

# Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council



JULY 2018

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## MAKING A BELOVED COMMUNITY

### “ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTIONS IMPACTING OUR SOCIETY”

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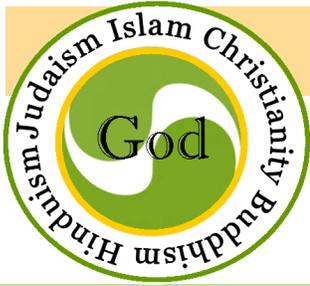


**“ART HAS THE  
POWER TO TRANS-  
FORM, TO ILLUMI-  
NATE, TO EDUCATE,  
INSPIRE AND  
MOTIVATE.”**  
- HARVEY FIERSTEIN

THIS DRAWING WAS  
MADE FROM AN INMATE  
WHO WAS ON DEATH  
ROW IN TEXAS. HE WAS  
A U.S. CITIZEN WITH  
MEXICAN ANCESTRY.  
HE BECAME A GANG  
MEMBER AT THE AGE OF  
EIGHTEEN & LATER HE  
WAS IMPRISONED FOR  
MURDER. EARLY IN  
2014, THE ARTIST  
BEGAN AN APPEAL OF  
HIS SENTENCE, HOW-  
EVER, IN OCTOBER OF  
THAT YEAR, HE WAS  
EXECUTED. HE CRE-  
ATED THIS THOUGHT  
PROVOKING DRAWING  
FOR FIRST FRIENDS TO  
SYMBOLIZE THE SITU-  
ATION OF NDOCUMENTED  
IMMIGRANTS HELD IN  
DETENTION.

IN THE PICTURE ABOVE, “THE STATUE OF LIBERTY IS BEHIND BARS. THE SCALES OF JUSTICE ARE BROKEN AND A DOVE CARRIES SCISSORS TO CUT THE BLINDFOLD FROM ICE’S EYES.”

COURTESY OF FIRST FRIENDS NEW JERSEY & NEW YORK



## About the **Union County** **Interfaith Coordinating Council**

### **Our Mission**

The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council works to facilitate regular interfaith meetings in order to make way for the building of bonds within the interfaith community.

We respect and encourage the inclusion and welcoming of others regardless of faith, race or disability. We strive to be proactive on social issues.

### **Our Goals**

- To grow the network of faith-based organizations in Union County.
- To encourage representatives from all faiths to join the Interfaith Coordinating Council including those of Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic, and other faiths.
- To be engaged in:
  1. **Community Building** within faith-based organizations and the general Union County population.
  2. The advancement of **Social Justice**.
  3. The intentional **inclusion** of others regardless of gender, faith, race.
- To be active in activities that are inclusive and community building.

### **Our Objectives**

- Sponsor regular engagement opportunities that facilitate the building of bonds within the Union County interfaith community and their congregations.
- Strengthen the Union County religious congregations through involvement, action and education in self-help.
- Build working relationships between Union County religious organizations and Community Access Unlimited that create opportunities for youth and people with disabilities and their support staff.

### **Potential Advantages to Joining the Interfaith Community**

- Develop interfaith solidarity.
- Avail yourself of increased visibility within the interfaith community and build opportunities to share educational and community events with the group.
- Build religious membership.
- Gain exposure for you and fellow congregation members to educational opportunities regarding entitlements, housing, and other services, including but not limited to: programs for seniors, youth, people with physical and developmental disabilities, etc..
- Create full and part time employment opportunities for congregation members with CAU.

### UNION COUNTY INTERFAITH COORDINATING COUNCIL **Steering Committee Members**

**Deacon Tim Williams-Chair**  
First Baptist Church  
Kenilworth

**Sidney Blanchard**  
Executive Director of CAU

**Rabbi Joel N. Abraham**  
Temple Sholom  
Scotch Plains

**Ayaz Aslam**  
Muslim Community Center of UC  
Elizabeth

**Pastor H. Bryant**  
Honorably Retired  
Presbyterian Church USA

**Denise Fernandes**  
Latino Outreach

**Erich Han William Kussman, Jr**  
Holy Cross Lutheran Church  
Springfield

**Pastor Mertz**  
First United Methodist Church  
Westfield

**Michelle Mobley**  
Director of Youth Service  
Residential

**Pastor Carmine Pernini**  
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Rahway

**Father Michael Saporito**  
The Parish Community of St. Helen  
Westfield

**Roderick Spearman**  
CAU Consultant

**Reverend Ronald C. Thomas**  
Fountain Baptist Church  
Summit

**Elder Arthur "Skip" Winter**  
Cranford Presbyterian Church  
Cranford

# guest message

## C is for CREATIVITY

**By: Professor Terry Benjamin**

Union County College and Essex County College

*"Make an effort to go beyond your own comfort zone on a regular basis. Listen to the real you inside who is encouraging you to transcend yourself rather than the old you who said you were incapable of such a task."*

-Dr. Wayner W. Dyer



Legendary Motivational Teacher and Best Selling Author (1940-2015 )

Everything that is physical began in an invisible world, in the quiet of someone's mind, heart and spirit, just outside their comfort zone where there is no growth or innovation.

As T Harv Eker, motivational teacher, author and entrepreneur, explains it: "If you want to move to a new level in your life, you must break through your comfort zone and practice doing things that are not comfortable."

In some instances, clinging to your comfort zone and not venturing outside into the wide world of creativity could be career suicide. For example, "Comedians tend to find a comfort zone and stay there and do lame versions of themselves for the rest of their career," says comedian Chris Rock. But here we are talking about going beyond a career, we are talking about life itself, a life that transcends the mundane and this is fulfilling and inspired to all that experience such a life with you. We should not live an un-lived life or a life below our potential, training and expectations. This real life, this full life, is open to all, all that is needed is a deeper understanding and full comprehension of creativity.

Creativity is where something new and valuable is created. This creation could be something new or just a feeling, but whatever it is, it has impact, the power to change the world as we know it today, affecting hearts and minds and spirits. This creating is not just found in one area of expertise. How you decorate your home; how you wear your clothes; how you curate the music in your most Pandora app. In essence, creativity is far reaching and all encompassing.

