

SICM NEWS

Year 42, Number 2,

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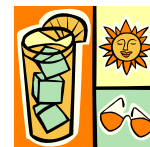
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2009 Annual Report

Summer Ministries 2009




Summer Lunch Program

Every day last summer, ten-year-old Alexandria walked alone to the site where she ate her free summer lunch. The day I met her, she was dressed in a lovely eyelet blouse, pearl necklace, black skirt, and sandals, with a ribbon in her hair. I asked: "Are you going somewhere special?" and she replied: "Yes, I'm going to summer lunch. It's the most special part of my day. Mom is working, and I don't really do anything else, so every day I dress up to go for lunch. I love summer lunch." And her smile was beautiful.



For all 10 weeks last summer, SICM offered free lunches to children and youth in Schenectady. Over 70% of our Schenectady kids qualified for free or reduced rate lunches in school, and many did not get regular meals during the school summer break. That's where the SICM lunch came in. We served free lunches at 12 locations across the city, including city parks, municipal housing complexes, and church fellowship halls.

Each lunch was served by a volunteer, and in 2009 we were fortunate to have 67 congregations and other organizations bring teams of volunteers to feed the kids. Over 650 volunteers participated in the program. We served over 37,700 lunches to hungry children; kids who, like Alexandria, enjoyed these meals and the interaction with the volunteers. This was a 24% increase in the number of meals from 2008 (during 2008 we served 30,750 lunches over 9 weeks, and in 2009 we served all 10 weeks of school break). In 2009 we opened a new site in Bellevue, at Hillhurst Park, and we closed a site in Mont Pleasant. If your congregation or group would like to help with summer lunch this year, sign up for a week or more by contacting Crys Hamelink at 374-2683, or crys@sicm.us. 

Summer Interns

In 2009, SICM was fortunate to have 13 summer interns on staff. These high school and college students were integral "cogs in the wheel" of successful summer programming for SICM! In addition to working in all SICM program areas, the interns met on a regular basis with Janet Mattis, Intern Coordinator, to reflect on their experiences and to learn about and discuss some of the unique challenges of the inner-city population of Schenectady. They were supported by Albany Street/Stanford UMC, Eastern Parkway UMC, First Reformed, Carman UMC, Lisha's Kill Reformed, Niskayuna Reformed, and Union Presbyterian Churches. The interns represented Guilderland, Niskayuna and Scotia-Glenville High Schools, and several colleges:



HVCC, Gordon College, SUNY Cortland, and Princeton University. Many thanks to all the supporting congregations, and to all the student interns without whom we would not be able to accomplish all that we do in the summer!





Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM) celebrates the partnership of 58 member congregations "relating the resources of the congregations to the human needs of the city," which means ministries of social service, education, witness and social action. The SICM newsletter and more detailed financial and program information is available from SICM at 930 Albany Street, Schenectady, NY 12307 or (518) 374-2683. FAX: (518) 382-1871.

Email address: information@sicm.us.

Website address is: www.sicm.us.

SICM's finances are audited annually by an independent auditing firm.

Ministry Notes

Seeking the Welfare of the City (for in its welfare...)

The Prophet Jeremiah had it right (verse 29:7). Reflecting on 2009, much of it is about the welfare of the city. Last year I reflected on the economy...it is still with us...and I invite us to reflect further. "Welfare" is a word with particular meanings. Welfare is used in reference to the poor, those who are dependent on society. "I don't want welfare" and so some do not go for help. Those who promote the use of Food Stamps take great pains to say it is not a "welfare" program.

The prophet meant "shalom" for "welfare." "Shalom" is also misinterpreted to mean the absence of war. It means "peace" but it also means – health, wellness, wholeness, indeed, salvation. When God's peace was visited to a house, it was blessed. Or the story of the ten who were healed and only one came back to give thanks; that one was blessed and salvation came.

Scholars tell us that shalom in the Bible is related to the poor, those on the margins, the widow, the sojourner, the orphan. A community's welfare is in trouble if the poor are endangered. Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote that you could measure a society's health by how the jails were doing! It means that the concerns of the poor come as a priority; not just

as an afterthought. There are obvious implications for public ethics here but that is for another column.

