

SICM NEWS

Year 42, Number 1, Winter 2010

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*Schenectady Inner
City Ministry
930 Albany Street
Sch'dy, NY 12307
Tel: 518 374-2683
Fax: 518 382-1871
information@sicm.us
www.sicm.us*

Damien Center Celebrates New Home Open House Scheduled for March 16, 3 to 6pm



615 Nott Street

After many months of preparation, the Schenectady Damien Center has moved into its new home at 615 Nott Street! Our new space features handicapped accessibility, a commercial kitchen, comfortable living spaces, and a backyard! SDC guests are very excited about how this location will make possible new programs and activities. The building purchase was made possible by a bequest from Jordan Hess, a former guest. SICM advanced funds for renovation, and is seeking additional support.

Ideas for utilizing the new space include offering free HIV testing, caregiver workshops, tutoring for youth, nutrition education, and one-on-one counseling. We are hoping to make use of our proximity to Union College for programs to recruit energetic volunteers.



Inside the new Damien Center

presentations about the face of HIV/AIDS today.



Rear of new Damien Center

The Damien Center will host an **Open House on March 16th, 2010, from 3 to 6pm, with a dedication ceremony beginning at 4:30pm.** We hope to be joined by guests, volunteers, donors, SICM members, and any community members interested in serving the HIV/AIDS community. Guests will be able to tour the new building, read about current and upcoming programs, and view



Please join us for an **Open House and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony**



Tuesday, March 16
3 to 6pm
Schenectady Damien Center
615 Nott Street, Schenectady

Refreshments will be served
RSVP to 374-2683 or information@sicm.us

We hope to see you there!

**Check the SICM website for parking information: www.sicm.us*

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



Yet and still...

In these most challenging times, we are encouraged by this response in faith, "yet and still." We are in what is now called the "Great Recession" and increasing numbers of people keep asking for help; yet and still... with your help, we are able to help more than before. Our food program expanded hours and offerings, making more temporary and emergency food available, as we saw many we had not seen before.

Too many in our community still struggle with the stigma of HIV and AIDS. Yet and still...through a legacy gift of the late Jordan Hess we purchased a new place for the Schenectady Damien Center that will keep current offerings and add more. The new facility, which we will dedicate this spring, is located conveniently at 615 Nott Street adjacent to Union College.

Too many of our young people not in school in the summer are at risk of hunger, especially in these times. Yet and still...we were able to give out a record number of summer lunches (37,000+) at 12 sites with hundreds of volunteers.

Both locally and nationally we are becoming more aware of the urgency to ad-

dress the growing epidemic of childhood obesity. Yet and still...through support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation we initiated a "Safe Parks and Edible Playgrounds" initiative. The Safe Parks Coalition will make some solid improvements this year, including expanding the number of "edible playgrounds" i.e. gardens in parks by and for children and youth.

I could go on...but in these challenging times...thanks to you...yet and still.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Phil Grigsby

Gifts & Grants

In recent months, SICM gratefully acknowledges receipt of grants from:

Emergency Food Pantry

from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and Reformed Church World Service Strategic Alliance for Health, Schenectady County (new food cooler)

Damien Center

from the Community AIDS Partnership of the Capital Region and Equinox Foundation for Renovations

Project SKIP

from the Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church Growth Fund and the Carlilian Foundation and Strategic Alliance for Health (playground equipment)

Spiritually Sound - Physically Fit

from the Barry Allan Gold Foundation

Summer Lunch

from the Standish Family Foundation (Mini Grant) and Macerich

Breakfast Program at First United Methodist Church

Golden Cross, Troy Annual Conference United Methodist Church

The U.S. Census 2010 is providing calendars.

We are grateful to the many individuals who took advantage of the GE Foundation's Double Matching Gifts.

(continued on p. 7)

SCHENECTADY INNER CITY MINISTRY
 930 Albany Street, Schenectady, New York 12307
 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 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.

SICM Community Service Award Recognizes Key Volunteers

As with any non-profit ministry organization, the volunteer corps at SICM is an integral part of everything that we do. Without their hard work and commitment, we would not be able to serve the community to the extent that we do in as many program areas as we do. For this, we are deeply grateful.

SICM honored some special volunteers at its December Assembly meeting with its Community Service Award: Marlene Paccico, David Winne, and the Scotia United Methodist Church Mission Team. **Marlene Paccico** has been volunteering in various capacities at SICM for several years. One of the ways she has consistently given of her time and talents is with bulk mailing projects, specifically the quarterly newsletter. For every newsletter mailing, Marlene puts the address labels on 3700 envelopes, assembles a mailing team, then guides them in folding, inserting, stuffing, sealing and sending them, all in an efficient manner!



