

Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council



SEPTEMBER 2018

SPONSORED BY COMMUNITY ACCESS UNLIMITED

MAKING A BELOVED COMMUNITY “ADVOCACY, ACTIVISM, AND ACTION”

2

About UCICC
page 2

3

Message from our Guest
page 3 & 4

6

What's at Stake
page 6

7

Faith in Action
page 7

10

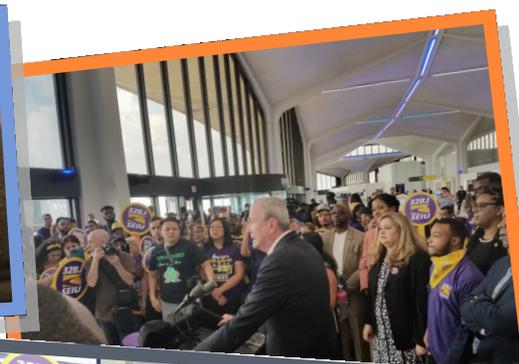
Taking Action! The
Elizabeth Coalition to
House the Homeless
pages 10

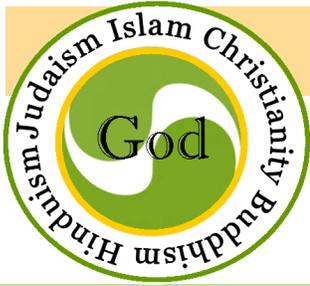
16

Belief into Action for the
Earth
Page 16

18

Advocates for Children of
New Jersey page 18





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

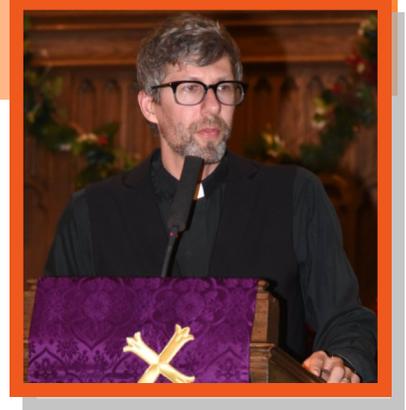
Synonyms: Faith, Advocacy, and Activism.

By: Rev. Carmine Pernini

UCICC Interfaith Coordinator

Member of Faith in New Jersey & NJ Clergy Coalition for Justice

Zion Lutheran Church– Rahway, NJ



One of the most persistent challenges in Interfaith work is often more about Theology, the words we use to describe God, verses what faith can produce, a collective appreciation for universal human dignity. People of different faiths may quibble about theological points – the sovereignty of God and human freedom, who was Jesus, when do we pray/worship and why etc..., but, more often than not, we tend to agree on what faith in God compels us to do: boundless love for one another. Faith, for all its messiness, distinctions, and nu-

ance, generally results in a simple yet profound love of strangers.

Questions of advocacy and activism, for me, flow out of the idea/emotion/action of loving my neighbor. At the last, it is love of one another which holds the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council together and not our conceptions of God. Yet, love is a verb or action and not merely an emotional inclination of the heart or affection. From my Christian tradition, the Epistle of James exemplifies love in action, “If a brother or sister (sic) is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace:...’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that(2:15-16)?”

Boundless love for one another in the public sphere, that is, politics and policy, are activism and advocacy for those who are not loved or treated fairly. Nearly all religious traditions have a version of “love your neighbor as yourself” or “do unto others.” Public policy names the “neighbor” or “others” that we are commended to love. There is disagreement with regards to whether or not religious people should engage in Advocacy or Activism, but the historical record of people of faith “staying out of politics” or worse, advancing positions which are now considered deplorable, is both long and bloody. For my own tradition’s part, the Church was largely on the wrong side of the Civil War (there are exceptions, however), segregation, women’s right to vote, and Marriage Equality to name a few. Today, calls for “religious people” to stay out of politics are often nothing other than a convenient ploy to silence views that are contrary to their own. While appeals to the historical precedent of the Church being on the wrong side of history were more effective in the past, today, rather than attempting to justify a faith community’s negligence in standing with the oppressed, it is easier, and more effective, to simply re-write history which results in a shift of the critique from neglect of the oppressed to history itself. An example is the myth of the Civil War being primarily about “State’s Rights” as opposed to slavery.

