


2007-2008 Board of Directors

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Onondaga Citizens League Mission Statement

The Onondaga Citizens League fosters informed public discourse by identifying and studying critical community issues affecting Central New York, developing recommendations for action, and communicating study findings to interested and affected groups.

Onondaga Citizens League
c/o Syracuse University
University College
700 University Avenue
Syracuse NY 13244-2530



Onondaga Citizens League

Annual Report

2007-2008

Dear OCL Members:


Since 1978, Onondaga Citizens League members have participated in a unique process for analyzing pressing community issues and developing policy recommendations. The OCL study committee process involves OCL members with other civic activists and stakeholders who get together to learn about, discuss, and develop possible solutions for community problems.

An important part of the study process is to help develop a common understanding of issues among citizens and to see that study reports and recommendations are distributed to decision makers, to be used as resources in developing public policy. In recent years, OCL board and study committee members have become aware of the need to make sure that policy recommendations are acted upon. To that end, we have increasingly partnered with other stakeholders for the follow-up necessary to turn our recommendations into action.


While OCL has had an influence on public policy in the past, in coming years we would like to have an even greater impact, but we can only do so with your support and involvement. The active participation of many members from varied backgrounds and with many viewpoints is critical to make the study process more effective. Our challenge in the coming year is to increase opportunities for you, as OCL members, to become more connected and engaged in our efforts to improve the public decision-making process and its outcomes.

Thank you for making the work of OCL possible through your continued involvement and membership support.

Sincerely,



Stephen A. Kearney
2008 – 2009 Board President



Sandra Barrett
Executive Vice President

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OCL Study Reports

The annual study is the most important activity of the Citizens League. As each year’s study gets underway, OCL board members and volunteers continue to work on communication of study findings and recommendations from past reports.

2007 OCL Study—How Inequality Makes Us Sick: The Growing Disparities in Health and Health Care

OCL Board member **Betty DeFazio** chaired OCL’s 28th study, *How Inequality Makes Us Sick: The Growing Disparities in Health and Health Care*, an examination of the problems associated with inequalities in health outcomes, health status, and access to health care in Onondaga County. The study committee found a growing national awareness of the extent of health disparities in this country, and a deeper understanding of the fact that the higher incidence of ill health among racial minorities, the poor, and middle class is very much related to social factors such as income, education, work, and neighborhood environments. The report reflects the fact that while Onondaga County is plagued by many of the same inequalities experienced around the country, there are a plethora of exemplary programs run by government agencies, community organizations, and educational institutions to address some of the issues. The study report reflects the complexity of the issue, the local implications, and the efforts underway to address some of the problems.

There were several follow-up activities in 2008. OCL Study Committee members **Mary Jensen**, **Martha Ryan**, and **Peter Sarver** appeared on WCNY’s *Central Issues* in March to discuss the report with host Dan Cummings. Cummings followed up the *Central Issues* interview with a Channel 9 news feature on the study and the Amaus Clinic, a new health service attempting to fill the health care gap faced by the uninsured. In May, the Physician Assistant Studies program at Le Moyne College hosted a Forum on Community Responses to Health Care Disparities, with a panel of local activists and experts. In April, three Thursday Morning Roundtable programs explored the problems and plans to address these serious issues: *From the Physician Perspective: Increasing Access to Health Care*, with Thomas Bersani, M.D., President, Onondaga

County Medical Society; *Church, Community, and University Partnering to Address Social Vulnerability through Access to Health Care and Beyond*, with Lynn-Beth Satterly, M.D., M.S., founder, Amaus Health Services, and Fr. Neal Quartier, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception; and *Not Just Skin Deep: A Look at Disparities in Health Care* with Sharon Brangman, M.D. An October 2008 event concerning childhood obesity, “Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future Roundtable,” featuring Rear Admiral Steven Galson, M.D., Acting Surgeon General, was planned. In addition, the Health Care Task Force for Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS), and the Health Literacy Network for CNY are both carrying forward recommendations from the health disparities study.