Scholars also tell us that shalom in the Bible is related to justice. It is obviously related to charity – providing directly for the poor, those with "too much money at the end of the month." But justice must be there; and justice is not the "blind justice" of lady liberty balancing a scale; God's justice is about the correcting of all imbalances, that the poor may be fed, that those (Isaiah) "who plant the gardens get to eat the fruit;" it is restorative justice. That's where Roman Catholic theologians go to get God's "preferential option for the poor."

Thank you to many who went above and beyond to not only support SICM's direct work of charity but also justice. You are truly partners in "seeking the welfare of the city" with us to keep reaching out in the most challenging of times. Much of the "Great Recession" remains: the Dow Jones average is up but not employment. With your help we were able to expand help to the hungry; to expand the services of the Damien Center leading to a new site this year; and for efforts such as Safe Parks that lead to policy change (read: justice). This passage encourages us to seek justice for those who are on "welfare" (public assistance), advocacy to increase benefit levels. This was successful for the first time in a generation and we hope against hope that the scheduled increases will not be a budget casualty this year.

In the midst of a difficult year I am greatly encouraged. The partnership with many sustains us. While seeking the welfare of the city can be seen as a burden the Prophet Isaiah reminds that when we provide bread for the hungry...then shall your light shine as the dawn...you (all) will be healed. God goes before us and with us. Thanks be to God!

Rev. Phil Grigsby

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The Assembly of SICM includes one clergy and two lay delegates from all member congregations: Albany Street United Methodist, Alplaus United Methodist, Altamont Reformed, Bellevue Reformed, Bethel AME, Burnt Hills United Methodist, Carman United Methodist, Christ Church Episcopal, Church of St. Adalbert, Duryee Memorial AME Zion, Eastern Parkway United Methodist, Emmanuel Baptist—Friedens UCC, Faith United Methodist, First Baptist, Sch'dy, First Baptist, Scotia, First Reformed, Sch'dy, First Reformed, Scotia, First Unitarian Society, First United Methodist, Friendship Baptist, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Grace Lutheran, Grace Temple Church of God in Christ, Immaculate Conception, Sch'dy, Immaculate Conception, Glenville, Immanuel Lutheran, Koinonia Christian Ministries, Lynnwood Reformed, Messiah Lutheran, Mount Olivet Missionary Baptist, Niskayuna Reformed, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Grace, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Our Redeemer Lutheran, Refreshing Spring Church of God in Christ, Rotterdam United Methodist, St. Anthony's, St. George's Episcopal, St. Helen's, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, St. Joseph's, Sch'dy, St. Joseph's, Scotia, St. Luke's, St. Paul the Apostle, St. Paul's Episcopal, St. Stephen's Episcopal, Scotia United Methodist, Society of Friends (Quakers), Stanford United Methodist, State Street Presbyterian, Tabernacle Baptist, Trinity Presbyterian, Union Presbyterian, Westminster Presbyterian, Woodlawn Reformed, Zion Lutheran.

SICM Community Service Award Recognizes Key Volunteers

SICM honored several volunteers at its December Assembly meeting with the 3rd Annual Community Service Award.

Marlene Paccico, David Winne, and the Scotia United Methodist Church Mission Team were recognized for their dedication and support of SICM programs. *Many thanks to all!*

2009 Programs in Review

Emergency Food Pantry

In 2009 the Food Pantry needed to take steps to meet the 27% increase in need from the previous year. Responding to this need, the Pantry expanded its hours of operation, adding Thursdays to its regular schedule of Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 9:00am to 11:30am. In addition, guests can now visit the Pantry 6 times in a year, rather than the previous limit of four. The Pantry continued its “mass distribution” on the last Thursday of the month, typically serving 200+ households.

Increases were seen in numbers of individuals served: 40,333 (up from 37,721 in 2008), and in numbers of meals served: 362,997 (up from 339,489). In 2009 the Pantry received 1,170,912 pounds of food!

In October 2009, the second annual Harvest for the Pantry fundraising dinner was held at Bellevue Reformed Church. Chef Nicky and local restaurants contributed food for the meal, and many local businesses donated goods and services for the silent auction. Proceeds from the auction exceeded \$3000, which added to the grand total raised at the dinner of \$15,000. Plans are underway for the 3rd Annual Harvest for the Pantry Dinner for Fall of 2010.