Advocacy and Activism on behalf of neighborliness are natural outgrowths of a faith that trusts in God’s love for all humanity. Advocacy, interested in public policy, and Activism, interested in public opinion, are both aspects of a love of others which both attempt to make manifest in the form of public opinion or policy universal human dignity. Advocacy and Activism need each other to produce long term change. For example, segregation was legislatively ended in the 1960s, yet today New Jersey’s schools are more segregated than they were during segregation with Union County suffering some of the worst de facto segregation in the state (<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/2018/07/13/how-segregated-new-jerseys-schools-and-what-can-done/702719002/>). While a legislative win was ushered in nearly 60 years ago, the urgency, activism in the form of public concern, which produced the

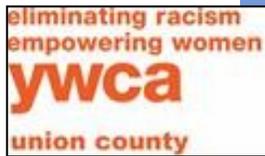
guest message continued...

“win” has since fizzled. Change, it seems, needs both policy advocates and activists to keep the fires of change hot. Activism, without reciprocal legislative change, can be nothing more than an angry mob venting their frustrations. Both are needed to produce change, and both are natural and vital expressions of faith which demonstrate love for the unloved.

Above, I asserted that advocacy and activism are natural outgrowths of faith in God’s love for all. I, like you, can think of plenty of religious groups who place artificial caveats on the scope of God’s love reducing it unsurprisingly to people who look, think, and act just like those who impose the restrictions. These “caveats,” even if they are the norm in society today, are aberrations both historically and theologically. They are, even if popular, unnatural developments not of religious thought, but of cultural biases imposed upon God’s abounding grace. Anecdotally, for Christians, it takes a whole lot of theological work to amend Jesus’ command to love your enemies, love one another as I have loved you (die for one another in solidarity?), and sell all that you own and give it to the poor. While the intellectual work of blunting these statements is impressive, it is, nevertheless, fraudulent in its representation of what it means to be Christian. The early church, 1st and 2nd centuries, held all things in common per the book of Acts from the Bible as well as the historical record where Roman political leaders would bemoan how “Christians (used derogatorily)” would take better care of Roman widows and orphans than the Romans did which made them look bad! Knowing this, the criticism lobbed at Religious Advocates and Activists seems to stem not from a theological critique born out of rigorous biblical study, but of a pre-existing cultural/racial bias which operates before theological considerations have been undertaken. The theological critique, then, is a pretext for prejudices which are filtered through language about God. My critique may seem a little “heavy handed,” but, in light of the 4,400 “Christian” pastors who just signed an “Anti-Social Justice Statement(<https://relevantmagazine.com/god/church/4400-pastors-have-signed-john-macarthur-anti-social-justice-proclamation/>),” timely may be a better label for my thoughts above.

Yet, speaking from my own tradition, love of one another, strangers and enemies alike, just seems more divine doesn’t it? Isn’t it easier to circle up the wagons and play island until the end of the world rather than messy ourselves with each other’s problems and glaring differences? For me, pessimist that I am, I see more instances of division and hatred rather than genuine embrace. If there is a God, wouldn’t God look different than what is considered normal? Near as I can tell, the biblical witness for Christians and the beautiful examples of faithful advocacy and activism from my Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist colleagues are authentic expressions of faith. Faith, when considered long enough, is not sedentary nor exclusive. Rather, faith is activism and advocacy. Faith is, as the late and great activist Roman Catholic Priest Daniel Berrigan once said (paraphrase), “Faith is doing good even when no one else will and trusting that your lone good act will draw others to it.” Faith, like activism and advocacy, is doing something for someone. Faith undertaken in the public sphere is activism and advocacy.

*“Advocacy and Activism are Natural Outgrowths of Faith
in God’s Love for All”*



YWCA Takes Action!

Janice C. Lilien | Chief Executive Officer

Every day, women (and men) come to the YWCA for help and safety from the one person they should be able to trust the most – their spouse, loved one or intimate partner. Domestic abuse affects one in 3 women and one in four men. It can take many forms beyond physical abuse – financial abuse, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse and isolation of the victim. The victim’s home – the place where s/he should feel safest – becomes a place of danger. And the most dangerous time for a victim is when h/ she leaves. We hear far too many stories of women losing their lives at the hands of their abuser, or suffering in silence for years because domestic violence is still often considered “a private/family matter” and many times the victim is blamed for the abuse.

Over half of the women and children who are homeless are homeless due to domestic violence. Without the resources of organizations like the YWCA Union County they have no place to go except back to the abuser, creating a cycle of abuse and homelessness.

