



Common Ground

Social Justice Newsletter for the UU Church of Bloomington Indiana

Three Finalists for Social Justices Collection Plate Funds

– By Bret Earheart, *The Social Justice Task Force*

At the June 5, 2011 congregational meeting members will have the opportunity to vote for one of three finalists to receive the 25% Sunday Plate Collection for Social Justice. The three candidates have been selected from applications submitted to the Social Justice Committee.

Descriptions of the organizations, their missions and what they hope to do with the funds are detailed below. Please remember to attend the meeting and vote for social justice.

Finalist: Monroe County CASA, Inc.

Monroe County CASA, Inc., (<http://www.monroecountycasa.org/>) was established in 1983 and became an independent, non-profit program in 2009. CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates, a national organization.

CASA serves children up to age 18 who have been adjudicated as a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) due to abuse or neglect by their parents or caregivers. CASA recruits, screens, trains, and supervises community volunteers who provide advocacy services to CHINS, thereby ensuring that they receive needed services and find a safe, permanent home.

We currently must train 40-50 new volunteers to keep up with our case load. Volunteers contribute 8,000-10,000 hours of service yearly, making CASA services extremely cost-effective.

CASA helps about 400 children per year, but generally has 20-40 children on a waiting list. Additional funds would help us reduce the waiting list by paying for advertising and additional training.

Other county programs have shown that advertising can significantly increase the number of people who learn about and volunteer for CASA.

– *Continued on the next page*

We currently hold 3 classes per year; with \$900 we could offer a fourth.

Added visibility provided by advertising could raise community awareness to a tipping point that would ensure a steady stream of financial contributions and volunteers.

Finalist: Planned Parenthood of Indiana

Sponsored by Marjorie Crosby and David Keppel

On May 10, Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels signed HEA 1210 into law. HEA 1210 is intended to cut off all public funding for Planned Parenthood of Indiana, depriving thousands of low-income women and men of the preventive, reproductive health care they rely on. Indiana is the first state in the nation to ban Planned Parenthood from receiving Medicaid family planning funding. That funding pays for services including birth control, cancer screenings, HIV testing, and more. In Monroe County in 2010, PPIN served 5,485 patients and provided 876 Pap tests, 1,056 Chlamydia tests, 1,053 Gonorrhea tests, 906 pregnancy tests, and 448 HIV tests at its Bloomington health center.

“By signing this bill, the governor has put the health care of thousands of Hoosiers who rely on federal funding at risk,” said PPIN President and CEO Betty Cockrum. “However, we’re not going to let that happen. We will see all patients who rely on federal funding ... and will cover those costs out of our Women’s Health Fund as long as we can.” Our Church has the opportunity to support this fund. Doing so would affirm the value that we place on reproductive health care for women and men.

Finalist: VITAL – Volunteers in Tutoring Adult Learners

VITAL volunteer tutors help community members improve their lives through literacy. VITAL serves adults who need to improve reading, writing, comprehension, basic math, and English language skills. VITAL serves approximately 70 individuals every week in one-to-one tutoring pairs or in ESL Conversation Practice classes. The literacy needs that are being addressed vary from the very lowest literacy levels to community college level vocabulary, and everything in between. What all learners share is the reality that literacy is necessary for a productive life and that literacy is an equalizer.

VITAL participants have many barriers to overcome and come from all walks of life. We are committed to providing a welcoming environment and we understand the power

of relationship. VITAL services may include job search tutoring, serving individuals with aphasia, computer coaching, being a reading partner for someone with developmental disabilities, or working with recently incarcerated individuals.

The program's success is dependent on its pool of dedicated volunteers, who are dependent on VITAL for up-to-date training, materials, and mentoring. Funds donated by UU Church would be used for those purposes, and include: consumable materials – supplies and workbooks that can be used and kept by participants, and training workshops on specific strategies provided by experts.

Plant a Row for the Hungry

– *By Dixie Welsh, The Hunger Task Force*

As you harvest your vegetable patch, consider dedicating a row to an organization that feeds your hungry neighbors here in Bloomington. Rather than bringing the produce to church, as in the past, delaying delivery until the next day and losing some of that great nutritional value, clip and save this list and plan to deliver your produce to one of the following organizations:

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, 1010 S. Walnut St., Mon.-Fri., 3-6 pm

Community Kitchen, 917 S. Rogers St., Mon.-Fri. 8am-6pm and Sat. 11am-6:30pm

Shalom Center, 620 S. Walnut St. (red house), Mon.-Fri. 8am-2pm

Hoosier Hills Food Bank, 2333 W. Industrial Park Dr., Mon.-Fri. 9am-5pm

Community Farmer's Market, at the City Hall on N. Morton St. between 7th & 8th Streets, Sat. 7am-noon, May-Oct

When you make your delivery, let the organization know you are from the Unitarian Universalist Church. These organizations will thank you and we thank you, too!