

Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council



AUGUST 2018

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MAKING A BELOVED COMMUNITY

“YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE”

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UNION COUNTY INTERFAITH COORDINATING COUNCIL Steering Committee Members

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Kenilworth

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Summit

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Cranford Presbyterian Church
Cranford

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 Coordinated 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.

guest message

Letter of Encouragement and Thanks!

By: Rev. Michael Anthony Howard

Former UCICC Steering Committee Member
New Jersey Association, the United Church of Christ

Dear Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council,

As a former member of your steering committee, I thought it would be appropriate at this moment in history to write letter of encouragement and to thank you for the work you continue to do. **Thank you! You are an inspiration!**



I also wanted to take a moment to share with you my thoughts about the use of Christian scripture to justify violence. (Below is part of a draft I have been working on as part of the Social Justice Taskforce of the New Jersey Association of the United Church of Christ to send out to our clergy. They have graciously granted me permission to share a slightly modified version with you.)

Over the last few weeks, a number of faith leaders from across the country, here in New Jersey, and even there in Union County have participated in protests and civil disobedience to try to bring attention to the current state of our society. The American public is waking up to the fact that securing the freedom of innocent children is our collective responsibility.

The terms of the current debate have been particularly troubling to us as members and leaders of communities of faith, because public officials have used religious texts from our tradition to justify violent public policy. **I offer this letter with the purpose of strategizing how to respond to such profane applications of scripture.** As religious leaders, we should all encourage people of faith to be careful when our sacred scriptures are used to justify policy positions or political opinions based on a single verse taken out of context. Quoting from Romans 13, it has been said that one should “Obey the laws of the government, because God has ordained the government for his purposes.” But what about the overall theological trajectory of the Christian faith, the verse’s scriptural context, or the socio-historical context in which it was written?

The law of the land—the legal framework of any particular administrative territory—and the Bible have a very complicated relationship. In the Book of Exodus, Moses led an entire population to disobey the government and escape slavery to freedom. The prophets of Israel were famous for being openly critical of the laws and rulers of their day. In the book of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into a furnace because they disobeyed the law of King Nebuchadnezzar. The prophet Daniel was thrown in a den of lions for disobeying the law. And the rebellious Maccabees disobeyed the law when they ignited a revolution and won their land back from oppressive, occupying governmental forces.

What was the context for Paul’s letter to the Romans? The Jesus story is the story of a refugee family trying to keep their baby safe by fleeing to another country; a friend to criminals, outcasts, and victims of religious and political authority; and a messianic figure who is arrested, tried, punished, and publicly executed. Early Christian communities mostly met in secret for fear of being found and punished as criminals by governmental authorities,

guest message continued...

and letters such as Paul's would have been circulated underground for fear of imprisonment or worse. Many of those Epistles actually state from the beginning that they were written from prison. Then there is the letter to the Romans, that epistle which contains the very verses that are so often quoted to justify unjust governmental policy. In this letter to the Christians in Rome, the Apostle Paul says that he hopes he will one day visit their congregation and their city. As the story goes, when Paul finally arrives in Rome, three years later, he is a convicted criminal. So the notion that governmental forces necessarily have God on their side both runs counter to the overall trajectory of the Biblical concept of God's liberation, and entirely misses the context of Paul's theological orientation and concerns in the face of such persecution.

I would like to go just a little further, to explore the role Romans 13 has played in more recent history. It was used by the crown loyalists during the American Revolution to promote obedience to the king. It was used in the 1850s to justify the Fugitive Slave Act. It was used in South Africa to support the Apartheid ideology. It has been used recently by white supremacists and Christian fundamentalists to justify various kinds of injustice and to criticize faith leaders for their leadership and involvement in justice movements. But, of course, none of these examples are based on a reading of the whole letter of the book of Romans, or even the whole chapter. If we read the whole chapter, perhaps we would stop and notice the power of the language of Romans 13:10, which says, "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law."

