



SiCM News
 Year 54 Number 1
 Spring 2021



Photo from Share the Warmth - story on page 3

BUILDING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE WITH NEW LEADERSHIP



**MEET AMAURY
 TAÑÓN-SANTOS**

Spring is in the air and with it brings many new things to SiCM. Join SiCM in welcoming new Executive Director, Pastor Amaury Tañón-Santos, as we race to complete construction of the community center on Albany Street. The pressure is on to get the community center up and running for summer programs. New offices are installed on the upper level, the Community Learning Kitchen will be outfitted with appliances, and the Resource Room will be filled with new computers. The front of 837 Albany St., where St. Joseph's Place and Patty's Place offer their hospitality and resourcing has been outfitted with a new door and windows allowing much needed light into the building. We can't complete this project without your help. To donate please visit www.sicm.salsalabs.org/capitalcampaign
More from Amaury on page 2!

Steering Committee 2021

- Rachel Curtis, President
- Rev. Peter JB Carman, Vice President
- Randy McGough, Treasurer
- Anne Cole, Secretary
- Sharon Astyk
- Diana Bennett
- Sr. Ann Christi Brink
- John Carter
- Rev. Tim Coombs
- Shae Fitzgerald
- Rev. Nicolle Harris
- William Monaghan
- Melanie Puerto-Conte
- Barbara Vivier
- Emerita Members:
- Rev. Diana Fletcher
- Past President:
- Shirley Readdean
- Dr. Amaury Tañón-Santos, Executive Director/CEO

Make an Impact - Apply for a Summer Internship at SiCM



SiCM needs interns this summer to help at our Summer Meals program, Food Pantry, and Schenectady Urban Farms. A SiCM Summer Internship will provide paid, hands-on experience working during the summer of 2021. It will include planning, training, setting up daily sites, overseeing volunteers, working with children from Schenectady County and organizing site activities – to name just a few experiences. The Summer Meals program will run from the end of June 2021 through the end of August 2021. Working dates can be flexible due to school responsibilities. There are full or part-time positions available. Deadline to apply is 4/30/21. Call Laura Pinckney for more information. SiCM office phone: 518-374-2683 ext 103 or email at LauraP@sicm.us.

VIRTUAL CROP Walk 2021
 We can use it to our advantage and take a walk every day to end hunger! Register online at the new website!
 We will not be gathering or walking with a large group together this year

CROP Walk helps fund national, international and local food pantries. Contact Chinira Lovick for more information: chiniraL@sicm.us 518-374-2683 x 107

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/event/schenectadyn>

SCHENECTADY COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

PO Box 1049
873 Albany Street
Schenectady, NY 12301-9998
Phone: 518.374.2683

E-mail: info@sicm.us
Website: ww.sicm.us

The Assembly of SiCM includes one faith group leader and two lay delegates from member congregations: Alplaus UMC, Altamont Reformed, Bellevue Reformed, Bethel AME, Burnt Hills UMC, Christ Church Episcopal, Church of St. Adalbert, Congregation Gates of Heaven, Duryee Memorial AME Zion, Eastern Parkway UMC, Emmanuel Baptist—Friedens UCC, Faith UMC, First Baptist, First Reformed, Sch'dy, First Reformed, Scotia, First UMC, Friendship Baptist, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Holy Name of Jesus PNC, Immaculate Conception, Immanuel Lutheran, Lishakill Reformed Church, Lynnwood Reformed, Parsons Memorial-COGIC, Messiah Lutheran, Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist, 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 of God Parish CACINA, St. John the Evangelist, St. Joseph's, Sch'dy, St. Joseph's, Scotia, 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, Trinity Reformed Church, Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady, Zion Lutheran

Dear Friends of SiCM,

My first weeks in service to SiCM have been eventful. The welcome from the staff, the steering committee and community partners has been warm, which I truly appreciate. The work ahead is great and manifold, which I knew coming in.

More immediately, I am working with key staff and the steering committee in updating the internal structures and processes of SiCM. This will allow us to be better

prepared to engage fully in a strategic planning process – one of the main responsibilities of my coming on board.

As you well know, SiCM's assembly and steering committee have stated their goal for us to become an interfaith, social justice, and racial reconciliation agency. To achieve this goal, we will embark in an intentional process of consultation of our member and partner congregations, sister community organizations, and the individuals we serve day in and out. This consultative process will give us the information we need to best articulate who, what and how the people of Schenectady will have us be with and for them in fostering community, service, and organizing. Having this clear articulation will also give us the proper framework to best develop the spaces we have been gifted within the 837-839 Albany Street campus. In short, we are getting ready for the future these 50+ years of service to Schenectady has been preparing us for.

As you can imagine, this strategic planning process will take a while, especially because we want to be intentional about reaching out to as many partners as we can. Our strength as an organization, predicated in our now close to 55 years of service with Schenectady, is our ability to be a collective of individuals, organizations and resources for the sake of justice, peace and love. Please, consider supporting SiCM's justice work with your financial donation by visiting <https://www.sicm.us/donate/>. Please, stay safe, wear a mask, and sign up for a COVID-19 vaccine if you can.

I am available to you via email or phone. We will soon announce when our offices will be more readily open to general public. I ask that you keep me in your devotional thoughts and/or prayers. I am looking forward to our work of expanding our service capacity with and for Schenectady. For this work I will need wisdom – the one that comes from you and the one that comes from the Divine.

