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Summer 2009
 Circulation 1000+

Peace Center Calls for Action in Universal Health Care Petition Drive

Starting in early June, the Peace and Social Justice Center participated with other local groups in Health Care Campaign Kickoff meetings and planned activities for the June 27-28 National Health Care Day of Service. We are organizing a petition drive, which we believe can unite most anyone opposed to the *status quo* in our for-profit health care system. The petition reads, "We the undersigned demand comprehensive, publicly funded health care for all! Now is the time! --Kansans for Universal Health Care"

In our first 3 group outings we have collected over 1000 signatures and have raised the issue of health care reform in the Wichita community. We favor an expanded and improved Medicare-type system, also called "single payer," covering everyone, independent of employment. Health care is a human right and should be available as needed. Payment would be routed through a public or non-profit entity and the private insurance companies would be out of the health care picture. People would be able to choose their doctors and hospitals, which would remain private, not government run.

The U.S. spends twice as much per capita on health

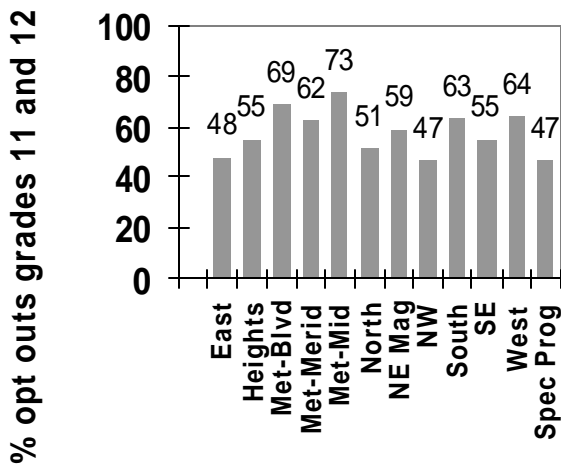
care as other countries. In Europe, they pay for health care. We pay for health care *and* insurance company overhead. While in the U.S. we are met with skyrocketing drug prices, premiums, co-pays, deductibles, etc., the governments in Europe and countries all over the world recognize health care as a basic human right and provide it for all of their people. In America, 62% of individual bankruptcies are due to medical debt with 84% of the bankrupted, supposedly "covered" by private insurance. The for-profit health insurance and drug companies are spending \$1.4 million of per day to lobby and advertise against real health care reform. It is time for people to become engaged in the fight for universal health care.

This is an action alert! Educate yourselves and others. See the petition insert inside and get active for universal health care reform.



Military Opt-outs Reach 52% in Wichita High Schools

USD 259 Percent of Military Recruitment Opt-outs in 2008-09



The Peace and Social Justice Center would like to announce that 2008-09 Opt-Outs for military recruitment in the Wichita high schools increased to 52% of all high school juniors and seniors, up 20% from the previous year. The Opt-Out Notification for Military Recruiters form became available in 2005 to enable students and their parents to prevent the automatic release of their names, addresses and phone numbers to military recruiters. Any school receiving federal money is required to give to the military, the names, and contact information of all juniors and seniors for recruiting purposes, unless the parents complete an Opt-out form.

The fact that a majority of district parents are opting-out shows that as the forms are included in the enrollment packets, increasingly parents choose to opt-out. The youth of our nation are one of its most precious resources. Students should have access to a variety of opportunities such as jobs, higher education and volunteer work. If they do join the military it should be for the right reasons, not because of recruiter pressures or promises, poverty, or lack of other opportunities.

The deadline for opt-outs is Sept. 20, 2009. (con't p. 3, *Opt-out*)

Half the Sky

from the Chinese proverb "Women hold up half the sky"
Women represent half the world population,
two-thirds of the labor force, receive one-tenth of the world income
and own less than one percent of world property

Money for health care reform: The U.S. empire of bases costs us \$102 billion a year, with 800 of them scattered strategically across the globe. Kyrgyzstan now bills the U.S. \$60 million a year to keep our base open. Pakistan gets a new embassy in Islamabad, costing a minimum of three-quarters of billion dollars. If these funds were freed up, we could feed the world and provide health care generously.