- When our policy makers publicly use the Bible to support any kind of violence, especially violence against children, I believe we have a responsibility to lead our faith communities to speak back: "You can't use our sacred texts that way!" When we do so, we stand in the good company of folks like Moses, Daniel, John the Baptist, Jesus, the Apostle Paul, Gandhi, and Dr. King

For Peace and Justice,

Rev. Michael Anthony Howard



Newark Pioneer Pathfinder Club

D'jenneth McLean– Newark Pioneer Pathfinder Club Director



The Newark Pioneer Pathfinder Club is a part of a worldwide organization of young people, ages 10-16, sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, though young people of any religion persuasion or none at all are welcome and encouraged to join the organization. The purpose of the pathfinder club is to develop the leadership skills of our youth for service to God and individuals in our communities.

- While our Pathfinders participate in a wide range of activities that aid in the development of their leadership skills, such as camping and camp survival skills and interactive training in a variety of areas, our focus is to promote community involvement through outreach activities. Our young people regularly serve meals to the homeless and those in need in the city of Newark, volunteer at the Hillside Foodbank, visit and encourage residents in nursing homes and rehab centers, collect toiletries for the homeless, provide Christmas dinner for our community and so much more. Through these small acts of kindness our pathfinders develop a service-oriented character and an intentional desire to share their Christian values in a loving and relational way.



REFLECTION ON CHILDHOOD SEPARATION

BY: CHARLENE WALKER
UCICC & COMMUNITY ACCESS UNLIMITED

The reality of childhood separation and the intersectionality of this practice in the US is rarely talked about. When I say childhood separation I'm pretty sure most of us have a clear image that pops in our head thanks to the images we have been bombarded by the media within recent months. We see images of children in cages. Typically, Hispanic children behind chain linked fences covered by shiny silver space blankets lying on mats. We picture small children with terrified faces crying out as their parent is ripped away from them with little to no notice by armed officers. Yes, this is childhood separation in the US. It is an ugly, traumatic, and downright immoral practice that sends ripples of despair through our nation. I'm pretty sure most of us agree that childhood separation is an issue regardless of political views but we must acknowledge that it is not limited to what we see occurring as a result of immigration. Childhood separation has been and is currently being experienced in the US in ways we rarely talk about. We can't talk about one way and neglect the others. We as an interfaith community have a moral obligation to bring attention to ALL childhood separation because if we don't identify the problem how can it be solved.

Personally I have had childhood separation be part of my life since the moment I was born. I was placed for adoption at birth and placed in a foster home of a loving woman known as Ms. Bea, that eventually adopted me. I got to see childhood separation first hand. I saw it through my mother's continued foster care, her job, in college, and now during my volunteer work. My mother worked in an institution for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She would bring those she supported home during the weekends sometimes because they had no family. Everyone needs family. They had been separated from their parents during early development. They clung to my mother and cried out for her when they could not see her since she was the only mother figure many of them had. This too is the result of childhood separation from a parent.

A revolving door of children lived with us through foster care. Many were placed due to their parent being incarcerated. Incarcerated for minor crimes that would only warrant probation but due to systematic racism and mandatory sentencing requirements they were given sometimes years in jail. Sometimes it was due to drug addition, like the crack epidemic, which criminalized drug addiction in the African American community instead of providing treatment like our current response to the opioid crisis. Sometimes it was simply because they just couldn't afford to pay bail. Sadly this is still the case according to the American Friends Service Committee. Currently there are 2.7 million children across the US with at least 1 parent incarcerated. I imagine that the experience of those children separated from their parents is similar to what I witnessed during my childhood. I recall the inconsolable cries with endless tears at bedtime for weeks, outbursts of anger, and general distrust of others. This too is childhood separation.

According to the National Indian Child Welfare Association Indigenous children are placed in foster care at a rate 2.7 times greater than any other. I recall my college classmate; an Indigenous American, explaining to me how depressed he was as his siblings and he had been taken away from their parents for neglect. Yet the neglect that was found was due to a lack of cultural awareness. Right now there are indigenous parents fighting to remain with their children or be reunited. Sadly, an FBI count in 2016 cites more than 7,700 separated Indigenous children went missing. May 5, 2018 was actually declared by the US Senate A National Day for Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Children. This too is childhood separation.

