

August 17, 2009



# Common Ground

Social Justice Newsletter for the UU Church of Bloomington Indiana

## Help Rebuild Damaged New Orleans Homes

– By *David Parkhurst*

The Katrina Relief Task Force took 10 volunteers to New Orleans to rebuild damaged houses for the week of September 13-20 last year, and another 14 in March of this year. Each time, we car-pooled down, and worked on several homes Monday through Friday. In September, we replaced most of the carport roof and mudded drywall at one home. At another we installed kitchen cabinets and did other tasks. The week is described in a 10-minute mini-documentary at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6w3C4Mb02Cs>. In March, we worked at four different homes.

We now seek volunteers for another trip the week of October 3–10, 2009. Also, some volunteers willing to put in their time can't afford the expense of the trip (about \$350 for gas, housing, and food), so we seek contributions to the cause. Tax-deductible contributions can be made with checks sent to the church, payable to the UU Church of Bloomington, with "Katrina Relief" in the memo line. The Church address is 2120 N Fee Lane, Bloomington, 47408-1646.

Information about the Little Farms Church (United Church of Christ) where

we will be housed, and where there's a well-developed rebuilding program, is at <http://www.ucc.org/volunteer/hurricane/>. For further information on our own efforts, please contact David Parkhurst at 333-2945, or by e-mail, [nola.dfp@comcast.net](mailto:nola.dfp@comcast.net). Thank you!

## Working to Ease the Wait for Prisoner's Family Members

– By *Christine McKenna*

The Friends of Prisoners Task Force has become increasingly concerned with the long waiting periods faced by family members attempting to visit individuals detained at the Monroe County Jail. Their wait seems exceptionally long on Sunday

after-  
noons  
and  
eve-  
nings.  
Families  
who  
wish to



visit their loved ones must line up early on Sunday morning. They are then given an approximate time for when their visit will occur and are forced to wait. Because of the limited amount of space for visits, the waiting period can be several hours. In

fact, some individuals have told us stories of having to wait until 3:00 a.m. to see family members. During this time, there is little to do but wait.

As the FoPTF, we are exploring ways to alleviate the frustration and boredom experienced by these individuals and utilize this waiting period as a positive opportunity. Our ideas range from providing activities for the children, to providing information about local services, substance abuse, health, etc.

If you have any ideas, want to learn more, or feel inspired to get involved, all are warmly welcome to the next FoPTF meeting on Wednesday, August 19th at 1:00 in the church library. If you'd like to join the email list to be notified of upcoming meetings and relevant community events, please send an email to [bg-breeden@att.net](mailto:bg-breeden@att.net).

## Monroe County Circles Initiative

– By Bonnie Vesely

The Monroe County Circles™ Initiative is a strategy to build community across race and class lines, empower low-income people in creating their own plans to transition out of poverty, and change systems and policies that perpetuate poverty. Low-income Circle Leaders are each matched with three middle-class Allies who provide friendship, problem-solving assistance, connections, and help negotiating middle-class cultural norms. All receive thorough training and staff support.

Circles™ urgently needs Allies! Time commitment is 18 months, 5 – 7 hours/month including community meetings. To help end poverty in Monroe County, contact Tom ([thomas@sccap.monroe.in.us](mailto:thomas@sccap.monroe.in.us)) or Genese ([genese@sccap.monroe.in.us](mailto:genese@sccap.monroe.in.us)); 339-3447, ext. 263 or 283.

## Sally Todd Concert

– By Anne Graham, *Helping Feed Our Hungry Neighbors*

Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 24th. Sally Todd will be performing a concert at 7pm at the church to benefit local food pantries. The program will include rarely performed works by Bach, Corelliano, Debussy, and Schubert. Listen to wonderful music and help feed the hungry in Bloomington. This is shaping up to be a special event - please plan to attend!

## Pick Fresh Produce to Help the Hungry

– By Anne Graham, *Helping Feed Our Hungry Neighbors*

Stranger's Hill Organic Farm needs volunteers to pick slightly blemished or oddly shaped produce for an hour or two to donate to the Hoosier Hills Food Bank. Evening hours available on weeknights. Could be a great volunteer activity for a Chalice Circle. Contact Georgia Emmert for details: [gemmert@stonebelt.org](mailto:gemmert@stonebelt.org) or 333-7166.