

# SICM NEWS

Year 44, Number 3, Summer 2012

## Steering Committee 2012-2013

Rev. Stacey Midge,  
*President*

Jack Sweeney,  
*Vice President*

Pat Obrecht,  
*Secretary*

Jim Bedard,  
*Treasurer*

Peter Notch,  
*Past President*

Cheryl Gerstler

Jim Raymond

Helga Schroeter

Rev. Megan Stowe

Dr. Frank Thomas

Don Wheeler

*Emeritus/a Member:*  
Rev. Diana Fletcher

Rev. Phillip N. Grigsby,  
*Executive Director*



*Schenectady Inner  
City Ministry  
1055 Wendell Ave.  
Sch'dy, NY 12308  
Tel: 518 374-2683  
Fax: 518 382-1871  
information@sicm.us  
www.sicm.us*

## 2011/12 Annual Report

It has been a full and exciting year at SICM! We have been busy continuing programs, starting new initiatives, and collaborating more in the community. Read ahead to learn more about what we've been up to during our 2011-2012 fiscal year!

### SICM Community Service Award Recognizes Key Volunteers

In December 2011, SICM held its annual Holiday Potluck Dinner in conjunction with the December Assembly Meeting. This provided an opportunity to honor some very special volunteers with the annual Community Service Award: Ellie Rowland, Nancy Peterson, Westoria Poole, and Gene Woodard. The award is intended to honor a volunteer or volunteer group within the SICM ministries network that goes "above and beyond."

**Ellie** is nominated for the SICM Community Service Award for her excellent contributions overall as a SICM delegate from Union Presbyterian Church, and for her outstanding volunteer service with the Emergency Food Pantry, the Summer Lunch Program, and her help with the SICM Steering Committee.

**Nancy** began serving as a SICM delegate representing First Unitarian Society of Schenectady in 2007. Nancy was instrumental in educating Schenectady residents about household hazardous waste, and provided an opportunity for them to drop off their household hazards free of charge.

**Westoria Poole** was nominated for the SICM Community Service Award for her outstanding efforts with the SICM Summer Lunch program at Friendship House over the years. For the past decade or longer, Westoria has served as the lead volunteer coordinator of this site.

**Gene** is a volunteer for the SICM Food Pantry, who goes "above and beyond" in helping those in need in the community. He is nominated for his outstanding efforts with the Food Pantry over the past 5 years, picking up baked goods at Hannaford and BJ's, and delivering to the Pantry, and for having worked at every mass distribution day since the program's inception a few years ago at the Pantry.



\*\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*\*

### Harvest for the Pantry

**Date:** Sunday, November 4, 2012

**Time:** 4:00pm to 7:00pm

**Location:** First Reformed Church of Scotia  
224 North Ballston Avenue, Scotia



*Check the SICM website for more information!*

# Ministry Notes

*Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM) celebrates the partnership of 54 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.*

## 2012 Reflections from the 45th

Thanks to some notebooks compiled by Rev. Jim Miller, formerly pastor at Emmanuel Baptist Church, we have some early documents. We were fortunate that Jim, who now lives in Providence (and pastors another Emmanuel Baptist there) was able to share a message with us for the 40th anniversary.

While SICM was formed over a period of time, the only particular 'date' is March 11, 1967. During this Saturday morning session, pastors and lay delegates adopted the SICM covenant. It is pretty much what we have today. SICM was originally called the Schenectady Ecumenical Urban Ministry. While in many ways this title better reflects our mission, SICM was and is a catchier acronym.

Over the years, of course, we have in some ways outgrown our name. Folks then did not see how we the people would spread out. Some of this simply related to more affluence - we could afford to move to suburbs. Some, of course, was less benign - we experience 'white flight' and the three central cities of our area have most of the diversity. And even though we try hard to use 'ministry' all the time, others put

'mission' and we get confused with the City Mission (we are not them and vice versa; call me if you would like information on this topic).

But the past is prologue. I want to recall to us some parts of a report given on the status of SICM in March 1969: "SICM was born out of the conviction that the church must participate in new ministries and that a significant portion of these ministries are related to the social problems in an urban environment. It is believed that Christ's message can be carried well beyond the church membership by identifying with and confronting the social problems of our rapidly changing urban society..."