Now as a volunteer at an immigration detention center I see childhood separation due to our country's immigration policies first hand. I watch children visiting their detained fathers and my heart breaks. Recently I watched a toddler with his family visit. The toddler was upset with his father, hiding under the table refusing to come out no matter how much the father tried. Eventually he climbed into his father's lap and they played the I love you game I think most of us know. Both saying "I love you more back and forth until it was announced that visiting hours were over. At that time the entire room turned to hysterics with tears and screams from children. This particular child had to be pulled off of his father leaving indentations on his father's arms and cried all the way to the car. This is childhood separation.

We have a moral responsibility to each other as humans to take care of each other. We need to believe we are our brother's keeper. We collected over 2,500 books but there are over 2,300 children experiencing childhood separation due to immigration and more than 2.7 million children due to incarceration. They will not get to say Good Night Moon with their Mom tonight. There will be no invisibility cloaks tonight. We need to let those children not being tucked in by Mom or Dad tonight know "Guess How Much We Love You", "We love you right up to the moon and back." and we will find a way to help you.

Faith In Action!

July 25, 2018- UCICC Event:

A Time for Interfaith Worship and Fellowship
at First United Methodist Church, Westfield, NJ



Over 2,500 books were collected at this event. The books will be distributed to children of all ages directly impacted by childhood separation from a parent due to immigration or incarceration by American Friends Service Committee , AFSC and UCICC partner organizations. Some of the books will be given directly to parents being released from incarceration or detention so they may read to their children in an effort to reconnect with them.



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
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Community Access Unlimited

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9am-3pm

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



FRIDAY, AUGUST 24

2:oopm-5:oopm

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1. OUR GOAL

- ◆ At the Lions of Justice Festival on September 23, young people from all backgrounds will gather in nine locations to stand up for the dignity of life—to proclaim that all people are worthy of respect and must be treated with the dignity they deserve.
- ◆ Through musical performances, films, inspiring speakers and the shared experiences of youth taking action in their daily lives to transform society, we will further affirm our determination to make the 21st century one of lasting peace and awaken profound courage and hope in our friends, families and communities throughout the country.

2. WHAT IS A LION OF JUSTICE

What is a Lion of Justice? A person who:

- ◆ Courageously faces and overcomes any obstacles that stand between themselves and their dreams;
- ◆ Fearlessly challenges the ways of thinking that justify hate, violence and discrimination; and
- ◆ Can joyfully unite with people of all walks of life toward developing a society based on the happiness of all people.

To develop into this kind of person and never give up in the face of opposition can be a challenge. Therefore, we need to be unbending in the face of obstacles, just like a roaring lion.

3. BACKGROUND

- ◆ The currents of society have taken an unfortunate turn in the direction of division and isolation. Many are polarized politically, suspicious of those who are different and take refuge in social media bubbles.
- ◆ While we see glimmers of humanism in our society, it's also undeniable that domestic violence, school shootings, discrimination based on race or gender, and environmental destruction persist and have even become more prevalent.
- ◆ Looming over this is the threat of nuclear weapons, which threatens the right of all people to exist.
- ◆ What is at the root of these problems? Buddhist philosophy teaches that social ills stem from the three poisons of greed, anger and ignorance that exist in the hearts of people. For example, greed gives rise to economic inequality and hunger; anger, to hatred and discrimination, violence, to war; and ignorance, to environmental destruction.
- ◆ What is the answer? It is for people to stand up in solidarity with the awareness that all life is precious and the solution lies in directly confronting the greed, anger and ignorance that lies within the human heart. This can only happen when diverse groups of people unite through shared respect and understanding.

4. AN APPEAL TO THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD

On June 5, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel released a joint statement appealing to the youth of the world to unite and work together to develop solutions to various problems plaguing the world. They cited issues such as poverty, hunger, climate change, nuclear weapons, stateless refugees and so forth. This appeal perfectly resonates with the purpose of the 50,000 Lions of Justice Festival, as we are seeking to unite young people to create an era where hope and the respect for all people become the key factors guiding our world. In the appeal, Dr. Ikeda and Dr. Esquivel stated in part:





"We direct our call to the young people of the world. There is no challenge that cannot be resolved if we unite in solidarity. We are confident that young people will take up the search for solutions, acting in solidarity from within their respective places of belonging across all differences of spiritual and cultural identity to generate waves of dynamic, shared action."