Marlene Paccico, Newsletter Mailing Coordinator

David Winne was awarded posthumously for his commitment to helping the hungry through continuous support, including a bequest upon his death. David was an active member of the First Unitarian Society, where he once served as Church President. The bequest will be used primarily for capital improvements to the Pantry and for the endowment for future needs of the hungry.

The first ever team award for SICM Community Service goes to the **Scotia United Methodist Church Mission Team**, for their outstanding efforts in renovation work at SICM last summer. Instead of traveling to a distant location for their mission activity, this year the team decided to help those in their own backyard. For 2 weeks in August, they donated their time and efforts in renovations and repair work at the Food Pantry, the SICM Office and summer lunch site. At the Pantry, they built shelves and painted. They put a new roof on the garage where the summer lunch supplies and food are stored. Several women from the team painted the stockade fence in the area where the children are fed, and the team also repaired and painted the SICM ramp, porch and railing. They accomplished all this without disrupting all the kids who appeared each day for their free lunches.



Kevin O'Connor, President of the Unitarian Society, accepts the award on David's behalf.



Dean Goodell accepts the award for the Scotia UMC Mission Team.

and efforts in renovations and repair work at the Food Pantry, the SICM Office and summer lunch site. At the Pantry, they built shelves and painted. They put a new roof on the garage where the summer lunch supplies and food are stored. Several women from the team painted the stockade fence in the area where the children are fed, and the team also repaired and painted the SICM ramp, porch and railing. They accomplished all this without disrupting all the kids who appeared each day for their free lunches.

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

Technology Update! Help SICM Save Trees!!

Would you like to be able to receive your donation receipts via email? We are collecting email addresses to allow us to send receipts to donors electronically. This will allow us to save money, time, and. . . trees!! Please help us out by sending your email address to: records@sicm.us



Thank you!





2nd Annual Harvest for the Pantry Raises Much-needed Funds for the Emergency Food Pantry!

On Sunday, November 8, 2009, the gymnasium at Bellevue Reformed Church took on a new look. Tables adorned with tablecloths and festive decorations brightened up the hardwood floors, and the aroma of scrumptious food filled the air. The occasion? SICM held its second annual fundraising dinner, "Harvest for the Pantry." As was the case last year, the goal of the event was to raise money specifically for SICM's Emergency Food Pantry. Chef Nicky provided a tasty chicken marsala entrée, and local restaurants contributed a variety of foods to complement the meal. Many local businesses donated goods and services for the silent auction, which was held in the adjoining room. Bidding took place throughout the evening for the 80+ items (double the number from last year!). The silent auction alone brought in over \$3000, contributing to the grand total of \$15,000! Watch for the 3rd Annual Harvest for the Pantry Fundraising Dinner to take place in the Fall of 2010!



Browsing at the silent auction

*Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of this event!
We truly appreciate your support!*



Clara LaSalle's creativity is reflected with this "Harvest for the Pantry" cake—thanks, Clara!



Good food, good company, good times—who could ask for more?!

2009 Harvest for the Pantry Honorary Committee Members

Archangel (\$300 level)

Bob & Stacey Fenton
Jacqueline & Michael Foster
Martin, Harding & Mazzotti LLP

Cherub (\$75 level)

Thomas & Cheryl Della Sala
Peggy King
Merle Longwood
Marshall & Sterling Upstate Inc.
Cynthia Shultz
St. Helen's Church
Mayor Brian Stratton
Assemblyman James Tedisco
Mrs. Ruth F. Varley

Guardian Angel (\$150 level)

Al & Carolyn Canova
Mr. & Mrs. William Clasen
Ed & Mary Cummings
Rev. Phillip Grigsby & Dr. Janet P. Grigsby
Drew & Crystal Hamelink
John & Mary Held
Paul & Susan Houpt
Victor & Liz Mazzotti
Bob & Pat Obrecht
Bob & Helen Ringlee
Ellie & Gene Rowland
Chris & Pat Rush
Helga A. Schroeter
Sam & Dot Thompson
Don & Pat Wheeler

Many thanks to the following restaurants/businesses for providing food for the dinner:

Bangkok Bistro, Center Stage Deli, Chef Nicky, Starbucks, Clara LaSalle, Stewarts, Turf Tavern, Knight's Orchards, Ferrari's Ristorante, Niskayuna Wine & Liquors.