SICM provided support for the newly developed Community Breakfast Program at First United Methodist Church. Serving on Sundays at 8am (volunteers welcome!), it sees 100-200+ depending on the time of the month.

Donations 2009

Boy Scout Troops (various)
 BJ's Rotterdam
 Center for Disability Services
 Cobblestone Reformed Church
 Congregation Agudat Achim
 Congregation Gates of Heaven
 Girl Scout Troops (various)
 Hannaford Supermarkets
 Holy Name of Jesus
 Hospice-Community Hospice Foundation
 Hunger Action Network of NY
 Kingsway Village-Parkland Garden Apts.
 Lisha's Kill Reformed Church
 Messiah Lutheran Church
 MVP Health Care
 Niskayuna Co-Op
 Ocean State Job Lot
 Our Lady of the Assumption
 Panera Bread

Price Chopper Supermarkets
 Princetown Hourglass Seniors
 Princetown Ridge ARC
 Rev. Diana Fletcher
 Roots & Wisdom
 Roy Neville
 Roxbury Farm
 Schenectady County Conservation Council
 Schenectady County Dept. of Social Services
 Schenectady Greenmarket
 Schenectady Rotary
 Shiloh Church
 Stewart's
 Student Athlete Advisory Committee—Union College
 Union College Dining Services
 Value Options
 Van Antwerp Middle School
 Veeder Elementary School



Spiritually Sound/Physically Fit



Coordinated by Rev. Van Stuart, SSPF with support from the NYS Health Foundation, continued to expand with participants from the Damien Center, Friendship Baptist, Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist, and others. Active partnerships with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the YWCA provided diverse experiences for all who took part and led to some great successes!

Project SKIP (Schenectady Kids Imagine & Play)

Project SKIP, the effort to build a new playground in Jerry Burrell Park, is rapidly approaching the May 22 Build Day. Coordinated by Weed & Seed, it has been wonderful to see the community come together to ensure the success of this project. You can learn more or donate to Project SKIP on SICM's website.



Damien Center



What an exciting year it has been for the Schenectady Damien Center! After moving the program's location twice, changing Americorps staff members, and adding many new volunteers, the Schenectady Damien Center remains a strong and effective program.

Despite the many changes of 2009, the Schenectady Damien Center experienced no break in providing services to the HIV/AIDS community. We opened 190 days during the year, served over 2100 meals, and hosted 205 individuals. Sixty-seven new guests participated in Schenectady Damien Center programs for the first time.

Program space remained the big project during 2009. A special thanks to the First United Methodist Church of Schenectady for providing us with temporary space in their Pine Room on very short notice! Their generous welcome in February helped ensure the continuation of Damien Center programs and services. What was supposed to be a short stay of three months became an almost year-long stay, as SICM and Damien staff worked to purchase and renovate our new (and permanent!) home at 615 Nott Street. Purchased in July with money gifted by the estate of Jordan Hess, 615 Nott Street has undergone renovations to expand the kitchen and to become handicapped accessible. The certificate of occupancy was granted by the City of Schenectady on December 23rd, 2009—a most welcome Christmas gift!

Staff changes were also a very important part of 2009 at the Schenectady Damien Center. After two years of service at SDC, our part-time Americorps member Niya Brooks left Schenectady to continue her education, beginning a Master's program in Student Personnel Administration at Buffalo State University. We wish her lots of success in her endeavors! Niya's successor, Eliza Rivero, joined SDC staff in October and, thanks to the economic stimulus plan, we were able to hire her as a full-time Americorps member. Eliza has taken over managing the Damien Center's meal program, bringing with her enthusiasm, warmth, and an infectious laugh!

During 2009, we continued to serve meals four times each week, including three dinners and one lunch. As part of our "Chef Night" program, one meal each week is planned and prepared by a Damien Center guest, helping to foster a sense of ownership and cooperation among guests and staff at SDC. We have

also had continued support from several church congregations who donate and serve one meal each month. These churches include Calvary Tabernacle AOG, Eastern Parkway UMC, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Helen's Church.

