

A way to solve the issues facing our families

By Ivan Arceneaux | Posted: Monday, October 8, 2007 12:00 am

All politics is local so local that a Galveston County Interfaith steering committee submitted surprising statistical conclusions on four fundamental issues facing Galveston County families at a workshop I attended recently at College of the Mainland.

”Education — How our children are learning” showed that 90 percent of students admitted to College of the Mainland need remedial education in at least one area; 53 percent in English 51 percent in reading and 44 percent in math. The report including data for each of the independent school districts in Galveston County was submitted by Dr. Eileen Scanks COM director of community outreach.

”Job Training: Pathways into work force” presented by Kathy Speegle and Michael Speegle Petroleum Technology Department chair at San Jacinto Community College focused on the availability of job opportunities today and for the next 10 years for our young people to enter the work force as replacements for the retiring Baby Boomers.

”How to develop Affordable Housing-Affordable Mortgages” was discussed by Steve McIntyre Maria Mercado and Sherry Villere who noted that whereas federal standards assume a family pays no more than 30 percent of its income for housing Galveston is one of 17 counties in Texas where at least 5000 families pay more than 50 percent of their income in rent. The bottom line as they emphasized is that ”most everyone is paying on a mortgage — his own or his landlord’s”

”How we assure access to affordable health care?” Joe Compian questioned the reasons why Texas is No. 1 in the country of the 46 million uninsured and answered: Who are the uninsured why don’t they have insurance what can be done about the impact of no insurance on the people themselves and on the population in general?

After this overdose of information the attendees conducted typical ”house meetings” which are standard format Galveston County Interfaith uses to build grassroots initiatives to mobilize its members to work at solutions to the problems presented.

Why do I present this information? Well as a preview of coming attractions for my readers to prepare themselves to attend the coming ”house meetings” sponsored by a church near you between now and Christmas. By attending a house meeting you too can do something about these four defined issues in 2008.

Galveston County Interfaith is an organization of some 15 religious institutions founded by local clergy and lay leaders to help communities in a variety of ways. It is non-ideological and strictly

nonpartisan but is proudly publicly and persistently building a political base whose chief product is social change.

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