WHY WE DO IT:

The Granite State Organizing Project is a nonpartisan, multi-racial, and multi-faith community organization, working to place human dignity at the center of public life in New Hampshire. By uniting faith communities, tenant associations, labor unions, and other organizations and individuals, GSOP strengthens the ability of Granite Staters to address local, regional, and national issues (including racial and economic inequities in education, housing, immigration, and healthcare). GSOP is a vehicle for congregations, people of faith, and all who desire positive change to act collectively and powerfully towards racial and economic equity and justice in NH.

WHAT WE DO

Our shared values and diverse faiths drive us to organize for a better world for our children and our children’s children. Leaders with GSOP organize to create a society where everyone, whether Black, Brown, or White, can thrive without exception.

WHO WE ARE

Our shared values and diverse faiths drive us to organize for a better world for our children and our children’s children. Leaders with GSOP organize to create a society where everyone, whether Black, Brown, or White, can thrive without exception.

COOPERATION
IMMIGRANT RIGHTS
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION
PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE
OPPORTUNITY
EQUITY
Our Board

EXECUTIVE

MARSHA FEDER
President
EVA CASTILLO
First Vice President
REV JASON WELLS
Second Vice President
SHIDEKO TERAI
Treasurer
ANNE GROSSI
Secretary

REPRESENTATIVES

CECLIA ALLEYNE
Manchester Chapter Representative
MARILYN CAVANAUGH
Manchester Chapter Representative
MCKENZIE GARDINER
Manchester Chapter Y.O.U. Representative
TONIA KNISLEY
Nashua Chapter Representative
SHARON PARKER
Upper Valley Representative
KENNETH BARNES
Individual Member at Large
TRISTAN HUSBY
GSIAF Representative

Our Staff

SARAH JANE KNOY
Executive Director
VIOLA KATUSIIME
Deputy Director
ILIANA BARRETO
Office Manager & Latino Community Coordinator
SUDI LETT
Youth Education Program Coordinator
BRECKIE HAYES-SNOW
Operations Manager
ANGELA MERCADO
Nashua Community Coordinator
MARTIN TOE
African & Clergy Organizer
BLAKE TYLER
Voting Rights Organizer
GEORGE HOYT
Souhegan Valley Organizer
NATE DUVAL
Assistant Youth Organizer
HABIBA HASSAN
Assistant Youth Organizer
EMILY MERCADO
Assistant Youth Organizer
JESSICA MARGESON
Tenant Organizer

The people who keep us going
Christ Church Exeter
Concordia Lutheran Church of Concord
Hanover Friends Meeting
Lebanon United Methodist Church
Main Street Methodist Church
Nashua Area Interfaith Council
The Sisters of Mercy
St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church
St. Anne-St. Augustin Parish
St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church
State Employees Assoc. of NH
Temple Beth Abraham - Tzedek Committee
The First Church of Nashua
Unitarian Universalist Church, Nashua
Upper Valley Jewish Community
Adult Learning Center of Nashua
American Friends Service Committee
Blessed Sacrament Catholic Parish
Church of Christ at Dartmouth College
Church of Our Savior
Elmwood Gardens Community
Londonderry United Methodist Church
Meriden Congregational
NH Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health
New Hampshire Peace Action
North Atlantic State Carpenters
St. Anselm College
St. Lawrence Catholic Parish
Sisters of Holy Cross
Unitarian Universalist Church of Manchester
United Food and Commercial Workers, local 1445
Catholics Organized for GSOP Support
Granite Staters Organized for GSOP Support
Over the past year, the Manchester Chapter has selected affordable housing as a top issue to address.

- **Inclusionary Zoning Research:** To build a foundation for that work, the Chapter has engaged in numerous leader-led research actions on affordable housing with a focus on inclusionary zoning ordinance. This included meetings with Alderman Pat Long, Alderman June Trisciani, Alderman Jim Burkush, meeting with Robert Tourigny, Director of NeighborWorks and Jeff Belanger, Director of Planning and Community Development.

- **Leadership Training:** The Manchester Chapter leaders have engaged in Housing Justice Narrative training to learn about framing and how to build a multiracial coalition to win sustainable change on housing.

- **Legislation:** The Manchester Chapter was instrumental in the defeat of HB 117, a bill that would have ended good cause evictions.

- **Tenant Organizing:** The Manchester Chapter supported Varney Street residents in their organizing efforts to form a legally recognized Tenants Union. This support included help with community meetings, information on HUD tenant rights and participation, nomination of officers, elections, setting up by-laws, and operations for the council.

