

# *Spokane Alliance*

## Accomplishments

September 2000 to January 2013

The *Spokane Alliance* consists of thirty member institutions, which represent approximately 28,000 people in Spokane County. The Alliance currently supports four Research/Action Teams: Sustainable Jobs, Health Care & Drug Costs, Youth/Education, and Tax Equity. The focus of research teams varies as the interests and pressures felt by member institutions change.

### **Spokane Alliance member institutions:**

- 1. Sheridan Elementary School PTA** took the lead and persuaded the City of Spokane to install a stoplight at the corner of 5th and Freya. The 14,000 cars that pass by per day created a significant danger for children crossing during non-school hours. With Alliance's training in power analysis, relationship building, research/action, and involvement by other member institutions Sheridan PTA won an unusual unanimous vote, the City Council agreed to the \$170,000 price tag.
- 2. VOICES**, an advocacy group for low-income people, partnered with the Alliance and succeeded in doubling (from ½ to 1%) the City of Spokane's budget for human services. This increase made approximately \$1.2 million available for emergency and recovery assistance to poor families and individuals getting out of poverty. The vote at the City Council was unanimous.
- 3. Bonneville Power Administration** was persuaded to include contractual incentives in their \$1.5 billion power line upgrade projects to reward contractors for hiring local workers. Rick Itami, an executive with the BPA, credited the Spokane Alliance with that "creative idea." He reported during the first phase (Grand Coulee Dam to Mead) that 95% (usually 65%) of the contracts had been with regional firms and 50% of those had been non-profits or minority-owned operations. The effort brought family-wage jobs in a sustainable industry to Spokane and the region.
- 4. Spokane Alliance member institutions** sent 130 of their people door to door in five low-income neighborhoods (Oct. 5, 2002). As a result, 81 people registered to vote, 331 uninsured people pursued health coverage for themselves and their families, and 287 people pursued unclaimed Earned Income Tax Credits. Mayor John Powers acknowledged the Spokane Alliance with helping to pump millions of dollars of EITC money into the Spokane economy through this effort. Jerry Littlefield from the IRS in Seattle confirmed that the total effort by all those who participated in this campaign in Spokane brought \$5 million into the Spokane economy in 2003.
- 5. "Strangers to Neighbors,"** an Alliance-supported program designed to create a more tolerant and relational culture in Spokane, brought hundreds of people from member institutions together with members of the Muslim community, the Japanese-American community, and the developmentally disabled community (2001–2002).
- 6. Health Care:** The Alliance worked to persuade State law makers to pass a limited eligibility Bulk Prescription Drug Bill in the face of intense lobbying by the pharmaceutical industry (2003). Legislators also agreed to minimize the projected cuts in the State's Basic Health Plan for the working poor from the proposed cut of 60,000 to 20,000. In anticipation of these narrow votes, the Alliance successfully persuaded a unanimous vote by the Spokane City Council to amend the City's legislative agenda to support these efforts in Olympia through its lobbyist.

