

## Immigration Initiative

Our Social Action Committee initiatives truly emerge from the interests and passion of our members. The Immigration Initiative is an excellent example. In 2010, one of our members gave us a presentation about legal immigrants who were being held in local New Jersey prisons while awaiting a hearing on their status. She explained that this was a violation of Federal law which mandated that such persons be in civil, rather than criminal, detention. The conditions were deplorable. They were not able to interact meaningfully with family or counsel; not given adequate health care; nor access to basic items such as pillows and toiletries. She asked if there was something the Social Action Committee might do to address this.

We promptly made her the head of our Immigration Initiative; provided her with funding; and asked her to point us in the direction she thought we should go to address this important issue. Since the plight of legal immigrants going through the indignities of the administrative hearing system is something that is not well publicized, part of her brief involved educating the rest of us. She brought a speaker from First Friends, a Quaker immigrant advocacy group, to speak to our committee and circulated literature to the congregation at large.

This is another example of the way our Social Action Committee empowers its members. We lead leaders. To become involved in our Immigration Initiative, we urge you to attend a Social Action Committee meeting.



Social Action Committee members work on the UCS Immigration Initiative