

TEN connects MOSES with Congressman Gary Peters .... for a relationship much deeper than "just" Transportation Equity



Earlier today, November 3, 2011, MOSES Organizer Michael Tasse confirmed a meeting between Fr. Tom Sepúlveda and Alex Greenfield. Fr. Sepúlveda is the pastor of St. Anne's Church in Southwest Detroit, a Catholic Parish rooted in Immigrant ministry from the time of Polish Immigrants in the early 1900s to a predominately Latino immigrant population as it stands today. Alex Greenfield is the Immigration correspondent staff person for Federal Congressman Gary Peters of Michigan's 9<sup>th</sup> district. Congressman Peters is one of, if not the only Michigan representative to have a full-time staff person on board dealing solely with Immigration matters.

Later next week, the Congressman's office, with the help of Mr. Greenfield, will work on putting the Parish and many other parishes into a deeper understanding of the President Obama Memorandum regarding *no deportation without criminal behavior* by being a keynote at the MOSES Equity Summit. He will then begin a series of meetings with Fr. Sepúlveda and other MOSES congregations.

However, that is not where this story began.

Just two months earlier, on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011, MOSES leaders flew to Washington D.C. with MOSES organizer Michael Tasse to attend the *Transportation Equity Network (TEN) Washington D.C. Fly-In*. The fly-in is an annual conference in Washington D.C. where transportation organizers from around the country share ideas and strategies, and are educated by the powerful seminars put on by TEN leadership. After a day and a half of seminars, strategy-sharing and meetings with the U.S. Department of Transportation, leaders and organizers are engaged in meetings with their Federal Senators and Congresspersons. In this case, MOSES attended several meetings; the most powerful took place with Congressman Gary Peters of Michigan's 9<sup>th</sup> District.



Congressman Peters was well aware of MOSES' engagement in Michigan transportation equity issues, currently focusing on developing a regional transit authority (RTA) and developing a federal funding stream to fund mass public transit service. On that Tuesday afternoon back in September, the Congressman listened to stories of Detroit and Metro-Detroit residents who are leaders in the MOSES Project's Transportation Task Force, and he shared opportunities and strategies that both parties might work on together to finally develop a much needed regional transit system in Southeastern Michigan.

When MOSES leaders returned to Michigan after the TEN Fly-In, they instantly connected with Congressman Peters' Michigan constituent staff and set up a meeting to further discuss solutions for the funding issues and political infighting that has caused Metro Detroit to suffer so long without a regional transit system like other developed cities in the country.



Then they were able to schedule a meeting at MOSES Member Congregation Greater Apostolic Faith Temple, located in the Congressman's future district, where they discussed Transportation Solutions *and* Immigration Reform Possibilities and Solutions.

Congressman Peters will be one of the keynote targets and speakers at the MOSES Equity Summit on November 10<sup>th</sup> at Central United Methodist Church, answering both demands of Transportation Equity and Immigration Reform.

Michigan has for the past fifty years, turned down federal funding for mass-transit projects that Michiganders pay every year in gas taxes. The reason for this is that the counties and city of Detroit have failed to create a "regional" system that is actually the norm in other metropolitan areas like Chicago, Portland, New York, Dallas and even Cleveland to the south.

The MOSES Project is Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength and is a faith-based congregation-centered grassroots organizing project of the Gamaliel Foundation. MOSES trains leaders in congregations and institutions based on their faith values around equity in Metro Detroit in order to better participate in the political process to fight for the issues that matter most to them.