

Lobbying to end poverty in Minnesota

About 60 people from different backgrounds, religions and races lobbied at the Capitol Thursday to end poverty.

"I used to live in cardboard boxes. I would eat anything to survive;" Minister Deroys Turner preached to the crowd. Turner is now advocating for people who live in poverty or are homeless.

"This is for our families;" said Rena Moran, a mother of six who was homeless not too long ago. "Determination," Moran said; along with the help she received from the Public Policy Project enabled her to become a working citizen.

The Public Policy Project has trained low income people and poverty stricken communities about public policy and how they can become more involved with the government process.

"Everyone here moved from being passive to active," consultant for the PPP Loren Niemi said.

Niemi along with fellow consultant James Trice taught two classes, one in North Minneapolis and one in St. Paul, on how people can "harness their passion or anger into making meaningful long-term personal, structural and policy based change."

"We want to put a face on poverty," Niemi said.

The PPP is a result of the Legislative Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota by 2020 and began three years ago.

"I believe we can do better," Senator John Marty, who co-chaired the commission said. "If we allocate money for it now more people will be productive, tax paying citizens.

Graduates of the North Minneapolis and St. Paul classes, handed recommendations for how to end poverty to their legislators. Educating community members on financial literacy is one of the recommendations Minister Turner spoke about.

For example, Turner learned that just because you can get a good deal on something, doesn't mean it's something you need to buy.

"If a soda that is usually a dollar is on sale for 50 cents, and you buy it, you're still out 50 cents."

The PPP, the Jordan New Life Community Church and the One Stop Family Support Center in North Minneapolis helped Minister Turner turn around his situation.

Rena Moran wanted her kids to know there is hope. Or as Minister Turner said; "The sun still shines on our community."



TW Hudgens and Rena Moran of LIFT Program
Constituents for Change Class

North Minneapolis

By Christine O'Donnell, KARE 11 News Capitol Assistant