In 2014

Starting at Marquette University
2 faith-based networks

* Wisconsin Council of Churches

* WISDOM
and 2 policy groups

* Wisconsin Council on Children & Families
* Citizen Action of Wisconsin Education Fund
hosted a path breaking 2 year conversation on poverty

* 24 major forums at churches & other religious settings
* In every region of Wisconsin
* Over 1,200 participants

Frame Presbyterian Church, Stevens Point
we dug into the facts

* who is poor
* how prevalent is poverty
* racial inequality
* causes of poverty
* history of efforts to reduce poverty
we discovered that children are now the poorest Americans

* in the 1950s seniors were the poorest group
* children were the second poorest group
* poverty for both was cut dramatically by public investments
* investments in seniors continued to have impact….
* but the economy changed and the impacts of investments in children tapered off…. So. . .
* seniors now have the lowest rate of poverty
* but children are the poorest group in America today
% Poverty Over Time: 1959-2010
Children and Seniors

Sachs JD. The Price of Civilization. 2011, Random House, NY. Chapter 10, pp. 185-208
in discussions across the spectrum of faiths

we found that child poverty is expanding in every region of Wisconsin
Free or Reduced-Price School Meal Eligibility 2003-2004

Legend
- Not participating
- 20 percent or less
- 21 to 40 percent
- 41 to 50 percent
- 51 to 70 percent
- More than 70 percent

Image source: DPI
Free or Reduced-Price School Meal Eligibility

2013-2014

Legend
- Not participating
- 20 percent or less
- 21 to 40 percent
- 41 to 50 percent
- 51 to 70 percent
- More than 70 percent

Image source: DPI
In WISCONSIN...

compared to white kids

* African American kids are almost 5x more likely to be poor
* Latino kids are 3x more likely to be poor
* Native American kids are 4x more likely to be poor
* …and the poverty rate for our African American kids is 8% above the national average for black child poverty

we found racial disparities are dramatic between our Wisconsin kids

U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
In addition, we learned that:

1) children are the poorest segment of Wisconsin
2) Wisconsin has among the worst racial disparities
3) pulling children out of poverty makes the biggest difference in life prospects
4) to help children you must help their families
we reached agreement on causes

* High rates of poverty are **not** a result of individual moral failings
* kids are clearly not responsible for their own plight
* Poverty is a result of **human-made** economic and social structures
“Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings.”

-- Nelson Mandela
Households at Highest Risk of Food Insecurity in Wisconsin, 2011-2014

- All households: 11.6%
- <high school: 22.9%
- Any noncitizen: 22.9%
- Hispanic: 34.5%
- African-American: 34.6%
- Single mother: 34.9%
- Poor: 37.3%
- Any disabled: 37.7%
Food Insecurity in Wisconsin and the US, 2011-2014

- All households
- White
- Hispanic
- African-American

U.S. vs Wisconsin percentages for food insecurity.
Consequences of Hunger
For Children

Learning

Behavior

Health
Consequences of Hunger
For Others

Elderly

Obesity

Communities
What Impacts Health?

Social and Economic Factors

- Education
- Employment
- Income
- Family and Social Support
- Community Safety

Source: County Health Rankings model © 2010 UWPH
Health and Income

- Access to health promoting goods and services
- Psychosocial effects linked with economic resources
- Cumulative effects over time and at critical periods.
Great Britain adopted the national goal of eliminating child poverty by the year 2020.

Evidence-based strategies were adopted up to the scale of the problem.

A robust evaluation and tracking system was adopted to:

- Evaluate progress in real time
- Identify what is working
  - ... and what is not
- ... and recommend policy shifts

We were inspired by the promise of a goal-oriented approach.
What the British Experience Shows

at concluding forums across the state

- First English Lutheran Church in Wausau
- St. Matthew CME Church in Milwaukee
- Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Eau Claire
- St. Paul AME Church in Madison
- West Side Moravian Church in Green Bay
The faith community believes that Wisconsin needs to set a goal of cutting childhood poverty in half in the next ten years.

It needs to also ensure that racial disparities in childhood poverty are cut in half.

