



# Common Ground

Social Justice Newsletter UU Church Bloomington In

## Finalists Announced for Sunday Plate Funds

The Social Justice Funds Committee announces the 2009-2010 finalists for the church's 25% of undesignated Sunday Plate funds.

Five excellent applications were submitted this year, and, once again, choosing the finalists was difficult. The SJFC appreciates the time and effort expended by all of the applicants and thanks them for their submissions. The three finalists for this year's congregational vote are: Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Crestmont Boys and Girls Club, and Middle Way House (Youth Program).

Brief presentations by each organization will be given during the Social Justice Moment on May 24, 2009. Representatives of the three organizations will be available after services for questions/discussion. We will vote for next year's recipient at the June 7<sup>th</sup> Congregational meeting.

Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) will continue to receive 25% of undesignated plate funds through this June. Thank you for your continued support of social justice needs in our community.

-Stephanie Estell, Social Justice Funds Committee

## 240 Trees Planted!



The Green Sanctuary Task Force worked with Earth Kin to distribute 240 free trees for Earth Day on April 19th !!

## Friends of Prisoners Task Force You Can Help!

New Leaf/New Life (NL/NL) is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to providing therapeutic programming in the jail to help inmates



create positive changes and successfully reenter into society once released. They are looking for volunteers to sit at their information table at the Farmer's Market on Saturdays. Enjoy being outside and help spread the word about the important work of New Leaf-New Life—you will be fully trained and equipped! Interested?— contact Debra Morrow: [VolunteerNewLeaf@aol.com](mailto:VolunteerNewLeaf@aol.com).

**Women Writing for (a) Change** Bloomington in conjunction with NL/NL sends teams of women into the Monroe County Corrections Center every other Saturday to facilitate writing circles for incarcerated women. We have served over 250 women throughout the two and a half years we have been active at the jail. We read poetry, practice fast writing, read aloud what we have written, and practice active listening to each other. We offer suggestions for writing that they may take back to the block and provide them with snacks and writing supplies so that they can continue writing on their own. We would like to find a venue for reading or posting their words and are seeking ways to make that possible.—Amy Cornell

## Children's Task Force Builds Shed for Templeton Elementary

The Children's Task Force recently helped Templeton Elementary School's preschool program by purchasing and putting up a storage shed for tricycles and other equipment. The project started with a Martin Luther King, Jr., "Day On not a Day Off" Grant from the City of Bloomington. We raised additional funds through a breakfast and bake sale held jointly with Habitat Task Force on March 8.

The Templeton preschool teachers are thrilled to have a place to store playground equipment that previously had to be left out in all weather because of the lack of storage space. Templeton's preschool serves a high percentage of students with special needs and families in poverty.

The Children's Task Force especially wants to thank Lloyd Orr for helping put together the storage shed, and all of our fellow congregants who supported CTF and Habitat at the breakfast. CTF is continuing to work with the Templeton playground committee on much-needed

upgrades to both the preschool and main playgrounds. If you are interested in helping out, or would like to donate to the playground fund, please contact Jennifer Livesay.



Angela Lexmond helps build storage shed

-Jennifer Livesay, Children's Taskforce

## You Can Help!



Parolees need XL clothing and larger! Bring to the church. Contact Bob/Sandy Taylor, 336-1234

"New Job" is looking for mentors to work with people on parole or probation for one year. This will require about 6 or 7 hours a week; so far we have 8 people who have agreed to do this.

Contact Norm Hollar, [nhorar@area10agency.org](mailto:nhorar@area10agency.org).

## Indiana's Nuclear Test

Indiana and its Senators will be at the heart of an effort to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Although John F. Kennedy signed a treaty banning atmospheric nuclear weapons tests in 1963, testing went – literally – underground. President Bill Clinton signed a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, but the Senate defeated ratification in 1999. President Barack Obama pledges to revive efforts to get the Senate to ratify the CTBT, as have 144 nations. The U.S.'s failure to ratify it puts us in the company of China, North Korea, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, and Pakistan. U.S. ratification is needed for the treaty to come into force.

The Comprehensive Test Ban would make it harder for new countries to get the bomb – and for existing nuclear powers to develop new types of nuclear weapons. Former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz recently called on his fellow Republicans to vote to ratify the treaty. Sean Meyer, Project Manager of the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy Initiative of the Union of Concerned Scientists, will speak at the Monroe County Public Library auditorium **Monday, May 18th at 7 PM.** Please come to learn more about the Comprehensive Test Ban; your presence will demonstrate public concern. *David Keppel 331-2815 or keppel@sbcglobal.net.*



Sean Meyer will speak at MCPL May 18th, 7pm

## International Outreach Task Force (IOTF) – News and Notes

A special thanks to all those who purchased goodies at the **Adopt a Kid Costa Rica Bake Sale** Sunday April 19th. We raised a total of \$131.00 in support of this home grown Costa Rican non-profit organization that works to provide scholarships for students of low income families to attend high school. Donations to Adopt a Kid Costa Rica are used to directly fund rural children and to improve the condition of their schools. The IOTF will be holding a bake sale the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month throughout the year in support of this worthy cause. If you are interested in donating a baked item please contact Jason Blankenship (765-318-8851 / [jason-blank33@yahoo.com](mailto:jason-blank33@yahoo.com)).



Big plans are in the works for year 2 of the IOTF's collaboration with Claire and Ed Robertson to support the **Ndethya wa Ngutethya women's cooperative** based in the Eastern Kenyan town of Kathonzweni. Our efforts to support Ndethya started on a positive note in 2009 thanks in large part to a generous donation of \$500.00 given by an anonymous congregational supporter. Claire Robertson is currently making arrangements for a trip to

Kenya this summer to work with the members of Ndethya on plans to put the funds raised last year to good use. Claire will also be purchasing items from various markets in and around Nairobi to use in her jewelry making. We can't wait to see the results at the bazaar next December.



Church members will visit a women's cooperative in Kenya.

Jason Blankenship is also planning to make the trip to Kenya with Claire Robertson this summer. His goal is to meet members of Ndethya and their families, and to hopefully make the 2 day trek out to Kathonzweni to make a personal connection with the town and the people who live there. Keep a look out for details on the Ndethya wa Ngutethya Lunch Forum tentatively planned for sometime in September. We should have pictures and lots of other details and info from the trip to present at the event.

Lastly, the IOTF is excited to announce its 2009 initiative, in conjunction with the UU Church of Kalamazoo, MI, to support the **Unitarian Universalist Church of Burundi micro-lending project**. Begun in June of 2007, the initial effects of this program have been quite profound. next The IOTF has set a goal of raising \$2000.00 to support the UU Church

## Reverend Jill McAllister of the UU Kalamazoo church speaks of Burundi

*"I visited Burundi in February 2008, and got to meet several of the participants, who are mainly women, heads-of-households, needing to provide an income for their families. Everyone in Burundi was affected by the recent civil war ....*

*Many of these people lost husbands, and parents in the fighting. For all of them, the small businesses they have begun have been successful new beginnings, including things like selling vegetables in the city market, selling rice, and making banana wine. The Burundian Unitarians want to build... from 30+ participating families, they hope to reach 100 families in the next two years. They have also added a literacy component to the program ... Adding the teaching component means they can provide jobs for a few of the college-educated people who are competing for not-enough work in Burundi. "*

of Burundi micro-lending project in 2009. We hope you will join us in supporting this worthy work being done by fellow UU's in the heart of Africa.

For more information contact Jason Blankenship (765-318-8851 / [jason-blank33@yahoo.com](mailto:jason-blank33@yahoo.com)).