In addition, they called on the youth to take action based on three-step approach:

- 1) Promote a common awareness of a universal sense of history in order to prevent the repetition of tragedies.
- 2) Promote the understanding that Earth is our common home, where no one is to be excluded on the basis of difference.
- 3) Promote the humane orientation of politics and economics, cultivating the wisdom needed to achieve a sustainable future

5. CONCLUSION

We, the youth of the Soka Gakkai International-USA, take pride in the origin of our movement, with founding Soka Gakkai President Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's struggle against the oppression of the Japanese fascist government during World War II. Mr. Makiguchi was jailed for his pacifist beliefs and eventually died in prison, a martyr to his beliefs. Our legacy of countering authoritarianism and empowering common people inspired us to initiate this festival, where we will express the passion and power of youth to transform society for the better and achieve personal happiness.

On September 23, we will declare:

Enough is enough! We will create a society based on hope and respect!

David Witkowski – National Youth Leader

Olivia Saito – National Young Women's Leader

Michael O'Malley – National Young Men's Leader



See <https://www.lionsofjustice.org> for more information and to register.



REPAIRING HOMES AND REBUILDING AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

By: Jeanne Thiemann
Central Presbyterian Church, Summit NJ



Few of the high school youth at Central Presbyterian Church in Summit were familiar with power tools before this year, when they took the time to learn in preparation for a trip to Painted Post, New York to help residents in need with home repairs.

Painted Post is a small town outside of Corning, NY where the economic conditions over the last several decades have brought changes to manufacturing and agriculture, leaving many residents without a source of employment. The resulting decline in population left many of the region's elderly on their own to care for their homes. Partnering with RISE (Risingville Intercommunity Service Effort), 24 of Central's youth spent a week in June helping these people, building porches, repairing steps, installing new windows, painting, and more.

24 of Central's youth spent a week in June helping these people, building porches, repairing steps, installing new windows, painting, and more.

An amazing team of chaperones dedicated their time prior to the trip to teach the teens how to use the hand and power tools that would be necessary for their work. The group spent a retreat weekend on Lake Hopatcong learning about power tools, painting and drywall techniques, and basic carpentry.

"This kind of work builds resiliency in our youth and in the communities that they serve by participating in God's mission," says trip leader Rev. Deborah Huggins. "Belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity all build youth who are ready to face our 21st century problems grounded in God's love."



YOUTH RETURN HOME FROM SERVICE TRIP WITH CATHOLIC HEART WORKCAMP

By Patty Gardner; Youth Minister
St. Helen's Church, Westfield NJ



As the Parish Community of St. Helen's continues to celebrate its 50th Anniversary, 50 parishioners made up of youth and adults from West-field and Scotch Plains, spent a week in Roanoke, Virginia helping those in need. The group's theme this year was "ECHO." The team was called to imitate the very acts of love and kindness that Christ demonstrated throughout His life on earth. They were called to ECHO the heart of Jesus in our world today by serving the neglected, brokenhearted, and marginalized members of society. The trip set out at 6 AM on Sunday, July 15th. This is the 7th year that St. Helen's has participated in CHWC— Catholic Heart WorkCamp.

In attendance were: Karen Abaya, Nora Bergin, Caroline Bielen, Eliza-beth Bielen, Patrick Bourke, Grace Cash, James Cirillo, Emma Conlon, Nick Corsentino, Anita Dazzo, Caroline Dwyer, Sean Dwyer, Emily Edwards, Anastasia Fowler, Caroline Francisco, Cathy Francisco, Cecilia Guarnuccio, Matthew Guarnuccio, Faith Hrinkevich, Liam Jackson, Molly Jackson, Malcolm Kahora, Erin Kylish, Chris Larkin, Brendan Loder, Lauren Logozzo, Olivia London, Gianna Mangiameli, Sophia Maurillo, Bridget McDermott, Will McGlynn, Mia Melao, Ronni Melao, Ricky Mercer, Elisa Saint-Denis, Brianna Weber, Alissa Witzel, Chris Witzel, Jake Zrebiec. **Adult Team:** Jim Conlon, Fr. Gabriel Curtis, Nick Dazzo, Patti Gardner, Marie Guaruccio, Mike Guarnuccio, Kevin Larkin, Chris Loder, Tricia McGlynn, Mari Melao, and Lisa Travaglini.