7. **Green Building**, an Alliance-based initiative, was presented to the Governors Sustainable Washington Advisory Panel (September 10, 2003). The initiative became the foundation for the highly successful Green Building campaign with Spokane City Schools (listed below).
8. **Health Care**: The Spokane Alliance joined a broad-based coalition of institutions from around the State of Washington in opposing the conversion of Premera Blue Cross from a non-profit to a for profit corporation. Research in other States found that such conversions led to significant reductions in services and access to health care in rural areas and resulted in thousands of people being forced from health insurance rolls. On December 2, 2003, over 100 Alliance members attended, and nine testified during the public hearing called by Insurance Commissioner Larry Kriedler. Due to eastern Washington's dependence on Premera (90%), its huge interest in the hearings, and its overwhelming rejection of Premera's application, Commissioner Kriedler rejected Premera's application (June of 2004).
9. **Spokane Valley City Council** was persuaded to raise their contribution to Project Access from \$5,000 to \$25,000 at their meeting on October 28, 2003. This program of the Spokane Medical Society is designed to provide health care, medications, and hospital care to the 44,000 uninsured in Spokane County. The action was led by Alliance member institutions from the Valley. Nearly 50 people from other member institutions provided the only testimony for the increase. The Council's decision was unanimous.
10. **Spokane District 81 School Board Meeting** had over 60 representatives from member institutions present at its December 10, 2003 meeting. As a result, the Board committed the district to implement high efficiency building standards in future school construction projects, and to negotiate with the Alliance and apprenticeship programs on a 15% Apprentice Utilization proposal.
11. **Apprenticeship Utilization** was forged between non-union contractors and apprenticeship program directors where negotiations had failed for years. The Alliance's proposal was ultimately advocated by all sides and accepted unanimously by the School Board (June 9, 2004). The agreement included the direct entry of a Spokane City school's student into an apprenticeship program for every \$5 million of a \$165 million remodel and building project. Using Spokane City Schools as the prototype, the Washington-State legislature passed an apprenticeship-utilization standard for schools (March of 2007).
12. **STA** received new funding, thanks to a campaign led by the Alliance (started January 19, 2004), to offset service cutbacks of over 40% that were implemented in July 2004. The baseline for this campaign was established in a 2002 election when a similar initiative was defeated by a 52% to 48% margin. The accomplishments of this campaign included:
  - Accountability measures and campaign calendar were set by 76 representatives from member institutions based on pressures felt by their families and institutions.
  - Negotiating pre-campaign agreements with STA Board members to support accountability measures (e.g., moving Board meetings to evenings, televising meetings, and regular accountability with CEO) and funding priorities (e.g., using initiative revenue for maintaining service levels to pre-2000 service levels, STA plaza utilization for revenue and passenger services, and consideration of bio-diesel as alternative fuel).
  - Assembling 265 people in mid-February attracted news coverage from all four television networks and provided momentum that kept opposition from materializing, that positively framed the initiative for the community, provided 154 volunteers for the campaign, pressed the STA Board to put the initiative on the ballot.
  - Persuading (in partnership with others) the STA Board to include a .3% sales tax increase (as opposed to a .2% which was also considered).

- Contacting 7,500 people by phone, 3,500 people by door-to-door canvassing, many others by leafleting and bus riding, totaling well over 11,000 contacts over a three-month period. Contacts produced 8,969 more “yes” votes in targeted precincts than during the 2002 election.
- Keeping a positive image of the issue before voters through television coverage of volunteers going door-to-door and phone banking by local officials.
- Resulting in the STA initiative passed 69% yes to 31% no, saving over 100 local transit jobs and six months later produced a service increase of 10% raising levels to pre-2000.
- In the fall of 2004, the STA Board voted unanimously to move its meeting times from 2PM to 5:30PM and began televising their meetings. That September, the Alliance hosted a meeting with the CEO and an STA board member for public questioning and direction. A Citizens’ Advisory Committee was established (Winter of 2005).

**13. Community Colleges of Spokane** and the Alliance worked together in securing a \$416,000 grant for the State Jobs Skills Program. This included 72,000 hours of training for architects, construction managers, and laborers in high efficiency building technology and resources.

**14. Health Care and Sustainable Jobs:** The Alliance, with a variety of allies, won 6 of 8 policy changes in their legislative agenda during the 2005 session. The victories came after eighteen leaders met in mid-February with 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> district legislators in Olympia, again with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> district legislators during March Town Hall meetings, and many more contacting legislators during critical votes in response to an Alliance legislative Action Alert e-mail system. The victories included:

- **Mental Health Parity:** health insurance policies include mental health coverage at par.
- **Health Care Access** increased for 20,000 children by the Governor’s executive order.
- **Prescription Drug Consortium** including all State residents in a drug purchasing pool.
- **Prescription Drug Assistance Foundation** coordinates free and discounted drugs to be offered through community organizations (e.g. Project Access).
- Fifteen Percent **Apprenticeship Utilization** for all government construction projects.
- **High Performance Building Standards** on all state construction projects, including schools.
- **Appliance Energy Efficiency Standards** on 13 large appliances.

**15. A \$20,000 grant** was received for training custodians, trustees, and other personnel of facilities in non-profit institutions so that they could assess, recommend, and act on energy and environmental retrofits in their buildings. Several Alliance institutions utilized the training.