The YWCA Union County is the only agency in Union County specifically designed to serve victims of domestic violence – regardless of age, race, ethnicity, income, gender, immigration status, and more. Our free services help break the cycle of abuse by providing comprehensive, wrap around services that meet the individual needs of each victim we serve. Our shelter provides immediate safety, counseling services address the trauma experienced, workforce development helps victims gain the skills and employment they need to be self-sufficient, court advocates help victims obtain the legal protections they need, and our programs for children help them heal from the violence they have witnessed. Our new Family Justice Center, a collaboration with the County of Union and the Union County Prosecutor’s Office, brings together multiple community agencies to provide legal, law enforcement, counseling, advocacy, and more in a single location to better serve victims in a holistic fashion. All of our services are provided through the intersectional lens of gender and racial oppression – recognizing that one cannot be eliminated without the other being eliminated as well.

We also educate and train. We go into schools where intimate partner violence begins in dating relationships. We talk about what are healthy relationships and what are the warning signs of abuse. Education of our community through presentations to students, counselors, faith leaders, and civic groups helps build a strong safety and support net for victims.

But it’s not enough to provide these services. YWCA also advocates for the needs of victims with our elected officials to create or modify legislation that supports victims, that keeps guns out of the hands of abusers, and that protects immigrant women so they can seek help without fear of deportation. We advocate for necessary funding so that our services reach all who need us. The YWCA – locally and nationally - is on the front lines of advocacy around domestic violence – urging renewal of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and other critical legislative initiatives that protect victims. Whether in individual meetings with our elected officials, testifying in Trenton and Washington, or calling, writing, and using social media – we make our voices heard.

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

WHAT'S AT STAKE

BY: REV. ROBIN TANNER

BEACON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SUMMIT



This past summer I had a baby and engaged in the launch of the New Jersey Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

For six weeks, beginning on May 14th, poor folks, advocates, and faith leaders in 35 states across the country and in D.C., gathered in their state capitals to demand action from legislative leaders to end systemic racism, poverty, the war economy and ecological devastation. They argued that this country's distorted moral narrative—one that would claim human sexuality as a moral crisis but not claim poverty as a moral crisis—was a narrative in need of fixing.

We were there in Trenton as the budget was debated and amended. We decried clearly that the budget is a moral document; one that demonstrates the values of our state and who we consider to be worthy. We were arrested for attempting to enter the statehouse during open hours in order to deliver a letter to Senate President Sweeney. Week after week, folks showed up in Trenton; raising voices to demand an end to funding the militarization of communities over the feeding of families, to call for a ceasing of the terrorizing of the Ramapough for using their land for religious ritual, to call for an accountable prosecutorial process that investigates when community members are killed by police.

Why so many different issues?

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is grounded in the belief that these issues are interconnected. We believe in a fusion movement, which is a movement of folks from diverse backgrounds, identities, cultures and geographies. We do not see these issues as different but symptoms of the dis-ease in our country today. We do not see our regions as barriers, but bridges to a greater movement.

My son was born June 6th. It was right in the middle of the six weeks. I was there the week before he was born, and back again two weeks later.

Many folks asked me why I would be there with just having an infant.

How could I not be there?

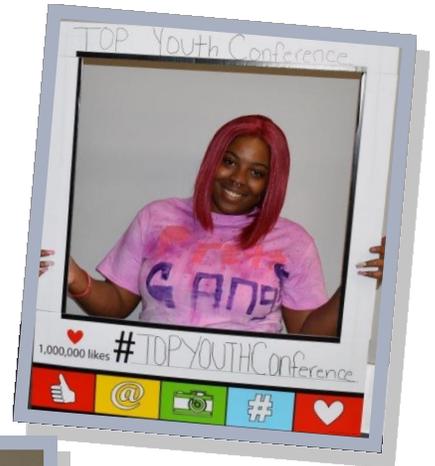
Our children's lives are on the line. It really is that straightforward. The future is now, and the decisions we make today, the battles we choose today, and the stories we tell of what matters most to us, will be what exists tomorrow.



May we tell stories that follow that arc of the moral universe and may the spirit of Justice and Love herself guide us. May all of our children live to see that day because of how we acted in these days.

UCICC Supported
Community Access Unlimited's
Transitional Opportunities Program
Annual Youth Conference- August 8, 2018

Faith In Action!





