

# 2010 Report

## PUP Organizes as Mass Unemployment Continues

Unemployment stood at near historic highs all through 2010 and was 9.8% at year's end, a full three years after the start of the Great Recession. The Philadelphia Unemployment Project continued to organize laid off Philadelphians and work with sympathetic organizations throughout the year and ultimately won significant victories for the unemployed. Our sister organization the Unemployment Information Center handled over 21,000 calls and our staff provided direct services to hundred of unemployed during the year.

### Fighting Foreclosures and Winning Help for the Unemployed

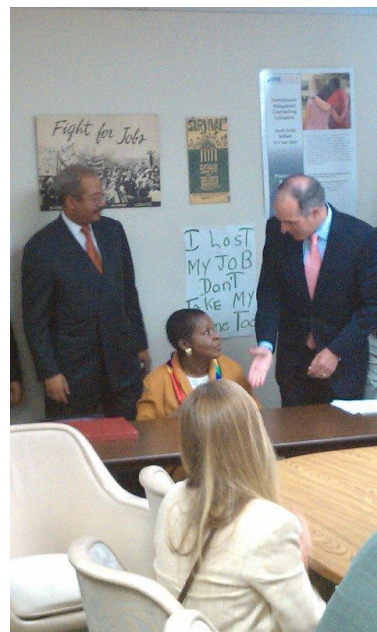
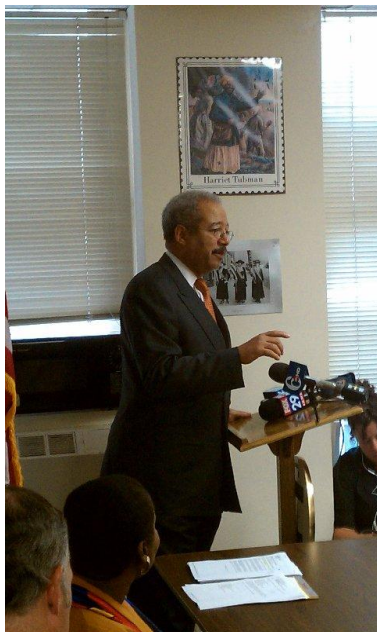
As the recession continued to roar into 2010 foreclosures remained a severe problem, but the cause had shifted from expensive sub prime mortgages to homeowners facing foreclosure due to unemployment. Our housing counselors and organizing staff could see this clearly, but the Obama Administration only had a program for sub prime foreclosures. Our counselors handled hundreds of foreclosure cases and working with the Philadelphia Foreclosure Diversion Program, were able to get affordable work outs for large numbers families, but the unemployment problem remained difficult to address.



*Unemployment Information Center Housing Counselors working with homeowners*

PUP developed position papers for federal officials calling for a bridge loan program for the unemployed. We organized a Save Our Homes Coalition of homeowners and housing advocates locally and worked nationally with many groups to raise the issue of unemployment caused foreclosures. We met with top officials from HUD, the Treasury and the White House pressing them to offer the program of bridge

loans to the unemployed. National media outlets covered our efforts. Finally the Treasury provided funds to the Hardest Hit States to offer help to the unemployed, but PA was not considered Hardest Hit. We developed national support from the labor movement and housing advocates and worked with Rep. Chaka Fattah and Sen. Robert Casey on legislation which finally passed in June and resulted in the Emergency Homeowner Loan Program. This HUD program allocates \$1 Billion nationally and will provide \$106 Million to pay the mortgages of unemployed PA homeowners until they get back to work. When added to the Hardest Hit states fund our efforts played a leading role in moving \$4.5 Billion to jobless homeowners facing foreclosure so that they can remain in their homes.



*Press conference at PUP offices announcing the new Homeowners Emergency Loan Program with Rep. Chaka Fattah and Sen Bob Casey and homeowner Adena Holder*

## Winning a Public Jobs Program in PA

Late in 2009 PUP began agitating for the state of Pennsylvania to use federal stimulus money to provide a public jobs program in the state. The TANF Emergency Fund had made nearly \$400 million available to the state but little had been drawn down by Harrisburg. PUP began to call for action and drafted a model jobs program as the basis for putting people to work. Media attention was attracted and we began working with Secretary of Labor and Industry Sandi Vito. Soon the Way to Work program was announced providing subsidized employment to out of work Pennsylvanians with children. Beginning in May 2010 over 12,000 subsidized jobs were created in PA at wages of up to \$13 per hour. Nearly 4,000 adults were hired in Philadelphia and thousands more summer youth jobs were created. Over 2,000 employers took part in the program.



*Mayor Nutter announcing the kick off of the Way to Work program with PUP members looking on in May 2010.*



## Working to Save Way to Work Jobs

Unfortunately, since Way to Work was so late to get started workers were immediately faced with a September 30, 2010 end date for the program. After PUP spent time reaching out to employers who would benefit from free workers and the unemployed to connect them with Way to Work, PUP began to organize to see if we could get Congress to extend the program for another year.