And from a 1967 document: "The underlying strategy of SICM is mission. The church does not talk about mission, or have a mission, or supports mission - the Church is mission. The character of the Church must be that fellowship of people who grasp an understanding of the needs of the world (the world's agenda), who discern how God is working in the world, and who have the obedience to be present with God in the world as reconcilers. This becomes the mandate of the Church in our day...."

SICM certainly has gone far beyond the original visions of our founders. However, their strong belief that church means going beyond the four walls, the changing urban environment, and the centrality of mission, continue to guide to this day.

One footnote is that one of the original SICM programs was called SUM FUN. It was an early variation of the Fresh Air Camp. While we don't need to provide this kind of experience because of many other good alternatives, we have provided two STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) enrichment camps. The past is indeed prologue.



### **SCHENECTADY INNER CITY MINISTRY**

1055 Wendell Avenue, Schenectady, NY 12308

Ph: (518) 374-2683, Fax: (518) 382-1871

e-mail: information@sicm.us Website: www.sicm.us

*Executive Director:* Rev. Phillip N. Grigsby

*Editor:* Janet Mattis

The Assembly of SICM includes one clergy and lay delegate(s) from all member congregations: Alplaus United Methodist, Altamont Reformed, Bellevue Reformed, Bethel AME, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Parish, 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, Glenville, Immanuel Lutheran, Koinonia Christian Ministries, Lynwood Reformed, Messiah Lutheran, Mount Olivet Missionary Baptist, Niskayuna Reformed, Our Lady of Grace, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Our Redeemer Lutheran, Refreshing Spring Church of God in Christ, Rotterdam United Methodist, St. Anthony's, St. George's Episcopal, 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, Woodlawn Reformed, Zion Lutheran.

Rev. Phillip N Grigsby



## Schenectady Damien Center

The SDC had a year of change and transition in 2011-12. We bid farewell to Dan Butterworth who went on to graduate studies at SUNY. With his experience from SDC, Dan is interested in studying more in the area of non-profit management. We appreciated that Allison Williams could transition from summer lunch to provide leadership at the SDC. During the first part of the year, Eliza Rivero finished her work at the center and moved on to other endeavors. As the summer approached, we were grateful that Laurel-le Lipski could provide leadership at the center.

The Center experienced severe funding cuts due to the economy and the changing nature of the HIV/AIDS situation. The good news is that with medication now AIDS can be addressed, at least in this country. The bad news is that AIDS is now off the radar screen for more funders. If you asked the person on the street, they would tell you that AIDS is cured (not true). While people are getting on with their lives, a serious stigma remains.

The Center focused activity to include nutritious meals (three per week) and a variety of programs including Catholic Charities Nutrition Outreach and Education Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Ellis Hospital, Whitney Young Health Center, the AIDS Council, Mohawk Opportunities, and Catholic Charities AIDS Services.

SICM and the Center are deeply grateful to congregations that continued to provide support for the guests, including Calvary Tabernacle, Union Presbyterian, St. Anthony's, St. John the Evangelist, Duryee Memorial AME Zion, and the Regional Food Bank.

Two highlights of the year were a special Thanksgiving Dinner co-sponsored with Mohawk Opportunities held at Emmanuel Friedens Church, and a Christmas program and dinner at the First United Methodist Church. Both brought in 100+ guests who enjoyed both evenings. The Thanksgiving dinner was supported by the Delta Delta Delta sorority at Union College.

The Community task force met at several points in the year, and worked on plans to seek a transition of the program to the Albany Damien Center. Twenty years ago at the start of the epidemic, the centers were joined but then went separate ways. Now the Albany Center has developed a number of best practices that could benefit people affected by HIV in our community. Plans are in process to see how the Schenectady Damien Center could be an affiliate or satellite of the Albany Damien Center, at the current location.

## Community Breakfast Program at First United Methodist Church

SICM continued to encourage support for this relatively new food ministry at the First United Methodist Church each Sunday. The program typically serves 100-150 guests each week starting at 8 AM. Volunteers are very welcome. SICM provided linkages to informational programs offered in conjunction with the breakfast. Elaine Troy serves as liaison to SICM for this program. SICM co-sponsored a Hands Across NY youth event in February that had youth reflect and study the Bible on hunger and faith, and included working at the community breakfast program.



