

The
**CHURCH
COUNCIL
of
GREATER
SEATTLE**

*Grounded
in Faith.
Working
for Justice.*



2011 Annual Report

A Note from the Executive Director . . .

Every year is marked by a turning of the seasons. In 2011, world events shaped a global experience of the seasons. First, there was the “Arab Spring” where the pangs of freedom and democracy were heard and expressed. Then, in late summer, there was the 10th Anniversary of 9/11, commemorated in Seattle by an Interfaith Service of Remembrance, walk and vigil from Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren to Idriss Mosque. In the Fall, the Occupy Movement flowered in Seattle through self-sacrifice and nonviolent hospitality, drawing attention to the ever-growing and harmful disparities in wealth and income in our nation. In all of these instances, the prayer and public voice of the Church Council offered encouragement and perspective.

The past year involved several aspects of a “turning of the seasons” for the Church Council. After 22 years, the HomeStep program providing transitional housing for hundreds of families and households on the path to self-sufficiency, transitioned to the Compass Housing Alliance. This move enhances HomeStep’s capacity and serves as an example of a partnership that advances the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County. We proudly continue to support our



Interfaith Prayer Vigil at Idriss Mosque, in Remembrance of the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001. Photo by Pastor Ken Miller Rieman.

remaining direct service programs that touch the various seasons of people’s lives: The Sharehouse furniture bank, the Sound Youth VISTA program serving youth, and the Friend to Friend companioning program.

The Church Council also turned to engage in other matters of significance to the community, including the plight of port truckers seeking their daily bread, the follow up to the Department of Justice report of findings that call for a new relationship between police and the community and local pastors, and the development of a curriculum for faith communities on the economic crisis, emerging from our social justice network of congregations.

We embraced new staff for our programs, social justice and development work. Finally, the Church Council turned to ask of ourselves, who are we to become in response to God’s call

to embrace the Beloved Community of justice and peace. To this end, our board, member congregations and people of faith will form the “we” from which we may be able to discern the gift of new wineskins to frame our core work – building relationships in community and witnessing together as church – in a changing world. The Church Council continues to offer a perspective of God’s abundance in the midst of a society built upon scarcity. As we grow intentionally toward forming a more authentic church body, we thank you for “acting justly, loving kindness and walking humbly with our God.” We invite your hands, hearts, and minds to join in planting together, anticipating a graced harvest this year and in the years to come.

Michael Ramos
Executive Director

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Thank you for your service to the Church Council of Greater Seattle and to the community at large.

Cover photo of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ©Mark Ippolito/spiritualbeings.net

Cover photo of Vigil in Downtown Bellevue for Economic Justice. Photo thanks to Rev. Marian Stewart

Sowing the seeds of social change

Social Justice Ministries of the Church Council of Greater Seattle educates, advocates and organizes in partnership with member congregations, the broader faith community, and community organizations to help create conditions for social, economic and racial justice in Martin Luther King, Jr. and South Snohomish Counties. We bring a distinct moral and faith voice to issues of our time, drawing on the gospel values of justice, peace, reconciliation and love.



Executive Director Michael Ramos speaks at a rally kicking off a fast for a just and humane budget in Olympia.

2011 marked the renewal of a multi-year partnership with King and South Snohomish County congregations to embrace our shared mission of “faith that does justice.” We joined hands in interfaith witness for the 9/11 Tenth Anniversary Interfaith Service, walk, and vigil, and also for two Interfaith Breakfasts – first for port truckers and later for immigrant rights. We facilitated a circle of pastors and church leaders in confronting the Mayor of Seattle with the findings of the Department of Justice report related to practices of the Seattle Police Department. A different Circle of Protection, with Bread for the World, sought to preserve basic human services at the federal level. We spent time with Occupy Seattle members and participated in Occupy Chaplains. We engaged city officials in support of a smooth relocation of the Nickelsville encampment.

These and other activities of public witness were complemented by public policy successes: Paid Sick Leave in the City of Seattle; the passage of the Home Security Fund extension for transitional housing operating and rental assistance after laying the groundwork for passage in 2011; a living wage contract for employees at the Westin Hotel after a community-led delegation presented concerns to management.