During the week the group broke up into separate work teams. The teams gathered at 7:30 am for morning prayer/program and departed for the worksites at 8am. Some of the organizations that they worked with were Habitat for Humanity, Community Food Banks, and soup kitchens.

Upon returning from the worksites each day, CHWC provided the youth with an evening program that consisted of music, reflections, games, Mass and candlelight prayer service.

The team stayed at Roanoke Catholic High sleeping on the floor all week in classrooms and showered in the gym of local YMCA. This was an unforgettable experience for all, which enabled the youth to truly appreciate all of the blessings that are provided for us in our own community. They plan to continue to serve those in and around our community and encourage those in the parish com-munity to serve alongside with them.



YOUNG ADULT YOUTH ADVISORY DELEGATE KATIE BARNY REFLECTION

By: Katie Barny

First Presbyterian Church of Woodbridge



December of 2017 I found out I was chosen to be a Young Adult Advisory Delegate (YAAD) for the 223rd General Assembly in St. Louis, Missouri, and little did I know the gravity my position held! Having not known of the General Assembly just weeks before my being chosen, I had no expectations or ideas of how being a YAAD would impact me or the commissioners of the assembly. But I would soon learn that we had a great responsibility, which was carried out to the fullest and then some!

I believe the YAADs of this assembly (and I'm a bit biased), were some of the most proactive, justice-seeking, and thoughtful of the most recent assemblies. What made us so distinct was our lack of passivity throughout the week. When you think of young adults (people aged 18-23) you may think of free-spirited, nonchalant, and naïve kids. But I can assure you we were deliberate, focused, and hungry for business. We acknowledged that our position didn't allow us the ability to make motions in front of the commissioners, but we made our voices heard in the great hall of Presbyterians.

We got up to speak on all sorts of issues and topics. A fellow YAAD and now friend of mine, Ben, got up to speak about the importance of LGBTQIA+ inclusivity and observation of the different gender identities. He spoke passionately on how crucial it is to tap-in to this wealth of people as Presbyterians, and he even felt so led to "come out" as bisexual to everyone in the hall. He was met with love and compassion from his peers and leadership of the assembly, and served as a beacon for commissioners to see how passionate we were with issues on the floor. This was just one of the many happenings at the assembly that showcased the YAADs candor and mission to contribute to and improve upon our already great faith.

I think it is important to recognize that something can be great, but it can still be improved upon. This comes from the belief that nothing can be perfect since we are a fallen and sinful people, but we can try our hardest to improve upon ourselves and our society to make it as peaceful and inclusive as it can be. That is my hope for this denomination, this country, and ultimately the world. We do so much to help others each Sunday and throughout our faith journey, but I believe it's important to address people where they are and not by where you may want them to be. These are turbulent times, and what we need right now is not only prayer, but action.

We need to reach out to our neighbor who is struggling. We need to seek out the injustices that plague our society and help those who feel targeted by this injustice. We need to assist our brothers and sisters of different races, genders, faiths, and so on in their struggle for equal treatment in our country and around the world. Faith is intersectional. It doesn't draw borders, like humans so often do. We are called to break the barriers and shake things up like Jesus did! He was a radical guy, and I feel we may often forget that as peaceful as he was, he was known to cause controversy and unease around people. Justice is not comfortable, and it is not always easy, but I believe it is what we are called to pursue.

Commissioners and advisory delegates from all 170 PC (USA) presbyteries, and other delegates and observers from around the world, held its 223 General Assembly (2018) united under the theme "Renewing the Vision: Kingdom Building for the 21st Century," from Matthew 6:25-33. The event was filled with worship services, action on a plethora of overtures, celebrations, deliberations, and inspirations in support of the denomination's biennial gathering.

MAC ATTACK

By: Michele Mobley & Howard Wingard
Community Access Unlimited

MAC ATTACK is a LLC business that is created by youth and ran by youth. The youth are a part of the Transitional Opportunities Program at Community Access Unlimited in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

MAC ATTACK created several presentations to help train and teach staff how to relate and communicate better with the youth that they serve on a daily basis. Staff gain better insight *about* the trauma that our youth go through and how to respond to them more effectively. MAC ATTACK conducts presentations for members and staff at CAU throughout the year, as well as, going around the country to conduct presentations at various conferences.

