

# SICM NEWS

Year 39, Number 3, Spring 2009

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## 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

### SICM Community Service Award Honors 4 Volunteers

SICM honored 4 volunteers at its December Assembly meeting with the 2nd Annual Community Service Award. **Marilyn Berrigan**, a SICM delegate from Our Redeemer Lutheran Church since 1978, has served on the SICM Emergency Food Task Force for 26 years, helped start the Save and Share Co-op, coordinated Our Redeemer's participation in the Summer Lunch program, and staffed CROP Walk events as well as many other community service projects with SICM and other organizations. Marilyn has been on the Board of Our Redeemer and served as an Elder for many years.

**Rev. Art Downing**, Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, was also a recipient of the award. He has offered Trinity Lutheran as a site for summer lunch since 1998. Each Spring, he reaches out to congregations in the Central State Street Ecumenical Cluster, and he recruits and schedules volunteers to staff the Summer Lunch site. Over the past 3 years, SICM has served 4,137 lunches at Trinity (about 1400 per year) with Rev. Downing's help.

**Gene and Linna Brousseau** have been faithful food pantry volunteers and help on average 24 hours/week. They volunteer on Mondays, picking up the food at the Food Bank and staying to arrange the stockroom; on Tuesdays they help unload the Tuesday delivery and store it; on Fridays they pick up donations from Hannaford and work in the storeroom. They also volunteer on the last Tuesday and Thursday of the month, and work at the Post Office drives. Gene built the wood shelves and assembled the steel shelving in the storeroom, and Linna serves on the Food Task Force.

*Many thanks to all of our award recipients, for all that they do for  
SICM and the community!!*

## Summer Ministries

**Youth Summer Lunch**, led by Crys Hamelink, with Julie Cupp coordinating each day, served lunches during the summer at 14 sites with many congregational and community volunteers. 2008 saw several changes, including the elimination of the Scotia/Collins Park site, and the addition of three new sites: Hispanic Outreach Services, St. George's Episcopal and MacGathan Municipal Housing. The program was offered for 9 weeks, serving 30,754 lunches with 610 volunteers.



**Internships** Led by Janet Mattis, SICM was blessed with a record 15 interns who worked in all of the SICM programs and some in the community. They were sponsored by Princeton University Class of 1969, Albany Street United Methodist, Bellevue Reformed, Eastern Parkway United Methodist, Grace Lutheran, Trinity Presbyterian, Union Presbyterian, First Reformed of Schenectady, and a legislative grant from Senator Farley.



**Computers for Kids** Led by Rev. Van Stuart, SICM sponsored the third year of this intensive program to train youth (16 in 2008) in hardware and software skills and therefore address the "digital divide." The program is a partnership of the City's Summer Youth Employment Program, the GE Elfun Computer Rehab, the City School District and Schenectady City-County Youth Bureau.

# Ministry Notes: Thank you, the Economy, and a Reminder



*Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM) celebrates the partnership of a new member congregation in 2008, Our Lady of Grace in Ballston Lake, Saratoga County. The delegates are Peter Notch and Deacon Frank Thomas; Parish Life Director is Deacon J. Neil Hook, and Sacramental Minister is Rev. John J. Varno.*

**Welcome, Our Lady of Grace!**



During the first Bill Clinton campaign, apparently the staff had a sign over their desks as a constant reminder: “It’s the economy, stupid!” The changes in the economy were part of all SICM’s ministry 2008. While we are often the first place that people visit who are in need, the broader economic changes made us wonder if we could still keep providing help. Those we serve have seen the effects of a changing economy for a long time; now many others began to feel it.

I am deeply grateful that our supporters – congregations, individuals, the GE Foundation, service groups, foundations, government, more – have risen to the occasion to keep providing for those in need in our midst. We were delighted at the GE Foundation’s leadership late in the year when they put in effect a “two for one” match program for groups such as SICM addressing basic human needs.

So thank you again to all who have helped in these challenging times! Because of this support we have been able to expand the number of times, for example, at the Food Program. The City of Schenectady, for example, for the first time has made financial assistance available for emergency food. Generous supporters, for example, helped us retire a loan taken out for the food program building, freeing up resources for the pro-

gram. And I could go on...

The economic crisis, for better or worse, had the effect of “clarifying” what many of us do. Thank you again for making this ministry a priority. To use again the analogy from Henri Nouwen, we have experienced the “miracle of multiplication” in God’s economy: as we share and offer what we have, as in the story of the Loaves and Fishes, there is enough for all.