We highlighted the ministries of the Rev. Rich Lang and Pastor Steve Baber and Skyway United Methodist Church at our Annual Dinner, “Let Justice Roll!” while planting the seeds of commitment over the long haul: we inaugurated our Social Justice Organizing Conversation, began to prepare a curriculum on Faith and the Economic Crisis and listened to pastors who urged us to be articulate about the gospel imperative to be faithful in the public square.

Sharing time with those who value it most

“Nationally, 6 out of 10 residents in nursing homes never have a visitor.” **Friend to Friend** recruits and matches volunteers to visit one-on-one with residents living in Nursing Homes, Assisted Living and Retirement Homes for the purpose of friendship. Each volunteer visits at least twice a month at their convenience for a one-year commitment. In 2011, Friend to Friend matched 205 individuals and residents to visit one-on-one in 114 Nursing and Retirement Homes in 5 Puget Sound Counties: King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish and Thurston.

Friend to Friend operates with one staff person and five volunteer chapter coordinators. Thank you to Ann Johnston, Colleen Stewart, Berlena Brock, Harriet Thomsen, and Stee Kern for their tremendous enthusiasm and commitment to Friend to Friend.

One volunteer says, *I’m visiting a man at the Mount who has limited communication ability. He has taught me so much about being patient, creative, and keeping a positive attitude! It’s amazing to me how much visiting him cheers*

me up, too. He is so happy every time I come to visit and I really enjoy seeing the smile on his face. We go for walks around the facility and I quickly learn that many (most) people know him. Even though he has trouble speaking, people know his smile and I feel lucky to be by his side when he gets multiple “hellos.” I’m so glad that I’ve made this new friend!



Connie has visited Dottie for four years. Connie says, *I am happy to say our relationship has been a blessing to us both.*

For more information, visit Friend to Friend’s website at www.friendtofriendamerica.org or visit Friend to Friend’s new page on Facebook!

Turning housing into homes

Moving into a new home is expensive and stressful for anyone, but especially for those who have experienced homelessness. **The Sharehouse** helps turn housing into homes by providing the most basic necessities such as beds, linens, and dishes to families and individuals reestablishing homes after a period of homelessness.

The Sharehouse mission has two vital components: to bring a sense of self-sufficiency and comfort to families and individuals transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing and to protect our environment by redistributing still-useful household items that would otherwise be discarded. In 2011, working with approximately 60 member agencies throughout King County, The Sharehouse provided furniture and other household goods to nearly 1,500 newly established households. In doing so, we also kept more than 22,000 items donated by local businesses and community members out of our area landfills.



Most of The Sharehouse staff in front of the truck used to pick up gently used furniture and to make deliveries to new homes.

The basic necessities provided by The Sharehouse are critically important for families and individuals who are working hard to reclaim their lives. As one recipient said, *I wanted to tell you that you make a positive difference in people's lives. I can't express enough how this has helped us in rebuilding and giving more a sense of home. So here's a big thank you from my heart to your efforts and resilience to change the world one needy person at a time.*

Member agencies report that families and individuals who have utilized The Sharehouse are twice as likely to be in stable housing after two years. As a staffer from one of our member agencies remarked, *Thank you for your support and tremendous patience with me, my clients, and their interpreters. Your staff went above and beyond what was expected. I appreciate all the work your team does in making this service available!*

For more information, please visit www.thesharehouse.org.

Supporting and empowering King County's young people

Sound Youth creates positive change for youth, builds capacity within local non-profits, and supports members who dedicate a year of their life to serving. This team of AmeriCorps*VISTA members help existing youth-serving organizations working against poverty to expand and improve the services they offer—creating programming, recruiting volunteers, and reaching out to bring in new resources. Our VISTAs help organizations do what they do best, better. Through our many partnerships, Sound Youth's community sites grow the capacity they need, VISTAs gain valuable experience, and Seattle area youth have greater access to needed resources. Sound Youth spent 2011 focused on helping its VISTAs deepen their own understandings of race, class, and other social justice issues, continually broadening their perspective on the work they do to see themselves as part of a larger social justice movement. Self care was integrated into their work to support their continued successes. This brought direct benefit to the youth they serve.



Members on MLK Day 2011—a day on, not a day off!

