



# Common Ground

Social Justice Newsletter for the UU Church of Bloomington Indiana

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## **Congratulations Crestmont Boys and Girls Club!**

– *By the Social Justice Funds Committee*

Congratulations to Crestmont Boys and Girls Club who, after a congregational vote during the June Congregational Meeting, are the new recipients of the 25% of the Plate Funds. They will receive 25% of the Plate funds from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. Thanks to all of you who voted during the June Congregational Meeting. All of the nominees are deserving of our congregation's support and we appreciate the time and effort involved by all who participated this year.

Volunteers in Medicine completed the 2008-2009 year as the 25% of the Plate recipient on June 30, 2009. Our congregation's generosity in these very difficult economic times resulted in a whopping annual total of \$6937.89 to VIM. Yippee!

## **Seed Money: Get an Early Start on Grant Applications**

– *By the Social Justice Funds Committee*

The SJFC encourages all social justice task forces, organizers, workers, and leaders to consider applying NOW for the Fall Grants Program. We have changed the process and are offering applications early so folks can receive feedback from the committee before the submission deadline in October. This will give us time to review applications and suggest revisions if necessary in hopes of being able to have a more successful grant year. If you have ideas about social justice projects which need some start up cash, we encourage you to be creative, involve the congregation in planning and apply, apply, apply!

Projects must be based in Monroe County and be consistent with the mission of our church. Priority will be given to applications from (1) Social Justice Task Forces, (2) projects that involve a significant number of the congregation, and (3) applications to seed new projects that will have an enduring benefit.

Before submitting the grant proposal, advocates of the proposal should have taken steps to inform members of the congregation and to involve interested members in the project.

Funding is limited by the amounts held in the Lundin Social Justice Funds. You can receive your application from Jennifer Blankenship at [jblankfamily@hotmail.com](mailto:jblankfamily@hotmail.com).

## What have you done this month to fight local hunger?

– by Anne Graham

The Helping Feed Our Hungry Neighbors task force is working with Plant-A-Row for the Hungry and we need your help. Please donate any surplus fruits or veggies or herbs from your garden to help hungry people here in Monroe County.

**It's easy!** Bring your produce to church with you on Sunday, and put it in the Plant-A-Row plastic bin near the Social Justice table. Or, take your produce directly to Mother Hubbard's Cupboard (1010 S. Walnut, M-F 4-6pm) or to the Hoosier Hills Food Bank (615 N. Fairview, M-F 9-5pm) and tell them you are dropping off on behalf of the UU Church.

What produce is needed? Everything! Vegetables (including zucchini, onions, salad greens, tomatoes) and all fruits and herbs. Everything will be enjoyed by hungry residents locally. For more information: Contact Anne Graham at [aegraham@indiana.edu](mailto:aegraham@indiana.edu).

**How's your back?** We are also looking for people who would like to help pick produce at Stranger's Hill Organic Farm (west of Bloomington). Stranger's Hill has produce that are "seconds" (not fit for selling because they are asymmetrical, blemished, too small, etc. but perfectly fine to eat) that they would like to donate to Hoosiers Hills but they need helping hands to pick the produce. Times



available are Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30-7:30 and Fridays from 5:30-6:30. It would be most helpful if we could put together small groups of people that pick the produce as a team. Interested? Email Anthony Schrock: [aschrock1973@yahoo.com](mailto:aschrock1973@yahoo.com) with the days and dates that would work for you.

## Fundraising for Templeton Playground Renovations

– by Jennifer Livesay

The Children's Task Force continues to assist Templeton Elementary School's Playground Committee fundraising project. Templeton has the second-largest number of students in poverty in the Monroe County school corporation, with 60 percent of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. These students are at greater risk of health problems such as obesity and diabetes. They need the physical activity that a well-designed playground encourages, yet the playground they have is deteriorating.

The Templeton PTO has raised over \$10,000 toward the new playground—the children themselves raised over \$1000! The Children's Task Force has received a small grant, held a fundraiser, and provided volunteers to help work on the playground. We encourage you to read about this project on the bulletin board above the social justice table, and consider supporting it if you are able. For more information, please contact Jennifer Livesay or Angela Lexmond, of the Children's Task Force.