Psychologist Scott Barry Kaufman, director of The Imagination Institute in the Positive Psychology Center, University of Pennsylvania has written extensively about the "4 Stages of Creativity." According to Kaufman this is the Preparation stage; the Incubation stage, the Illumination stage and the Verification stage. In the first stage there is the gathering of information; second, letting your mind wonder in your ideas; third, when everything comes together and lastly, making your creation available for public consumption. This is the level where production is key, where you see the sum total of your creativity, the essence of your God given gift.

This all adds up to the best way to live your life, to always be about your growth, your creativity. Because in essence, the greatest investment is your time in yourself, in honing your skills, discovering your talents, improving your health and fitness, thus producing long term enjoyment and benefit to you and those around you.

Poet/Author Maya Angelou once wrote: "You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have." In other words, creativity is the gift that keeps on giving.

Still you must realize that this create space can not be found in a crowd. As Mahershal ali said when receiving his best supporting actor Oscar, "Social media has colonized what was once a sacred space occupied by emptiness: the space reserved for thought and creativity."

So in essence, the "sacred space" of true creativity is in our solitude, in our quiet unplugged moments, in our mental space where we move beyond potential and realize the real life that we were born to live.

No truer words were ever spoken when American Psychologist Dr. Rollo May said that "In order to be open to creativity, one must have the capacity for constructive use of solitude. One must overcome the fear of being alone."

# Know Your Neighbor



*Assalamu'alaikum* - Greetings of Peace,

Maintaining family relations and the bonds of kinship (*silatur-rahim*) indeed enjoys extraordinary importance in Islam. Conversely, severing the ties (*qata-ur-rahim*), is very high on the list of enormities/major-sins (*kaba'ir*).

In several places in the Holy Quran, *Allah*(God) has cursed the one severing family ties or the one causing families to be broken apart.

**"Whoever breaks the covenant of *Allah*(God) after its confirmation and cut asunder what *Allah* (God) has ordered to be joined, and make mischief in the land, these it is that are the (*Khasir*) losers".** (Surah al-Baqarah, Chapter titled The Cow 2:27)

In the Quranic terminology when the word *Khāsir* (loser) is used it denotes the one who is to be in loss, or rather the one who is cursed.

**"And those who break the covenant of *Allah* (God), after its ratification, and sever that which *Allah* (God) has commanded to be joined (i.e. they sever the bond of kinship and are not good to their relatives) and work mischief in the land, on them is the curse, and for them is the unhappy home (i.e. Hell)"** (Suratul Ar-Rad - Chapter titled Thunder 13:25).

**"But if you held command, you were sure to make mischief in the land and cut off the ties of kinship. Those it is whom *Allah*(God) has cursed, so He has made them deaf and blinded their eyes."** (Surah - Chapter Muhammad, 47:22-23)

The Prophet Muhammed (SAAWS-Peace Be Upon Him) stated in no uncertain terms: "There is no sin more deserving of having punishment meted out by *Allah* (God) to its perpetrator in advance in this world along with what He stores up for him in the next world than oppression and causing the severing of ties of family." [Tirmidhi].

The Arabic term *Rahim* (family ties/relations) has its linguistic origins in the word *Rihm* - which means the womb of the mother. With this in mind we can understand another Prophetic saying which highlights the high stakes involved here in a compelling way: "*Rahim* (family relations/ties) is a word derived from one of *Allah*'s(God's) Most Beautiful Names - *Ar-Rahman* (The Compassionate One) And *Allah* (God) says: 'I shall keep connection with him who maintains you (sacred relations of the womb) and sever connection with him who severs you (sacred and inviolable realtions of the womb).'" [Bukhari]

**Think, reflect, pray and act NOW in accordance with the important message from the Parliament of World Religions below.**

*wa'salamu'alaikum- Peace*

Your Brother in Faith and Humanity,

*Saffet A. Catovic*

*Imam and Muslim Chaplain, Drew University*

*Member of the Climate Action Task Force of the Parliament of World Religions*



***Save the Date!***  
***July 25, 2018***

***You are Invited to Join the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council  
for:***

## **A Time of Interfaith Worship and Fellowship**

**First United Methodist Church**

**117 Ferris Place • Westfield, NJ**

**6:30P—7:30P**

**Light Refreshments following worship ~ Sign-in begins at 6:00P**

**Bring along a blanket to sit on! ~ Mingle with your interfaith neighbors!**

***(In the event of rain, we will move indoors)***



80 West Grand Street  
Elizabeth, NJ 07202  
(908) 354-3040

***Please Reserve Now!***

E-mail or phone your RSVP to:  
[UCInterfaith@caunj.org](mailto:UCInterfaith@caunj.org)  
(908) 354-3040 x4324

# Faith In Action!

*Houses of Worship showed up for North Jersey Pride to welcome those of the LGBTQIA+ community seeking a*



**June 10, 2018—North Jersey Pride, Memorial Park, Maplewood NJ**

# Faith In Action!



**June 28, 2018 at the Elizabeth Detention Center UCICC hosted a candlelight vigil to keep immigrant families together.**



**Save the Date!**  
**September 29,**  
**2018**

**Please Reserve Now!**

Register on Eventbrite or phone your RSVP to:  
<https://uciccwomenoffaithconference.eventbrite.com>  
(908) 354-3040 x4324

*You are Invited to Join the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council for our  
Women of Faith Conference:*

**Making a Beloved Community:  
“Together We Stand Divided We Fall!”**

**Community Access Unlimited**  
**80 W. Grand St. • Elizabeth, NJ 07202**  
**9am-3pm**

Join us for panel discussions & gain resources to make a beloved community.