- **Tenant Association Clinics:** The Granite State Tenant Association began meeting in person in October of 2022 and is approaching its 1 year anniversary with over 50 members. The Clinic will be having its 2 year anniversary September 27, 2023 this year. This Clinic has reached hundreds of tenants who were grateful for the services, support and encouragement offered. Because of the clinic 2 tenants were able to find their voice and learn how to file an appeal to the NH Supreme Court and win.
Chapter Reports:

Meetings occur every third Monday at 6:30pm

Nashua Chapter

Asphalt Plant:
The Nashua Chapter has organized for the past several months in opposition to the proposed Asphalt Plant in Nashua by knocking on doors and our monthly meetings at Arlington Community Center. This culminated in several of our Latino community leaders testifying at Planning Board meetings about the proposed plant and taking a more active role within the Nashua chapter.

Earth Day Cleanup
We also organized an Earth Day cleanup event, and we are currently working towards a petition project to get lights installed at Greeley Park in Nashua.

Voter Education
During the election season, we held several voter education events with new American citizens and infrequent voters around documents needed to vote and describing positions on the ballot/what they meant to the average voter.

Leadership Development:
The Chapter continues to affirm ongoing leadership development in the Latino community in Nashua and Manchester with a recent graduation from the Crendo Lideres en La Comunidad.
Climate Explorers:
The Upper Valley Chapter members organized activities in their local community to participate in Plastics Free July. We continue to explore ways to address climate change.

Affordable Housing:
- The Upper Valley Chapter has invested in research actions about affordable housing, organizing meetings with a Select Board Member, affordable housing experts in the region, and people with lived experiences.
- We supported St. Paul and Twin Pines project to create 18 one-bedroom affordable units for chronically homeless individuals. Members of the Upper Valley attended planning board meetings, lobbied the planning commission, and mobilized local faith communities and friends to speak up in support.
- We mobilized support for a housing article in Hanover which was passed by voters at Town Meeting Day. The article commits 5 acres of land to the construction of new affordable housing. This included speaking at Town Meeting Day, making calls to Hanover residents, writing letters to the editor, and publishing bulletins in church newsletters encouraging people to vote for the article.

Organizational:
We are excited to announce the hiring of our new Upper Valley Organizer, Allen Lipson, a rabbinical student who will be joining us in June.

Hanover Town Meeting Article

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Modified: 5/3/2023 6:41:34 PM

Valley News Forum for May 3, 2023: Support housing article at Hanover Town Meeting

On Tuesday, May 9, at 7 p.m. in the Hanover High School gym, registered Hanover voters have an opportunity to participate in democracy in action. I urge Hanover voters to attend and to vote yes on Article 15 which addresses the need for local workforce housing.

In 2020 the town accepted 256 acres on the north side of Greensboro Road known as the Leavitt property. This year the town is requesting approval to pass 5 acres of this property to Twin Pines Housing Trust or a similar nonprofit to build workforce housing.

Recent Valley News editions have highlighted the lack of affordable housing in New Hampshire. In the Upper Valley we are not immune from this shortage. Talk with any employer having trouble filling positions; you will hear that because people can’t find housing either in the Upper Valley or within reasonable driving distance from their employment, they turn down jobs. We who depend on medical care from Dartmouth Health have reason to be concerned if the lack of housing affects Hitchcock’s ability to hire qualified personnel.

For residents concerned about the impact of potential housing on the 5 acres, any proposal must go through planning, zoning, and selectboard hearings. For more information, see the Hanover Town Report on the Town of Hanover website.
The Souhegan Valley Chapter of the Granite State Organizing Project (GSOP) is a revitalized initiative to foster equality, inclusivity, and active community participation in the Souhegan Valley. This work builds on the legacy of the old Souhegan Valley Chapter from 2008, which resulted in the introduction of the Blue Bus, an appointment-based transportation service for medical visits. It is a testament to the transformative changes achieved when a community comes together with a common purpose.

The Upcoming Year:

- **Community Engagement:** We aim to increase community participation, recognizing that change is most impactful when driven by those it affects. Our strategy includes mobilizing local congregations, as their influence can significantly shape community perspectives and foster unity.
- **Engage Systemic Issues:** Our goal is to tackle the long-standing systemic problems in the Souhegan Valley, including affordable housing and advocating for everyone's right to secure and reasonably priced accommodation. Additionally, we aim to address deeply ingrained social justice concerns, such as environmental issues, discrimination and systemic racism.
- **Master Plan:** Our involvement in the Envison Milford Master Planning Process allows us to align our initiatives with larger community development objectives, ensuring our efforts synergize with broader goals for Milford's and the wider region's growth.
- **Meetings:** We hold monthly meetings to strategize, align our initiatives, and engage in meaningful discussions to guide our actions. Building community and growing relationships is crucial to our efforts in the Souhegan Valley.

