

# SICM NEWS

Year 47, Number 2 Fall 2015

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*Schenectady Inner  
City Ministry*

SEFA #50-00396

Web: [www.sicm.us](http://www.sicm.us)

## SICM Summer Meals Program Breaks Records!

Summer Lunch 2015 was the largest Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in its 22-year history! Over a 10-week span when school was out, the program served 75,260 lunches, an average of over 1,535 daily. The peak days in the mid summer were over 2,250 when all sites were operating.



Rev. Phil with the Summer Lunch Crew: Rachel Curtis, Director, Eileen Ploetz and Kara Williams, Assistant Directors

SICM hosted in July the annual Summer Lunch Kickoff in Jerry Burrell Park, with plenty of activities for the children. Flutterbug Magic provided an intriguing magic show, Usborne Books gave away brand new books to each child, and the Schenectady Police Officers who



One of two vehicles providing lunch to children around Schenectady last summer.

*(continued on p. 4)*

## SICM Welcomes Rev. Sanders as Chief Diversity Officer Will Continue, Expand Schenectady County Embraces Diversity (SCED)

SICM is pleased to announce the hiring of the Rev. Horace Sanders, Jr. this summer as Chief Diversity Officer. Known to the SICM family as Senior Pastor of Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist Church, he began his new 'day job' this summer with SICM. He formerly worked with CDPHP.



Rev. Horace Sanders, Jr.

Earlier this year the SCED Steering Committee voted to ask that the SCED program come under the SICM umbrella. Started some 15 years ago, SCED currently runs a 'study circle' program for middle and high school youth; but in prior years had programs on race and diversity for adults, including some with the Police. Part of the hope in transitioning to SICM was to identify resources to expand the program beyond youth. Also, this year Kay Ackerman, who very ably coordinated the program for many years, announced her 'next' retirement and we needed a new coordinator. The school portion of SCED is supported by all the area school districts.

After discernment, SICM decided to move ahead and venture into a new position and engage Rev. Sanders. Given the times and need for more community conversation on the challenging issues of race and diversity, it seems like an important step to provide leadership within SICM and the community. The term 'Chief Diversity Officer' is

*(continued on p. 4)*

## All Invited to Annual Harvest for the Pantry November 8, 2015

SICM will hold its 8th Annual fundraiser, Harvest for the Pantry, at the First Reformed Church of Scotia. The event will feature the fine cuisine of Chef Nicky, a silent auction and a "pick-a-prize." A variety of items have been donated, including gift certificates from local restaurants and performance venues, retail stores, artwork, jewelry and more! Tickets (for \$30) are available at the SICM Office. All are welcome!



*Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM) celebrates the partnership of 50 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 1055 Wendell Avenue, Schenectady, NY 12308 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

### Summer and 2 Anniversaries

How was your summer? As you read in this newsletter, with SICM it was a very busy and productive time. As we are in the Fall and head towards Winter, I am thankful for all who made it happen - staff, volunteers, community partners, funding sources, vendors, and all! I am not going to repeat here - but want to give thanks that summer meals could serve the most; that Mobile Meals vehicles came on line successfully; that we could engage Rev Sanders to work full time with us as Chief Diversity Officer; that the Camp@Steinmetz in partnership with Camp Fowler had a successful second year; and we could undertake a pilot program with Fox Creek Farm in the Northside area!

In the summer we also received resources from two unexpected places. With the changes in our community, two churches are no longer with us: Albany Street United Methodist Church and Grace Lutheran. Both were early SICM partners (indeed Grace was the first suburban church to join SICM), both experienced the dramatic demographic shifts in our community and culture and no longer exist. Members of Albany Street partnered with Stanford UMC for a number of years; those remaining with Grace partner with Prince of Peace Lutheran. Both cared greatly for SICM and

as part of their legacy when they sold their building they shared a portion of the proceeds with SICM! We honor their legacy and their gifts make it possible to move into the future!

I also want to reflect with you on two anniversaries: St. Joseph's Place and SICM's. Time flies and September was the first anniversary of St. Joseph's Place. I vividly recall the phone call with the late Fr. Mike Hogan: could SICM buy the Traffic Division building for a new ministry? Modeled after the "kitchen table" that he encouraged when Sacred Heart/St. Columba's was open, it is a ministry of hospitality. Many gathered to celebrate and affirm. There are some detractors; some believe it encourages illegal activity. However if you come visit you will see it does not. It is a place of prayer and welcome; small amounts of food and coffee; and a place of healing and hope. All are welcome to 'come and see' as it is open during the week in the mornings and afternoons (except not Tuesday morning). Come visit with Sr. Ann and Sr. Linda. The place embodies St. Francis' words: preach the gospel at all times; if necessary use words.