These goals should be accompanied by a commitment to annual, evidence-based evaluation of progress.
the path forward

1. make our goal of cutting child poverty and racial disparities in half prevalent . . . .
2. build a larger and larger group of believers in the faith community...
3. seek commitment from elected leaders and other community leaders...
4. use goal to force a choice, for or against....
5. Create a context where leaders cannot posture as advocates for children while taking no meaningful action to the scale of the problem. . .
6. our campaign must create a context for moral clarity and moral choice...
Establish Wisconsin government policy which officially adopts the goal of cutting child poverty and racial disparities in half in 10 years

I. put the goal in state statute

II. adopt initial evidenced based policies at the necessary scale

III. establish robust tracking and evaluation capacity to adjust policies and keep us on track
the obstacle is *the will* not *the way*

* this is where the faith community comes in
  * reducing child poverty in half is a moral objective
  * we must extend the consensus to larger and larger circles
  * ... to the point where it becomes a shared goal for Wisconsin
How can we build public will?

Direct Service

Advocacy
One in 20 bags of food assistance comes from a charitable organization. Federal nutrition programs provide the rest.
What is Public Policy Advocacy?

Public Policy: How we govern our communities through laws and administrative rules

Public Policy Advocacy:

- Issue advocacy
- Lobbying
- Not partisan activity for political party or candidate
Who is an Advocate?

Someone who:
* Cares about their community and its members
* Is a citizen -- not a “wonk” or an “activist”
* Is willing to speak to policymakers (local, state, federal)
Why Be an Advocate?

"No one listens to the cry of the poor or the sound of a wooden bell."

*Haitian Proverb*

Your stories are important, powerful and memorable.
How Can I Be an Advocate?

- Invite public official to your program
- Letter/E-mail
- Office Visit
- Public Hearing
- Op-Eds, Letters to Editor
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>In-Person Issue Visits from Constituents</td>
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<td>Contact from Constituents' Reps</td>
<td>94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individualized Email Messages</td>
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<td>Individualized Postal Letters</td>
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<td>Local Editorial Referencing Issue Pending</td>
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Who Are My Legislators?

[Finding legislators on Wisconsin State Legislature website]

- Find a Proposal
  - AB 222
- Find My Legislators
  - Address
  - Use Location

**Law and Legislation**
- Current Session
- Statutes
- RSS Feeds

**Session Information**
- 2015-2016 Session Calendar
- Session Statistics — Updated November 2, 2015

**Senate**
- Senators
- Committees
- Senate Session
- Senate Daily Floor Calendars

**Citizen’s Information**
- Wisconsin Blue Book
- Eye on Lobbying
- Citizen’s Guide

**Assembly**
- Representatives
- Committees
- Assembly Session
- Assembly Daily Floor Calendars

**More Information**
- Maps and Geographic Data
- Press Credentials
- Legislative Spotlight
Who Are My Legislators?
Visit with Legislator or Staff

* Plan Ahead
  * Define the purpose
  * Know your legislator & the issue
  * Who will make the visit
  * Assign roles
    * Talking points
    * Notes, follow up
* Make an Appointment
* Be Prompt, Patient, and Flexible
Visit with Legislator or Staff

* Be Prepared
  * You are the expert – you know your clients, your program, and your community
  * Have a vivid story that puts a human face on the facts
  * Leave a concise fact sheet
* Remember the “Ask”
* Make Notes
* Send a Thank-you
* Develop a Relationship
  * Be a resource
Visit with Legislator or Staff

Representative Gary Hebl
Assembly District 46 (D - Sun Prairie)

Representative Gary Hebl’s Home Page
District map based on 2011 Wisconsin Act 43
Subscribe to updates via Notify
2015 authored proposals feed
2015 all related items feed
2015 author index
Historical information

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P.O. Box 8952
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515 Scheuerell Lane
Sun Prairie, WI 53590

Staff:
Traci Busan
Traci.Busan@legis.wisconsin.gov
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Current Committees
- Committee for Review of Administrative Rules
- Committee on Environment and Forestry
- Committee on Family Law
- Committee on Judiciary
- Committee on Rules
- Joint Committee for Review of Admin

Biography
Born Madison, May 15, 1951; married; 3 children, 1 grandson.
Graduate Sun Prairie High School; B.A. Political Science UW-Madison

2015 Authored Proposals
(First or second author, first sponsor)

9/21/2015: 2015 Assembly Joint Resolution 63
Relating to: requiring the legislature to enact laws requiring reasonable notice of and public access to meetings of governmental bodies, including legislative committees, and making members of the legislature subject to citations and civil penalties for violations of such laws (first consideration).