***Moved to March
2019!***

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.



RAHWAY COMMUNITY FORUM

Tuesday, September 25 at 6pm
@Zion Lutheran Church,
215 Elm Ave., Rahway

Light Refreshments and Childcare Provided



BECOME A **HAMBASSADOR**

HELP NICARAGUAN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

HAMBASSADORS' mission is to help provide freedom to victims of domestic abuse in Nicaragua. Women who escape their abusers need economic independence. Some start their own farms to provide for their families.

Owning a pig is a big deal for a Nicaraguan farmer. Especially when the pig has babies. The pigs become a source of revenue for the family.

HOW CAN I HELP?

- ✓ Raise **AWARENESS** by sharing this story
- ✓ **RAISE \$150** to buy a pregnant sow
- ✓ **RECRUIT** one additional Ambassador
- ✓ Like **HAMBASSADORS** on Facebook

DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO "HAMBASSADORS."

HAMBASSADORS, C/O A-1 BASEMENT SOLUTIONS, 1766 E 2ND ST, SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ 07076

TAKING ACTION!

THE ELIZABETH COALITION TO HOUSE THE HOMELESS

BY: LINDA
FLORES-TOBER
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

About a year ago Mr. Madison and his family moved into their apartment. It was the end of a long journey. It was a journey that included the physical assault of their daughter in school, leaving her with permanent brain damage. The journey included becoming homeless after living in a home for many years, shared with siblings only to find out that they did not pay their share of the mortgage. They found themselves on a curb and because they did not qualify for public assistance, they were locked out of the shelter system as well.

Mr. Madison did not dwell, he acted. He called Senator Booker, who called us. We placed the family in a hotel until we could sort out their needs. After some time there, they moved into Family Promise who gave them the secure and kind space they needed to begin to rebuild their lives. Eventually they were recipients of a Section 8 certificate. Again, another road block. They needed a 3 bedroom and most 3 bedrooms are \$1,800 and much more. Their certificate required that the apartment be at Fair Market Rent of \$1655 per month or less. That was impossible. The danger is that the time to find an apartment is limited. The Madison's were under a lot of pressure. Fortunately, the Elizabeth Coalition had an opening come up in their Permanent Housing Initiative where the rent was well below Fair Market Rent. The Madison's moved in September 2017. There they have remained, enjoying their lives. Finally. Their daughter, Cindy, has improved greatly and is attending private school, thanks to a scholarship. Their son is doing well too.

The Madison's barriers to getting help are an everyday occurrence at the Elizabeth Coalition. With the closing of the Plainfield YMCA shelter and the other shelters closing beds, finding shelter is extremely difficult. There are nearly no beds for families who don't qualify for public assistance (welfare). At least weekly, we have a working family come in who is sleeping in their car. They can't afford the market and luxury rents that are common in Union County including Elizabeth and surrounding towns.

The Elizabeth Coalition can shelter some of the families, but the lack of truly affordable housing (at or below Fair Market Rent) is impossible to find. Landlords demand incomes that keep rent as 1/3 of their income. This means to afford a Fair Market Rent of \$1314 for a two-bedroom apartment they have to earn \$50,000. The Median Income in Union County is \$44600.

We need to do more to create affordable housing. It is a problem that affects us all: children coming back from college, our grandparents who live on a fixed income and the people who we see every day who work in our towns: the dry cleaner counter person, the day care worker, the home health aide and nurse's aide, the people who work in the grocery store and check you out and the receptionist at your doctor's office. Everyone needs a safe, clean, place to live. Everyone.

We need to make room and find ways to make sure that everyone in our communities have a place to live. No one wants to sleep outside in a car with their children. These are our neighbors and WE can do better. The solution is in WE. Together we can solve this problem. Please join us in the effort. It won't happen without you.

Thank you,

Linda Flores-Tober



THE ELIZABETH AFRICAN- AMERICAN HERITAGE PARADE



WHEN

**Sunday, September 16th
2:00 pm Sharp**

WHERE

**Starting @ Union Square
Elizabeth Ave & New Point Rd
Elizabeth, New Jersey**

**FEATURING • The Stilt Walkers • African Float • Marching
Bands • Face Painting • Bouncing House • Music By DJ**

AFRICANAMERICANPARADE.UC@GMAIL.COM

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
YOLANDA EADY-PERKINS (908) 220-6113
OR BRENDA MCCLINTON (908) 346-1346**

FREE EVENT

MUSIC

VENDORS

PETTING ZOO

GIVE-AWAYS

SPONSORS

**City of Elizabeth
County of Union
Pepsi Co.**



CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH TAKES ACTION!