*Temple of God Church*

**FRIENDS & FAMILY  
SUNDAY BEST CELEBRATION**

**July 15, 2018—Sunday**  
**Bring Your Praise! Your Testimony!**  
**Dinner @ 2:30pm-3:30pm**

**ROAD SIGNS OF LIFE— PANEL SERVICE**

**At 4:00 PM**

**1318 E. St. Georges Ave., Linden**

**Pastor Sheila Fall, Dr.**

**908-994-9797**





# Transitional Opportunities Program *presents*

# INDEPENDENT CITY



## SATURDAY, JULY 21 2018

**Time:** 10:00 AM—2:00 PM

**Location:** 80 West Grand St. Elizabeth, NJ 07202



**What does it take to make it on your own?** Experience a day in the life of an adult. Learn how to write checks, read pay-stubs, budget, rent an apartment, purchase furniture and groceries, and how to utilize modes of transportation, and much more!



For more information & to register contact:

Marie: [mguillaume@caunj.org](mailto:mguillaume@caunj.org),

Howard: [hwingard@caunj.org](mailto:hwingard@caunj.org) or Aliya: [awood@caunj.org](mailto:awood@caunj.org)



# ADAM FLEISSNER STARS IN THE CAU COMMUNITY PLAYERS PRODUCTION

By: First Presbyterian Church of Cranford



Congratulations to First Presbyterian Church member Adam Fleissner for landing a lead role in the Community Access Unlimited Play Annie Jr. Adam will play the role of Daddy Warbucks. Adam is the son of Rich and Lori Fleissner. Annie Jr., being presented by the CAU Community Players, will be performed on June 29, June 30 and July 1 at the Rahway High School Center for the Performing Arts. Sid Blanchard, Executive Director of Community Access Unlimited noted “that there are over 100 people involved in the production and that many are high school and college students who return year after year to assist with the production. It is truly a community effort.”

Adam has been involved with Community Access Unlimited for the past year. Earlier, Adam was one of the 25 members of CAU’s Academy of Continuing Education who joined 20 Kean University students, performing a collaborative concert at Wilkins Theatre on the Kean University campus. In February, he performed in CAU’s first Cabaret.

Adam is currently employed at the Homewood Suites in Clark, where he works between 25-30 hours per week in the Complementary Services Department. His work day starts at 5:30 in the morning. Besides singing and working, he plays basketball in the winter with the Special Olympics and softball with them in the spring. In the coming months, soccer and golf take precedence. In his spare time, he assists his dad in coaching basketball. Rich notes that the younger players really relate to him.

Adam completed a three year program at NYIT Vocational Independent Program on Long Island, graduating in May of 2018. He also performs in Shining Stars, a local talent show highlighting special needs young people. Adam loves his singing and performing and being in the musical environment.

Tickets are available online at [www.rwhs.booktix.com](http://www.rwhs.booktix.com)



UCICC Congratulates the CAU Community Players on their stellar performance in Annie Jr.. Job Well Done!

# THE INSTITUTE OF MUSIC FOR CHILDREN

## MAKING ARTS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL IN ELIZABETH

By: **Alysia Sauder, Executive Director** (Pictured below)



Guided by its vision of H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. – Helping Achieve Responsible, Motivated, Optimistic, Neighborhood Youth – the Institute is building a community of high-achieving citizens who are arts lovers and arts makers through professional instruction, mentorship, and family engagement.

The Institute of Music for Children, New Jersey's fastest-growing arts-based youth development organization, engages children and youth in artistic expression and the creative process. Over 1,000 youth annually are provided economically accessible, high-quality arts training in an inspiring and nurturing environment. Guided by the belief that all children deserve access to the benefits of the arts, no student is ever turned away based on financial need.

In 1995, the Third-Westminster Presbyterian Church established the Institute to provide community families with a means of pursuing affordable artistic training in a secure environment. Since that time, the organization has received five consecutive Citations of Excellence from New Jersey State Council on the Arts (2014-2018), and continues to build a community of high-achieving citizens who are arts lovers and arts makers through professional instruction, mentorship, and family engagement.

The Institute strives to broaden participation in the arts among underserved communities through tuition assistance, bi-lingual staff and promotional materials, and urban outreach initiatives. To keep its programs economically accessible to all families, the Institute relies on financial contributions from foundations, government grants, corporate sponsorships, and individual donors to provide over 70% of its operating budget.

### **IMC Values**

**Creativity:** we cultivate an environment of inspiration and imagination.

**Respect:** we acknowledge the personal journey and life experience for the people with whom we interact.

**Compassion:** we act from a position of support and empathy.

**Social Equality:** we address the economic and cultural barriers to arts access.

**Inclusion:** we are open and accepting.

**Personal Growth:** we provide opportunities that encourage self-awareness and social adaptation.

**Fun:** we honor the joy in our work.

### **Institute Success in 2017**

Provided **397** children and teens with **52** group and **121** private classes afterschool.

Hosted **214** kids in the 5-week, full-day summer arts camp, exploring **29** arts disciplines

Employed **25** Youth Leaders – classroom assistants and role models for younger students. **95%** will go on to higher education.

Led **38** residency programs in **8** schools and organizations, serving an additional **580** students.

### **Making Arts Accessible to ALL**

**1/3** tuition costs of similar programs with **\$30,000** in scholarships awarded each year.

Serves **96%** students of color (Since 1982, Latino/Hispanic and African American communities have seen a **40%-49%** drop in childhood arts access, compared to 1.3% for Whites.)\*\*\*

**82%** of students come from households of low or moderate income\*\*\*\*



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# RESISTANCE ART FROM NEW JERSEY IMMIGRATION JAILS

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By Nancy-Jo Taiani

Board Secretary of [First Friends of NJ & NY](#)

Living in detention is demoralizing. There is no privacy in the Tower-of-Babel-like dormitories you share with strangers. If you are lucky, you'll find someone who speaks a common language. You do not get to breathe fresh air; in the Elizabeth Detention Center, the 'outdoor area' is created by a skylight high above. You can spend months to over a year with little to occupy your time other than the worry of trying to prove your case and remain in the United States.