## SICM Staff Changes

### Farewell to Crys Hamelink,

Assistant Director of SICM and Former Summer Lunch Program Manager

Retirement is such a good thing, Crys Hamelink is trying it for the second time! After working for the State of New York for 20+ years, Crys first retired from that job in 2005. She was quickly recruited for the role of Assistant Director of SICM, having served as its President for 2 years. Now, after being on staff for 7 years, Crys has decided to retire for a second time. We thank Crys for her tireless efforts to better the Schenectady community through her years of hard work and dedication to SICM, and wish her all the best in her future endeavors! Thanks, Crys, and enjoy retirement! You will be missed!



Crys Hamelink

## Emergency Food Pantry



Due to the economic downturn, we continue to see a rise in pantry use. In January 2012, pantry visits were increased to once per month from the previous six times per year. This was made possible by an increase in state HPNAP (Hunger Prevention and Nutritional Assistance Program) funding.

Increases were seen in "Mass Distribution" held on the last Thursday of the month, where an average of 350 households per month were served, and in regular pantry visits, with 44,947 individuals served (404,533 meals). 10,775 milk cards, good for a gallon of Stewarts 1% milk, was provided to households with children under 18. June 2012 set a new monthly record, with 4410 households served – 186 seniors, 2487 adults, and 1737 children. Between July '11 and June '12, 999 new households were added to our database of 18,500 individuals.

The HPNAP grant allowed us to lease a new truck with a hydraulic lift. The truck is capable of a 10,000 pound payload. The old truck was capable of a 4000 pound payload, and was frequently overloaded.



The 12 passenger van used for taking home guests was replaced by a new 15 passenger van purchased under a New York State program. The old van and truck was traded in and our old 15 passenger van that was not roadworthy was sold to further reduce the price.

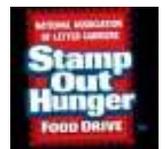
In the Fall of 2011, a 42 x 54 foot pole barn garage was constructed in our parking lot to provide enclosed parking for the new truck and van as well as providing extra storage space. The parking lot, which was in poor shape, was resurfaced at this time. These were made possible by the David Winne legacy.



Our annual Harvest for the pantry fundraiser was held at Scotia Reformed in November 2011. Again, chef Nicki and crew provided a great meal. A total of over \$20,000 was raised at the event.

In April, the confirmation class at St. John the Evangelist collected goodies for Easter treat bags. The pantry handed out approximately 200 bags to very excited and grateful children during the week before Easter.

The annual Post Office Drive in May provided 47,350 pounds of food for our local food pantries. SICM received 19,887 pounds of this total. Our "back door" food donations from individuals, congregations, and others totaled 203,200 pounds, an essential part of food provided.



In June 2012 a volunteer lunch was held at the pantry, catered by Center Stage Deli, with over 100 attending. Gail Van Valkenburgh presented volunteer awards to Shirley Joosten, Ralph and Clara Lasselle, Gene and Linna Brosseau, and Jim Bedard.

*Gail Van Valkenburgh, Food Program Director*

## Day of Service 2012



On April 21, over 100 volunteers, including members of nine congregations, students from Northeast Parent & Child's Youth Build program, and Union College students, turned out to rake, plant, paint, clean, assemble, write letters, and more, at SICM and eight other locations/organizations. Special thanks to our sponsors, who made a very nice luncheon for the volunteers possible: Martin, Harding, and Mazzotti; Marvin & Co.; RBC Wealth Management, and Albany Print.

## Summer Lunch Program

Nearly 75 % of Schenectady's kids qualify for free or reduced rate lunches in school, and many do not have regular meals when school is not in session. That's where SICM steps in, offering free and healthy lunches at 13 locations in 2011, including city parks (Central, Jerry Burrell, Hillhurst, Quackenbush, Wallingford, Carrie Street), 2 municipal housing complexes (Yates and Steinmetz), and several church fellowship halls (Friendship House, Faith United Methodist, Trinity Lutheran, Mount Olivet, and New Creation in Christ). In our 15<sup>th</sup> year of serving free lunches, we served nearly 28,000 meals to hungry kids. We partnered with other groups (we provided the lunches) that offered educational and recreational activities at certain sites, including the Boys and Girls Club at Quackenbush Park and Steinmetz Park, the YMCA at Jerry Burrell Park, and city and county programs at some pools and Central Park.