As we rebuild the Souhegan Valley GSOP Chapter, we remain committed to bringing incremental yet significant changes to the community. Leveraging the successes of the past and with a clear vision for the future, we aim to create a more inclusive and equitable society. We invite and encourage more community members to join us so that we can make a more significant impact.
Manchester Chapter:

- **Harvard Visit:** Our youth spoke about firsthand experiences in youth organizing at Harvard in Dr. Karen Mapps graduate class.
- **School Board Influence:** Our students attended and spoke at school board meetings calling for an AP African American studies class to be added to the Manchester School Board Curriculum.
- **Civic Engagement:** Y.O.U. Leader McKenzie took part in a Martin Luther King Jr. Day Panel discussion in Manchester. The Manchester Chapter also attends and speaks at Manchester School Board meetings.
- **The Future:** Y.O.U. students are currently planning for future events and opportunities to do community organizing and build power including this summer's We Are One Festival and this fall's Candidate Forum.

Nashua Chapter:

**Nashua Y.O.U. Meeting**

YOU launched a Nashua program and has had seven successful meetings with students from Nashua North. It is a diverse group and we’re hoping as the word spreads around that more youth will come, through our outreach efforts with school coordinators. The meetings so far have focused on addressing the weaknesses in our community and schools and providing civics education, including the role and responsibilities of an alderman, board of education, and where city hall is located. Six out of the seven students who are English Language Learners mentioned about the lack of respect, engagement, and the quality of relationships they have with the staff and other students at the school.

We came to know that many of them wanted to participate in the various programs of Nashua Technology Center and were told no because they don’t know the language yet (English). With Y.O.U being established in Nashua we will ensure that their voices are heard and that we can make a change not only for them but for the many ELL high school students in Nashua.
The GSOP Clergy Caucus has made a conscious effort to promote diversity within its caucus and foster genuine connections with one another through individual meetings. One of the group’s objectives this year was to conduct 50 of these meetings before June, but the clergy have exceeded this target. Additionally, the GSOP Clergies have been dedicated to expanding their membership, reinvigorating current memberships, and welcoming fresh faces into the fold. They have also provided testimony on 18 bills and authored 92 pieces of testimony, advocating for legislation concerning a range of issues, such as the minimum wage, housing, and immigration. As we progress, the Clergy Caucus of GSOP will remain steadfast in their commitment to opposing the oppressive, racially motivated regulations that jeopardize the warm reception of immigrants in our locality. We will actively promote the adoption of more equitable housing regulations and stand up to the blare of racism and white supremacy.

The Immigrant Solidarity Network (ISN) has resumed the monthly vigil at the Federal building in Nashua, raising awareness about the detainment and potential deportation of our neighbors. This group continues to bring testimony to Concord in response to proposed immigration legislation deemed harmful to our communities.

Vigils occur on the first Tuesday of the month at 9:00am

Meetings occur the last Tuesday of the month at 1:30pm,
Emerging Leaders Konnections' mission is to equip individuals to become leaders through networking and building relationships. By connecting leaders with each other and with resources, we can help them create positive change in their communities.

ELK has been holding listening sessions in our African communities and with people most impacted for this purpose. Young community leaders (or ELKs) conducted these listening sessions in order to collect opinions and insights that could benefit the community members' quality of lives. Because the meetings provide a secure environment where community members can express their experiences, worries, and opinions, we can learn about the issues that have the biggest impact.

The talks include topics connected to discrimination, racism, and cultural identity as well as access to healthcare, education, housing, employment, and social services. The information acquired during these meetings can also be used to advocate for change on a local, national, and international level and to increase awareness of the problems facing our communities. As well as locally advocating, ELK members have taken the stories of their community to D.C. to help advocate for immigration reform.

Centro Latino in conjunction with community partners led three vaccination clinics at which over 20 community members were vaccinated. We were able to survey 512 community members about their concerns; by having deep conversations with people we developed our first Latino Community Health Fair. We partnered with different community providers to provide resources, information, and COVID-19 vaccinations. We have also been doing our Creando Lideres para la Comunidad training which provides leadership training to community members. We have done two trainings from which 42 people have graduated and actively participate in actions at the state House.

Centro Latino Community Health Fair

Emerging Leader Konnections

Created this year by Martin Toe, our clergy organizer

Trip to DC

African Community Diaspora Dialogue
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Celebrating 21 Years of Justice

2002 - 2023

GRANITE STATE ORGANIZING PROJECT
ANNUAL REPORT