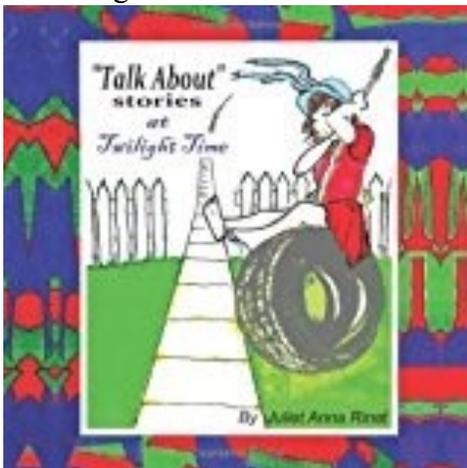
It is easy to fall into depression, difficult to maintain hope. Yet, in spite of these conditions and the lack of any programs or materials, detainees find ways to express themselves through art. They use whatever items come to hand. Some buy gum from the commissary—at higher than normal prices—and save the wrappers to create intricate forms—swans, flowers in vases, picture frames. Paper from magazines and even paper towels come in handy for weaving. Detainees also weave bracelets out of threads from blankets or strips from plastic bags, creatively using different colors to make a pattern, or a name.

Often detainees will create works of art as thank you gifts to visitors who recognized their humanity and brought them hope. One such gift, a piece of a bed sheet, beautifully decorated using Kool Aid powders for color, was given to volunteers from [First Friends of NJ & NY](#). The artist had to hide the sheet while working on it or it would have been confiscated.

Other artists use their talent to express their feelings or decry conditions in detention.

Work from local detainees which was collected by First Friends, was included in a traveling show, "[States of Incarceration](#)," when it was installed in Gateway 2 in Newark last fall. A detainee artist who had been released that year, Juliet, was on hand one evening of the show to speak about her work, and her time in detention.

Juliet, who had a green card, had committed a minor crime to which she had pled guilty and had paid a fine. But during the Obama Administration, ICE began prioritizing the detention and deportation of immigrants with criminal convictions, even minor offenses. By then, Juliet was married to a U.S. Citizen and had U.S. Citizen children. She was apprehended and put in detention where she spent nine months. During that time, her husband was seriously ill with cancer. Trying to save money, Juliet pled her own case, but the judge, refusing to believe her, deported her.



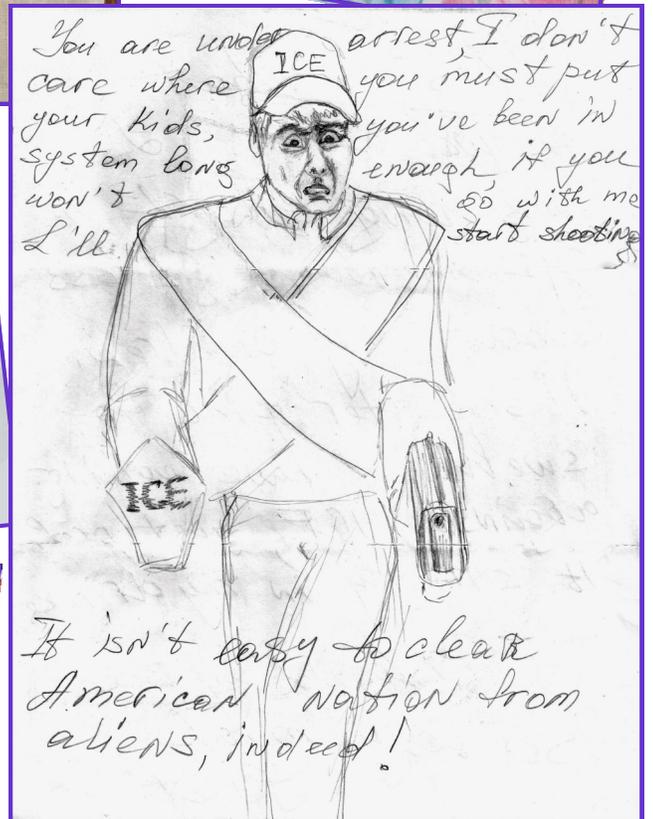
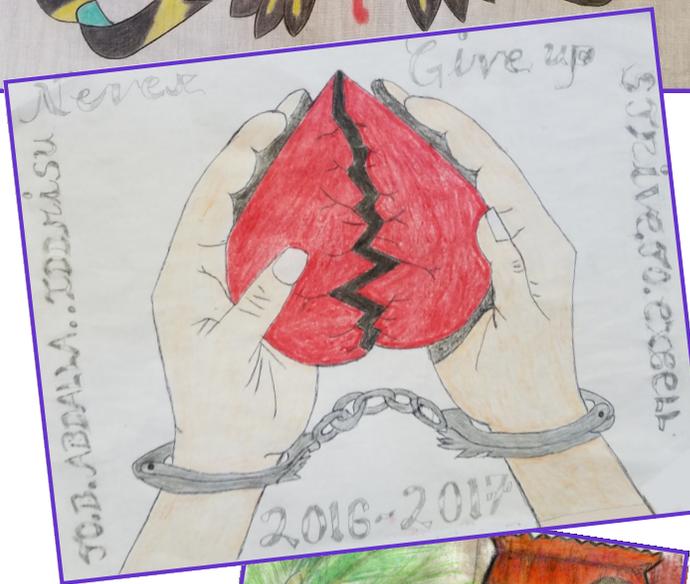
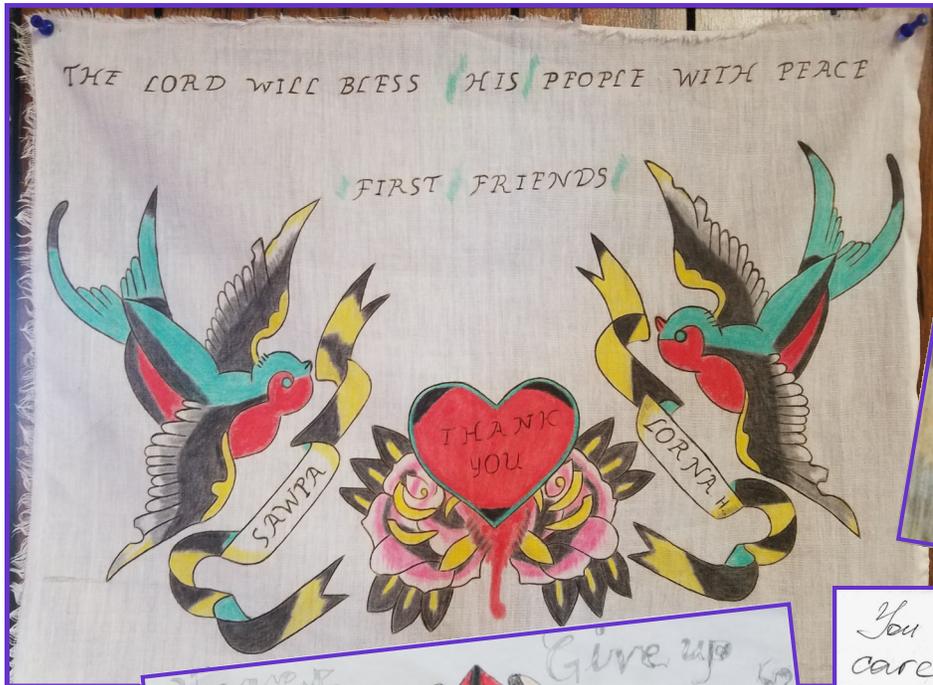
"Talk about Stories": At Twilight Time  
by Juliet Anna Rinat