I also want to add a reminder: In meeting with one of our churches, I went over the types of social ministry which is something I tend to think we all know but they found the reminder helpful. Ecumenical and faith based groups such as SICM (councils of churches, etc.) I believe are challenged to reflect a range of ministries. While we are best known for social service (which we hope to do as much as possible with people, not to people), we are challenged also to engage in social education (understanding the causes of hunger, poverty, injustice, etc. and what our faith perspectives bring to it, sponsoring forums, etc.), social witness (speaking “truth to power” e.g. by taking public stances on issues) and finally social action (addressing root causes through program or constituency development, broader policy changes, etc.). All aspects are crucial; we seek a “both/and” ministry which reflects the range of social ministry. The work one by one with individuals is important in itself; but also hopefully informs work on changing policies or addressing important community issues. To some this broader focus is confusing (it is not always easy to say succinctly what SICM does) but for many it is critical and essential part of our ministry. I would be glad to come by your congregation to reflect more about this.

Thank you for your partnership in ministry.

Rev. Phillip N. 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 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.

## Ongoing Ministries

**The Emergency Food Program**, led by Gail VanValkenburgh, continued to see an increase in demand by clients. Overall, the need increased 27% from 2007 to 2008. Total number of meals served increased from 267,309 in 2007 to 339,489 in 2008. There are over 150 volunteers serving the Food Pantry. The program initiated a “Mass Distribution” program in May, on the last Thursday of the month, with donated items from the Regional Food Bank. On average, 300 families of two adults and two children took part, often lining up. The Food Program continued “wrap around” services including linkage to Food Stamps (NOEP, CCSC) with 200 families getting help. SICM initiated a partnership with the NYS Department of Health, Capital District Initiatives to see applicants, as well as a pilot lead testing outreach.



**Damien Center**, led by Daniel Butterworth, instituted a number of changes that have resulted in a stronger, more effective program. In May 2008, stakeholders democratically decided to restrict entrance to persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH/As) as well as those “affected.” This has ensured support for PLWH/As as well as protection of their confidentiality and anonymity. Despite a more restrictive entrance policy, SDC has grown. In 2008, SDC had 218 individuals visit at least once, with over 50 individuals utilizing services on a weekly basis. The total number is an increase from the 98 individuals recorded in 2007. We increased our number of scheduled meals, from 3 per week to 4 per week. The number of meals served in 2008 totaled 2196.



In addition to expanding our meal program, we have added a monthly visit with nutritionists from Cornell Cooperative Extension; sessions with medical professionals on medications, and life skills workshops on budgeting, understanding tenants’ rights, and others. As a community, we created a panel for the AIDS Quilt, displaying the names of loved ones lost to HIV/AIDS, and have begun participating in “Spiritually Sound, Physically Fit.” We have also developed “Out & About”, a program that plans and pays for Center guests to enjoy recreational activities around the Capital Region, including trips to the Schenectady Museum, Indian Ladder Farms, an Albany River Rats game, and Albany’s Holiday Lights in the Park.

The changes at the Schenectady Damien Center are not limited to programming. Today, we are more connected to a variety of social service and AIDS service

organizations in the Capital Region, and therefore are better able to refer guests to services. The linkages that have been created over the past year include links to:

- (1) The AIDS Council of Northeastern New York (providing mental health counseling at SDC);
- (2) Catholic Charities AIDS Services (partnering on a grant);
- (3) Mohawk Opportunities for Mental Health (joint fundraiser);
- (4) The Albany and Troy Damien Centers (joint excursions for “Out & About”);
- (5) The Peter Young Altamont Program (employment and housing);
- (6) The NAMES Project (AIDS Quilt panel);
- (7) The Ryan White Network of Northeastern NY (the regional network of HIV/AIDS service providers).

Because of these linkages, SDC guests have better access to medical care, educational opportunities, and financial assistance, and increasing referrals. Thanks to the following groups who help with meals: Calvary Tabernacle, Eastern Parkway United Methodist, St. John the Evangelist, First Reformed of Schenectady, and the AIDS Council of Northeastern NY.

### Safe Parks and Edible Playgrounds



In December 2008, SICM was awarded a two year grant from a Faith Based Initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The grant is designed to affect policy and seek new ways to address the crisis of childhood obesity. A competitive process, SICM was one of 22 funded programs. Details on other projects is included at their site, [www.galvanizingcommunities.com](http://www.galvanizingcommunities.com).

The principal researcher (in the RWJF terminology) for SICM is the Rev. Van Stuart. The program seeks to develop ways to get city parks seen as more safe through the development of a Safe Parks Coalition seeking policy changes. “Edible playgrounds” are gardens in parks by and for young children. SICM is partnering with Roots and Wisdom to add to the number of edible playgrounds and continue the involvement of young children.





## 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, many of whom responded at a record level to the annual "Friends of SICM" campaign.