Second, time flies and we are relatively soon upon the 50th anniversary of SICM! It feels like 'just yesterday' when I came in 1986; and SICM before that essentially had only one other person in leadership, the Rev. Robert Pierce. SICM is very different from when people first gathered in 1966 and 1967 to forge the SICM covenant and in faith hired the Rev. Pierce (budgets were challenging then also). SICM is far beyond what the founders envisioned.

I invite your recollections; and invite you to reflect on how we could celebrate this 50 years. With prior anniversaries we have had special services, times of re-covenanting, and even a gathering at Proctor's. Or we could do something different!

Such occasions are not meant to be, or should not be, occasions for nostalgia, thinking about the 'good

*(continued on p. 5)*

#### **SCHENECTADY INNER CITY MINISTRY**

*Executive Director: Rev. Phillip N. Grigsby*

*Editor, SICM News: Janet Mattis*

The Assembly of SICM includes one clergy and two lay delegates from member congregations: Alplaus UMC, Altamont Reformed, Bellevue Reformed, Bethel AME, Burnt Hills UMC, Carman UMC, Christ Church Episcopal, Church of St. Adalbert, Duryee Memorial AME Zion, Eastern Parkway UMC, Emmanuel Baptist—Friedens UCC, Faith UMC, First Baptist, Sch'dy, First Reformed, Sch'dy, First Reformed, Scotia, First UMC, Friendship Baptist, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Holy Name of Jesus PNC, Immaculate Conception, Immanuel Lutheran, Lynnwood Reformed, Messiah Lutheran, Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist, New Consecration Temple, Niskayuna Reformed, Our Lady of Grace, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Our Redeemer Lutheran, Prince of Peace Lutheran, Refreshing Spring, Rotterdam UMC, St. Anthony's, St. George's Episcopal, St. Kateri Tekakwitha, 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 UMC, Society of Friends (Quakers), Stanford UMC, State Street Presbyterian, Tabernacle Baptist, Trinity Presbyterian, Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady, Zion Lutheran.

## Summer Interns 2015

Once again, SICM was blessed to have students serving as summer interns. 18 interns helped to achieve the goals of the Summer Lunch program, the Emergency Food Pantry, the Camp@Steinmetz, and the Home Furnishings Program. We very much appreciate all their hard work—we certainly couldn't accomplish all we do without them! They were: Lily Becker, Shelby Bryson, Connor Chew, Olivia Cox, Beatriz Cruz, Greg Diebold, Jefferson Gardner, Nicole Gentile, Stephanie Macri, Lilly Perry, Hemanjali Persaud, Kate Sears, Bhartie Singh, Ben Taubner, Erin Thiessen, Aliajah Thomas, Nephetimah Wilkes, and Anna Winters. Also thanks to former interns who served as "pinch hitters" for us when we were short staffed this summer:

Lizzy Gallagher, Peter Krauss and Anna Mattis. The interns were sponsored by Bellevue Reformed, Eastern Parkway UMC, First Reformed (Sch'dy), Lynnwood Reformed, St. George's Episcopal, St. Kateri RC, St. John the Evangelist, St. Edward's, Trinity Presbyterian, Union Presbyterian, Thaddeus and Sylvia Raushi, and Austin & Marti Spang. As a requirement, interns are asked to write a paper reflecting on their experiences; here are some insights:

"This summer has been one of the most extraordinary experiences of my life. I have made a positive impact in the community, helped others less fortunate than myself, and had more fun than I could have ever imagined. My internship at SICM is fully responsible for this feeling."

"Throughout this summer, whether I was at a lunch site, working in the office, setting or cleaning up, or working at the pantry, I knew I was growing. When I joined SICM last year I was diving headfirst into murky waters – I had no idea what was coming, or how I would change. But every day when I come to this job



End of summer Intern Party!

I know even more that I want to spend the rest of my life helping other people. Being given more leadership positions this year has increased my confidence and helped me to understand what it really means to lead. . . I went to work knowing that I really do have a greater purpose in my life other than living just for myself. And it is beautiful to be able to work side by side with teenagers who have that same vision in their head. . . . This internship centers me over the summer and reminds me of who I want to be, and I'm so grateful that

I've had the chance to be a part of SICM again this year. I will never forget the experiences I've had here over the past two years and am positive that I will never lose the passion SICM has given me for helping others. I plan to continue being a part of this organization in the future in whatever way I can."