Once a person is deported, they are forbidden to return for 10 years. But Juliet could not abandon her dying husband. She returned—and was sent back to detention. Her parents took care of her young two sons, one still in diapers. She spent another 2 1/2 years in detention. During that time, her husband died, but she was not even permitted to attend the funeral.

Juliet persisted by writing stories and drawing pictures, which she sent to her children. She also drew allegories of our immigration system and pictures depicting life in detention, many of which were included in the show. Finally winning her case last year, Juliet is picking up the pieces

of her life. She's even published a book under her maiden name, with some of the stories she wrote for her boys.

First Friends turned 10 photographs of the artwork that was included in "States of Incarceration" into note cards. The cards include information about the artists and help to inform people about immigrant detention. Profits from the sale of the cards help the work of First Friends.



**Featured Resistance Art from immigrant detainees held in New Jersey courtesy of First Friends New York & New Jersey.**



*“First Friends of NJ and NY upholds the inherent dignity and humanity of detained immigrants and asylum seekers. We provide compassion and hope through volunteer visitation, resettlement assistance and advocacy.”*

**...WE NEED YOU TO BE A FRIEND**

 **BE A VOLUNTEER**

 **BE A VISITOR**

 **BE A PEN PAL**

 **BE A DONOR**

**IF YOU CAN HELP IN ANY WAY PLEASE CONTACT: FIRST FRIENDS**

53 HACKENSACK AVENUE, 2nd FLOOR, KEARNY, NEW JERSEY

**PHONE:** 908.965.0455 **Email:** [info@firstfriendsnjny.org](mailto:info@firstfriendsnjny.org)

## Religious Services at CAU

**There has been some exciting things taking place at CAU!  
We have started a new initiative for the members of the CAU community to  
experience religious worship.**

This ministry is geared towards the DD community and also to the TOPS youth program. There has been approximately 40-50 members that attend, and it has been a blessing to be able to serve this beloved community.

I would like to extend an invitation for you to speak at our religious services. These services are held on Saturdays at 11:00am and at 1:00pm and are an hour long. This an interfaith endeavor is open to all faith traditions and houses of worship. If you can provide worship, a positive inspirational message, and most of all, and a heart to serve.

### **Our objectives are:**

1. To provide a safe space for our members to worship God
2. To foster spiritual growth through the diverse understandings of God
3. To build up the community in faith, hope, and love

If you would like to volunteer in this amazing ministerial opportunity or find out more, please contact

Chaplain Erich Kussman at [EKussman@caunj.org](mailto:EKussman@caunj.org).



**T**RANSITIONAL **O**PPORTUNITIES **P**ROGRAM  
At **COMMUNITY ACCESS UNLIMITED**

*presents*

# Focus on Your Innergram



## ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

*\$5 Each*

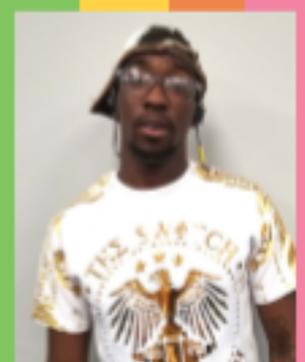
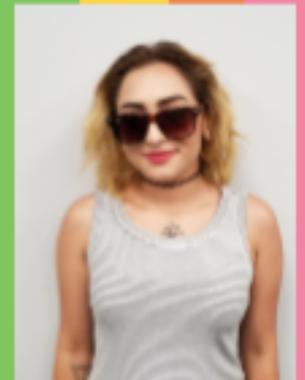
*Day Includes:  
Workshops, Prizes  
Entertainment & Food!*

**Wednesday, August 8, 2018**

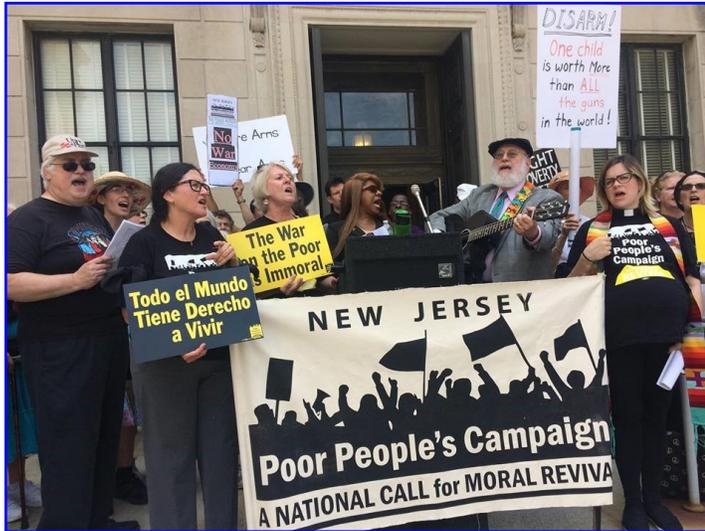
**9:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