In reflecting on how her understanding of her work has grown, one member wrote, *My perspective on youth empowerment has shifted from a place of independence to a place of community. Most of the youth I serve take charge of themselves not because they want to but rather because they must with no present parents or guardians. These young people need access to information and services they may not have even known were available to them. Most of them are self-reliant, and empowering them means connecting them to help, not just showing them how to be on their own.*

Sound Youth's VISTAs served with the Hepatitis Education Project, Girls on the Run, the Boys and Girls Club, Cleveland High School, Outdoors for All, Catholic Community Services, and Youth Care.

These many successful partnerships were able to improve our region's climate for under served young people in a time of economic hardship.

For more information, please visit www.soundyouth.org.



Sound Youth VISTA Members show their excitement for volunteering for a food drive on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.



Executive Director Michael Ramos speaks at Nickelsville as it moved back to its original location on W. Marginal Way SW. Photo by Revel Smith.



Attendees listen to a speaker at an Interfaith Breakfast for Immigrant Rights. Photo used with permission.



Rabbi Jonathan Singer, Bishop Greg Rickel, and Hisham Farajallah lead the procession to Idriss Mosque for the Remembrance of the Tenth Anniversary of 9/11. Photo by Ken Miller Rieman.



Chair of the Church Council Social Justice Committee, Rev. Dick Gillett, works with Genevieve Aguilar in organizing an event in support of the Port Truckers. Photo © Stefanie Felix.



"Mary" and "Joseph" help lead the procession during 2011's Las Posadas put on by the Washington New Sanctuary Movement. Photo used with permission.



Pacific Northwest Conference UCC Conference Minister Rev. Michael Denton speaks, with several clergy behind him, during a rally for Port Truckers. Photo © Stefanie Felix.



Executive Director Michael Ramos speaks to a gathering at Interfaith Advocacy Day about specific funding requests to help our collective efforts to end homelessness and provide affordable housing for all.



Mattresses lined up at The Sharehouse's warehouse. Mattresses are just one of the crucial items The Sharehouse provides to help turn housing into homes.

We extend deep gratitude for the commitment of the partners
whose financial and in-kind support makes our work possible.

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2011 Revenues and Expenditures*

Revenues

Religious Organizations	37,818
Individuals	106,716
Organizations/Foundations	431,574
Special Events	34,403
Government	368,338
Other Revenue	300,712

Total Public Support & Revenue 1,279,561

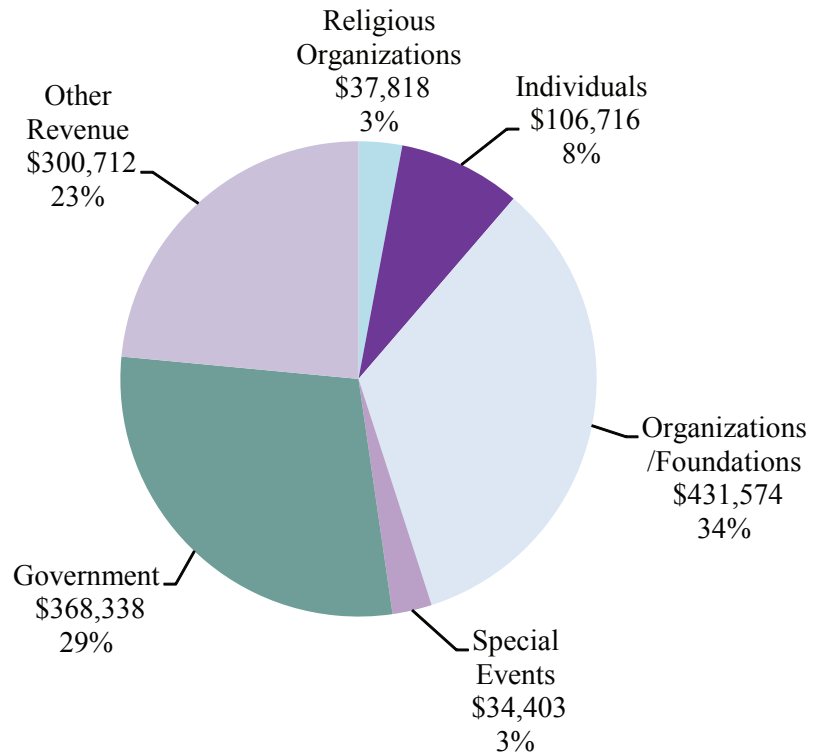
Expenditures

Personnel	148,428
Professional Fees	41,477
Office	14,773
Other	14,560
Occupancy	61,125
Insurance	6,416
Fundraising	33,791
Total Administration	320,570
The Sharehouse	255,449
HomeStep	543,364
Sound Youth	49,023
Friend to Friend	57,720
Social Justice	127,142
Small Programs & Taskforces	5,767