**16. Health Care and Sustainable Jobs:** Negotiations took place between approximately 225 Alliance leaders, Laurie Dolan (the Governor’s Policy Director), and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> district legislators at the Spokane Ag-Trade Center (May 22, 2005). Ms. Dolan facilitated a negotiation with the Administrator of Health Care Authority the following August and Governor Gregoire the following June. Senators Lisa Brown (D-3<sup>rd</sup>) and Brad Benson (R-6<sup>th</sup>), Representatives John Ahern (R-6<sup>th</sup>), Timm Ormsby (D-3<sup>rd</sup>), John Serben (R-6<sup>th</sup>), and Alex Wood (D-3<sup>rd</sup>) met with Alliance leaders Nov. 22, 2005 and agreed to pursue bipartisan legislation during the 2006 session in health care and sustainable jobs including:

- Restoring mental health funding cuts (passed)
- New funding for the Job Skills program (passed)
- Funding for a small business energy efficiency retrofit revolving loan fund (not passed) and
- Pilot program for integrating job skills and academic skills for grades 7-14 (not passed).

17. **State Prescription Assistance Foundation:** 150 Alliance leaders negotiated with the Governor Christine Gregoire at Spokane Community College on the following issues: (1) for her to consider (ultimately appointed) an Alliance candidate for the State's Prescription Assistance Foundation, (2) to come to Spokane in October 2005 to help kick off an Alliance campaign to sign citizens up for the Prescription Drug Purchasing Consortium (see #14, point 3 and #19), and (3) to discuss apprenticeship programs.
18. Won an **Alliance initiated compromise** agreement with **Steve Hill**, newly appointed Administrator of the **Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA)** who was initially reluctant to fulfill a partnership the Alliance had forged with HCA. He agreed to provide brochures and training about the Prescription Drug Consortium for the **LIVING WELL NEIGHBORHOOD WALK** (described below). In March 2007, the Washington Prescription Drug Discount card began offering up to **60% discounts for generic drugs and 20% for name brand drugs.**
19. Executed the **LIVING WELL NEIGHBORHOOD WALK** on October 8, 2005 in six low income Spokane County neighborhoods **knocking on 3,318 doors. Walkers handed out over 4,200 brochures** describing opportunities for apprenticeships, discount prescription drugs and health care insurance geared to income. Earned media coverage by three TV new teams that covered the event.
20. **Relational Campaign training gathered 96 leaders from 24 member institutions** for face-to-face conversations within their institutions to strengthen relationships, share values and identify common pressures on their families. A May 1<sup>st</sup> discernment of the campaign produced four Research Action Teams: Sustainable Jobs, Health Care, Tax Equity and Youth/Education.
21. Local 12-hour **Leadership Institutes** trained 63 leaders from 19 institutions and sent 11 leaders to the 7-day Regional Institutes in western Washington.
22. **SustainableWorks** was incorporated July 1, 2006 to bring carbon cuts, apprenticeship opportunities and energy cost cuts to non-profit and small businesses in greater Spokane. Shore Bank Enterprise Cascadia, **Numerica** and **Spokane Teachers Credit Unions** have committed to partner in providing low interest loans to overcome first cost barriers. **United Food and Commercial Workers 1439** committed to provide **\$25,000** for deposit and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane has delivered **\$1,200 and promised another \$1,000** for a loan loss reserve for under-collateralized borrowers. In partnership with Electrical, Plumbing and Sheet Metal apprenticeship programs, the pilot project, **Liberty Park United Methodist Church**, has begun. A recent partnership with **Avista** clears the way for coordinating free energy audits with 31 other buildings that are waiting for energy audits and retrofits to start.
23. Held **six Tax Forums** in member institutions in the fall 2006 to inform and discern what consensus exists. There was clear consensus among attendees for reform of the Washington State tax system that would make the system fairer and less regressive. In general there was support for **enactment of an income tax, a reduction of the sales tax** to address regressivity and for reform of business taxes that would make Washington more competitive with other states by **replacing the Business and Occupation Tax** with a more equitable tax on business.
24. Won **commitments of \$233,000** from local municipalities and corporations for **Project Access**, which provides medical services for **low income, uninsured people**. Alliance leaders met with Mayor Hession and a majority of City Council members from **Spokane and Spokane Valley Cities** as well as Mayor Wilhite, Mayor Peterson, Commissioner Richard and Jeff Nelson, CEO of **Empire Health Services (EHS)** producing. The commitments provided the majority of the funds needed to draw an additional **\$175,000 grant** from Washington State.