Most people spend their lunch break, well, eating lunch. But last summer, 650 wonderful volunteers served lunch, instead. These volunteers—from 66 teams in all—fed hungry children across Schenectady. The groups came from 35 area congregations, GE, ARC, and several other non-profit and business groups. SICM provided the food through a grant from the USDA and the NY State Education Department. Volunteers packed the meals, fed and entertained the kids. Some volunteer teams brought bubbles, some brought books, and others brought Frisbees. Some teams made paper airplanes with the kids at their sites, while others brought games and craft/school supplies.



Parents, grandparents and caregivers thank us repeatedly for the food for their families. The kids just smile and say that “lunch is good!”

*Allison Williams, Summer Lunch Manager*

## Summer Interns

In 2011, SICM had a record-breaking 20 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. As part of a new collaboration, several interns assisted at the Home Furnishing Warehouse, where they assembled, delivered and picked up furniture around Schenectady. This arrangement worked very well for all, and Home Furnishings was extremely grateful for the support! The interns were supported by

First Reformed of Schenectady, Niskayuna Reformed, Lynnwood Reformed, Albany Street United Methodist Church, Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church, Burnt Hills United Methodist Church, St. Helen's, First Unitarian Society Schenectady, Trinity Presbyterian, and Union Presbyterian Churches. The interns represented Doane Stuart School and Mohanasen, Niskayuna, Schenectady, Burnt Hills/Ballston Lake and Scotia-Glenville High Schools, and several colleges: Wells, RPI, Macalaster, College of St. Rose, Union College, Northeastern University, SUNY Fredonia, Indiana University, Harvard, and Vassar College. 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!

*Janet Mattis, Internship Coordinator*



Clockwise from upper left: Chris Onderdonk-Milne, Colin Foster, Hannah Brem, Brian Kimmey, Scott Miller, Kara Williams, Emily Griffith, Megan Sweeney, Becky Rose, Janet Mattis (Internship Coordinator), Chloe Williams, Heather Ipsen, Libby Wells, Will Anderson; center: Kyle Coombs, Abby Foster. Not pictured: Corey Chaires, Rachel Cox, Anthony Staccone, Anna Mattis.

## Development

SICM is grateful to be blessed with continued volunteer and financial support from a variety of individuals, congregations, religious organizations, businesses and foundations. In addition to congregations and individuals, we received support from the Consolidated Federal Campaign, Contributor's Choice of United Way and State Employees Federated Appeal. The continuing support from the GE More Gifts More Givers Program is very encouraging.

Thank you to congregations that hosted SICM summer lunch sites: Faith United Methodist, Friendship Baptist (at Friendship House), Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist and Trinity Lutheran (Central State Street Ecumenical Cluster). We also appreciate the City of Schenectady for their support for Summer Lunch at 6 parks (Carrie Street, Central, Hillhurst, Jerry Burrell, Quackenbush and Wallingford) and the Community Rooms at Steinmetz and Yates Village provided by the Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority.

### SICM received support from:

*Sharon Carter, Grant Writer*

Albany Presbytery  
 Albany Print  
 Ancient Order of Hibernians  
 Argo Turboserve Corp.  
 ARMA International, LLC  
 Bechtel  
 Brown School  
 Brown Transportation  
 Capital Area Baptist Association  
 Chamber of Schenectady County  
 Church Women United  
 Church World Service  
 Coburg Village Residents  
 Country Knolls Nursery School  
 Culligan of Scotia  
 Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church  
 (GROWTH Fund)  
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of America  
 (national domestic hunger program)  
 Flying Geese Fabrics  
 GE Athletic Association  
 GE Woman's Club  
 Hudson Mohawk Association of United Church of Christ  
 Hudson Mohawk Conference of the Evangelical Church in  
 America (ELCA)  
 Hummingbird Home Association  
 I.A.T.S.E. Local #14  
 Marshall and Sterling—Glenville  
 Martin, Harding & Mazzotti  
 Marvin & Company  
 Metroland Business Machines  
 Pine Grove Volunteer Fire Department  
 RBC Wealth Management  
 Red-Cap Sales, Inc.  
 Reformed Church World Service  
 Robert E. Van Vranken and Lori Liebers

Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany through CREO  
 (Capital Region Ecumenical Organization)  
 Schenectady Federation of Teachers  
 Schenectady Ole Timers Baseball Club  
 Senior Sewers of Schenectady  
 Sunrise Rotary Club  
 TA Predel & Co. Inc.  
 The Whitney Club, Inc.  
 United Credit Union members