**CAU Main Office  
80 West Grand St. Elizabeth, NJ 07202**

RSVP to Latanya Palmer at  
908-354-3040 x4394 or [lpalmer@caunj.org](mailto:lpalmer@caunj.org)



# Solidarity Singers for Social Justice



*The Solidarity Singers and others constituting the New Jersey Poor Peoples Campaign Choir leading demonstrators in song in Trenton on May 29, 2018. Bennet D. Zurofsky pictured with Guitar also pictured UCICC member Rev. Robin Tanner.*

**By Bennet D. Zurofsky**

Director of the Solidarity Singers,  
Attorney at Law & former President of the Community Access Unlimited Board of Trustees.

According to Pete Seeger, “A singing movement is a winning movement.” The Solidarity Singers of the New Jersey State Industrial Union Council believe in that truth, and for more than 22 years we have led demonstrators in song to advance the movement for social justice.

Our self-description is that “We are a street chorus, not a concert choir. Our preferred venue is a picket line. We try to lift the spirits of people engaged in struggle and help them to carry on. Only a few of us know how to read music, but we all know which side we’re on.”

Most recently, we have been honored to serve as the principal song leaders of the New Jersey Poor Peoples

Campaign through six weeks of demonstrations in Trenton intended to revive the goals and efforts of the original Poor Peoples Campaign begun by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King fifty years ago. The Poor Peoples Campaign pursues Dr. King’s goals of ending the three evils of systemic racism, poverty and inequality, and militarism and adds the fourth goal of ending ecological devastation. The New Jersey Campaign is part of a national call for moral revival that was supported by demonstrations in more than 35 States and the District of Columbia during May and June and is planning to continue through the mid-term elections and beyond in an effort to redirect our Country away from greed and fear and towards mutual love and support in recognition of our common humanity. You can join the campaign at <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/>.

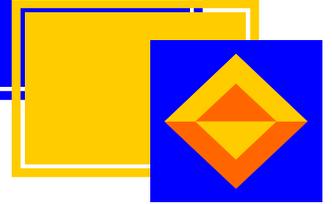
The songs we sing are both old and new. Unfortunately, the issues that motivated the radical compositions of the Wobblies more than a hundred years ago, the Almanac Singers more than seventy-five years ago, and the Freedom Singers more than fifty years ago, remain with us. Fortunately, the songs they wrote are still a joy for us to sing, and still have the power to inspire people to greater efforts towards social justice.

Unfortunately, the Trump Administration has made the need for protest greater than at any previous time during the Solidarity Singers’s existence. Fortunately, the Resistance has responded with more people protesting more often than at any other time in our group’s existence. In addition, it has inspired us and many others to compose new songs to advance the struggle. We believe that everyone who joins with us in song is a Solidarity Singer and we have now find that there are more of us singing together than ever. You can sing along with some of our videos at <http://solidaritysingers.org/>.

Our group was named after the song we sing most often, “Solidarity Forever,” written to the tune of “John Brown’s Body” by Wobbly composer Ralph Chaplin in 1915. The lyrics of the chorus sum up why we must stand together to fight against oppression and injustice, and provide the perfect coda to any large movement gathering. Please sing along as you finish this article.

Solidarity forever,  
Solidarity forever,  
Solidarity forever,  
For the Union makes us strong!

# Innovative Gospel Musician Spotlight



Rev. Orlando T. Riley Sr., (a.k.a. Preacher Pap), has released a string of enormously successful albums dating back to the '70s. Beginning with the self-titled debut Preacher Pap & the Exciting Maryland State Choir, followed by Preacher Pap and his Specials of Jersey City, New Jersey, The Famous Williams Sisters & Preacher Pap, The Artistic Chants and Preacher Pap & Family. His mark is forever engraved within the historic chapters of gospel music history as one of its truly innovative forces. The right blend of traditional and contemporary gospel, meshed with the classical sounds culled from his formal training as a child, has become his musical signature of this century as a songwriter, arranger, producer and recording artist.

In June 1994 Preacher Pap formed a group called the Invisibles comprised of three members: Maurice, Shelton and William who are three invisible men. The amazing thing about this group is you

can hear five voices and see some physical accessories that a man would wear but no physical body appears.

In June of 1996 Preacher Pap and his Gospel Invisibles released their first CD entitled "Jesus will fix it Every time". In November 2001 they released their second CD entitled "We'll Meet Again" and their most recent CD was released in April 2004 entitled "Lord Why".

Preacher Pap has proven that through the quiet intimate brush strokes of worship melodies, coupled with the powerfully delivered inspirational lyrics, he has once again crafted a project that demonstrates the spiritual maturity and growth of an artist who has consistently triumphed as a multi-talented songwriter and performer. He is an ambassador to those who have been touched by his life and his music. His determination to worship God for who He is and all that He has done for him, allowing his faith in God to remain at the forefront of everything he does.