Peace!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amaury Tañón-Santos'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Amaury Tañón-Santos, DMin
Executive Director/CEO
Schenectady Community Ministries

FOOD INSECURITY ON THE MOVE



Volunteers fill a car with fresh food at Mass Distribution at Our Lady of Mt Carmel. SiCM is making great strides to focus on food insecurity in areas of high need throughout Schenectady County. Through our delivery system we were able to derive statistics on what areas are particularly affected by food insecurity, urban food deserts, and the Covid-19 pandemic. We now have a better focus on what neighborhoods to place our services like Mass Distribution at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel for the Mt. Pleasant and Bellevue neighborhoods, continued deliveries for Seniors and those personally impacted by Covid-19 quarantine, and eventually Pop-up Pantries, which will serve different mobile sites throughout the entire county.

If you or someone you know needs to schedule a food delivery please call the Emergency Food Hotline at (518)346-4445 x 1. If you would like to volunteer your time in an effort to eradicate food injustice, please call Tom at (518)456-4445 x 2.



Katie from Progressive Schenectady speaks about the importance of climate justice.

A diverse and growing coalition of local faith communities, conservation nonprofits and racial justice organizations gathered on Thursday, March 11th in the Stockade to rise in unity and demand the passage of the Climate and Community Investment Act (CCIA) this spring in New York State. The vigil was part of a statewide and global day of action on climate justice organized by NY Renew and Green Faith called "Sacred People, Sacred Earth." For more photos visit SiCM on facebook at facebook.com/sicmny.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE
Meetings are every last Wednesday of the month at 6PM. Contact Shelly Ford for more information by email at Sford@sicm.us or call her at 518-374-2683 x 111.

INTERFAITH COMMITTEE
Meetings are every 2nd Wednesday of the month at 1:30PM. Contact Laura Pinckney for more information by email at Laurap@sicm.us or call her at 518-374-2683 x 103.



Updates from Schenectady Urban Farms

Schenectady Urban Farms is offering new memberships for the 2021 growing season. Right now we are cleaning up from the winter and planting sugar snap peas to start. We are getting a lot of compost from a local farmer to add to our beds. One of the early tasks will be turning compost into all our vegetable growing beds. We will also offer a series of orientations at all the

farms as well as Open Hours when the farms will be open for you to come and work. We started giving out the vegetable seeds many supporters helped repackage. We have seeds available if you are looking for some to plant at home or you know someone who could use some seeds.



We have also tapped maple trees for maple syrup at the Vale Farm. Visit our facebook page to watch the informational video. Visit sicm.us/about-us/schenectady-urban-farms to get signed up for a membership.

Dreaming of spring sunshine and warmed soil - Melissa, Schenectady Urban Farms

Thank you for donating to Souper Bowl 2021!

We have received \$10,615 and 201lbs of food and counting...!



SiCM Shares The Warmth Thank You to our Community Partners



Thank you to MVP, the staff and community partners that donated winter coats, hats, gloves, and other warm weather accessories to our Share The Warmth Event. SiCM took the opportunity on a cold January Tuesday to host Share The Warmth

at the SiCM Food Pantry parking lot. Staff, guests, and volunteers handed out coats and allowed guests to comb through the gloves and hats for their family members. Over 100 new coats were distributed to local Schenectady residents at the SiCM Food Pantry.





Schenectady Community Ministries

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The Last Word by Rachel Curtis, President of SiCM

Happy Spring! March 13, 2020 is a day that forever changed business as usual. The last year has felt something like the twilight zone. For SiCM, despite the pandemic that has raged on, change and transition have been the focus. The Capital Campaign has made great improvements to the infrastructure of the 837-

839 Albany Street buildings, and is nearly done! I cannot wait to see the community center all ready to roll, and the various innovative community programming that will be made possible through its completion.

The Interfaith Forum held in early February, with representatives from the Sikh, Islamic, Jewish, Pagan, and Christianity religions, was well-attended and informative. I tend to center myself on the idea that love is love. I believe that as we collectively reach toward our higher power(s), we can overcome the evil that the social construct of race has bestowed upon the world. Of course this effort alone is not the complete answer, yet it is certainly part of the equation. For me, along with others, this forum was cathartic - as it was clear that regardless of faith, love and good will toward one another are central to the success of the righteous human experience.

Last summer, as a byproduct of my SiCM Steering membership, and as a part of my work with the Schenectady City School District, I connected one of our summer programs with the Schenectady

Urban Farms. Colleagues and I were able to work on the farm, film ourselves doing so to broadcast for our virtual learners, and deliver fresh organic produce to families who otherwise may not have been able to afford it. As a result, I have decided to become a member for this upcoming growing season. For just \$25, and 2 hours of work per week at any of the three locations, membership is yours! If you care to sponsor a family in need instead or in addition, this is also an honorable option.

SiCM's Social Justice Committee was responsible for the anti-racism statement that has been published on our website. Significantly, the Black Lives Matter banner on the front fence of Albany Street has provided some comfort to our guests, many of whom are from marginalized groups. I use the term 'marginalized' instead of 'minority' here, because it shifts our focus from the number of bodies to power dynamics, systems of oppression, and peoples' shared experiences within them. Schenectady County Embraces Diversity (SCED), with Shirley Readdean and Sr Renee Adamany, CSJ, leading the charge, is getting the next generation of circle facilitators ready for this important work.

I believe the most significant step SiCM has made recently toward an anti-racism commitment is in the hiring of our new Executive Director, Amaury Tañón-Santos. He is committed to racial reconciliation, and will lead the inside of the organization in a way that is reflective of the banner that hangs on the outside. I look forward to the work ahead!

