

# naugatuck valley project

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world."

Margaret Mead

Waterbury, Connecticut

Summer 2008

## Re-Patterning for NVP Director Carol Burkhart-Lyons



AT HER AGE, Carol Burkhart-Lyons abhors the connotation of "retirement." She feels that she is "re-patterning her life on July 31, 2008". She says, "Six months of traveling while we are in good health" with her spouse, Peter Lyons, is what she wants to

do for now. They have plans to travel to Mexico, Antarctica, and Australia.

A native of Buffalo, New York, Carol has been employed by the Naugatuck Valley Project on and off for 24 years. A couple of those years Carol spent taking education breaks and family leave, but she remained in touch with NVP's actions, staff, and leadership.

Being the child of two deaf parents, Carol has experienced the injustice of discrimination and the poverty that comes from ignorance or ill will. "[My parents'] deafness taught me to be a sensitive listener, noticing body language and intonation of voice, as well as the deflection of gaze when being spoken to by a hearing person."

Carol's father lost his skilled tool-cutting job at 65, six months before he was to retire, and the company took his pension with them. That injustice brought her to the Naugatuck Valley.

Getting into community fights and getting your "hands dirty" is a necessary thing because action empowers the disenfranchised. Carol will miss seeing that growth in people.

A search for a new Staff Director will begin in early winter.



Left to right: NVP Youth Kyle Vergauwen, Olivia Jones, and Isomar Vazquez perform to "I Need to Wake Up" (song written by Melissa Etheridge) at NVP's 23rd Annual Convention.

SAVE THE DATE



**NVP ANNUAL CONVENTION**

**WEDNESDAY**

**NOVEMBER 12, 2008**

**6:30 PM**

**DINNER · NEW OFFICERS · ACTION**



THIS IS A

FUNDRAISING EVENT

SILENT AUCTION WILL BE HELD

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# Lessons Learned on Growing Green: NVP's Trip to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

ON APRIL 14 and 15 a group of five traveled to meet with persons in positions of leadership in various areas who are working to build a new and better Pittsburgh, PA. This old manufacturing mecca has serious problems, especially financial and environmental. It is also a city of strong resources, especially in the business, education and medical communities.

We met with Councilman William Perduto. Among his insights were that building a post-industrial city requires the ideas of everyone. They sought out these ideas from the community by using the local media who publicized the ten best ideas submitted.

Perduto calls the downtown area "our living room", and as they plan for the future they include research done by groups in the field of education, especially those who promote the development of high-tech businesses. Vital for rebuilding a city that will be cleaner, healthier, more efficient, more open and more cooperative will be the collaboration between state and local leaders and citizens, especially those with vision.

Our next stop was at the Green Building Alliance where we met with its LEED (leadership in

energy, environment and design) Project Specialist Eamon Geary. This visit opened our eyes to "retrofitting" older structures to make them healthy places to live and walk, and to reduce their carbon footprints. Through their efforts, buildings are proud to display the LEED logo.

Our third visit was with William



A Brownfield in Waterbury, CT

Cagney of Local 95 of the International Union of Operating Engineers in offices they had converted from an old closed Catholic elementary school. There they proudly displayed the Energy Star logo in a building done over largely by their own members.

We also met with Carl Luisi, the Education Director of the Local. This Local does not provide workers who build, but "stationary members" who maintain the buildings and systems within the Pittsburgh area. Through their education programs and their

partnerships with colleges and technical schools they offer hands-on experiences that count as credit towards a college-level degree for students.

Our final stop turned out to be a lesson of urban planning. We met with East Liberty Development, Inc. Deputy Director Ernie Hogan and Sustainable Policy Coordinator Nathan Wildfire. The people there are working to bring about a major transformation. They believe that continuous meetings with the residents and the owners of businesses are essential to creating trust and cooperation.

Without the input of its residents, the best-intended plans will fail.

As a result, a mixed-use master plan has been created and is being implemented. Lessons learned by the development team include the need to keep talking with people, keep promises made, that diversity and compassion are market riches, that social equity differs in residential and in commercial areas, that affordable or transitional or supportive housing do not degrade an area but is a tool for revitalization, and that wise financial planning is a necessity.