## Habitat Works in Progress

– by Barb Berggoetz

The Habitat for Humanity Task Force needs building volunteers interested in working a half day or full day on Saturday, July 25. Work is just beginning on a new house on the southwestside that will be part of a community of Habitat houses, including this year's Women Build house. Work to be done on July 25 will be putting in the subfloor, so there will be measuring and hammering involved. Please email Barb Berggoetz, [barb.berggoetz@indystar.com](mailto:barb.berggoetz@indystar.com), if you're interested as soon as possible. Habitat is looking for 10 volunteers that day. If you can't work that day, but want to build sometime this summer, let Barb know, too. There will be numerous opportunities to build this summer.



Members of the Habitat Task Force prepared lunch on July 11 for about 20 people who were working on the ReStore house from this summer. The house is nearly done and we will be presenting a quilt to the homeowners made by men in prison, given to our Prison Task Force. The quilt is one of two made by the men. Both of these beautiful quilts will be given to Habitat homeowners this summer.

Please tell friends and family planning on going to Indiana University football games beginning in September to park at the church parking lot. The Habitat and International Task Forces will be collecting

\$5 per car that will be used to further the work of each of the task forces.

The Habitat Task Force is looking for new members! We need more people to help our small, but dedicated, group. We welcome anyone to come to our monthly meetings, typically between services on the fourth or first Sunday of the month. Our next meeting is a working meeting, tentatively planned for Saturday, Aug. 1, at the Restore, so we can make parking signs.

Please email Barb or Connie Nelson-Laird, [cnelsonlaird@gmail.com](mailto:cnelsonlaird@gmail.com), if you'd like to help our task force in any way.

## 4th Annual Simply Living Fair and Wellness Expo Planned for November 2009

– by Patricia C. Coleman

The 4th Annual "Simply Healthy: Creating Sustainable Communities" Simply Living Fair and Wellness Expo focusing on "Living Simply Well, Community Building, Eating Local and Eating Healing Meals" will take place November 12-14th, 2009. This year's keynote presenter is Diana Leafe Christian, Editor of Communities Magazine and author of "Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities". Vendors displaying wellness services, green businesses and products, Workshops for

mind, body and spirit; Local Food Dinner hosted by Middle Way Food Works featuring food from local growers and producers; Moderated Community Conversation with Marcia Veldman, Farmers Market Director and Green Sanctuary Task Force member and other community leaders moderated by Marti Crouch; Children's activities and Healing Sound Concert with opening words by Reverend Maryanne Macklin with Alain Barker, Daryl Breeden, Steve Pollit and others will take place here at the UU Church. It is a goal of the Indiana Holistic Health Network and Local Food (Green Dove Network projects – allied with the Just Peace Task Force) and other Simply Healthy Conveners to educate and inspire through the exploration of some of the many possibilities available locally and beyond that can be utilized to support our becoming healthier, more sustainable communities. We look forward to your support and participation. For more information Contact: Patricia C. Coleman at [simplyhlthy@gmail.com](mailto:simplyhlthy@gmail.com) or visit [www.indianaholistichealth.net/wellnessexpo.htm](http://www.indianaholistichealth.net/wellnessexpo.htm) or [www.simplyhealthy.net](http://www.simplyhealthy.net)

## VOLUNTEERS IN MEDICINE THANKS YOU

– by Judy Bennett, sponsor

As voted by the congregation at the June 2008 Congregational meeting, Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) clinic was the lucky recipient of the 25% of Sunday plate for July 1st 2008 to June 30th 2009. This clinic serves the uninsured of Monroe and

Owen counties, treating both acute and chronic conditions as well as providing education on diseases and healthy living. The clinic is staffed by a nurse practitioner, along with volunteer physicians and nurse practitioners from the community. A second nurse practitioner was just hired.

The clinic received \$6938 from UU church over the past year, and this money was used to fund the purchase of diabetic test strips. Diabetes is one of the most prevalent chronic diseases seen at the clinic. Because of this, in October 2008 a diabetes clinic was started on site with a diabetic nurse, nutritionist, behavioral health and primary care provider in attendance. It occurs each Wednesday. The patient is seen by each of the providers for monitoring, education and health checks. It is hoped to help prevent diabetes with the education provided, as well as help patients manage and control their diabetes. They are provided with the meters and testing strips that they need. Without such a program the expense would be prohibitive for the patients. Daily monitoring is extremely important to managing diabetes, and by helping to pay for the test strips we made a big difference in many lives. Since October 2008, 203 appointments have been made at the diabetic clinic and 160 individuals have been seen.