### SICM received grants from:

Broadway Cares  
 William Gundry Broughton Charitable Foundation  
 Edward D. Cammarota Foundation  
 Church World Service (CROP)  
 City of Schenectady's Community Development  
 Block Grant  
 Community AIDS Partnership of the Capital Region  
 Concerned for the Hungry  
 Emergency Food and Shelter Board through United Way  
 Feinstein Challenge  
 Grace Lutheran Church  
 Macerich Company/Rotterdam Square Mall  
 Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger  
 NYS Department of Education (Summer Food Service,  
 with USDA funds)  
 NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
 NYS Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program  
 Rotary Club of Schenectady  
 Schenectady County Strategic Alliance for Health  
 Schenectady City School District  
 SEFCU Foundation  
 Stewarts' Shops  
 Times Union Hope Fund  
 WGY Christmas Wish Campaign  
 Wright Family Foundation



# Memorial and Honorary Gifts



## In Memory Of

Andrew Geier  
 Andrew L. Nicodemi  
 Andrew Nicodemi  
 Angeline Spina  
 Ann & Herb Speanburg  
 Anthony DeLucia  
 Baby Donald E Moldenhauer  
 Betty Jane Struys  
 Betty Marx  
 Betty Stryz  
 Bettye Jane Struys  
 Carol McCaffrey  
 Cecelia Garfinkle  
 Christine Donato  
 David F Boyd  
 David F. Boyd  
 David Randles  
 Dom Denio  
 Don Nolte, friend and neighbor  
 Dorothy Harlow  
 Edwin Bushnell  
 Elizabeth Avakian  
 Frances Wainwright  
 Francis Long  
 Frank Calabria  
 Fred & Margaret Friello  
 Fred Morlock  
 Glen Weatherholtz  
 Helen Mitchell Baum  
 Herbert Pagano  
 James O'Connell  
 Janet Kalogridis  
 Jean Young Griffen  
 Jeannine Davies  
 Jeffrey Gardner  
 Jenson Edward Merriam  
 Joan Hemenway  
 John F. Van Hoesen  
 Joseph A. Early  
 Joseph Kozlowski  
 Josephine A. Baldosare  
 Josephine Corbo  
 L. Clinton Cox Jr.  
 Lou DeMarco  
 Louis Capobianco  
 Lynn Joosten  
 Marie Hallenbeck  
 Marilyn Berrigan  
 Marilyn Berrigan  
 Martha Phillips  
 Mary E. Gavin  
 Mary M Schickel  
 Mary Prater  
 Norm Cover  
 Norma Peterson  
 O. Edmunds & Fernand "Jerry" Allie

Peter Ipsen  
 Phyllis Pfeiffenberger  
 Phyllis Phillips  
 Raymond Fisher Jr.  
 Raymond Sylvester  
 Rev Melvin R. McGaughey  
 Rev. Rowland Conklin  
 Richard E. Weisheit  
 Richard Greene  
 Robert Wilkie  
 Sean Valero  
 Shirley Willis  
 SK Walton Wallace  
 Stanley Godell  
 Steven Munson  
 Thaddeus Predel  
 The Honorable Robert E. Lynch  
 Thomas Rourke  
 Verna May Orr

## In Honor Of

Ann Bradbury  
 Ben & Sharon Wiles  
 Bernadine Herskind  
 Bob and Pat Obrecht  
 Bob Van Vranken  
 Christine, Peter, Angie & Michael  
 Clarence & Ruth Browne  
 Cynthia Ann Herman  
 David & Pilar Seacord  
 Don & Pat Wheeler  
 Donald Brightman  
 Dr. Edward & Marie Gannon  
 Dr. Martha Asselin  
 Ed & June Grinter  
 Elaine Bair  
 Emmanuel Friedens Church Staff  
 Ernestine Rubin  
 Frances Wainwright  
 Frank Thomas  
 Friendship Baptist Church  
 Heide Westergard's Birthday  
 Helen Horn  
 Herb & Sylvia Winer  
 James & Mary Gibney's 68th Anniversary  
 Joan Camillo  
 John Held  
 John Yagielski  
 Larry Bisailon's 80th Birthday  
 Larry N. Lewis  
 Nancy Bedard  
 Nancy Tucker & Mary Lou Kuske  
 Ralph and Carmela's 60th Wedding  
 Anniversary  
 Robin Stocks' Birthday 12/1/11  
 Rosendale Elementary School  
 Roy and Marianne Scott