Home Furnishings Crew

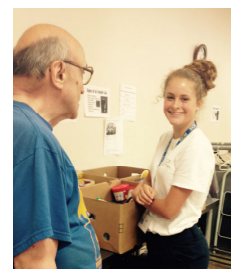


Morning SL setup

"I learned how to lead others with kindness and understanding, and realized that the attitude you approach co-workers with can greatly impact not only their mood in that moment but how they feel about their job and the quality of your group's work as a whole. I realized that the key to being a good leader isn't simply knowing what to do, but also involves knowing how to cooperatively engage your peers while treating them with respect."

"This internship ended up being the perfect way to spend a summer. I was able to do something I consider valuable, while learning great skills that will help me out in any job I have in the future. This hasn't just been a summer job, this has been an experience that has made

me rethink what I have to offer to the world. I feel blessed to have had this experience this summer. Leaving my bubble of Niskayuna, and seeing with my own eyes how many people need help has made poverty less of a thought and more of a reality to me. The experience this summer gave me has made me want to be a lifelong volunteer and neighbor to those in need." For information on the 2016 program, check the SICM website in February.



Rocco and Lily enjoy a light moment at the Food Pantry



2015 Summer Interns



## Rev. Horace Sanders *(cont'd from p. 1)*

often used with larger institutions; in this situation it is for both the SICM family and the community.

In addition to finding ways to enhance SCED, Rev. Sanders will be involved in exploring ways to develop parent empowerment training using the Parent Leadership Training Institute model developed elsewhere.

Rev. Sanders is a 2008 graduate of Drew University Divinity School and continues to serve at Mt. Olivet where he was called over three years ago. He is originally from Bronx, NY, reared in South Carolina but has served in ministry in churches in the NYC metro area prior to coming to the Capital District.

Rev. Sanders' office is at the church/SICM, and can be reached at 374-2683 ext 112; or via email: [fear-not@sicm.us](mailto:fear-not@sicm.us).

### SFSP *(continued from p. 1)*



Summer Lunch is yummy!

were serving that day had fun with bubbles with the children! The United Way of the Greater Capital Region, an ongoing strong supporter, gave away color-changing cups, and provided delicious "sno cones" for all. Remarks were made by local dignitaries, and checks were presented by Key Bank and 1st National Bank of Scotia. The SFSP fills in when children and youth are not in school. In Schenectady the need is great: 80%+ of young people in school are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

The media identified the need with several articles (in the Times Union) that Schenectady ranks 13<sup>th</sup> from the bottom in terms of the rate of child poverty – 50.8%. The SFSP helps fill the gap when school is out.

SICM started the program 22 years ago with just one site, Central Park. The increases in the past few years are due in part to the increase in the number of sites - 30 fixed sites and 16 mobile sites. The Program is



Schenectady Police Officers partake in the bubble bonanza at the Summer Lunch Kickoff.

available in all parts of the city at parks, churches, housing authority complexes, and other sites such as the downtown public library and the MiSci Museum.

Three years ago SICM initiated a Mobile Meals program. Operating first with rented school buses and this year with vehicles designed for the task, the Mobile Meals component has grown. The Mobile vehicles made 16 stops in areas where children gather. This year the meals included both cold and shelf-stable meals.

The Mobile Meals vehicles were made possible by a collaborative through the United Way of the Greater Capital Region, with grants from the Wright Family Foundation and the Carlilian Foundation, the Upper NY Conference of the United Methodist Church, and with additional funds from SICM.

The program operates with site supervisors, interns from area congregations, and teams of volunteers from both faith-based and secular groups such as GE. Often the volunteer teams provide books or other resources; some provide games and provide activities for the children. This year over 750 volunteers took part.

The SFSP is supported by funds from the U S Department of Agriculture, operated by the NYS Department of Education. SICM received support from the United Way of the Greater Capital Region's program, United Against Hunger, and the Bank of America Foundation. The food vendor was Whitson's.



Marcus and Gage are happy owners of new books!



Jennifer Zhao of Usborne Books brought over 200 books to hand out!

