

## **Sister Maribeth Larkin, SSS Co-Lead Organizer ONE LA/ IAF**



Sister Maribeth Larkin is a Roman Catholic Woman Religious, a vowed member of the Sisters of Social Service of Los Angeles. In 1976, while doing parish-based social work at Dolores Mission Parish in East Los Angeles, she began participating as a leader with the United Neighborhoods Organization (UNO), a local organization affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation. She attended IAF national training in Texas in 1976 and in Chicago in 1978. She was hired as an organizer with UNO in 1978, and has been organizing with IAF ever since.

From 1980 through 1983, she worked in New York as lead organizer of the Queens Citizens Organization, under the supervision of then IAF Executive Director Ed Chambers. In 1984, she moved to Texas and for 15 years worked with Ernesto Cortes, Christine Stephens and other IAF organizers in the development of a statewide network of strong church and congregation-based organizations like Dallas Area Interfaith, EPISO in El Paso, and COPS in San Antonio.

Sister Maribeth returned to Los Angeles in the spring of 1999 to assist in rebuilding IAF's organizing presence in Los Angeles. Together with Lead Organizer Ernesto Cortes and five other senior organizers, Sister Maribeth helped lead a strategy to consolidate the four IAF affiliated organizations into a new metropolitan-wide organization, One LA/IAF. From 2003 through 2006 she served as Lead Organizer of the Sacramento Valley Organizing Community in Northern California. Since 2007, after returning to Los Angeles, Sister Maribeth and senior IAF organizer Tom Holler have worked as Co-Leads of One LA/IAF.

In her organizing work, Sister Maribeth assists institutional leaders from churches, synagogues, schools and unions in learning how to develop relational power and engage in a process of practical democracy. She teaches ordinary people how to shape and influence public policy around issues including education reform, increasing wages and benefits, and health care availability.

She has served on the National Staff of the IAF in the US, and regularly assists with IAF national and regional trainings.

In addition to her organizing work, in 2005 through 2010, Sister Maribeth was an elected member of the General Council of the Sisters of Social Service (the governing board of her religious congregation).