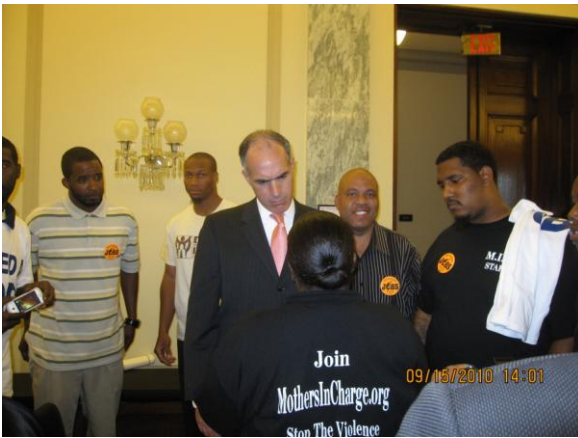


*Employer Angela Venditti speaks in support of the Way to Work Program*



*Way to Work employees at a North Philadelphia Rally in September.*

Since the program provided fully subsidized workers for private employers as well as government and non-profits we targeted businesses to encourage them to support the program. An employer letter was developed and a strategy devised to reach employers in other states benefiting for subsidized jobs. This was a win-win program for employers and workers. We held meetings of employers and Way to Work employees, held rallies, lobby days, engaged people from other cities and got extensive media coverage. We developed a national letter for businesses to sign on to encourage Congress to continue the program. Over 2000 employers from around the country agreed to sign the letter, hoping that small business support would move Republicans in Congress.



*Lobbying in Washington for the TANF Emergency Fund and Way to Work, including employers, workers and little Silas Wilkerson trying to save his daddy's job. Sen. Casey speaks to Way to Work employees in DC. (left).*

Despite the clear need for jobs and the broad based support that was generated, including from small businesses, the Senate would not go along and Way to Work ended September 30, after only 5 months of desperately needed employment for thousands in Pennsylvania.

## Symbol of the Resistance of the Unemployed

Unfortunately in this recession we have seen that PUP is one of the few organizations organizing jobless workers. But our clear and simple message that real people need jobs or decent benefits has been heard around the country, due to an excellent Associate Press photographer and rallies and events that have caught the attention of the media. Our rallies in Philadelphia and DC have been featured from Hawaii to Maine and from California to Ohio. Two of the many photos featuring PUP members that have been seen across the nation are reproduced here.



*Yvette Ward at November Vigil for the Unemployed- AP Photo*



*Frank Wallace at June rally at Philadelphia City Hall for jobs- AP Photo*

## Health Care

After a long and difficult battle federal health care reform finally was enacted in early 2010 and most Americans will now have affordable health insurance. PUP organized a state wide coalition the PA health Access Network (PHAN) to help educate the public on the issues regarding health reform. We reached out to

hundreds of people from throughout the state who felt that access to health care was a critical issue. Our staff held meetings throughout Pennsylvania and helped the uninsured and concerned citizens to have a voice in the debate. In February as the issue hung in the balance we staged a march to Washington to call for health reform to become law. 8 intrepid souls marched through snow and cold and were greeted in DC by top officials and good press coverage on their arrival. PUP and PHAN made a real contribution to passage of the legislation that was signed into law March 23 by educating hundreds of people and organizations on the issues. We are now working to make sure that the new law is implemented in a way that ensures that all citizens get the health care that they need.

We also continue to offer the services of a Health Care Navigator who connects uninsured people with affordable health services, insurance free mammograms, prescription drug programs, public health centers, etc.



*Rally for Health Care Reform- Center City*



*Washington DC Rally for health reform*

## Jobs Club and Reverse Commute

PUP continues to offer a welcoming environment where unemployed people can look for work and get help with various issues that often come with unemployment, such as loss of health insurance, inability to afford a mortgage, insufficient income, denial of unemployment benefits. A weekly Jobs Club helps prepare people for their job search and acts as an informal support group.

We also continue to provide an innovative reverse commute program for inner city workers to get to suburban jobs, the Commuter Options program. We currently have 26 vans and cars taking over 100 people in car pools to suburban jobs each day. Commuter Options provides the vehicles and organizes the pools. It makes it possible for people to get places which would be difficult or impossible to reach on public transportation.



*Commuter Options commuters at the job with their van.*



*PUP's Job search computer lab.*

## 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

PUP celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2010. A lovely event commemorated the occasion and three people who played important parts in PUP's history were honored. PUP Board Chair John Meyerson and former PUP members Sen. Shirley Kitchen and Rep Vanessa Brown were given Leadership Awards by the organization.



*The honorees with PUP Director John Dodds*



*Rallying at City hall against fraudulent foreclosures with Save Our Homes Coalition*

## Please Help PUP with your Donation!

What we need now is support from you. Please make a donation to help support the work of the Philadelphia Unemployment Project. We rely on donations to remain a strong voice for working families and the unemployed. There is no more important time than the present to support PUP.

Please use the enclosed envelope to send a donation to PUP or go to our web page and donate online. Your support is greatly appreciated.

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