Additional programs at SDC during 2009 include: the continuation of our Emotional Support Group, in partnership with the AIDS Council of Northeastern New York; continued visits from nutritionists from Cornell Cooperative Extension; sessions with medical professionals from Albany Medical Center on medication adherence techniques and emerging HIV medications; guided meditations with holistic health professionals; life skills workshops on topics such as budgeting, maximizing one's Social Security and/or disability payments, and understanding tenants' rights; and continued participation in "Spiritually Sound, Physically Fit." Through our "Out & About" program, SDC guests have continued to enjoy recreational trips to local (and not-so-local) places of interest, including trips to Proctors' iwerks Theater, the Albany River Rats, Glenville Sportsplex, Valley Cats Baseball, the Altamont Fair, Moreau State Park, the Bronx Zoo, Boulevard Bowling Alley, and the New York State Theater Institute.

With our move to 615 Nott Street now complete, SDC staff and guests are looking forward to another exciting program year. We hope that our new home will allow us the space to host additional programs; encourage participation from new guests, volunteers, and AIDS service organizations; and provide us the opportunity to offer HIV/AIDS testing. Thanks to all the SICM churches that helped support SDC programs and guests in 2009. We look forward to seeing you at 615 Nott Street during 2010!



Damien Center Open House and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony, March 16, 2010, coordinated by the Schenectady County Chamber of Commerce.

Development

SICM is blessed with continued volunteer and financial support from a variety of individuals, congregations, religious organizations, businesses and foundations. SICM is grateful to all of them.

Thank you to the Consolidated Federal Campaign; Contributor's Choice of United Way and State Employees Federated Appeal. Record numbers responded to the GE Foundation's Double Match! Thank you also to congregations that hosted SICM summer lunch sites: Faith United Methodist Church, Friendship Baptist Church (at Friendship House), New Creation in Christ and Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist, Trinity Lutheran Church and Westminster and Union Presbyterian Church (at Yates Village).

SICM received support from the Troy Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Albany Presbytery, Capital Area Baptist Association, Hudson Mohawk Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Evangelical Church of America (National); Hudson Mohawk Association United Church of Christ, Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany through CREO (Capital Region Ecumenical Organization), NYS Health Foundation, Golden Cross; Rotterdam KOFC 5703, Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church GROWTH Fund; Coburg Village Residents, Sunrise Rotary, Berkshire United Way, GE Woman's Club, Pine Grove Volunteer Fire Dept., Argo Turbo-serve Corp., The Whitney Club, Inc., Flying Geese Fabrics, Brown Transportation, I.A.T.S.E. Local #14, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Sch'dy County Chamber of Commerce, Members United Credit Union, Brown School, Church Women United, GE Athletic Assn., Country Knolls Nursery School, Sch'dy Ole Timers Baseball Club, Senior Sewers of Sch'dy, Hummingbird Home Assn., TA Predel & Co. Inc., Teal Becker & Chiaramonte, Culligan of Scotia, Red-Cap Sales, Inc., Robert E. Van Vranken and Lori Liebers, and ARMA International, LLC.

SICM received grants from Broadway Cares; Carlilian Foundation; City of Schenectady's Community Development Block Grant; The Edward D. Cammarota Foundation, BJ's Wholesale Club, Northeastern NY Thrivent Chapter, Community AIDS Partnership of the Capital Region; Concerned for the Hungry; Emergency Food and Shelter Board through United Way;



Barry Alan Gold Foundation; Macerich Company; MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger; NYS Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program; NYS Department of Education; NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; NYS legislative items through Sen. Hugh Farley and Assemblymen Jim Tedisco and George Amadore; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Rotary Club of Schenectady; Schenectady Co. Strategic Alliance for Health; Schenectady Co. Youth Bureau; Standish Family; Stewarts' Shops; United Way of the Greater Capital Region; and WGY Christmas Wish Campaign.

SICM in Collaborations

SICM provided leadership in several collaborations, i.e. coalitions of groups and/or individuals gathered for a common purpose. The Community Crisis Network, physically located at Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP, 913 Albany Street) provided a common point of entry to those seeking emergency financial and related assistance. SCAP also was an application point for winter energy assistance. CCN includes SICM, SCAP, the City Mission of Sch'dy, Catholic Charities of Sch'dy, Bethesda House, and the Jewish Community. Schenectady County Embraces Diversity continues to use the study circle model to help community members look at challenging issues of race and diversity. SCED this year worked in the various school systems. SCED includes SICM, the YWCA, the Human Rights Commission, Girls Inc., the League of Women Voters, SCCC, and others. The Safe Parks Coalition was formed this year. Representatives from over two dozen organizations meet monthly to address childhood obesity through community advocacy and environmental changes.



