

SICM NEWS

Year 40, Number 3, Fall 2009

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Grigsby,
Executive Director



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Spiritually Sound, Physically Fit Takes Off

Time to get fit in body as well as spirit! The Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM), in conjunction with several congregations and the Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Schenectady YWCA, is offering a physical fitness and nutrition program to help improve cardiovascular risk factors such as weight and blood pressure rates among members. SICM was able to expand the program this year with additional congregations and the Schenectady Damien Center (part of SICM) through a special grant from the NYS Health Foundation.

Rev. Van Stuart is coordinating the program. Groups involved (and their coordinators) include the Damien Center (Will Christman), Friendship Baptist Church (Phyllis Smalls), Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist (Virginia LaBad), and Macedonia Baptist (Rev. Harris).

The basic premise of Spiritually Sound-Physically Fit is that many people have the proper information about ways to improve their health but need support in changing habits. What is needed is not more education, but a strategy. The values and beliefs shared in religious congregations make them



an ideal "network" for fostering and encouraging a healthier lifestyle. Participants keep track of daily fitness activities, and receive support from a fitness buddy. They have periodic weight, body mass and blood pressure checks, and receive nutrition tips and recipe modifications. Prizes will be awarded for meeting personal goals!

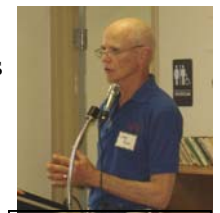
Benefits of participating in this program include: weight loss, reduction of hypertension, decreased risks of developing diabetes, decreased risk of heart disease, and in general, feel better and have fun! The program held a kick-off event with registration, demonstrations of heart-healthy foods and exercise, setting up a buddy system; and other activities. The program will conclude with a celebratory dinner and program in November..



Reception Held For Food Pantry Donors

On Wednesday, June 4, star donors to the SICM Emergency Food Pantry were honored at a reception. Held at the Pantry, the program included tours of the facility, refreshments, and remarks by Chris Rush, Co-Chair of the Food Task Force, Reverend Phil Grigsby, SICM Executive Director, and John Held, SICM President. John Held unveiled and presented a plaque with the names of the donors on it, to be displayed at the Pantry.

To date, \$180,000 of the \$280,000 loan has been raised. Therefore, \$100,000 is still needed to reach the goal.



Chris Rush



Schenectady Chamber of Commerce staff members partake in a tour of the Pantry!

Thank you to all!



Elaine Bair, delegate, with Sister Linda, both from St. Helen's.

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



One of the more unexpected events to share with you from this summer was coordinating the final affairs for Jordan Hess. I first knew Jordan through the Damien Center about a decade ago. He periodically stayed in and out of contact. He asked me to coordinate his final affairs since he had no family left. Most recently he was out of contact although I had a premonition by wondering what was up with him. Jordan was challenged all his life with a developmental disability. Literally thrown out by his mother and father, he became a mental health advocate, often on behalf of those in the VA system (he was a veteran). After his death I was blessed to get access to papers he always kept to himself. He struggled with belief and faith, but confessed ultimately faith in God. He saw himself from his own struggles and sufferings as a "wounded healer" as did Henri Nouwen. Jordan wrote about "Wounded Healers":

"We must all struggle with God to get in to heaven, as Jacob did with the angel. But because it is not possible to struggle with God and come away the victor every one in heaven has a wound. This is a connection we all have with

the cross.

The wound may be spiritual, psychological or physical.

If you think Christ's message is just rewards you will be disappointed.

He came to share our suffering, but we must also share His suffering."

Jordan, like most of us, searched for home, it's just that his search was more visible than most of us. He joined at least 5 churches around here at one point (and likely more—that's all the ones I know!). He would alternately delight and infuriate. I shared during the memorial service his piece called "The Enigma":

"A woman once gave birth, but no one knew what it was.

They were not sure if it was male or female, young or old, beautiful or ugly, wise or stupid.

Many people avoided it because it was different, and therefore made them uncomfortable.

It searched all its life for some place it was accepted and could call home. There were some who tried to love it, but it never lasted, and in the end was always left alone.

It was very sad and lonely.

But when it died, God opened his arms and said come to me my child, and it was home."

I hope some time to look at the book Jordan wrote on the mental health system. At the memorial service we gave thanks for his life, and are still discovering his legacy. While challenging, we are fortunate for the lives of people who come along our path in SICM.

Grace and Peace,
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, Mount Olivet Missionary Baptist, Niskayuna Reformed, Our Lady of Fatima, 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.

Welcome to new Steering Committee members and officers!