Socialized medicine and the military: Military hospitals, such as Walter Reed (scandalized in 2007 for their substandard care of war-wounded veterans), are operated by the military and as such come under the military budget. Don't confuse the VA with Walter Reed. By contrast, VA hospitals are under civilian control and provide medical care to veterans that could be considered "socialist." The Robert Dole VA facility in Wichita is an excellent hospital, as are most VA hospitals. This health care system is the largest government-operated system. Despite being socialized medicine, the VA is ranked the highest in a national survey of patient satisfaction by the University

of Michigan. U.S. taxpayers own the 172 VA hospitals and 881 clinics; the VA employs 289,000 people, including 16,000 doctors and 42,000 nurses.

- **Women's Health:** My checks are decorated with a pink ribbon. A portion of the costs of the checks go to breast cancer research. Like thousands of other women, I have experienced the devastating effects of this disease. My mother died young, leaving 3 small children to be raised by our wonderful dad. My friend, Dr. Leslie Page, OB/Gyn, has been active in the field of women's health, breast cancer in particular. She has challenged the medical "industry" by refusing to send women home just a day after a mastectomy. A few years ago, a bill introduced in the House and Senate would require insurance companies to cover a minimum 48-hour stay in the hospital, but the bill died in committee.
- The U.S. lags way behind in providing prenatal care to women in poverty as well as many who are uninsured. As a result, infant/maternal deaths are sharply above those of most other nations.

—Mary McDonough Harren

Military Coup in Honduras led by School of the Americas Graduates

The overthrow of democratically elected Honduran President, Manuel Zelaya, on June 28 was orchestrated by graduates of the "torture school," the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, GA.

Because Zelaya had recently raised the minimum wage, proposed agrarian reform and organized a referendum for a popular assembly to rewrite the country's constitution, he clashed with the ruling elites and the heavily U.S. funded and controlled Honduran military over these reforms. Unfortunately, Obama and Secretary of State, Clinton, have up to now, refused to label the overthrow a *coup d'etat*, which would trigger the cessation of U.S. military aid to Honduras by U.S. law.

To counter the influence of and to help close this "school of assassins", please join us for the Nov. 20-22 vigil and protest at the gate to Ft. Benning, GA. If you are interested or have questions, please call the Peace Center at 316 263-5886. Also, please check School of the Americas Watch website, www.soaw.org for the status of pending legislation regarding investigation of the school.

Hearty Party for Peace Fundraiser



With more than seventy-five people coming through the door at the Peace Center, the Hearty Party fundraiser provided a chance for members of the peace community to enjoy each other's company, good food, lively music, interesting conversation, and an escape from the rain. This year, instead of the fall Hearty Party gatherings at members' houses, we opened the Peace Center to members and friends so everyone could see the improvements made to the house over the past year.

After a barbeque buffet, the Bonafide Blues Band, with Wayne Fisher, Doug Everingham, and their special guests Nathan Toews and Jesse Graber, played toe-tapping bluegrass music.

The money raised will be used for ongoing Peace Center programs. Thanks to all those who contributed to making this summer Hearty Party the most successful fundraiser the Peace Center has ever had.

A “Medicare for all” Program Would:

1. Eliminate deductibles, co-pays, pre-existing conditions and non-covered charges.
2. Allow choice of your own doctors and hospitals, which remain independent and private.
3. Process and pay all bills through a public or non-profit agency, eliminating the huge private insurance billing bureaucracy.
4. Finance the entire system through progressive taxes. Except for the richest 5% of Americans (millionaires and billionaires), everyone should pay less for universal coverage.
5. Allow for the local medical care of veterans who live too far away from any of the 172 VA hospitals.
6. Negotiate group rates for prescription drugs and doctor and hospital fees.
7. Cover everyone without spending any more than we do; eliminating the waste of the for-profit insurance companies would save \$350-\$400 billion a year-enough to cover everyone.
8. Help job growth and the entire U.S. economy by removing the unfair burden of health costs from businesses.
9. Give everyone access to health care through times of layoffs, job transfers, family emergencies, new business start-ups, natural disasters, etc.
10. Prevent individual or family bankruptcy, forced moves and foreclosure due to medical debt.

This is a call for immediate action to support for health care reform. Congress is working to pass health care legislation as we go to press. In your family, church, workplace or block, get 10 signatures for the Health Care Reform petition on the back of this notice and mail it back to the Peace Center in the envelope provided with this newsletter as soon as possible.