25. Created **WellnessWorks** in partnership with **Empire Health Services**. EHS provided clinicians, equipment, assessments and education for health screenings and plans for behavior changes. Alliance institutions provided publicity, on-site logistics and follow up. The WW pilot project resulted in 50 being screened at **Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ**, 80 people at **St. Aloysius Catholic Church** and 48 at **Covenant United Methodist**. Health education will be available for each church and in October a 6-month follow up screening. At the April 2007 Action Assembly, EHS committed to **WellnessWorks in 5 more member institutions**.
26. **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 73** joined **Plumbers & Pipe Fitters Local 44** and **Sheet Metal Workers Local 66** in investing **\$10,000 each, for a total of \$30,000 in SustainableWorks**. The three union locals are stepping forward in the expectation of expanding their market share in energy efficiency retrofit work in Spokane over the next 10 years. Exemplifying how self-interest can work in the interest of the rest of the community as well.
27. In June 2007, Spokane and Sound Alliances began to detail **state-wide campaign** calendar for the next two years. Spokane initiated that campaign with **1000 Conversations** to root itself once again in the pressures faced by families in our member institutions. Those pressures were the heart of the **October 30, 2007 Action Assembly** at the Convention Center. The campaign continued with cross state collaboration on 9 point legislative agenda and commitments at the Sound Founding Assembly where Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown committed to facilitating SustainableWorks pilots in Tacoma, Seattle and Spokane. The joint legislative agenda was the background for the **Spokane Alliance September 08 Candidate Forum** where all the candidates present agreed to support SustainableWorks, Multiple Pathways to high school graduation & child care funding/training standards.
28. **WellnessWorks** continued, despite the reluctance of Empire Health Service, in collaboration with WSU College of Nursing. Community Health Systems provided equipment and supplies to completed the second round (spring 08) of screenings with Westminster, St. Al's, Covenant Churches and in the fall 08, provided free health screenings to Holy Trinity Lutheran, Highland Park United Methodist and Salem Lutheran Churches. The Health Team anticipates WellnessWorks at Arc of Spokane soon.
29. **Spokane Transit Campaign** (Spring 08) came in the midst of other campaigns and waged with a measured response calculated to do enough to win. Ultimately 150 volunteers (280 event/volunteers) made (over 6000) person to person contact at Park & Rides, door to door (in their own legislative districts) and on phones resulting in a 65% yes vote.
30. **Empire Health Services** After the EHS broke their promise to participate in WellnessWorks, the Alliance took up the campaign to protect uncompensated care levels and funding for foundation. The Alliance was the lead organization for Protect Our Hospitals which provided community education in information sessions every 3 weeks, legal evaluation and counter proposals for the proposal for sale, lobbied Governor Gregoire and Secretary of Health, Mary Selecky, gained an agreement with Senator Lisa Brown for a valuation of hospital and brought 40 testimonies (almost half of all testimonies given) at DoH Public Hearings. The result was a mandate for the new owner for almost doubling funding levels for uncompensated care and creating a guaranteed \$80M for the public health foundation.
31. **SustainableWorks** completed 6 retrofits in small commercial and non-profits with agreements for financing \$½ million. Center Pointe alone saves \$6,000 on \$24,000 investment. In 2008, the focus shifted to training in order to create the capacity for ramping up quickly to a proposed "Neighborhood as single project" paradigm. SustainableWorks is the centerpiece of '09 Senate leadership economic recovery legislation.