Thank you to the GE Foundation (More Gifts... More Givers), SEFA (State Employees Federated Appeal), Contributor's Choice of United Way, and CFC (Consolidated Federal Campaign). Thank you also to congregations that hosted SICM summer lunch sites: Faith United Methodist Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, Westminster and Union Presbyterian Church (at Yates Village), Friendship Baptist Church at Friendship House, New Creation in Christ and Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist, and Steinmetz Homes (three new sites).

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), Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany through CREO (the Capital Region Ecumenical Organization), NYS Health Foundation, The Edward D. Cammarota Foundation, BJ's Wholesale Club, Share Our Strength, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Bank of America, Princeton Class of 1969, Northeastern NY Thrivent Chapter, First Niagara Bank, Rotterdam KOFC 5703, WGY Christmas Wish Campaign, Coburg Village Residents, Sunrise Rotary, Berkshire United Way, GE Woman's Club, Rotary Club of Sch'dy, Inc., Pine Grove Volunteer Fire Dept., Argo Turboserve 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., and ARMA International, LLC.

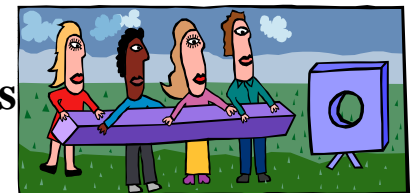
SICM received grants from the Reformed (RCA) Church World Service, Community AIDS Partnership of the Capital Region, Broadway Cares, Video Industry AIDS Action Committee, Concerned for the Hungry, NYS Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program, the NYS Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Labor, the Emergency Food and Shelter Board through United Way, the City of Schenectady's Community Development Block Grant, Stewarts' Shops, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, legislative items through Sen. Hugh Farley and Assemblyman Jim Tedisco, the Troy Savings Bank Foundation, the



Schenectady County Youth Bureau, Rotary Club of Schenectady, and Princeton University Class of 1969.

SICM received support so far for the special Building Campaign (839 Albany Street) from many individuals and the GE Volunteers Foundation, the Schenectady Foundation, the Carlillian Foundation, the Wright Family Foundation, the Bender Foundation, the William Gundry Broughton Charitable Foundation, the Key Bank Foundation, Trustco Bank, First National Bank of Scotia, Albany Street United Methodist, First Reformed of Schenectady, Eastern Parkway United Methodist, Rotterdam United Methodist, Lynnwood Reformed Church Women, Troy Savings Bank Foundation, Robert Van Vranken and Lori Liebers, Martin, Harding, and Mazzotti, the Regional Food Bank, First Unitarian Society, Sacred Heart/St. Columba's, Teal, Becker, and Chiaramonte, Trinity Lutheran Church, Stanford United Methodist UMW, Princetown EPC Church, MLK Choir, Beukendaal Chapter Not. 528 OES, Sigma Bodies AASR, GE Women's Club, and a legislative item from Senator Hugh Farley. The Building Campaign continues, seeking to build a garage and pave the parking lot.

## 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 and branched out to the elementary level in a pilot program. SCED includes SICM, the YWCA, the Human Rights Commission, Girls Inc., the League of Women Voters, SCCC, and others.

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 many recommendations to the city on improving police and community relations.



# Memorial and Honorary Gifts

## In Memory Of

Walton Wallace  
 David Winne  
 Bernhard Koester  
 Jordan Hess  
 Anne Coggeshall  
 Dan Jones  
 Julia Czarkowski  
 Armine Aroian  
 Barbara Whitmarsh  
 Hedwig Leith  
 Deborah Kaufman  
 Salvator Palmieri  
 Ann Palmieri  
 Simeon Richmire  
 Tom Rourke  
 John Pardi  
 Lynn Joosten  
 Rev. Fred Baumgardner  
 Frederick White  
 Andrew L. Nicodemi  
 Elaine and Al MacKinnon  
 Mrs. Pryor Sr.  
 Parker and Lena Dillman  
 Frank Rogan  
 Karl Sharke  
 Mr. & Mrs. John G. Peace

## In Honor Of

Ellie & Gene Rowland  
 Kingsway Village Staff  
 Marriage of Don & Dale Willie  
 Bob & Pat Obrecht  
 Kim and Peter Callan  
 Joe Farry  
 Ed & Marie Gannon  
 Pat Blanchard's Birthday  
 Rita & Bill Vullo  
 Trish Cassady  
 Warren O'Neal  
 Rocky Bonsal  
 Jackie  
 Bill Sttridze  
 Diane's Birthday!  
 CPT. Jordan Schoonmaker  
 Herbert E. Speanburg & Osborne  
 McSwain  
 Gregory & Emily Notch  
 David Peck  
 Fred & Helen Pepper's  
 50th Anniversary  
 Mac Provost  
 Marriage of Ken Realeya &  
 Elaine DeSieno  
 Kaye & Bob Craig

