United Methodist Women in the Desert Southwest Conference has created a team to work on immigrant rights. They work on the United Methodist Women Immigrant/Civil Rights Initiative, which is one of United Methodist Women’s four key social justice priorities nationally. They also work closely with the conference immigration task force and conference staff in coordinating a United Methodist response on immigrant rights. Please consider creating your own conference team! You can be flexible on the format—the idea is to create leadership at district and conference level to work on this issue.

What Desert Southwest United Methodist Women Did
The president and social action coordinator organized a focus group at a School of Christian Mission that gave a presentation on racial justice and immigration, and they gathered names for an immigration team. The president appointed an immigration team chair and shared the list of names. The chair selected a team member from each district. The team collectively participated in the Ecumenical Advocacy Days in March 2010 in Washington, D.C., gaining knowledge and resources. They participated in a March on the Mall for Immigration Reform and visited with legislators’ and senators’ staff.

The team works closely with the United Methodist Women conference mission team and the social action coordinator while focusing on one particular priority issue.

The United Methodist Women team seeks to:
• Compile a list of contacts who are interested in receiving immigration information.
• Gain knowledge and information on immigration issues.
• Educate United Methodist Women members, members of Church and Society and Mission committee, local church members and interested persons.
• Hold individual and local unit and ecumenical community prayer vigils.
• Write to federal and state legislators, send letters to the editor of local newspapers and visit state and federal legislators.
• Participate in “holy conferencing” dialogues among people with strong differences regarding immigration to seek understanding and common ground.

find out what YOU can do!
Give Carol Barton a call at 212-682-3633. Carol staffs the United Methodist Women Immigrant/Civil Rights Initiative. She can put you in touch with your United Methodist Women conference leadership. Women’s Division can also provide resources and regular action opportunities and let you know what United Methodist Women groups in other conferences are doing. You can also e-mail Carol at cbarton@unitedmethodistwomen.org.

Reach out to Desert Southwest United Methodist Women to learn about their experience. Contact Glenda Hill at iahill72@msn.com.

Find out if your conference has an immigration task force, and if so, get in touch with members to coordinate efforts. The conference task forces are part of a national “Rapid Response Team” network organized by the United Methodist Task Force on Immigration, which keeps them updated on action opportunities. Call your conference office for information.

Talk with your conference president and social action coordinator about creating a team. Consider beginning with a workshop at a conference-wide United Methodist Women or church event and gathering names of women who are interested in serving on a conference team.

Stay in touch! Let United Methodist Women know what you are doing so we can continue to resource you and learn from your experiences. Contact Carol Barton at cbarton@unitedmethodistwomen.org.

United Methodist Women Immigrant/Civil Rights Initiative
777 United Nations Plaza,
11th Floor, New York, NY 10017
212-682-3633
cbarton@unitedmethodistwomen.org
www.unitedmethodistwomen.org
UMWimmigration@groups.facebook.com
http://immigration.umwonline.net