Upcoming Events

August 2009

- **1 Board Retreat**
10:00 am—2:00 pm at the Peace Center
- **8 What's Next Action Committee**
10:30 am until Noon at the Peace Center
- **11 Program Committee**
4:00 pm until 5:00 pm at the Peace Center
- **15 *Canadian Bacon* and Ice Cream**
7:00 pm until 9:00 pm at the Peace Center
An anti-war comedy, starring Alan Alda, John Candy and Rhea Perlman.
Enjoy an ice cream sundae while watching the movie.
- **22 What's Next Action Committee**
10:30 am until Noon at the Peace Center
- **27 *Rethinking Afghanistan***
7:00 pm at the Peace Center
A new full-length documentary by Robert Greenwald, focusing on the key issues surrounding this war.

(**Opt-out**, cont. from p 1)

We encourage people to inform high school aged students and parents of this deadline through word of mouth, church bulletins, community news, etc.

Parents of high school juniors and seniors must sign each year. Please contact the Peace Center if you cannot find the Opt-out form in the enrollment packet.

The Peace and Social Justice Center is interested in working with parents from school districts outside of Wichita to request that their school boards provide the military Opt-Out forms. Call (316) 263-5886 for more information.



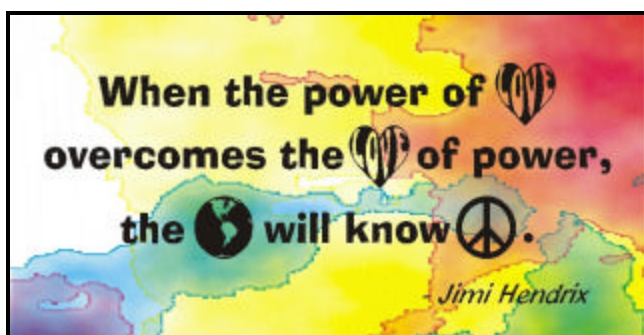
On the Aid Caravan to Cuba, Pastors for Peace Say, "Free the Cuban Five"

Marking the 20th anniversary of their work, the IFCO/Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan visited the Peace and Social Justice Center on July 14, on their journey to deliver humanitarian aid to the Cuban people. After a pot-luck dinner, Jim Bouman explained the purpose of the caravan and discussed the current status of U.S./Cuba relations.

The caravan delivers much needed supplies in defiance of the U.S. blockade, which for over 40 years has prevented U.S. trading partners from sending medicines, spare parts, and other supplies to the Cuban people. Mr. Bouman discussed the Cuban Five, who in the early 1990's were monitoring Miami-based anti-Cuban groups to stop terrorist attacks on Cuba.

The men infiltrated the terrorist organizations and successfully stopped various plots, saving Cuban and American lives. But when Cuban Intelligence shared the information with the FBI, the five were falsely accused and convicted of conspiring to commit espionage on the U.S. They are serving four life sentences and 77 years collectively after their trial in Miami.

The Cuban Five have been held in solitary confinement and their families have been refused visas to come to the U.S. to visit them. While in 2005, a three-judge panel overturned their convictions paving the way to a new trial, the 11th Circuit full panel in 2008 denied the Five a new trial. Groups and individuals all over the world have rallied around their cause. Find out how you can support the Cuban Five at freethefive.org.



THE NEW PEACE CENTER T-SHIRTS **FOR SALE !!**

TIE-DYE DESIGN T-SHIRTS – \$15.00 EA.

(Peace Symbol on the back)

**Show Your Support for the
Peace Center!**

Great Gifts for Family and Friends!

**Peace and Social Justice
Education Fund
1407 N. Topeka Street
Wichita, Kansas 67214**

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Michelle Yipé
Capri Zimmerman

Email: staff@wichitapeace.org
Phone: 316-263-5886

2009 Membership Drive

Annual membership dues for the Peace and Social Justice Center and the Education Fund start at \$30 per year, but we welcome gifts of any amount.

Please complete the pledge form below and send it with your contribution to 1407 N. Topeka. We thank you in advance for considering this appeal to make a pledge for Peace in 2009.

**YES!! I WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF PEACE AND JUSTICE IN WICHITA
and here is my contribution**

Apply to: Peace Center *or* Education Fund (tax-deductible)

Peace Supporter \$_____ up to \$30 Peace Seeker \$_____ \$26 to \$100 Peace Keeper \$_____ \$101 to \$300

Peace Maker \$_____ \$301 to \$600 Peace Teacher \$_____ over \$601

NAME _____ DATE _____ PHONE (H) _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE (W) _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____ EMAIL _____

Please mail this coupon with your check to: Peace Center, 1407 N. Topeka St., Wichita, KS 67214
(Summer 2009)