



Common Ground

Social Justice Newsletter for the UU Church of Bloomington Indiana

Help Rebuild Damaged New Orleans Homes

– *By the The Katrina Relief Task Force*

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 \$300 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 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.

Call Now to Oppose Escalation in Afghanistan

– *By David Kepel, Just Peace Task Force*

General Stanley McChrystal, Commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, has requested tens of thousands more troops. This is on top of the 21,000 that President Obama has already ordered there, bringing the total, before McChrystal's proposed

escalation, to 68,000. 1,379 Americans have been killed in Afghanistan, 334 this year alone.

NATO regularly estimates civilian deaths from American airstrikes at half the figure put by the pro-U.S. Afghan government. If, as in a recent airstrike in Kunduz, we even-



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tually admit that scores of civilians died, we claim it was the sole responsibility of the Taliban for hijacking a fuel tanker which we then bombed. While NATO does not specifically aim to kill civilians, rising Afghan civilian casualties are the foreseeable result of drone and manned airstrikes as well as heavy shelling. We create more terrorists than we destroy.

President Hamid Karzai claims to have won a recent election rife with ballot stuffing on his behalf. The Afghan government is corrupt and unable to deliver basic services. Our war in Afghanistan pushes the insurgents into Pakistan, an unstable state with nuclear weapons.

Please contact Senator Lugar (**202-224-4814**), Senator Bayh (**202-224-5623**), Congressman Baron Hill (**812-336-300**), and President Obama (**www.whitehouse.gov/contact**) to oppose escalation.

Habitat for Humanity Fall Volunteer Opportunities

– by Barb Berggoetz

Enjoy a nice fall day by working at a Habitat for Humanity home construction site with other UUsers on Saturday, Oct. 24. The Habitat for Humanity Task Force is looking for 10 people to do siding and drywall on a home in the Cedar Chase subdivision on the southwest side of Bloomington.

This is the area where Habitat is building a group of 20 or so homes. If you haven't built at a Habitat site before, you

should know that no experience is necessary and you will be taught what you need to know to do the work.

Workers are needed from 8 a.m. (arrive about 7:50 a.m.) to about 4 p.m. or half-days from 8 to noon or noon to 4 p.m. A morning snack, lunch and drinks are provided. You don't need to bring any tools -- just dress appropriately for the weather.

If you are interested in working, email Barb Berggoetz at **barbberg@bluemarble.net** or call **876-6659**, or email Connie Nelson-Laird at **cnelsonlaird@gmail.com** or call **322-5039**.

We also are looking for volunteers to prepare food for the Habitat workers on Saturday, Oct. 3. We need morning snack items (fruit, bagels, breads) and lunch dishes, including side dishes, main dish (vegetarian or meat), desserts and drinks. Contact Connie to donate food.

The More Than Houses Breakfast, sponsored by the local Habitat chapter, is an annual community-wide breakfast event at the Convention Center. This



year, it will be Thursday, Nov. 5, from 7:30 to 8:30. A free light breakfast is provided. Hundreds of people come to hear about the good work Habitat has done, its impact on the community and plans for the future. It's also a fund-raising event during which people can pledge donations, if they so choose. We are trying to get at least nine UUsers to attend to fill up one table.

Harvest of Hope Concert, October 24, 2009

– by Anne Graham

Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 24th at 7pm. The Helping Feed Our Hungry Neighbors Task Force will be presenting: **Harvest for Hope: a Concert by**



Sally Renee Todd to benefit Monroe County United Ministries' food pantry. Our very own Sally Todd will be playing

rarely-performed piano and harpsicord works by Bach, Schubert, Debussy and Corigliano. Donations of non-perishable food items will be collected at the door. Light refreshments will follow in Fellowship Hall. A special concert for a very good cause! Don't miss it!

Take Part in the International Day of Action!

– by Stephanie Kimball

The Green Sanctuary Task Force invites you to participate in an International Day of Action on Saturday, October 24, 2009. At www.350.org you can read about efforts around the globe to call for action at the international talks occurring in Copenhagen in December.

Scientists at NASA find that the threshold for a safe level of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere is 350 parts per million (ppm). In May, 2009, this level was reported to be 390ppm. It continues to rise. If we act boldly to decrease our

greenhouse gas emissions, it will still be possible to avert the most disastrous of changes, such as massive melting of polar ice caps and a huge rise in sea levels.

In Bloomington, a coalition is organizing events on October 24 and in the 350 hours (approximately two weeks) leading up to that date. Our goal is to celebrate area organizations, individuals, and businesses that are taking positive steps to curb climate change. The GSTF aims to sell 350 compact fluorescent bulbs in October, and Earth Care would love to have 350 people participate in WALBICUS (walk, bike, or car pool to service) on October 11. If you can run a mile, please sign up for the Cool Earth Relay on October



17. Don't miss the Mountain-top Removal Roadshow on October 20.

For information, contact Stephanie Kimball kimball.stephanie@gmail.com.

Our church is working to lower its own impact on the environment. We have installed new programmable thermostats and switched to "green" cleaning products. We also hope to apply for green LEED certification for our building. To extend these actions, we are looking for ten UU members to participate in Earth Care's "Master Trainer" program to help quickly reduce the carbon footprints of a significant number of households within our congregation. To be a part please contact Stephanie (address above).

\$600 Donation Helps Prisoners

– by Glenda Breeden

We are very grateful for the recent \$600 donation that was given to our taskforce from the proceeds of the Maryann Orr Art Gallery Show/Sale that was organized by Jackie Hall and took place in our church library on August 21st and 22nd. Maryann was a friend and member of UUCB for many years and a local artist well-known for quilting, basket weaving and photography. Because of the compatibility of her artwork with craft projects done by our Friends of Prisoners Task Force, Maryann's family and friends made us a beneficiary of her estate.

Besides the substantial monetary gift, quilting materials will be cut up by the Quilters Guild and donated to the Quilting Project at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, and craft supplies will be given to our Crafting Bridges Project at the Monroe County Jail.

Our task force is working hard right now with other concerned community members to find a meeting place for Sunday and Wednesday afternoon visitors to the Monroe County Jail—especially the children. We plan to provide entertainment, snacks, and a friendly, caring, atmosphere for these kids who are caught up in the inefficient, inhumane downside of having an overly crowded jail and a very small visitors' waiting room. This gift from Maryann Orr's Art Sale is a welcome financial boost for this particular project.

Grant Applications Due

– by Jennifer Blankenship

Attention Social Justice Leaders: Apply for Funds, Now! DEADLINE OCT. 1

The Social Justice Funds Committee encourages all social justice task forces, organizers, workers, and leaders to apply for our church's Fall Grants Funding. Below are some of the guidelines taken from the application. If you have ideas about social justice projects and need some start up cash, we encourage you to be creative, involve the congregation in planning and submit an application.

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.

Request applications from **blankenship.jennifer@ymail.com**. There will be some hard copies in the Social Justice Funds Committee mailbox in the Church's workroom as well.