The presentations that MAC ATTACK created are: *Living in the system, All about relationships, Stepping up to the plate, No time like now to direct your footsteps to the future, Choices & Bullying*. The two things these presentations have in common are learning how to treat our youth with better respect and for our youth to learn how to speak up and advocate for themselves more effectively. MAC ATTACK has been teaching these skills very well at every conference that they attend. Attendees are always asking their advice and *request that they* come to do presentations at their agencies.

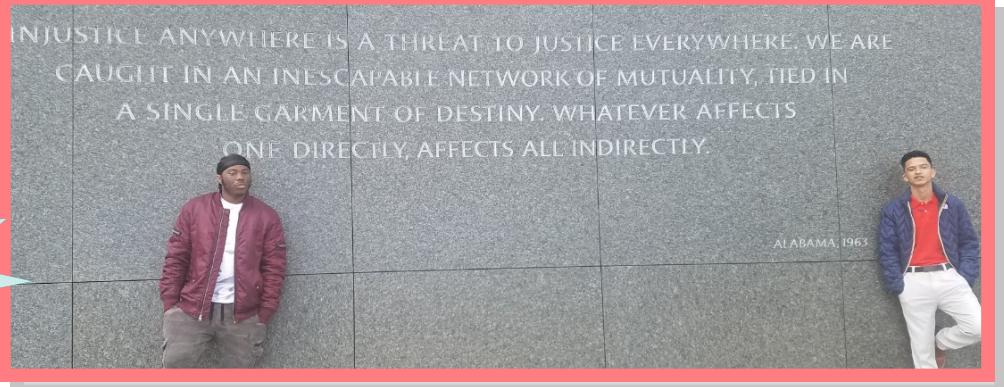
They you who are a part of MAC ATTACK and *seen* in the photos are Casandra Jeffers, Shameese Burnett, Daquan Huey and Alejandro Amaya.

Cassandra Jeffers and Shameese Burnett attended the Daniel Memorial National Foster Care Conference in Orlando, Florida and Daquan Huey and Alejandro Amaya attended the Child Welfare League of America Conference in Washington, DC.

The National Foster Care Conference focused on permanency and finding secure placement for all the youth that we serve. The CWLA Conference focused on immigration issues and how our youth are affected. The four youth from MAC ATTACK that attended these conferences were well versed in these subject matters and were able to provide adequate information to anyone that asked their opinion in these matters.

Other Conferences that MAC ATTACK has attended are as follows: NJ Alliance Conference, National Independent Living Association Conference, Youth Conference at CAU, etc.

MAC ATTACK is constantly evolving and the members of MAC ATTACK are doing what they can to make a difference in the lives of their peers and in their community.





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PHONE: 908.965.0455 **Email:** 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, 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.





North Jersey Pathfinders

By: Anthony Francis

Who are those young people in that scout looking uniform? Pathfinders! Yes, it's a department of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church. They are similar to the scouts in many ways, but they place

a special emphasis on the spiritual lives of young people. They focus on our young people from ages 10 to 19



Presently, the goal of the Seventh Day Adventist Church is that every SDA church should have a Pathfinder club. If this is accomplished, it will help to keep our young people off the street corners and they will be taught how to be an asset to society.

In New Jersey, Pathfinder Clubs are represented in two conferences. One conference, Allegheny East has the state divided into two areas, Northern New Jersey area, which covers from the Pocono to Trenton to Neptune with about 20 clubs and the Bay Area which covers everything south from Trenton and Neptune with about 6 clubs. The New Jersey Conference covers the whole state of New Jersey with about 20 Clubs.

Some of the activities the clubs participate in are the annual Breast Cancer Walks, Memorial Day Parades, Pathfinder Bible Bowl (better known as PBE), Thanksgiving baskets give away, drum skill displays and color guard demonstrations. We even have the young people display their skills by hiking parts of the Appalachian Trail and competing against their club members or against other clubs in friendly activities.