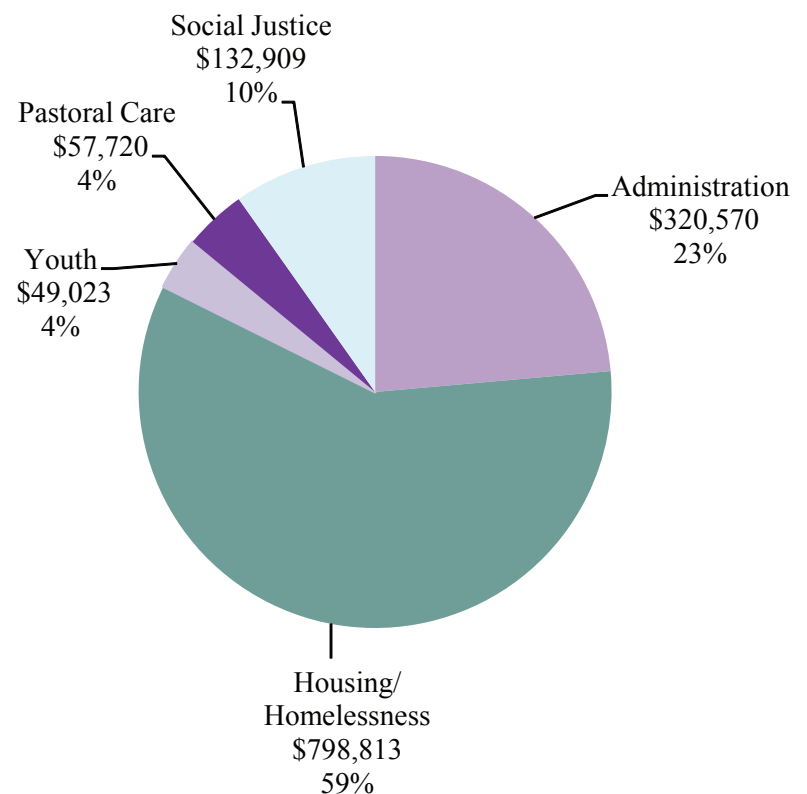
Total Expenditures 1,359,035

*Unaudited.

2011 Revenues: \$1,279,561*



2011 Expenditures: \$1,359,035*



Join us!

Join with the Church Council in planting and tending the Beloved Community - moving our region toward adequate sustenance, vibrant respect, non-violent relations, and mutual caring for all.

Stay Informed with the Weekly Update and Action Alerts

~ The Weekly Update is our weekly e-newsletter of social justice, ecumenical, and faith events of interest to the faith community in King and South Snohomish Counties.

~ The Action Alert is our e-mail call to action.

~ Sign up for the Weekly Update and/or the Action Alert at www.thechurchcouncil.org or email info@thechurchcouncil.org.

Help us Connect

~ Invite us to engage with your community -- to hear your priorities, your concerns. Or invite us to join your worship or share in your community what we are doing and how your community and you as individuals can be involved. Call us at 206.525.1213, ext. 3040 or email info@thechurchcouncil.org.

Donate your Time

~ Seal an envelope or contribute to a committee. Volunteers are essential to our success. Contact Ann Erickson at aerickson@thechurchcouncil.org or call 206.525.1213, ext. 3040.

Become a Stakeholder

~ Your financial contribution is key to building this community. Make a gift in tribute, remember this work in your will, include a matching gift, or offer a donation online. For more information, log onto www.thechurchcouncil.org or contact Beth Amsbary at BAmsbary@thechurchcouncil.org or 206.525.1213 ext. 3931.



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