**By: Jill Garnhart; Publicity
Calvary Lutheran Church**

Calvary Lutheran Church Holds Mattress Fundraiser for Jersey Battered Women's Services on Sunday, September 23

Calvary Lutheran Church is holding a Mattress Fundraiser. That's right - a mattress fundraiser. On Sunday, September 23, from 11am to 5pm, Calvary's Fellowship Hall will turn into a mattress showroom.

"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." (1 John 3:17-18) Calvary Lutheran Church wants to provide a warm bed for those in need and we invite you to join us. For *God's Work, Our Hands* day of service, on Sunday, September 23, from 11am-5pm, Calvary will be selling mattresses to benefit NJ Battered Women's Services, Luther Haven home for the disabled, and Homefront Social & Welfare Services.

"We have a great opportunity to help people here", says Meg Spatz, SERVE coordinator for Calvary. "Think of the woman escaping domestic violence who only wants a safe place to sleep for herself and her children. Think of families outside in the elements and how comforting a warm bed is on a cold night. Organizations like Jersey Battered Women's Services and Homefront provide this comfort and we have a chance to help them."

You can purchase one or more Simmons Beauty Rest mattresses for your home - the same mattresses on sale at any Macy's or Simmons factory store, but for up to 50% less! A portion of the cost will go towards the purchase of *another mattress* to be **donated**. Don't need a mattress? Buy one to donate! Too rich for your blood? Join with others and buy a mattress together! New bedding, new pillows, and monetary contributions are also welcome.

Calvary Lutheran Church is located at 108 Eastman St. in Cranford. For more information call (908)276-2418 or go to calvarycranford.com.

Calvary Lutheran 
108 Eastman Street - Cranford, New Jersey 07016
908.276.2418 www.calvarycranford.com



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH MATTRESS FUNDRAISER

Proceeds to benefit
Jersey Battered Women's Service
and Luther Haven.



Twin From \$259 | Full From \$289 | Queen From \$299 | King /CA-King From \$499

- ✓ All Sizes Available!
- ✓ Firm, Pillow-top, Orthopedic, Latex & Gel Memory Foam Sets
- ✓ All Mattresses are **BRAND NEW** with Full Factory Warranties!
- ✓ Adjustable Beds, Luxury Pillows & Mattress Protectors!
- ✓ Name Brands like Simmons Beautyrest
- ✓ Layaway and Delivery Available
- ✓ Cash | Check | Credit Card



Adjustable Beds



Pillows

 [.com/customfundraisingnj/](https://www.facebook.com/customfundraisingnj/)

 dcox@customfundraisingsolutions.com

 [.com/CFSP Philly](https://twitter.com/CFSP Philly)
[#Beds4Calvary](https://twitter.com/Beds4Calvary)

When: Sunday, September 23
11am to 5pm

Where: 108 Eastman St, Cranford

For more info text GWOH to 797979
or go to calvarycranford.com



God's work.
Our hands.

Advocating for Faith Inclusion for People with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

By: Charlene Walker

On Behalf of the advocates of Helping Hands, the New American Movement for People with Disabilities, Jumpstart, and member's of Community Access Unlimited

"I use the term 'disabled people' quite deliberately, because I subscribe to what's called the social model of disability, which tells us that we are more disabled by the society that we live in than by our bodies and our diagnoses." -Stella Young (Australian comedian, journalist and disability rights activist.)

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are advocating all over this country to be heard and no longer let the society they live in disable them. One of the greatest desires for those with different abilities is simply to be included. Included in spaces where they don't just blend into the background and merely exist. They have a voice and different abilities that can contribute to any forum. Yet all too often people with different abilities aren't seen or truly included. I ask that you look around your place of worship and ask yourself this. Do you see your brothers and sisters with different abilities? Are they in the choir, on the welcome team, assisting with coffee hour, volunteering on community projects, or actively part of praise and worship? Have the fellow congregants formed a bond that extends outside of worship service with those that have different abilities?