## In Honor Of (cont'd)

Nancy & David Tickel  
 Sue & Mark Walkins  
 Joy & Heath Mastropletro  
 Betty & Charles Blanchet  
 Garrett Golden  
 Rick Golden  
 Connie Nagy  
 Anita Ross  
 Courtland Andrew  
 Anthony Germano  
 Rickie Gageway  
 Donna Rivers  
 Larry Kraham  
 Val & Frank @ Garbo's  
 Grab Bag of Ups & Downs Women  
 Carol Schreiner  
 Polly Shepard  
 Alplaus UMW  
 Dr. John Assini  
 Dan O'Conner  
 Bonnie Nuendel  
 Nancy & Jim Bedard  
 "The Best Mom" - Pat Wheeler  
 The Food Pantry  
 Christine Lee & Nancy Thornton

Many thanks to all for your kind acts of generosity!

## Spiritually Sound, Physically Fit



Through a generous grant from the NYS Health Foundation, SICM re-started this congregationally based health and wellness program. With the foundation's support, we were able to broaden the reach of the program to include some new partners and congregations. The primary perspective of SSPF is that simple wellness information is not enough for someone to alter their living habits. We have had the experience of going to health fairs, getting information, and then living as we have before. SSPF seeks to encourage new wellness behavior by forming groups in congregations.

In 2008, Rev. Van Stuart, former Pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, coordinated the effort. Congregations involved were Friendship Baptist and Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist Church. The program broadened to include participants from the Schenectady Damien Center. Coordinators included Phyllis Smalls (Friendship), Virginia LaBad (Mt. Olivet) and Will Christman (Damien). Participants had an initial check and measurement; a series of check ins and wellness options; various incentives; and a closing event.

Outreach yielded interest from other congregations, who since have become involved, including the Higher Ground Worship Center COGIC, Koinonia Christian Ministries, Bethel AME, and New Bethel COGIC. The program involved nearly 70 during the year. Agency partners included the Schenectady YWCA and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The YW made memberships available to all participants. Cornell at each check in offered a nutritious dish or snack with alternate recipes for requested foods. A closing event featured a healthy lunch and inspirational interactive presentation by Elaine Troy, a member of First United Methodist who works at the NYS Department of Health. The Foundation grant is for two years, which enables SICM to continue and enhance the program in 2009.

## The Last Word, by John Held, President, SICM Steering Committee

As we look back on 2008, the economic downturn loomed large for SICM. It certainly is driving up demand at the Food Pantry, and putting limitations on the resources of our member churches. On the brighter side, take heart inasmuch as contributions from individuals soared at year end. This is consistent with the American phenomenon that charitable giving actually goes up during recessionary periods (people intuitively recognize the needs of the less fortunate increase even as their own outlook may be dimming). Further, the temporary increase in the GE Matching Gift Program should provide further relief. We operate in challenging times. The SICM Steering Committee and Staff are focused on the issues of 2009 (expanded hours at Food Pantry, new home for Damien) and remain confident we can weather the storm with the continued help of our friends and supporters. God bless you and thank you for keeping us in your thoughts as we forge ahead into the challenges of the future.



John Held (John is a delegate from St. John the

Evangelist)

## Food Pantry Donations

In addition to many church congregations, many thanks to the following organizations who collected donations for the Pantry :

Congregation Temple Gates of Heaven  
 Hannaford Supermarkets/Niskayuna & Rotterdam  
 The Chamber of Schenectady County  
 (Holiday Mixer contributions)  
 En-Con (NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation)  
 Leadership Tech Valley Class of 2009  
 (through Schenectady and Albany-Colonie Cham-  
 bers of Commerce)  
 Lishakill Senior Citizens  
 Princetown Hourglass Seniors  
 Capital Gains Investment  
 Schenectady ARC  
 Congregation Aqudat Achim

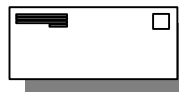
Niskayuna High School  
 MVP Health Plan  
 Hospice of Schenectady  
 DOT (Department of Transpor-  
 tation)  
 CSEA/local 924  
 Daily Gazette



## Volunteers for SICM News Mailings



A special thanks to **Marlene Paccico**, who not only organizes the crew of mail volunteers for each newsletter mailing, but also supervises the mailing, and in her “spare time” puts labels on almost 4,000 envelopes!



## CROP WALK SUMMARY



In 2008, the annual Crop Walk involved 600+ walkers or runners, and raised over \$58,020! Local Pantry Recipients included: SICM Food Program, Sacred Heart/St. Columba’s, Schenectady Nutrition Program for the Elderly (Catholic Charities), Community Crisis Network, and St. Vincent DePaul Society of St. Luke’s Church.

*Thank you to St. Helen’s for hosting, and all who participated!*