



Transforming lives.
Strengthening communities.

WHO IS COMMON GROUND?

Common Ground is a new broad-based organization in the Milwaukee area. Our leaders and members come from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and political backgrounds. What they share in common is the desire to achieve positive changes in our community.

The development of Common Ground began in 2004, when a group of 38 religious, civic and business leaders raised \$700,000 in seed money to launch our grassroots organization, then known as Greater Milwaukee Sponsors. The seed money came from the congregations and religious groups affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), Presbyterian, Episcopal and United Church of Christ (UCC). Foundations, individuals and unions have also contributed.

WHAT DOES COMMON GROUND DO?

Common Ground exists to build and support an organization to address Greater Milwaukee's critical social issues in an effective, non-partisan way. We spent our first year listening to over 1,400 people discuss their concerns including health care, education, jobs and economic development, crime, mental health, youth activities, immigration and housing. We have prioritized these areas of concern for research, which is now underway. We've also been conducting Leadership Institutes to teach volunteers the basics of organizing.

With a paid, professional organizer, Mark Fraley, and volunteer leaders from all walks of life, we are organizing support from congregations, religious groups, schools, civic associations, social agencies, unions and businesses. All these people gathered on April 13, 2008 as one powerful voice to begin to address the important social issues facing our community. But we weren't strangers. We've spent the past two years setting up one-on-one and small group "relational" meetings to get to know each other and begin to build a common vision.

THE FOUNDING CONVENTION

April 13, 2008 was the official launch of Common Ground. 2328 delegates from over 50 groups came together to formally constitute the new organization and declare their membership. We believe Common Ground will be a major force in the decisions that will impact Greater Milwaukee for generations to come.

JUST SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN?

We are a local organization affecting change where we can, but we are also part of something much bigger. Common Ground is just one organization in a national network affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). IAF is the oldest and largest institution for professional organizing in the United States. IAF organizations have been successful in passing legislation which expanded affordable, quality healthcare to over 300,000 people in Massachusetts; getting 3,000 affordable housing units built in New York; instituting school reform and effective job training in Texas; urban reinvestment in Washington, DC and many other social issue campaigns.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

You can reach Mark Fraley, our Lead Organizer, at 414.517.3379 or mark.fraley@commongroundwi.org. You can also contact Bob Connolly, the President of Common Ground, at 414.272.0101 or bob.connolly@commongroundwi.org



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