Advocates from Helping Hands, a self advocacy group for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, report varied experiences from houses of worship. There are some that long to find a house of worship to call home but have been jaded by visits during their search. One individual notes that they have spent much of their life being made fun or stared at due to their body or diagnosis. As such when they attended a local temple and were given a seat at the front they felt as though this was another time to be on display as the person with different abilities. They would like other houses of worship to know that no matter how nice the gesture of sitting up front is it is important to give the person a choice. Choices are powerful, they give the person dignity, and it helps them to choose what is best for them without feeling obligated to make themselves uncomfortable in order to feel accepted.

It was also often reported that when attending houses of worship many of the interactions with the faith leader and parishioners occurred with support staff. Advocates want faith leaders and parishioners to know that even if they have a support staff with them please remember they are the one trying to worship and form a relationship. Helping Hands member, Steven Agolia, was able to help his church to embrace him and hopes that other people with different abilities find acceptance. "I love my church and have a loving relationship with Jesus. It took a while for the priest to be comfortable with me but we became friends overtime. He taught me how not to pray or sing too loudly during service and helped me a lot in confession by just talking to me. I try to go to church at least 4 days a week because it isn't like going to the store or the bank where people look down at me. I am accepted as just another person glorifying the name of Jesus Christ. I have friends at church I greet and they appreciate me."

There are other member's that point out that thanks to their involvement in fellowship and volunteer work at their house of worship they have found friends with shared interests as well as purpose. One member notes that one of her fellow parishioners picks her up sometimes to go to fellowship events and they sit together in worship. If she is having a hard time she gives her friend a call and they use their faith to manage the hard times.

She also has been able to volunteer to help senior citizens with meals on wheels and other initiatives at her house of worship. She knows that they look forward to seeing her, sharing a meal, and having a conversation about the week. Her house of worship has even praised her for her dedication to others and being an great representative of her faith.

Advocates want you to know that houses of worship should look past just contributing to those with different abilities through charity work they may provide. People living with different abilities not only share your faith but want to and can be valuable assets to your house of worship. We all have different abilities and the odds are there is someone with different abilities that can be a valuable member at your house of worship that is currently looking for a place to call home.

If you would like ideas on how to build a more inclusive house of worship Jumpstart (a consulting company of self advocates with different abilities) would love to lead a workshop at your house of worship.

Please contact Charlene Walker at 908-354-3040 ext 4371 or e-mail cwalker@caunj.org for more information.



Save the Date

**6th Annual Union County
Youth Networking Conference
October 24, 2018
8:00 AM—3:00 PM**

**Community Access Unlimited
80 West Grand St.
Elizabeth, NJ 07202**
For More Information Contact
Rolando Zorrilla at 908-354-3040 x4305
rzorrilla@caunj.org

Sponsored by:



UNION COUNTY
We're Connected to You!

Belief into Action for the Earth

By: Rev. Fletcher Harper
Executive Director– Greenfaith



Founded in New Jersey in 1992, GreenFaith is an interfaith, international environmental organization that is one of the oldest groups of its kind in the world. We work with diverse faith communities, educating about the moral and religious basis for protecting the environment, helping these communities green their operations, and mobilizing diverse faith groups for environmental advocacy and campaigns.

Our Core Values

Our work is based on beliefs and values shared by the world's religious and spiritual traditions. We believe that religious traditions see the sacred in nature and that people grow spiritually through a strong relationship with the earth. We believe that our consumption habits must help heal, restore and renew the earth. We believe that all people deserve a healthy environment, regardless of their race, gender, or income. These values represent the foundation for our work.

Developing Leaders

Our Fellowship Program trains clergy and people of diverse faiths from around the world, with a new class beginning each September. This year's class includes Fellows from North and South America, Africa, and the Middle East. We also work with seminaries through our Green Seminary Initiative, helping prepare a new generation of religious leaders to protect our precious planet. With the Oxford Center for Hindu Studies, we manage the Bhumi Project, a global Hindu environmental initiative, and we co-sponsor the Global Muslim Climate Network.

Mobilizing and Campaigning

We regularly lead multi-faith organizing for major climate mobilizations. For example, in September 2014, we led the organizing of faith communities for the Peoples Climate March, which brought over 400,000 people into the streets of New York to call for climate action. More than 15,000 people of faith took part that day in what remains the single largest religious-environmental mobilization ever.