*"You know what music is? God's little reminder that there is something else besides us in this universe; harmonic connection between all living beings, every where even the stars."*

*-Robin Williams  
August Rush (2007)*



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**ANNUAL IRA GELLER  
WALK-A-THON  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2018  
OAK RIDGE PARK, CLARK, NJ**

**REGISTRATION: 11:00 AM \* EVENT TIME: 12:00 PM—3:00 PM**



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Register Now!** Sign up for Day of Prayer and RSVP by October 5th at <https://5thannualdayofprayer.eventbrite.com> or call 908.354.3040 x4371

# 5th Annual Day of Prayer and Reflection

## Unifying Our Community Through Prayer



**Union County**  
**Day of Prayer**  
**October 9, 2018**  
**7:00 PM - 8:00 PM**



**St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church**  
**2032 Westfield Avenue**  
**Scotch Plains, NJ 07076**



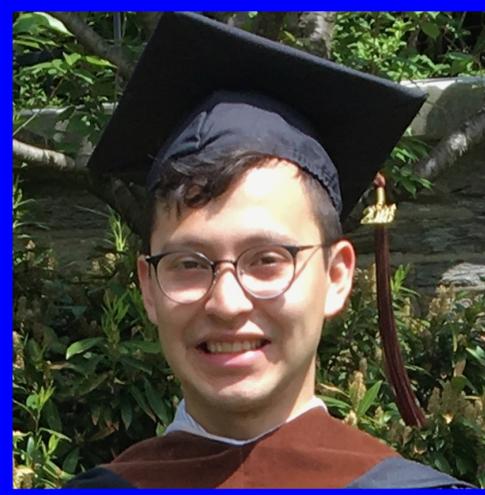
*Working to facilitate the building of bonds within the interfaith community,  
promoting the respect, inclusion and welcoming of others.*

Sponsored by: Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council and Community Access Unlimited

# Elmi L. Ventura Mata

## ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Written & Edited By:  
Linwood Bagby &  
Elmi L. Ventura Mata



Friday, May 11, 2018 marked a special day in Elmi L. Ventura Mata's life. He is the first in his family and in Restore Ministries, his Elizabeth, NJ after school program, to finish graduate school. As he walked across the stage in his graduate gown to receive his Master degree in Fine Arts from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, he was cheered on by his brothers, Esmel and Angel, along with his lifelong mentors, Linwood Bagby and Gary Reece. Twelve years prior, Elmi had taken a risk in joining Restore Ministries, where he discovered comfort, happiness and guidance as he continued to mature and pursue his education.

Elmi's story started in the cornfields of El Salvador to eventually immigrating to Elizabeth, N.J. to join his family. When he arrived to the United States, he didn't know English and did not have any school re-

records. He was retained a grade, failed his first year because he lacked proficiency in the English language and did not comprehend what it meant to be a proper student in the American schools. Broken English slowly started pouring out of Elmi after a year in school. This gave Elmi confidence in committing to his studies. At the age of 14, he earned high academic honors at his middle school. Another highlight during his time in the Elizabeth Public School system was being chosen to write and give a speech in front of three middle schools as part of the D.A.R.E. program. He excelled academically and earned the trust from Restore and sponsorship from private donors to pursue his education at Saint Mary's of the Assumption High School in Elizabeth, N. J. .

During his studies at St. Mary's, Elmi continued to flourish academically and, with the continued backing of his Restore mentors and with ongoing financial support from various Restore donors, graduated at the top of his class. While in the last two years of high school, Elmi placed all of his energies into building his portfolio in pursuit of his dreams of college at an art school. He matured as a painter and was accepted to various art institutions in the country, before committing to the Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA). "I was fortunate to have many people believe in me and give so much personally and financially towards my growth as an artist," explains Elmi. "During my high school years, Restore Ministries, found funds so I could attend Appel Farm Summer Arts program. It was there I worked one on one and in groups with professional artists from different parts of the world. This broadened my perspective to the world that I knew growing up in the inner city."



Title: A young woman, an mother and an angel.

During his time at the Cleveland Institute of Art, Elmi continued to pursue his dream of being a painter. The



**Title: An allegory. When death takes one from the family.**

working class Americans. With immigration constantly in the headlines, Elmi believes that he has an important story to share with the world. Ultimately, he is “proud of his roots as an immigrant from El Salvador” and wishes people to “embrace and celebrate diversity.” The figures that often populate his canvases are almost always his family members and loved ones. This is a means of empowering them and having their stories told through oil paint.

Elmi is currently living and working in Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love. Elmi states, “It’s an opportunity to expand my network and at the same time be exposed to very important and influential people in the art world.” “I’m very excited and lucky to continue my journey and be here at this time in life.” And expanding his network is exactly what Elmi does best, from the cornfields in El Salvador, the public and parochial schools in Elizabeth, NJ to graduating with a Master’s degree, to now working as a passionate artist and entrepreneur. Elmi is on his way to success.

On the side, Elmi is developing a love for Russian literature and cooking Mexican food. One of his lifelong goals is to have a book published.

Elmi believes that, “success is being a loving and humble person, connecting to your history, understanding good values and ethics along with maintaining good principles in everyday decisions.” Elmi has found his passion and purpose in life.

All of us who have nurtured and watched him mature agree.

commissions and the support of the CIA’s Painting Department to continue chasing his dreams. Honors included getting artwork into a private collection at the University Hospitals of Cleveland and receiving the AICUO Award in Visual Arts from the Ohio Art College and University Association. This prestigious award allowed a second private collection to acquire Elmi’s work, where it was displayed in Ohio’s Governor Kasich’s office.

Throughout his undergraduate studies, Elmi always knew that he wanted to go continue at the graduate level. While in his year of graduation from the Cleveland Institute of the Arts, he received the Future Faculty Fellowship to pursue his Masters program at Tyler School of the Arts.

Elmi states, “Six years is a long time to be studying in higher education. Through the years my work has matured and I have confidence in carrying forward my practice as a painter.” In his work, Elmi wants people to recognize the fragility of life and the struggles faced by



**Title: When war shatters lives.**



# JOIN OUR TEAM!

Community Access Unlimited welcomes those with a big heart! Due to our continuing expansion, there are a number of **full time** and **part time** openings for those interested in guiding people with disabilities and youth at risk who are on the road to independence.

For those looking for part-time positions, CAU offers available house on the weekends and overnights!

Minimum requirements are:

- Valid driver's license
- Access to vehicle daily to use for work purpose
- Original High School Diploma/GED/College Degree

Experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities and/or youth at risk are a plus! Of course compassion for the work and a flexible schedule is also required when providing support to our members.