SICM Program Updates

Damien Center

While preparing for the move has been a major undertaking, the Schenectady Damien Center continues to provide services and programming to people living with HIV/AIDS. Support groups, workshops, and recreational activities remained uninterrupted by the move, in large part due to the generous donation of temporary space by the First United Methodist Church of Schenectady.

The Schenectady Damien Center also sponsored several special events over the last quarter, foremost being “21 Years of Light and Hope”, an event commemorating World AIDS Day on Dec. 1st. The event was the first of its kind in Schenectady in many years, and featured a short candlelit walk downtown and an “open mic” in which community members, HIV-positive and –negative, shared personal experiences with HIV/AIDS. More than 50 people attended, including City Council members Margaret King and Mark Blanchfield and representatives from Rep. Paul Tonko’s office. Because it was such a moving experience, the Schenectady Damien Center hopes that a Schenectady commemoration of World AIDS Day will become an annual event.



Dan Butterworth (center left) joins others in walking down Jay Street to commemorate World AIDS Day.

Over the course of 2009, the Schenectady Damien Center provided service to 185 individuals infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and served over 2,300 meals. More than fifty individuals were new to the Center this year, representing increased collaboration with other AIDS service organizations and better means of directed outreach to the HIV/AIDS community.



Anna & Morgan read stories at the Christmas Party.

We will continue our outreach efforts in 2010 and hope to add programs that are tailored to the needs of the HIV/AIDS community in Schenectady. But we could not do it without your help! Many thanks to all of our volunteers in 2009, including groups from Calvary Tabernacle AG, Church of St. Adalbert, Eastern Parkway UMC, First Reformed of Schenectady, First United Methodist of Schenectady, St. Anthony’s Church, St. Helen’s Church, and St. John the Evangelist. Also, many thanks to all who adopted a family or contributed in another way to the Damien Center Christmas Party!

Summer Lunch Coming Back Soon!

Each day last summer, Maria would gather her children and other neighborhood kids and bring them to SICM summer lunch. On the last day of the program, she and the kids thanked us for helping them eat all summer, waved “goodbye” and walked out of our lives for a few months, saying they couldn’t wait for June and our return. Our city parks and church lawns are now quiet, under their blanket of snow. In just a couple months, kids will be back in the parks, and Summer Lunch 2010 planning will begin. SICM and our volunteers served over 37,700 free lunches in 2009, a 24% increase over the prior year. We are looking to



Maria and her crew

expand into one or two additional city parks this summer, and will once again be seeking up to 70 volunteer teams from congregations and businesses to help us feed the children. Signups will begin during April. If you have questions, contact



Left: SICM Summer Interns with kids at SICM site

Right: Summer Lunch at Central Park Site—one of our busiest!



SICM Summer Internship Program

“My summer spent with SICM has been such a positive experience. I served thousands of lunches, distributed produce, made friends, healed injuries, wiped tears, and laughed incredibly hard. I am so grateful to my church for funding me, and so thankful to SICM for all they do for the community.”

-Morgan, high school summer intern

Each summer, SICM seeks potential interns and sponsors to support the Summer Internship Program. Interns come from various SICM congregations, and gain valuable experiences working with those in need in our community. Interns also meet with the internship coordinator on a regular basis to reflect on their observations and involvement. These students work at the Food Pantry, Damien Center, the Summer Lunch Program, Computers for Kids, Edible Playgrounds and other special projects. Congregations sponsor an intern for \$2,500 for a student to work full-time an average of 9 weeks in the summer, or \$1,250 for a part-time position. If a congregation would like to participate but does not have an intern prospect, SICM can help identify one from another congregation that may not have the funds for sponsorship.

For congregations interested in sponsoring an intern, and for students wishing to apply for an internship, contact Janet Mattis at the SICM office, 374-2683 or jmattis@sicm.us.



Food Program News



The downturn in the economy has hit everyone, including those who are food deficient. A reflection of this is shown in the dramatic rise in use of the Emergency Food Pantry. Some telling statistics:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Individuals Served</u>	<u>Meals Served</u>
<u>Totals for 2007</u>	29,701	267,309
<u>Totals for 2008</u>	37,721	339,489
<u>Totals for 2009</u>	40,333	362,997

Did you know. . .

In 2009, the Pantry received 1,170,912 pounds of food?!

Project SKIP (Schenectady Kids Imagine and Play)



Over the past months, Project SKIP, the effort to construct a new playground in Jerry Burrell Park using the community build model, has made great strides. Thanks to financial support from a number community entities including the Union College Class of 2010, Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church, the Schenectady Alliance for Health, the Carlilian Foundation, as well as local residents, over \$56,000 has been pledged towards our final goal of \$80,000.

