This year VOICE-Buffalo weighed in on the New York State Budget, crafting a statement that supported the passage of a budget that includes **all** people
- VOICE-Buffalo Clergy Caucus and faith leaders delivered 1500 post cards calling on our U.S. Senators Gillibrand and Schumer to support a strong public option. Followed up by in-district visits where Senator Gillibrand announced her, "unequivocal support of a strong public option!"