We campaign for fossil fuel divestment and increased investment in renewable energy to provide energy access to the 1.1 billion people globally who lack modern power sources. We coordinate Living the Change, a new global initiative that invites people of faith to live sustainably by committing to change their diets, home energy use and transportation habits – the three environmentally highest-impact areas for most people. Here in New Jersey, we help lead Jersey Renews, an environment-labor-faith-community coalition pushing for ambitious climate change policies that create good jobs and cleaner air, particularly for the most heavily polluted communities.

Much has changed since our work began in 1992, with faith and spiritual communities globally more environmentally active than ever before. In response, we have embarked on a new chapter of our history by developing GreenFaith Circles, local formations which empower people of faith to build relationships, leadership skills, and power for environmental stewardship and justice. A GreenFaith Organizer convenes representatives from five or more faith communities of diverse faiths and spiritualities to put their beliefs into action for the Earth. We provide organizing training, a community of practice, and resources for the development of Circles.

We are one human family, sharing a common home. GreenFaith is proud to play a leading role in educating, inspiring, and organizing diverse faith communities for environmental action. Our members are resisting environmental degradation, generating respect for Earth's sacredness, building an economy that sustains people and the planet, and rising as a multi-faith human community. We seek to accomplish all our work in a spirit-filled, just, compassionate and sustainable manner. We hope you will join us and get involved.

Let's Drive NJ

By: Jorge Torres.



It is our duty to help our neighbors and be welcoming to all. Supporting expanding access to driver's licenses is about standing by our marginalized brothers and sisters so they can be full participants in our communities. As faith leaders from across the state and representing many traditions, we share core values of compassion, hospitality and welcoming the stranger in our midst. Our neighbors who are senior citizens, un-

documented, victims of violence and veterans are most vulnerable and become isolated when they cannot drive legally. We are unwilling to simply bear witness to the unjust, unequal status that our immigrant neighbors face. With this moral grounding, we urge you to support "Let's Drive NJ" campaign's efforts for legislation that would grant driver's license to all New Jerseyans regardless of status

Expanded access for all qualified drivers

Undocumented immigrants aren't the only qualified drivers who face barriers to obtaining a license or state ID in New Jersey.

Undocumented residents;

● Certain senior citizens;

● Survivors of domestic violence who are unable to retrieve their documents;

● People with who have changed their names after marriage;

● Transgender people whose documents may not accurately match their gender identity;

● Homeless individuals;

● Both citizens and noncitizens who have lost essential documents and have not yet obtained replacements because of cost or administrative delay.

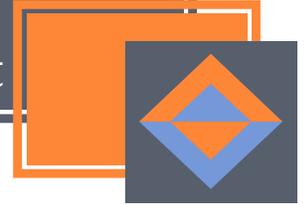
Community Needs & Urgency of issue

Thousands of New Jersey families are living in fear of ICE detention. Parents need to be able to drop their children off to schools, take them to doctor's appointments and go to work without fear of being targeted by ICE. Living in New Jersey without a driver's license puts them at a risk for deportation and separation from their families due to a simple traffic violation. Communities and families will be able to participate fully in civic life and feel more comfortable reporting crimes to law enforcement because they will have a valid form of New Jersey state identification.

September 6th, 2018, 10:30am-- Supporters from across New Jersey will be heading to the Trenton State House to rally in support of driver's licenses for more than 500,000 New Jersey residents who currently lack access. Speakers will urge the community members to join the Let's Drive NJ campaign in support of expanding access to driver's licenses.

Undocumented and mixed - status immigrant families live in fear of being stopped for a simple traffic violation and turned over to ICE. However, access to a driver's license will help many to feel safe while driving their kids to school, or taking their kids to doctor's appointments. Additionally, expanded access to driver's licenses is expected to benefit to all New Jerseyans through increased road safety, a boost to New Jersey's economy through collection of fees and insurance payments, and increase the well-being of communities by decreasing the risk of family separation.

Advocates for Children of New Jersey Advocates and Activists for New Jersey's Youngest



By: Catherine Felegi
Advocates for Children of New Jersey

Children can't vote. They have no political influence. They can't tell our state leaders what they need. And yet, we see the influence of politics on their everyday lives.

Affordable child care remains an obstacle in a state where \$222 a week for licensed child care, equating to more than \$11,500 annually, is the norm. Many parents can't afford to take paid family leave to bond with their newborn or infant at a time when their early environments matter most. And the rate of women receiving early prenatal care has declined 8 percent since 2012, per the latest data publication, *New Jersey Kids Count 2018: The State of Our Counties*.

Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) works with local, state and federal leaders to identify and implement changes that will benefit New Jersey's children. Our work results in better laws and policies, more effective funding and stronger services for children and families. As a strictly non-partisan organization, we accept no government funding for advocacy, allowing us to focus on our sole mission – to identify children's needs through research, policy and legal analysis, to raise awareness of those needs through strategic communications and to work with elected officials and other decision-makers to enact effective responses.

This year, ACNJ's efforts have resulted in legislation to help improve attendance in schools with high chronic absenteeism rates, as well as boost school breakfast participation among low-income students. In addition, ACNJ has supported efforts to bring about more lead poison testing to children under age 6 in the Garden State.

How you can get involved

Join our network of advocates

Help speak up for children at the local, state and federal levels. Sign up for ACNJ's email alerts by visiting acnj.org. You can also find us on social media by following @acnjforkids on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Most recently, ACNJ is leading a statewide comprehensive advocacy agenda for our children, from pre-birth to age 3, calling on state leaders and policymakers to improve our early childhood systems. We're bringing attention to what infants and toddlers need to thrive: strong families, healthy starts and positive early learning environments. You can visit our website to sign up for our advocacy workshops, download the advocacy toolkit and join the campaign.

Equip caregivers with information about children and the law

KidLaw is New Jersey's foremost online information source on children and the law. Through ACNJ's KidLaw Resource Center, thousands of parents, caregivers and professionals gain the information they need to be their child's strongest ally and advocate. Visit acnj.org to learn more.





For families facing difficulty navigating the K-12 education system, staff attorney Nina Peckman (npeckman@acnj.org), who is fluent in English and Spanish, assists parents by explaining the law and helping them advocate for their children in school. When necessary, she negotiates with school district staff and attends school meetings with parents. Nina also gives trainings in special education and education law to parents and professionals, including school staff, psychologists, social workers, and government agency staff members.

ACNJ’s goal is to help all children grow up safe, healthy and educated, so they can become productive adults, contributing to New Jersey’s communities, securing our future and making the state a better place to live. Through rigorous advocacy, engaging activism and fact-driven reports, we can make a difference– not for just one child, but for thousands of children across 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 PEN PAL**

 **BE A VISITOR**

 **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



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:



Sponsored by the Union County
Board of Chosen Freeholders
UNION COUNTY
We're Connected to You!



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.



Questions?

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





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.

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 –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:

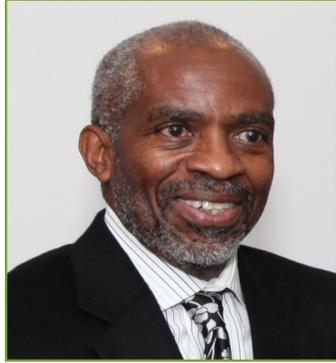
- *Age 59 or younger [head of household]; *Living in low income households;
- * Unable to access adequate food for themselves and their families.
- * Documents and interview are required to qualify.

Contact Gene Tavera X 4272.

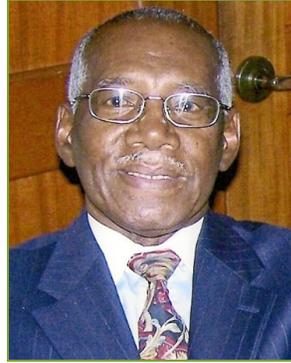
UCICC Outreach Coordinating Team



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



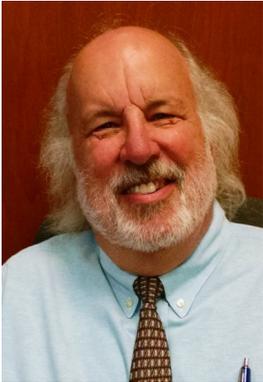
*Roderick (Rod) Spearman
UCICC Interfaith Coordinator
rspearman@caunj.org*



*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 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

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

See Right side →

UCICC Steering Committee

October 4, 2018 at 10am
80 W. Grand Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07202

See Right side →

UCICC Steering Committee

November 1, 2018 at 10:00am
80 W Grand St
Elizabeth NJ 07202

See Right side →

UCICC WOMEN OF FAITH CONFERENCE HAS BEEN RE-SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 2018 TO PROVIDE YOU WITH AN ENRICHING DAY OF ACTIVITIES

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

NO UCICC EVENT



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