*Submitted by Fr. John M. Cooney, NVP President*

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# NVP Conducts Several Medical Interpretation Trainings

OUR SPRING ACTION this year is taking place within our organizations instead of a large assembly. Impacting the Health Care provider market is essential in the Naugatuck Valley and it won't happen without your help.

### Remember:

#### Health Care is a Right, Not a Privilege!

Naugatuck Valley Project is conducting training on how to navigate the health care system. These training and small group sessions are designed to teach people how to use the current health care system in Connecticut and teach people who are non-English speakers (NES) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) speakers how to ask for a Medical Interpreter.

The following Valley churches and organizations, so far, have agreed to participate in the training: Casa del Perdon, Waterbury; Our Lady of Fatima, Waterbury; Sacred Heart-Sagrado Corazon, Waterbury; St. Margaret's Church, Waterbury; Shekinah Pentecostal Church, Waterbury; Smirna Misionera, Waterbury; Tabernaculo de Oracion, Waterbury; United Muslim Masjid, Waterbury; Holy Rosary Church, Ansonia; Latino Hispanic Resource Committee, Derby; St. Joseph's Church, Shelton; and St. Peter's Church, Torrington.

### History

For the past 2 years, NVP has been meeting with the four area hospitals' leaders and administrators. As a result, Griffin Hospital and Charlotte Hungerford



Standing: Liz Rosa, NVP Organizer & Trainer; Sitting: Santa Teresa Perez and Herman Reid, Members of Sacred Heart-Sagrado Corazon Church.

Hospital have hired part-time, trained medical interpreters and have increased usage of language line interpreting. St. Mary's has changed their signage; and Waterbury Hospital has added signage on how to access a medical interpreter by language line.

### NVP Navigation Training

The purpose of the Navigation training is to create a demand for trained face-to-face interpreters and to educate LEP and NES residents on how to use the current health care system in the four area hospitals. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) have programs that are available to residents in the Valley that they must know about.

### What's The Action?

If your church or organization is listed above and you have not scheduled dates to hold training, please call the NVP office and we will help you get started.

If your church or organization is not on this list and you would like to send someone from your institution to be on trained how to disseminate this information, please call us.

We are looking for bilingual teachers in Portuguese, Urdu, Arab, Albanian, Polish.

## Join Us

If you agree that NVP and its work are critical to promoting social justice throughout the Valley, please consider joining us, encouraging others to join, and making a personal contribution. To learn about the important social justice issues we are presently working on and other urgent issues it seeks to address, please call **(203) 574-2410**.

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## NVP Hires Janet Caggiano as New Organizer



A NATIVE OF Wheaton, Illinois, in 1972 Janet Caggiano moved to Danbury, Connecticut with her family so her father could work in an engineering job. Janet is married to Vince Caggiano and they have a son, Vincent Jr., and a daughter, Tina.

Janet's organizing career began in 1993 as a leader and she served 3

consecutive terms as an NVP officer, including President. Her background consists of a grandfather that was the first Regional Director of the National Labor Relations Board based in Ft. Worth, Texas during President Roosevelt's "New Deal" era. Her grandfather survived the McCarthy era witch-hunt when a company retaliated against him in an arbitration decision. He was able to exonerate himself.

Her sense of justice comes from her family's efforts to change things in the community. Janet remembers her mother asking the whole school board to resign because of incompetent decisions, and that is where she was instilled with "you can change things". As

president of a local school PTA, the issue that brought Janet into the NVP was the lack of after-school programs which evolved into parent empowerment around the school budget and drop out rate. "That really got me really interested in organizing. With large groups of committed people you can empower yourself and others to make change" Janet said.

In 2003, Janet worked with NVP as a Congregational Developer and with the Brookside Cooperative Housing members. Janet is still organizing with residents. What she'd like for you to know is "I really look forward to working with NVP's organizational leaders and residents up and down the valley".

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***"Leadership can be thought of as a capacity to define oneself to others in a way that clarifies and expands a vision of the future." (Edwin H. Friedman)***

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