WAYVE (Westfield Area Youth Volunteer Experience)

Submitted by: Jill Dispenza and Vicki Simpson
WAYVE Program Directors



WAYVE (Westfield Area Youth Volunteer Experience) is a program made possible through generous funding from The Westfield Foundation to Jewish Family Service of Central NJ (JFSCNJ), a non-profit, non-sectarian health and social service agency, that serves all residents of Union County. The grant provides youth in Westfield and surrounding communities with quality volunteer opportunities throughout Union County that introduce new skills, enhance life experiences and provide useful knowledge for college and career. Our goal is to match agencies and individuals in need of volunteers with enthusiastic teens and young adults.

During the inaugural year of the WAYVE program teens were able to get involved with something they are passionate about or explore a possible career path. Teens volunteer in areas that include social service advocacy, tutoring, nutrition and food pantry, peer volunteer leadership, and a Teen Foundation Board.

The first year of our WAYVE Teen Foundation Board was a resounding success. The Board of 13 teens reviewed 17 grant requests from Union County non-profits totalling \$22,000. They invited several agencies to present their grants and after thoughtful discussion and consideration they awarded \$5,900 in grants to 7 deserving grantees.

Our outstanding group of teen volunteers have served young and old throughout Union County. From packing boxes for our servicemen and women with Bonds of Courage, to packing and distributing food at the JFSCNJ Food Pantry, WAYVE volunteers are making a difference and feeling good about it. They also assisted older adults at a Technology Workshop and worked with residents of Westfield Senior Housing on a Legacy Project. At the Westfield Neighborhood Council motivated teens tutored younger students in subjects such as math and science.

As we head into our second year of WAYVE this fall we look forward to welcoming more teens and young adults to join us as we make a difference in Union County. If you're interested in joining the WAYVE or are a Union County non-profit who needs volunteers, please contact us at wayve@jfscentralnj.org.

#ridethewayve #teensareawesome #wevolunteerdoyou

WAYVE (Westfield Area Youth Volunteer Experience) Teen Philanthropy Board
Members awarded \$5,900 in grants to seven (7) Union County Organization in an awards ceremony that took place Monday evening, May 21, 2018, at the Westfield Area Y.

Pictured Here: WAYVE Teen Philanthropy Board Members: Thomas Brennan, Matthew Dispenza, Mackenzie Dulski, Ava Feldman, Roselyne Garabete, Nathaniel Fountain Jardim, Jesse Katz, Aiden Maher, Dominic Maurillo, Sloane Silverman, Rachel Simpson, Marianne Smith and Ryan Smith with Grant Awardees, Janet Sarkos, Caring Contact, Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan, CASA of Union County, Ellen Tepper, Family and Children's Services, Josefina Lieberman, Plainfield College Readiness Program, Alisha Jenks, Community Coordinated Child Care of Union County, Ahisa Quallis, Westfield Neighborhood Council, Erica Rodriguez, Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless. Tom Beck, Executive Director Jewish Family Service of Central New Jersey, Jill Dispenza and Vicki Simpson, WAYVE Program Directors.



Interfaith Community Support

Addressing Substance Use Disorder



**By: Sean Foley, LSW
Substance Use Navigator
Prevention Links, Inc**

The United States is in the midst of an opiate crisis. This opioid crisis has been responsible for the devastation of families and the destruction of communities. On the federal level, movement towards drastically reducing the crisis has been unreasonably slow and after listening to President Trump's most recent speech on how to combat the Opioid Crisis, it also appears terribly misguided. For this, it is more than vital that state and local communities work collaboratively together to reduce the amount of individuals suffering from opioid abuse and increase acute and recovery support services for those whom are suffering from opioid addiction. For this to occur it is extremely important that the faith based community be a major part of that collaboration.

To combat this emergency we will need faith based organizations to have a seat at the table when community stakeholders work to combat the opioid crisis. Faith based institutions are essential to the well-being of services and resources in many communities; from providing homeless services, food pantries, housing, and other support services for families and individuals. Due to this, many faith based institutions have been on the frontlines fighting the opioid epidemic and its ravaging effects in their communities for decades. They were aware of this public health epidemic, before the general public would decades later declare it a crisis. Their knowledge and experience on this issue, along with the missions of congregations whom take a vital role in assuring an increase in health and wellness in their communities' is why community stakeholders need to be aware of the significant amount of value faith based institutions can bring to fighting this issue, and why successful collaboration cannot happen without their guidance and work. Faith based institutions' skills and experience are vital to helping combat this crisis here at home, and it is vital that they have a seat at the table along with other community stakeholders.