The Leon, Brough & Birbilis Families  
 Tim Cole  
 Tony Clement  
 Trish Cassady  
 William Mutryn

## Other

Contribution from Hourglass Seniors in  
 Honor of Family and Friends  
 Contribution to Damien Center in Honor of  
 First Reformed Church in Sch'dy  
 Contribution to the Damien Center in  
 Honor of Rosemarie Armstrong

*Many thanks to all  
 for your kind acts  
 of generosity. SICM  
 appreciates all your  
 donations!*

*To make a donation  
 online, please visit  
 our website at  
 www.sicm.us and  
 click on  
 "Supporting SICM"  
 in the sidebar.*



SICM was blessed with a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to pilot a program to develop a Safe Parks Coalition and support Edible Playgrounds, gardens in parks by and for children in collaboration with Schenectady County Cornell Cooperative Extension's Roots and Wisdom. SICM and Roots and Wisdom supported edible playgrounds at Steinmetz Park, Hillhurst Park, Wallingford Park, and the main site on Fehr Avenue. All the gardens were occasions for young children to learn during all seasons.



During the summer of 2011, SICM initiated two one-week STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) enrichment camps at Steinmetz Park through a contract with the Schenectady City School District. These camps offered up to 15 youth a hands-on experience, including nature, gardening, animals, and trips to area museums. With the successful experience, SICM hopes to offer the camps in the future.

The Safe Parks Coalition met on a quarterly basis, and worked on building coalitions for the parks. In addition to the gardening and STEM, the coalition supported efforts to save the Central Park Greenhouses, smoking bans in parks, and encouraged neighborhood groups to work on master plans for parks. With successful advocacy, the City continued its support for park-related activities in the midst of budget challenges.

## Collaborations

SICM continued its collaborations with the [Community Crisis Network](#), [Schenectady County Embraces Diversity](#), the [Housing Task Force](#), and the [Committee for Social Justice](#). In addition, this year the annual [CROP Walk](#) (Church World Service) succeeded in surpassing the goal of \$50,000, bringing in \$51,800!

## The Last Word, by Rev. Stacey Midge, **President**, SICM Steering Committee

This newsletter is full of good news about what SICM has accomplished this summer. The number of guests at the Food Pantry has hit record highs. We have served thousands of summer lunches. A group of high school and college students have been inspired and challenged during their time as interns. The Damien Center continued to provide a place of community for people infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS. SICM has been at the heart of the needs of the city, just as we have been for decades, advocating for justice and operating ministries of mercy in response to the timely issues of the day.



When I speak of SICM, I use the word "we" quite intentionally. You see, it sometimes seems that I've spent my entire adult life working with not-for-profit agencies in one way or another; after all, I've spent most of it employed by churches. I've been honored to sit on the boards of a few organizations and have even been part of the founding of two of them. SICM, however, is an unusual breed - not merely an organization or agency, but a partnership of congregations with a vast network of volunteers. Our staff, steering committee, member churches, and individual volunteers all work together to make it possible for us to address the injustices and inequities of our community. In a sense, we don't just cooperate; we *are* our cooperation.

We are an organization that is continually in transition in response to the changing world around us, and this time is no exception, as we move through a transitional time with the Damien Center. It is our cooperation, with each other and with the Albany Damien Center, that will make this movement forward a success. And it is our cooperation that will move SICM as a whole successfully into the future.

The growing numbers at our food-centered programs point toward a larger problem with poverty that has many implications for our community. And so we face the question, how will SICM continue to address the needs of the city? How will we adapt and change to meet the demands of this time? The staff and steering committee are working hard to identify needs and envision how SICM might step into the heart of them as we have so often in the future. But we need you, too. We need *us* - all of us - to thoughtfully consider what new actions we ought to take to move into a vital future together. This is an ongoing process that I plan to be intentional about encouraging during this year.

As this year's SICM president, I invite you to participate in this phase of our cooperation, to think hard and dream big about who we can be and what we can do together. We are SICM, and together we can continue to right the injustices and level the inequalities of our community.

Grace and peace,

*Rev. Stacey Midge*

revstacey@gmail.com