- 32. Olympia Day 2009** Spokane Alliance joined Sound Alliance to bring over 150 delegates to meet with legislators from 28 of the 49 legislative districts in Washington State. Legislators made commitments to support bills that would fund SustainableWorks and require accountability and expansion of apprentice utilization.
- 33. Asbestos Safety** While doing retrofit work, SustainableWorks found no contractors to do asbestos removal safely and reliably. The strategy was adopted by the Alliance to create market for best practice contractors. The Alliance worked out agreements with Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency culminating in an action where 10 leaders testified at a public hearing (Dec.4 2008) and the SRCAA Board unanimously voted to post asbestos contractor violation histories on its website. In a parallel action Alliance negotiated with Spokane Public Schools to create pre-qualifying standards for asbestos contractors on their \$344M school bond construction/renovations at Jan 26, 2009 Assembly.
- 34. SustainableWorks:** Spokane Alliance partnered with our sister organization in Puget Sound, Sound Alliance, to pass legislation (SB5649) that will provide \$14.5 million of federal recovery funds for neighborhood based energy efficiency retrofits. Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown and Senator John Rockefeller partnered with the Alliance to craft requirements that were shaped by the SustainableWorks business plan to reach low to moderate income residents, small business and non-profit organizations while lowering energy costs, reducing CO2 emissions and creating good paying jobs with benefits. The SustainableWorks received \$4 million state-wide and Spokane \$1.3. Allocation of funding began January 1, 2010.
- 35. Implementation of SustainableWorks (South Perry):** The Spokane Alliance neighborhood organizing of South Perry has overcome significant challenges to date gathering 320 forms indicating interest, provided 90 energy audits and 50 energy efficiency retrofits for residents. The Alliance organizing included more than 100 volunteers. While the results of the organizing are not in, the organizing in south Perry has concluded and focus has moved to the Northwest neighborhood.
- 36. Children's Investment Fund** – The current signature gathering campaign included 15 member institutions and over 50 other organizations within the City of Spokane. Over 13,000 signatures were gathered toward certifying 8500. Over 100 leaders participated in gathering signatures at a variety of sites including grocery stores, parades, sporting civic events. After the signature gathering campaign was complete, the measure was put on the ballot.
- 37. SustainableWorks:** Moved the South Hill area in the beginning of 2011. South Hill residents have the opportunity to drastically lower their carbon footprint by participating in a SustainableWorks audit and retrofit SustainableWorks is partnering with Washington State University Extension, Avista Utilities, the City of Spokane Office of Sustainability, the Spokane Alliance and others to bring this energy saving opportunity to the South Hill. The purpose of this stimulus-funded program is to help homeowners and renters (with landlord approval) make home improvements that reduce their energy use and energy bills. Participants can save on items like furnaces, water heaters, insulation and air sealing. SustainableWorks has already completed 200 audits and 100 retrofits in other neighborhoods in Spokane. Spokane residents that have already participated are saving up to 40% on their energy bills, and are benefitting from increased comfort in their homes this winter. Already over 175 South Hill residents have signed up to participate. The goal of the project is to sign-up 500 residents for an energy efficiency audit and potential retrofit. If this goal is accomplished it is estimated that the project will reduce carbon emissions by 300,000 lbs annually and create 15 full-time living wage jobs.

- 38. WA State Jobs Bill:** Spokane Alliance again partnered with our sister organization in the Puget Sound, Sound Alliance to pass a \$1.1 billion construction bill that will create over 18,000 jobs in Washington State in 2012. It includes \$54 million of projects in the Spokane area, including the rest of the needed funds to finish the WSU Medical School among a number of other local projects. It also includes funding for the Community Energy Efficiency Pilot program (CEEP), which has been a primary funding source for SustainableWorks. Our Alliance members played a key role in this campaign, leading strategic efforts by phone banking their membership to teach about the bill and encouraging members to call their legislators. Our members met with local officials to gain their support, and a large team traveled to Olympia to meet with all Spokane County State Representatives. The Alliance organized a press conference/rally with over 100 Alliance leaders and all TV, newspaper, and local radio stations turned out. This bill is already making a difference to many of our families from our local union members.
- 39. Local Elected Officials:** During the winter and spring of 2012 a team of Alliance leaders set up and executed relational meetings with all city and county elected officials to begin to build public relationships and learn where we have common interests. This developed into a new team called *Government Relations*, which will focus more deeply on understanding our city, our elected leaders and identify spaces where we can more efficiently engage with the policy making process.
- 40. National Training:** The President and Vice-President of Spokane Alliance attended our international eight day Leadership Training June 2012 continuing our efforts at developing local leaders.
- 41. Convention Center and Arena Project won Design/Build:** Spokane Alliance's Jobs Team lead the effort to engage the Public Facilities District to make their upcoming expansion of the Convention Center and Arena a truly local project. They agreed to hire local contractors and local hires, to give preference for contractors who provide full family healthcare and have a high rate of apprenticeship utilization.
- 42. Spokane 2013 City Budget:** Responded to dramatic cuts to city services and jobs. The Alliance brought attention to a budget that cut services and threatens the cities safety. We changed the way people were talking about the city budget. We turned out over 80 people for budget conversations. This pressure pushed the council to put the library levy on the Feb ballot and add a levy for public safety in the fall. We were able to get our elected leaders to respond when the rest of the city was silent.