

# Compassion Action Network

*Anoka County Human Services, Faith Communities and Non-Profits  
linking resources to strengthen our community.*

**When everyone brings something, there is more than enough.**

**June, 2009**

## Success Stories

Success in networking! Here are just two examples of connections made as a result of participating in our Compassion Action Network and Circle of Influence (COI) meetings.

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After accessing the local free stores, a community social worker who was serving a young mom with an infant requested help finding baby clothes & supplies. Through the Circle of Influence she connected with **Gail Weems** at Fridley Covenant Church who partnered with her to help this mom provide for her infant.

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**Joyce Carlson** from the Senior Community Service Employment Program first attended our COI meetings earlier this year to tell us about opportunities for low income adults 55 and older to re-enter the workforce without jeopardizing their income status. Also in attendance was **Patty Halvorson** from Central Center for Family Resources who later contacted Joyce about getting a volunteer to help out in their office. Joyce found the perfect fit for Patty's University Ave office, where the volunteer now handles clerical responsibilities for Central Center.

Join us at our next COI meeting. The networking is endless.

**1st Thursday of every month  
1:30 p.m. in Room 210  
Emmanuel Christian Center**

## A Gift of Many Years

This year's Spring Faith Forum, **Anoka County Seniors – a Vision For 2020**, was held on May 14th, at the Church of St. William in Fridley. Among the 85 in attendance were: 32 participants from the Anoka County faith community, 28 city and county agencies, and 25 non-profit organizations.



Our keynote speaker was **Kim Ratz**; a motivational speaker, trainer, singer, songwriter, and author. Kim's keynote was aptly titled, **A Gift of Many Years**. Kim inspired us with songs, stories, words of wisdom from his own Mother, and ideas to serve, honor, & engage the senior citizens in Anoka County.

Kim began the keynote with a song he had written tailored to our topic of honoring, engaging, and inspiring seniors.

One of Kim's messages was about **choices** - what you do and how you do it - that largely determine if at the end of the day you feel content or regret. It's about living congruently, by aligning your **attitudes** (what you believe to be true, right and good) with your **aptitudes** (skills you're born with plus those acquired and strengthened throughout your life) and your **actions** (i.e., words and deeds).

Kim told entertaining and inspiring stories about seniors and how we can learn from them. His songs and stories were well received by our participants and brought smiles & giggles so very early in the morning.

Following Kim Ratz's keynote, the group attended one of two concurrent breakout sessions, followed by speed networking where local organizations displayed their services, and then followed by two more concurrent breakout sessions.

Please look on page three to see some of the great comments from our attendees.

Sue Kennell—Advisory Board

## Senior Power-Engaging Seniors in Meaningful Ways



This forum breakout session featured a panel of senior volunteers who use their time, skills, and experience to benefit the community. **Rev. Duane Addison** talked about the Life Enrichment Adult Forum for Seniors (LEAFS) program sponsored and organized by seniors at local faith communities for fellow seniors. Their program consists of two yearly sessions featuring speakers on a wide variety of topics. Each LEAFS session concludes with a luncheon so participants can network and socialize, also an important program benefit. For more information about the LEAFS program, contact Duane at [addisonde@msn.com](mailto:addisonde@msn.com) or Joanne at [joannedavis@usfamily.net](mailto:joannedavis@usfamily.net)

In the second portion of this breakout session **Diane Pokorney** discussed Anoka County's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), which she coordinates. This program matches seniors with meaningful volunteer service opportunities. Two RSVP participants, **Mary and Marvin Hannah**, gave an interesting and inspiring presentation about volunteer programs they work with. Marvin is a volunteer Health Insurance Counselor and works with Meals on Wheels. Mary is active with 3 sewing groups, one of which she helped develop, that donate their work to those in need. To contact RSVP call 763-422-7090.



The panelists clearly showed their enthusiasm for their volunteer work. The audience asked the presenters several good questions and went away with useful handouts and good information.

Ellen Raeker—Advisory Board

## Home Sweet Home

Given the growing senior population and the current trend towards "aging in place" (seniors preferring to stay in their homes), the need for services such as home maintenance, quality home care, and transportation are key to supporting seniors in their homes. A panel of 4 professionals participated in a discussion that highlighted local programs that are available to Anoka County residents.