6/26/2015: 2015 Assembly Bill 300
Relating to: creditable military service under the Wisconsin Retirement System. (FE)

6/22/2015: 2015 Assembly Bill 271
Relating to: expanding the eligibility of a veteran and an eligible unmarried surviving spouse of a veteran to claim the veterans and surviving spouses property tax credit. (FE)

6/10/2015: 2015 Assembly Bill 265
Relating to: public financing of campaigns for the office of justice of the supreme court, making appropriations, and providing penalties. (FE)

4/8/2015: 2015 Senate Joint Resolution 24
Relating to: declaring April to be Health and Wellness Month.

3/20/2015: 2015 Assembly Bill 106
Relating to: groundwater management, approval of high capacity wells, and granting rule-making authority. (FE)

3/12/2015: 2015 Assembly Bill 90
Relating to: criminal procedure and providing penalties.

2/27/2015: 2015 Senate Bill 61
Relating to: proclaiming May 15, 16, and 17, 2015, Syttende Mai Weekend.

MissPronouncer.com
Connect to Shared Values

Our state budget can -- if we make the right choices -- help our communities thrive.

We can make wise investments that will help all Wisconsinites to be healthy and productive, so that they can support their families and contribute to the well-being and prosperity of their communities. . . .

When our neighbors are healthy, well-housed, free from hunger, and able to find good jobs, we all benefit by living in a better, stronger community.
People who receive public assistance are drug dealers, criminals, and gang members.

The system is full of people who defraud or cheat the system.

Stories are negative:
- Lazy taking handouts
- “Poor, single moms” on the dole
- Help that actually “hurts”

Wasted opportunity & resources

Stories are positive:
- A receiver of charity
- Blindly optimistic
- Thankful for the choices made for them; don’t know any better

They have to be saved

Characters are powerful:
- Resilient
- Hardworking
- Proactive agents in their lives; have and make choices

Characters are powerless:
- Fear of safety

Just like us/posses qualities we desire

The Hunger Frames
Messaging Do’s

• Use universal themes that everybody agrees with
  – Working/striving toward a better life
  – People need food to live

• Needing help from time to time
  – Everybody has experienced needing help and when external help is framed as a temporary, last line of defense, respondents are more sympathetic

• Breathing room in your budget
  – Financial anxiety about the rising cost of living is shared by broad swaths of the population

• Childhood hunger
  – People sympathize with children
Audience Specific Messaging

- Clients and potential clients
  - Emphasize that everyone needs a little help sometimes, pivot to food stamps helping people get back on their feet
- SNAP reformers
  - Must embrace (right) reform, pivot to core purpose of the program
- Budget cutters
  - Affirm fears of spending, remind that hunger relief programs have already been cut, and then redirect to core purpose of your work
Audience Specific Messaging

- Personal responsibility/dependency critics
  - Address fears of “misuse” and “waste,” then focus on hunger relief programming as enabling people to make responsible choices like work and feed their families
- Pro-food bank and anti-SNAP
  - Engage their desire to solve hunger and frame SNAP as part of a comprehensive solution, along with churches and other community groups
- Policymakers
  - A general public message: hunger-relief programs strengthen communities by providing people with the food they need to work at turning their lives around
• Avoid the desire to normalize hunger
  – Stories about how hunger “is right next door” or “could happen to you” cause people to be fearful
  – Avoid adjectives that separate like, “low-income,” “struggling,” “and “vulnerable” which highlight “THEM"
  – Instead normalize the people who need food assistance as “just like me”

• Avoid open-ended stories and messaging
  – It creates a sense that addressing hunger will be a perpetual effort
  – Small, realistic success stories can help to show an end of a much longer battle

• Avoid massive numbers by themselves.
  – Bigness, conveys urgency, also suggests an impossibility to solve.
  – Facts, paired with real human stories, work better
Key Takeaways

- Everybody agrees and understands that people need food to be healthy
- Keep your messages positive and hopeful
- Pivot away from individual decisions and reframe to focus to systemic causes
- Point the way toward progress; nutrition programs must empower and enable people to better things.
Endorse the Child Poverty Goal!

Do it now!

On your phone, pad, or laptop, go to: www.tinyurl.com/cutchildpoverty