Working at CAU is not just a job but a career! We offer promotional opportunities for employees, competitive salaries and a comprehensive benefits package to full time employees!

Please take the time to visit our agency website [www.caunj.org](http://www.caunj.org) for more information and current listings.

## CAU Hosts a weekly Open House Mondays from 4 PM -6 PM

80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ  
07202

Don't forget your resume and  
come prepared to fill out an application

To make an appointment, please call an  
HR representative at (908) 354-3040 ext  
4203. If you are unable to attend the open  
house, please fax resume to (908) 354-  
0283 or email to [rwright@caunj.org](mailto:rwright@caunj.org).

## UCICC –CAU COMMUNITY HELP LINE

**DO YOU NEED HELP WITH FOOD? HOME HEALTH OR PERSONAL CARE  
HOME AND PROPERTY CARE  
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO DOES?**

Call CAU's Information and Referral Office at  
**908-354-3040 [X 4272]** for answers and resources.

CAU's community service mission includes providing direct services to people in need as well as information on how to locate services provided by other agencies.

This month we highlight **one of CAU services available to qualified recipients** in our Union County communities.

1] **Free home delivered meals** [6 week program; one meal per person per day] for Union County residents who are US citizens and their families who need food and who are:

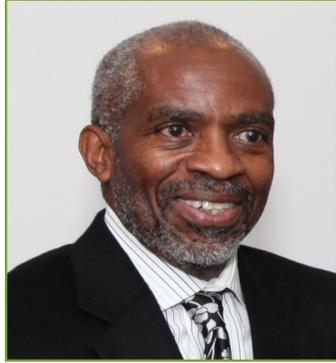
- \*Age 59 or younger [head of household]; \*Living in low income households;
- \* Unable to access adequate food for themselves and their families.
- \* Documents and interview are required to qualify.

**Contact Gene Tavera X 4272.**

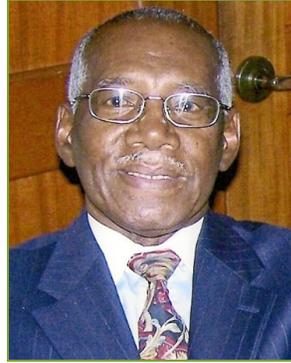
# UCICC Outreach Coordinating Team



*Sidney Blanchard,  
Executive Director  
Community Access Unlimited  
sblanchard@caunj.org*



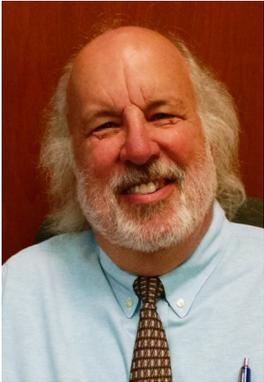
*Roderick (Rod) Spearman  
UCICC Interfaith Coordinator  
rspearman@caunj.org*



*Pastor Howard A. Bryant,  
UCICC Interfaith Coordinator  
hbryant@caunj.org*



*Pastor Carmine Pernini  
UCICC Interfaith Coordinator  
cpernini@caunj.org*



*AH 'Skip' Winter  
UCICC Steering  
Committee Member*



*Michelle Mobley  
CAU Director of Youth  
Service Residential  
mmobley@caunj.org*



*Charlene Walker  
UCICC Administrative Assistant  
cwalker@caunj.org*

## Join & Be Active Today!

- Attend monthly meetings.
- Invite other community leaders to attend our meetings and events.
- Support or host fundraising programs to support the Record Expungement Grant Program.
- Sign up for our mailing list.
- Share useful information about your organization.

Contact Rod Spearman at  
908-354-3040 x 4324  
for more information on becoming  
a member



### Advertise in the UCICC Newsletter!

Have an exciting event or program happening?

Reach out and build bonds with members of the interfaith community in Union County by advertising in this newsletter!

Please send all print-ready ads to Rod Spearman at [rspearman@caunj.org](mailto:rspearman@caunj.org) by the **13th** of every month to save a space!



Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council c/o Community Access Unlimited  
80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202  
Phone: (908) 354-3040 x4324 • Email: [UCInterfaith@caunj.org](mailto:UCInterfaith@caunj.org)

[www.facebook.com/UnionCountyInterfaithCoordinatingCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/UnionCountyInterfaithCoordinatingCouncil)



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Elizabeth, NJ

80 West Grand Street  
Elizabeth, NJ 07202  
Phone: 908-354-3040 TTY/TTD: 908-354-4629  
Fax: 908-354-2665 www.caunj.org

**Community Access Unlimited's Mission:** *To provide community access through effective and comprehensive support services for people with disabilities and at-risk youth, giving them the opportunity to live independently and to lead normal and productive lives in the community.*

## UCICC & STEERING COMMITTEE UPCOMING EVENTS

### UCICC Steering Committee

July 5, 2018 at 10:00am  
80 W Grand St  
Elizabeth NJ 07202

See Right side

### UCICC Steering Committee

August 2, 2018 at 10am  
80 W. Grand Street  
Elizabeth, NJ 07202

See Right side

### UCICC Steering Committee

September 6, 2018 at 10:00am  
80 W Grand St  
Elizabeth NJ 07202

See Right side

### Full UCICC Event

A Time for Interfaith Worship & Fellowship  
July 25, 2018 at 6:30pm—7:00pm  
First United Methodist Church Westfield  
1 E Broad St, Westfield NJ 07090

**Full UCICC Event Support Event for Youth  
Transitional Opportunities Program  
Annual Youth Conference**  
August 8, 2018 at 9:30am - 3:00pm  
Community Access Unlimited  
80 W. Grand St. Elizabeth , NJ 07202

### Full UCICC Event

Women of Faith Conference:  
Making a Beloved Community: "Together We Stand Divided  
We Fall" September 29, 2018 at 9:00am -3:00pm  
Community Access Unlimited



Rod Spearman  
Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council  
c/o Community Access Unlimited  
80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202  
Phone: (908) 354-3040 x4324  
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