**Laura Zimpleman-Eng**, Anoka County Senior Services social worker, and **Karen Pollesch**, Coordinator of the Senior Information Line for ACCAP, recommended several resources that can link seniors to the services they might need:

- *Anoka County Resources for Seniors* brochure – provides basic contact information for people interested in accessing county services. <http://www.anokacounty.us/v1/seniors/documents/ResourcesForSeniors.pdf>
- *Anoka County Community Assistance Program (ACCAP) Resource Guide* – The Seniors Only section provides program descriptions for a wide range of services provided throughout the county. <http://www.accap.org/file/ResourceGuide/Web%20RG/12%20ACRG08%20For%20Seniors%20Only.doc>

- *Senior Information Line* – a phone line answered Monday – Friday 8 am – 4:30 pm that can assist in helping seniors and their families identify services that will meet their needs. 763.783.4707

**Cindy Tembreull**, Anoka County Public Health Nurse, who specializes in assessing seniors' health needs and assisting them in accessing services, discussed various governmental programs seniors may qualify for to get financial help for in-home services. She also encouraged people to call the Home and Community Health department if they have questions about what is available and how to access free services within the county system. <http://www.anokacounty.us/v1/seniors/health/index.asp>

**Tom Buchman**, coordinator of Ride Care, a volunteer led transportation ministry of St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Anoka, described how his church developed and coordinates this very successful program. 40 – 50 volunteer drivers and schedulers provide transportation to 25 – 30 individuals per week. Tom stressed the significant role this program plays in supporting seniors in the community and encouraged faith communities to join them in meeting this need by considering starting a similar program. <http://www.ststephenchurch.org/Service/community.shtml>

Gayle Alexander—Advisory Board

## Vulnerable Adults – Interventions and Resources

As an individual slowly declines in their health and well-being, the question lingers, “when is it time to do something and what do I do...” In this concurrent session we heard from **Mary Banister** representing Anoka County Adult Protection Social Services, **Kim Almeroth** representing Anoka County Home & Community Health Care, and **Myra Harris Johnson** representing the Fridley Police Department. Each of these representatives helped us understand what their programs exist to do, and when it’s important to simply call 9-1-1. Myra, of the police department, explained if it’s an emergency “call us.” However, if it’s been a gradual decrease and there is no immediate danger, it might be better to contact a relative or someone else who could make necessary improvements for the



individual’s living arrangements and needs. If you are concerned about an individual that may be taken advantage of, physically or maybe financially, *do* call Anoka County Adult Protection and they can help assess the situation.

To report abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, call Anoka County at 763-422-7168 or to get general information call 763-422-7070. All calls can be confidential.

Together we can help! One participant, a coordinator for Meals-on-Wheels, commented that hearing this presentation helped clarify some details for him, so he and his volunteers can be more informed as they are seeing seniors on a regular basis.

Elisa Thibodeau—Advisory Board

## What Did our Participants Have to Say About our Spring Forum?

*“Home Sweet Home—  
transportation information  
especially helpful—  
Tom Buchman very  
comprehensive, realistic, and  
organized.”*

*“Well organized, good  
environment, good variety of  
presenters.”*

*“I learned of availability of  
particular resources—senior  
companions, respite care, and  
transportation”*

*“CAN does a great job with  
forums—very informative and  
interesting.”*



*“Good ideas to take back to  
my seniors and some ideas to  
use with volunteering.”*



# 2009 Fall Faith Forum

## Mission Statement

To mobilize community organizations to recognize the value and benefits of working together, because when everyone brings something, there is more than enough.

## Vision Statement

By working together to serve our community, every community organization will recognize and utilize its own unique gifts and resources.

## Advisory Board

Mary Jo Loftus, Co-chair  
St. Katharine Drexel Church

Gayle Alexander, Co-chair  
Anoka County Human Services

Lyla Pagels  
Mercy & Unity Hospitals

Ellen Raeker, Secretary  
St. William Catholic Church

Elisa Thibodeau  
Emmanuel Christian Center

Sue Kennell, Newsletter/Website  
R.S.V.P.

## Contact Information

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# Save the Date!

## October 29, 2009

The Compassion Action Network (CAN) is currently planning the Fall Faith Forum scheduled for October 29th at St. Philip's Lutheran church in Fridley. The topic will be homelessness in Anoka County, focusing on:

1. Raising Awareness about homelessness in Anoka County (the facts & faces of the homeless)
2. Highlighting Current Initiatives (who's doing what about homelessness in Anoka County)
3. Encouraging Action (what can I or my faith community do?)

The Anoka County Homeless Count on 1/24/2008 identified 609 people experiencing homelessness. The number of children with adults was 191.

The count on 1/28/2009 identified 1,004 as homeless. The total number of children was 423. This is an increase of 121% in the number of homeless children.

In honor of Homelessness month (November), CAN will be partnering with Heading Home Anoka, a regional initiative to end homelessness, as we look in depth at how homelessness impacts our community. If you would like to contribute ideas for this event, please attend the monthly Circle of Influence meetings (the first Thursday of each month at 1:30 p.m. at Emmanuel Christian Center) or send us an e-mail at [compassionnet\\_mn@yahoo.com](mailto:compassionnet_mn@yahoo.com).

“Even if you are on the right track—you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”  
- Will Rogers



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