2006 OCL Report: Leveraging Better Outcomes for Downtown, resulted in the first ever Downtown Living Tour in May 2007 bringing nearly 2,000 people downtown to tour a selection of unique apartments, lofts, and condos. In 2008 OCL sponsored the second annual Downtown Living Tour, this time organized by the Downtown Committee of Syracuse. The Downtown Living Tour event is an excellent example of how OCL studies have a lasting, positive impact in partnership with other community organizations.

2005 OCL Report: Strategic Government Consolidation. The “Strategic Government Consolidation” report formed the basis of Syracuse 20/20’s Government Modernization Project (<http://syracuse20/20.org>). The grassroots effort, in which many OCL members remain involved, continues to grow support for changes in government, and the move toward consolidation of government services, entities, and school districts is growing throughout the region and the state.

2004 OCL Report: Disappearing Democracy? A Report on Political Participation in Onondaga County. Acting on one of the recommendations in the Onondaga Citizens League’s 2004 study, the Syracuse League of Women Voters, with the help of OCL, formed the Fair Campaign Practices Committee to help candidates conduct fair and honest campaigns. The Committee accepts written complaints about alleged unfair campaign practices and determines, through a hearing, if the complaints are legitimate. The Committee then

notifies the parties regarding its findings and also issues a press release. The Committee’s decisions are based on the principles set forth in the Fair Campaign Pledge, which every candidate for office is encouraged to sign. http://www.lwvsyr.org/Fair_Campagin_Practice.html

Annual Meeting

The OCL Annual Meeting was held on June 11, 2008, at the Syracuse Renaissance Hotel. Board member **Tony Malavenda** chaired the Nominating Committee. Board members **Ken Her**, **Don MacLaughlin**, and **Doug Sutherland** were appointed to second three-year terms.

New board members appointed to three-year terms commencing in September 2008 were:

- Hanah Ehrenreich**, CNY Works
- David Holder**, Syracuse Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Heidi Holtz**, Gifford Foundation
- Karen Kitney**, OCL Member
- Amy Kremenek**, Onondaga Community College
- Hilda Martinez**, Syracuse University Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Grant Reeher**, Syracuse University, Maxwell School of Citizenship

Outgoing board members **Joseph Ash**, **Linda Henley**, **Steven Kulick**, **Rebecca Livengood**, and **Elaine Walter** were thanked for their six years of service to the board.

Keynote speaker at the 2008 annual meeting was **Joanne Mahoney**, Onondaga County Executive, who discussed her Opportunity Agenda, tying her vision for Onondaga County to several recommendations from past OCL studies.

The sixth annual **Levi L. Smith Civic Education Award** was awarded to **Christine Capella-Peters** and **George Curry**.

Capella-Peters, Regional Representative for the New York State Historic Preservation Office, and Curry, Distinguished Teaching Professor at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, were honored for their dedication to educating students, developers, public officials, and neighborhood and civic groups on historic preservation, urban planning, and neighborhood revitalization.

A recognized expert in historic preservation, Capella-Peters is on the Syracuse Public Art Commission. She is editor of *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, produced by the National Park Service.

Curry, a professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture at ESF, has been a member and chair of the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board, and is a general partner in three historic rehabilitation projects in downtown Syracuse.

As co-instructors in urban design courses for 16 years, Capella-Peters and Curry supervised hundreds of students who produced design plans benefiting the community, and have also worked on the Downtown Master Plan and contributed significantly to the revitalization strategy for Downtown Syracuse.

The Levi L. Smith Civic Education Award was named for the founder of the Citizens League, and honors an outstanding contributor to the field and practice of civic education in Central New York.

Financial Statement—September 2007-August 2008

Revenue	Expenses
Memberships	Printing and Postage
\$6,420	\$2,422
Corporate Contributions.....	Professional Services
3,500	6,000
Annual Meeting	Annual Meeting
2,450	2,465
Bank Interest.....	Supplies and Miscellaneous
694	4,002
Total	Downtown Living Tour
\$13,064	623
	Total
	\$15,512
	Net from Operations.....
	-\$2,449
Opening Fund Balance.....	Year-end Fund Balance.....
\$48,145	\$45,697