The Assembly in May thanked Helga Schroeter for her service as President. John Held was elected President and Peter Notch as Vice President. New or re-elected to Steering are the Rev. Stacey Midge, Phyllis Smalls, and Dr. Frank Thomas. Norm Cover was elected member emeritus.

Memorial and Honorary Gifts

In Memory Of

Parker & Lena Dillman
 Andrew L. Nicodemi
 Ann Palmieri
 Mr. & Mrs. John G. Peace
 Frank Rogan
 Barbara Whitmarsh
 David Winne

In Honor Of

Brian Aylward
 Pat Blanchard's 50th Birthday
 Diane's Birthday
 Jackie
 Dan O'Conner
 Mac Provost
 Herbert E. Speanburg & Osborne McSwain
 Bill Sttridze
 "The Best Mom" Pat Wheeler

Many thanks to all for your kind acts of generosity!



SICM Staff Changes

Farewell to . . .

Vjuana Anderson, former Program Manager of the Damien Center, who moved south with her family to pursue other opportunities. *Many thanks for your hard work and dedication. We wish you the best in your future endeavors!*

Welcome to . . .

The Schenectady Damien Center welcomed a new program manager in the spring. **Dan Butterworth** joined the SICM staff to manage the efforts of the Center, where he oversees the daily operations, recruits and engages volunteers for support, advocates for improved services for those affected by HIV/AIDS, and raises funds. Dan is a Missioner with the First Reformed Church of Schenectady, and is a native of the Capital District, having grown up in Schodack. *Welcome, Dan!* The friendly face and voice of **Sabrina Holiday-Harder** greets folks to SICM as the new Office Administrator. Sabrina is an active member of Friendship Baptist, most recently coordinating part of the farewell celebration for Rev. Stuart. She has worked locally at several organizations and most recently has advocated for the redesign of the Central Park playground so children of all abilities can play. *Welcome, Sabrina!*



Summer Interns: Once again SICM was blessed to have had several high school and college students

serving as interns. 15 interns helped to achieve the goals of the Summer Lunch program, Computers for Kids, the Damien Center, and the Emergency Food Pantry, as well as Weed & Seed. We very much appreciate all their hard work—we certainly couldn't accomplish all we do without them! They are: Colleen Brisport, Kevin Capel, Kyle Capel, Justin Chaires, Keith Coomes, Julie Cupp, Chris Grigsby, James Herrington, Amity Higgins, Josh Mason, Peter Runfola, Morgan Schmitt, Erin Sherman, Kelly Trepess and Elite Williams.



Thank you, interns!



The Last Word *by John Held*

Dear Friends of SICM,

It's been a very busy and successful time for the Summer Lunch Program. Many thanks to Crys Hamelink, the SICM Summer Interns, and the numerous volunteers from our member churches and other local organizations who all make this very vital program happen. The members of the community (especially the kids) have come to rely upon SICM to substitute for School Lunches during the summer vacation. It has become the newest addition to SICM's long time association with nutrition issues (Emergency Food Pantry, Save and Share, etc.) and is quickly becoming another face of our ministry.

Turning to the future, one of our goals for the coming fall will be to reach out to some of our member churches that have become less involved (both timewise and financially) in recent years. We aim to reestablish contact and bring some new ideas into the SICM family. You will all be hearing more about this soon. Look forward to seeing you at the next Assembly.

John Held

Food Pantry Begins Mass Distribution in May

The SICM Food Pantry started Mass Distribution in May of 2008. After a year at our new location we finally had room to try this new program out through the Regional Food Bank. On the last Thursday of each month, the RFB delivers 12 pallets of "hard to move items," especially produce that they don't want to spoil, as well as yogurt, cottage cheese, juice and bread. Each person is given a box and proceeds to each pallet and is given enough of every item according to their family size. The items change each month and this does not count against the person's regular pantry visit of 4 times a year. The food pantry is not open for regular business on that day and NO transportation is provided! The stats are proof of the success of this program so far:



Served	May	June	July
Families	340	305	342
Total Individuals	1387	1158	1331



SAVE THE DATE! Sunday, November 8, 2009



Harvest for the Pantry

a dinner to raise funds for the

SICM Emergency Food Pantry

Date: Sunday, November 8, 2009
 Time: 4:00pm to 7:00pm
 Location: Bellevue Reformed Church
 2000 Broadway, Schenectady



Featuring:

- delectable appetizers, main courses, salads and desserts from local restaurants
- silent auction
- jazz music

Tickets:

- available at the SICM Office, 930 Albany Street, 374-2683
- \$25 per person, a portion of which is tax-deductible

*Please join us for an evening of fun and fellowship,
 and show your support for the Food Pantry!*



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