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who voted to give this money to VIM, and especially to all who gave so generously. You have made a difference in the healthcare available in our area.

## Just Peace Needs You

– by David Keppel

At the recent UU General Assembly in Salt Lake City, there was much discussion of Just Peacemaking. Our understanding of peacemaking has evolved to include not only international peacemaking but also the societal, congregational, and personal. How can we make peace in our own communities and lives? As we understand peacemaking more broadly, the opportunities to get involved grow. Consider the analogy of the environmental movement, where you can not only lobby



Congress about legislation but also change how you live your daily life. Even when Congress is disappointing, we still know we are making a difference.

In coming months, the Just Peace Task Force hopes to expand its work and membership by including new, positive projects. If you have ideas, please come to our special meeting on Sunday August 16th after the second service (more details to follow) or get in touch ([Keppel@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Keppel@sbcglobal.net) or 331-2815).

Meanwhile, we have urgent work to do. This fall, Indiana will be a national focus in efforts to secure Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, because Senator Richard Lugar's vote will be decisive to the outcome. On August 6th at 7 PM, there will be a program at the Monroe County Public Library Auditorium, including showing of the documentary

White Light, Black Rain on the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And we need to tell President Obama and Congress that we reject escalation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. (For more information on Afghanistan, as well as Iraq, Iran, and the Middle East, as well as suggestions for action, please see <http://www.fcni.org>.)

## Speak Out for a Safe Climate

– by David Keppel

Last month, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act, establishing a cap-and-trade limit on carbon dioxide emissions that cause global warming. Unfortunately, however, the bill was greatly weakened on its way to passage. Instead of auctioning all permits to pollute, thereby setting a price on pollution and bringing down the cost of truly clean energy, the bill gives away many permits to the worst of polluters – the utilities using coal. Its Renewable Energy Standard has been cut

to 15% and includes dubious sources such as burning municipal waste

– hardly an environment friendly source. Worst, the bill strips the Environmental Protection Agency of authority to regulate greenhouse gasses under the Clean Air Act. Thus some leading environmental



activists now fear that the bill is worse than nothing – and far short of what our planet and our economy desperately need. The Senate will take up the bill this fall. Our Senators -- Evan Bayh and Richard Lugar -- need to hear from you. Senator Bayh's Indianapolis staff claims it is receiving 40-1 messages against a clean energy bill. Please call his office (202-224-5623) or email at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov).

## **IOTF Members Return from Kenya Trip**

– by *Jason Blankenship*

International Outreach Task Force (IOTF) members Claire Robertson and Jason Blankenship, along with fellow travelers Maemie Blankenship and Eric Maxen, have returned safely from their travels in Kenya. A special “thank you” to all for the thoughts, prayers, and general good wishes that were sent our way during our travels. The trip itself was a memorable mix of excitement, challenge, emotion, exhaustion, and learning. While in Nairobi we met with leaders of the Ndethya wa Ngutethya women's cooperative to deliver the funds raised by the IOTF last year, and to discuss possible future projects. The members of Ndethya wa Ngutethya communicated their main priorities as being the purchase of much needed durable new plows, the building of new latrines on several of the homesteads, and the fencing in of the communal retention pond. It was agreed that the money donated by

the IOTF from our 2008 fund-raising efforts would go towards the purchase of 21 plows to be shared among the 42 households belonging to Ndethya wa Ngutethya group members. The day following our meeting in Nairobi, Jason, Maemie, and Eric, along with members of Ndethya wa Ngutethya, travelled to the home village of Kathonzweni to meet many of the group members, their families, and to view past projects that were funded in part through the efforts of congregation member Claire Robertson. This was an experience like no other. We were given a joyous reception highlighted by much singing and dancing. We then sat down to a very generous home cooked Kenyan meal provided by the Ndethya members.

Given the general challenges faced by the Kathonzweni community, the generosity was incredibly moving. What ensued during the rest of our visit was the kind of human to human, community to community, interaction that makes support of such projects so worthwhile. Over a 5 hour period we talked, laughed, cried, and considered as we came to know one another in the spirit of shared love and fellowship. The circle of caring our Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington congregation creates reaches far and wide. The IOTF plans to hold an Ndethya wa Ngutethya Lunch Forum in September which will feature video and pictures from the trip to Kenya among other things. Keep an eye out for more details.