## SICM Food Program Developments

Over the summer and into the Fall, the program moved ahead with a number of new initiatives. Shelly Ford at a recent SICM Assembly indicated that the Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables has now a 'standing room only' crowd in the first week of the month. Cornell Cooperative Extension continues to come with cooking demonstrations and recipes. A first ever diversity training drew a large number of volunteers to reflect on important topics. Mass distribution continues to draw record numbers on the last Thursday of the month; this past month Shelly noted it was the best ever for the variety offered from the Regional Food Bank. Finally, Senior Connect is again offered to give an introduction to seniors who could use the pantry but may not be coming; to participate call Shelly at 346-4445.

## Camp@Steinmetz Has a Successful Second Year

Directed by seminarian Ryan Cogswell, the Camp had a very successful second year; 6 interns (please see intern story) worked as a dedicated team to make it happen. It was held at Steinmetz Park, on the Niskayuna end of Lenox Rd. (and just up the hill from Yates Village). The camp enrolled regularly 35 campers; 25 on average attended. For the first time, we had a waiting list of 20 potential campers! The campers came not only from the immediate area but all over the community.



Field trip to Camp Fowler

The camp is a partnership with Camp Fowler, an inclusive Christian camp based in Speculator, NY; Camp Fowler has expanded with satellite programs in urban areas. Participants in the Steinmetz Camp are eligible to attend Camp Fowler as well. The purposes of the camp were two fold: to show the children that God and Jesus love them; and to encourage their imagination to avert the 'summer slide.' The Camp is free, and enrolls youth ages 7 to 12. The daily program included Biblical stories, songs, discovery activities, gardening, and supervised games.



Magic show

This year the camp was over a 6-week period, from 8:30 am with an optional breakfast through lunch. Trips were once a week and included travel to Camp Fowler (3 times), MiSci, the Aerospace Museum in Glenville, and the Fox Creek Farm. While all were memorable, the most striking image was the campers picking and eating green beans! Most had never been to a working farm, and some families then participated in the pilot CSA at Yates that SICM led this year.



Nephie teaches hip hop to the campers!

The Camp was supported by contributions and a grant from the Times Union Hope Fund through the Community Foundation. Hannaford Helps with the Hope Fund already announced support for next year's camp!

### Ministry Notes (cont'd from page 2)

old days.' While we reflect and take notice of the changes (of which there are many; see the church closings above!), anniversaries are better served as times to give thanks, to celebrate, to tell the story, and then as prologue to what is next. We have been about "seeking to relate the resources of the churches to the needs of the city" in many ways over the years. Anniversaries can be ways to educate about where we are and how we discern our call. We know that as we journey with God that in the ancient words "there is still more light to break forth." So what are your ideas for SICM's anniversary? Please give me a call.

*Rev. Phil Grigsby*

### Interactive Food Resource Map Now Available

SICM is committed to addressing the issue of food insecurity in Schenectady. We have partnered with Ellis Medicine, SCAP, Schenectady County Public Health, the Schenectady Foundation, the City Mission, United Way and others to address ways to reduce food insecurity in Schenectady. One result of this effort is an interactive map of Schenectady County ([sicmfood.com](http://sicmfood.com)) showing the location of the wide array of available food sources. For more details, see the SICM website, [www.sicm.us](http://www.sicm.us). This map is intended to be a resource, for low income residents in particular, that identifies these available food resources (e.g., grocers, food pantries, vendors who accept SNAP benefits) and provides contact information. and days/hours of operation.



Rachel Curtis explains SICM's Community Supported Agriculture (CAS) new initiative.

## Schenectady Inner City Ministry

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### **The Last Word** *by Shirley Readdean*

I find it hard to believe that summer has left us. As we move into fall, we can look back and celebrate the activities of the summer of 2015.

This summer the SICM Summer Lunch program served over 75,000 lunches, increasing numbers served by about 10,000 lunches when compared to the Summer of 2014. This increase was made possible by the addition of 2 new lunch mobiles, thanks to a caring community and grants from the Wright Foundation, the Carlilian Foundation, United Way of the Greater Capital Region and the Upper New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Another item for celebration is the introduction of the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. This is a program that brings fresh produce to the Northside community. Customers are able to use SNAP benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance) Program to purchase the produce.

Camp Steinmetz has completed its second year, providing an inner city camping experience for children. This is a collaborative camp with staff training provided by Camp Fowler. The campers spent some of their time on field trips to Fox Creek Farm, to the miSci Museum, and to Camp Fowler in Speculator, New York.

These celebratory events would not have been possible without the wonderful giving spirit of this community. The gifts of funds, volunteer time, and general supportive actions are greatly appreciated by the SICM Steering Committee as well as the SICM staff.

Thank you, Schenectady!