The Schenectady Committee for Social Justice has gathered to look at police and community issues. This year members advocated for increased support of summer youth jobs and increased affirmative action monitoring of employment, and made recommendations to the city on improving police and community relations, and the civilian police review board.



Dear Friends of SICM,

It's not always good to look back at the past year; it can be full of regret or a sense of opportunity lost. I think 2009, however, is a year we can all look back upon with feelings of relief, accomplishment and faith fulfilled.

Relief arrived after we stared at the economic downturn starting in 2008 and watched as contributions from individuals increased dramatically. Our member churches lived up to their respective commitments to SICM while facing tough challenges of their own. Further, we became a beneficiary of the GE Foundation's \$2-for-1 match program for organizations that provide urgent housing and food needs.

We accomplished much by keeping our heads up and fulfilling our mission—tens of thousands of Summer Lunches served all around the City; 50,000 meals a month provided by the Pantry; expanding in both facility size and programs at Damien and starting Safe Parks/Edible Playgrounds to give our kids places to play and nutrition literacy.

They say it's always darkest just before dawn. Many times over the years, SICM has seen lean times and turbulent waters—times like 2009. Yet every time, we've been able to steer the ship into a safe harbor. The Lord watches out for us and it shows in many ways: able leaders who come up with timely ideas, volunteers who inspire others to get involved, a previously unknown donor who steps forward. SICM is a group both inspired by faith and an inspiration for those seeking faith. Our faith turned 2009 from possibly the worst of times into our finest hour. God bless you and your families.

John Held, President, SICM Steering Committee



Memorial and Honorary Gifts

In Memory Of

Dorothy Anderson
Robert Beauchane
Dr. Joseph Cavallaro
Mama Lena Cimo
Robert Clancy
Winifred Coffee
Ruth Conklin (44 gifts)
Whitney Ferguson
Gary Garofalo
Rene Hebert
Paul Hermann
Lynn Joosten
Lydia Koslowski
Elaine Lefkowitz
Becky Lumpkin
Louise Miller "Grandma"
Frances Moffett
Eleanor Neuburger
Wilton Raney
Arthur Salvatore (18 gifts)
William Sheily
Steve Smith
Lucy Thompson
Henry Varriale (26 gifts)
Mary Winkler
Rev. Franklin Wright
Tess Zubal

In Honor Of

Rosemarie Armst
Jim & Nancy Bedard
Clarence & Ruth Browne
Paula Carosella's Birthday
Sister Sheila Christensen's 50th Anniv.
Jeanne Clap's Birthday
Tim Coombs' 50th Birthday
Julie Cupp
Marjorie Dayton's 100th Birthday
Rev. L. Edward Deimeke
Elizabeth Dobson-Davis' Birthday
Kelly de la Rocha
David & Helenmae Duff
Pastor & Mrs. Tom Duncan
Emmanuel Friedens Staff
Judy Feldman
Jeremy Flaum's Birthday
Dr. Patricia Ford
Eric Hedman
John Held
Marriage of Jean Held & Ann Sancilia
Susan Herman
Karen & Andrew Hess
Kingsway Village Staff
Ralph & Clara Laselle's 50th Anniv.
Lori-Anne Malone
Jim & Mary Ann McDermott

In Honor Of (cont'd)

Robert D. McFarland's 76th Birthday
Dana Miller's 50th Birthday
Gregory & Emily Notch
Bonnie Nuendel
Pat & Bob Obrecht
Social Justice Ministry of
Our Lady of Fatima
Ellie & Gene Rowland
Eleanor Seaver
Linda Shapiro's 50th Birthday
Edna Sill's 100th Birthday
Johanna Takaroff's 100th Birthday
Deacon Thiessen
Deacon Frank Thomas
Marriage of Holly Hazard &
Dr. William Vacca
Robert Van Vranken
Nancy Virkler
Teri Warner's Birthday

Many thanks to all for your kind acts of generosity!