It also is important that community stakeholders and the recovery community collaborate with congregants and train faith based institutions, and members in their community about substance use disorder, signs and symptoms of use, how to navigate the system of care and Naloxone training. Teaching congregations about Substance Use Disorder and its signs and symptoms will help institutions further enhance their understanding of the disease and help them to better observe physical or emotional symptoms of abuse. Also, trainings on how to navigate treatment and recovery services will enhance their ability to direct the system and increase success of referrals for treatment, and trainings on Naloxone will allow for the lives of many to be saved. As the Union County Substance Use Navigator for Union County, myself and my colleague, Lisa Federico would be more than glad to direct these trainings for faith based institutions throughout the county. These trainings are and would always be of no cost.

People seeking recovery often have to fight through a fragmented system, with long waits to access treatment, lapses in medication and a lack of recovery support services in their area. Effective collaboration between Faith based institutions and other community stakeholders can initiate sustainable progress. True and effective collaboration will help decrease incongruities to the road of recovery and increasing preventive models of care whilst increasing health and wellness in communities throughout Union County.

The challenges of this work can be daunting. However, we cannot continue with the current status quo. To ensure we don't lose our communities and each other we must all work together to fight this epidemic. So I close with this passage from Galatians 6:9 "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."





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

GAMES, ACTIVITIES, & LIVE MUSIC
WALK AROUND THE PARK
FOOD & COMMUNITY



FREE REGISTRATION AT
WWW.CROWDRISE.COM/2018IRAGELLERWALK-A-THON

SEEKING SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS & VENDORS!
CONTACT CARA CLAIR FOR MORE
INFORMATION AT CCLAIR@CAUNJ.ORG

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT:



Ira Geller was a CAU member who tirelessly worked to raise funds for the annual walk-a-thon, always facing the adversity of fundraising with a positive approach. His devotion to fundraising and his commitment to people with special needs lives on through the Annual Ira Geller Walk-a-Thon.



COMMUNITY ACCESS
UNLIMITED

Questions?

Contact Cara Clair at 908-354-3040 x4376 or cclair@caunj.org



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

Striving to Make a Beloved Community



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.

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 for more information and current listings.

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.



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

**80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ
07202**

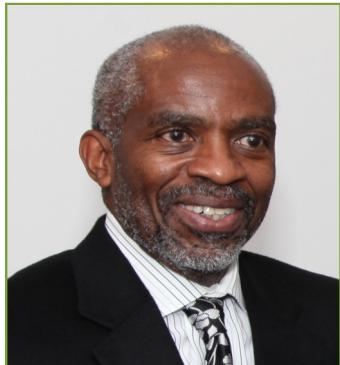
Don't forget your resume and come prepared to fill out an application

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.

UCICC Outreach Coordinating Team



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



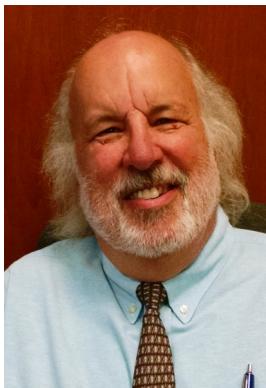
*Roderick (Rod) Spearman
UCICC Interfaith Coordinator*
rspearman@caunj.org



*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
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

www.facebook.com/UnionCountyInterfaithCoordinatingCouncil



NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 225
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 UP-COMING EVENTS

UCICC Steering Committee

August 2, 2018 at 10:00am
80 W Grand St
Elizabeth NJ 07202

See Right side →

UCICC Steering Committee

September 6, 2018 at 10am
80 W. Grand Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07202

See Right side →

UCICC Steering Committee

October 4, 2018 at 10:00am
80 W Grand St
Elizabeth NJ 07202

See Right side →

UCICC Supported Event

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

Full UCICC Event
5th Annual Day of Prayer
"Striving to Make a Beloved Community"
October 9, 2018 from 7pm to 8:00pm
St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church
2032 Westfield Ave. Scotch Plains, NJ 07076



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