



Common Ground

Social Justice Newsletter for the UU Church of Bloomington Indiana

Children's Task Force Collecting Box Tops

– By Jennifer Livesay, Children's Task Force

Looking for an easy way to support local public schools? You could help the Children's Task Force collect Box Tops for Education. Box Tops for Education are found on many foods and household products, some of which may be in your pantry right now. Each box top you collect is worth ten cents to a local school, which may not seem like much, but they add up to a big benefit for cash-strapped schools.

You can collect your box tops and take them to the local school of your choice, or bring them to church and deposit them in the collection box on the social justice table. All box tops collected at church will be donated to Templeton Elementary School.

One Day Volunteer Options with Habitat for Humanity

– By Barb Berggoetz, co-chair, Habitat Task Force

Looking for a one-day volunteer opportunity that will help build a new home in Bloomington for a deserving family?

The Habitat for Humanity Task Force is hoping to organize a group of UUs to work on Saturday, Aug. 7, at the Cedar Chase neighborhood on the southwest side (off of Tapp Road). Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County is building more than 20 homes in that neighborhood, including the Women Build home that a group of UU women recently helped build.

There are two houses being built now that are homeowner mortgage sponsored builds. That means they are financed with money from other Habitat homes, rather than an organization or group that typically supplies many of the needed workers. So, we have a good opportunity to help with these two homes.

There are 15 openings at one home, where volunteers will be putting up trusses and roof decking. This is an exciting job that's a great experience. The other home has 12 openings for workers who will be pre-building walls --a lot of hammering!

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The work days are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. A morning snack, lunch and drinks are provided. No experience is necessary and all the tools you'll need are provided.

Please contact Barb Berggoetz, Habitat Task Force co-chair, as soon as possible at barbberg@bluemarble.net or 812/876-6659, if you're interested in participating in one of the builds on Aug. 7.

If building isn't something you can do, there are many opportunities from customer service to donation pick-up at Habitat's ReStore, which sells home and building supplies, used books, furniture and other items to the public. If you'd like to learn how you can help at the ReStore, located at the former Stephen Olds-Honda shop on 10th Street, you can go to volunteer orientation sessions. The next one is 1-2 p.m. on Wednesday, July 28. Other orientation sessions are available. Contact Barb if you're interested in this opportunity and thanks for your continued support.

New Leaf/New Life Recipients Say Thanks!

– *By Glenda Breeden, Friends of Prisoners Task Force*

Last year funds were donated to our task force from the Maryann Orr Arts and Crafts Sale. We have now passed on \$350 of that gift to New Leaf/New Life to purchase reading glasses and birth certificates (as needed) for people incarcerated at the Monroe County Jail. Tania Karnof-

sky, program director/volunteer coordinator for NL/NL, says thank you from NL/NL and from the inmates. We are planning an August fundraiser for NL/NL. Inmates have this to say:

“NL/NL can't be thanked enough. They gave me the tools. But they left the rebuilding phase of my life to me.”

“I discovered a completely new viewpoint on life, one with a renewed spirituality, morality and sense of worth.”

You can help! NL/NL's inmate assistance fund is maintained by the sale of current textbooks. Please consider donating your new textbooks. They will gladly pick them up-812-349-2890. Or bring them to church and leave them near the social justice table.

In a recent survey of the MCJ on an average day, only 3 of the 251 inmates were there for the first time. The majority had been incarcerated more than five times. People face many challenges when released from incarceration. Employment and housing are difficult to find even without a criminal background. Making positive choices and avoiding negative influences are important parts of staying out of trouble. Rick and Lois Holl, mentors to a “returning citizen,” invite you to consider becoming a mentor and/or joining Crafting Bridges on a monthly basis-whenver you interact with inmates in the jail you brighten their lives.

Our task force (along with NL/NL) also supports OASIS, a new community group

who needs mentors. Their mission is to “assist ex-offenders in progressing toward success in life.” There are so many ways we can plug in to “honor the worth and dignity of each human being” in our beautiful community!

Letter on Iran Accepted at the New York Times

The following letter by UU of Bloomington Member, David Keppel, was published in the New York Times in June 2010:

Stop Sanctions-Rattling on Iran
To the Editor:
Re “After the Security Council Vote”
(editorial, June 19):

You applaud a new round of United Nations Security Council sanctions against Iran, yet few believe that they will stop Iran’s nuclear program. Congress supports a unilateral embargo on Iran’s refined petroleum imports — a measure that Iranian dissidents warn will hurt ordinary Iranians and politically bolster the regime.

Before sanctions-rattling gives way to saber-rattling and a war that would enflame the region, Americans should realize that the Obama administration never broke with President George W. Bush’s humiliating demand that Iran forswear uranium enrichment even for nuclear power. Even liberal Iranians are nationalists who remember the 1953 C.I.A.-sponsored coup.

It is time for a new diplomacy emphasizing inspections and common security, with negotiations involving all Iran’s neighbors. The Turkish-Brazilian initiative over nuclear fuel could be a starting point toward a nuclear weapons-free zone. Nor can the Israeli nuclear arsenal be exempt.

David Keppel
Bloomington, Ind., June 19, 2010