In addition to our financial progress, strides have been made towards finalizing a playground design. A design committee has been established consisting of six concerned residents. These residents are mothers, daycare providers, and others with strong connections to the youth of Hamilton Hill. Working with the Schenectady Office of General Services and a certified playground vendor, these local residents are ensuring that this playground will address the specific needs of the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood.



Gifts & Grants *(cont'd from p. 2)*

REMINDER: SICM is registered with the **State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA)** and the Combined Federated Campaign of the Capital Region making it easy to contribute on a regular basis. **SICM SEFA # is 50 - 00396**

Gifts

- The RN Club of Schenectady
- Central State Street Bible School
- St. John the Evangelist Sunday School
- Van Antwerp Middle School
- Siena College Volunteers
(for helping with Damien Center renovations)
- Ocean State Job Lot



Ocean State Job Lot generously donated 13 pallets of food to the Food Pantry.



At Van Antwerp Middle School, Mrs. Krauss with students and their donated "goody bags" for the Food Pantry.



It takes lots of hands and a good balancing act to unload the truck!

In Memoriam

SICM mourns the loss of Paul Herrmann, who passed away in December. Paul was a volunteer at the Emergency Food Pantry since 2000. Paul assisted with food pick-ups and deliveries, Post Office Drives, and various duties at the Pantry, including halving several dozen cartons of eggs every Monday, and portioning rice, margarine, etc. We appreciate all that Paul did for the Food Pantry, SICM and the Schenectady community.



Schenectady CROP Walk: Sunday, May 2, 2010

The CROP Walk is a celebration where people from all walks of life join in common cause to fight hunger here and overseas. Funds raised are used locally for food pantries and meal programs and funds overseas are used for relief, refugee resettlement, and self-help development through partner agencies or designated by contributors. Schenectady's CROP Walk has consistently been in the top 25 in the country, thanks to many supporters. In the past 25 years, SICM's CROP Walk has raised over \$1 million and over \$250,000 has been returned to Schenectady to address hunger locally. The CROP Walk reminds people that 1.3 billion of the earth's 6.5 billion live at or below \$1 per day income and 80% of the world's people live at less than \$10 per day. Recruiters are needed to recruit others in a congregation, company, school, group, etc. A Recruiter's Workshop will be held on **Monday, March 15 from 5:30-7:00pm at Emmanuel Friedens Church**, 218 Nott Terrace, Schenectady. A light supper will be provided at the program, where materials will be distributed. Materials will be available afterwards at Emmanuel Friedens Church and the SICM office. Sponsored by SICM, this year's walk has a new route, starting and ending at Emmanuel Friedens Church, with parking available in the MVP Garage. For more information contact Rev. Phil Grigsby at revphil@sicm.us or call 374-2683.





Dear Friends of SICM,
As we start a New Year, let's look at some challenges and hopes that lie ahead:

First, Damien Center is now up and running in its new location on Nott Street. We have many benefactors (like Jordan Hess) to thank for helping making that happen and we should feel lucky someone as talented and committed as Dan Butterworth is here to guide Damien through this transitional period. The new location provides more space to be sure, but more importantly, it brings a sense of stability to a program that has had many homes over the last few years.

On the challenge side, SICM is in the process of analyzing the level of participation of its member congregations. As in many organizations, a small fraction of the members are the most active. We will be reaching out to many of our members in an effort to intensify the current commitment while also introducing ourselves to some potential new member churches. Congregational membership and participation is the lifeblood of a group like SICM, so this initiative is very important.

We continue to do extraordinary things for people in need in our little corner of the world. I am always amazed at how much good can be accomplished by so relatively few. May God bless you and your families and bring you a Happy 2010!

John Held, President



Spotlight on Volunteers

Our numerous volunteers are an essential part of the SICM family, and we rely on their service and commitment to help us do what we do. As one means of recognizing these special people, we are pleased to announce a new feature of SICM News, "Spotlight on Volunteers." In each issue, we will feature a current volunteer, including in what capacity and how often they volunteer, how long they have been involved with SICM, what they like to do in their spare time, tips for new volunteers, etc.

This issue's "Spotlight on Volunteers" features **Chris Jones**. Although you won't typically see Chris' face at the Food Pantry, or at the Damien Center, or at the CROP Walk, he is an integral part of sharing what SICM does with the rest of the world. Chris is the webmaster of SICM's website: www.sicm.us. He is the one to update events, add newly published newsletters, and get up-to-date information up and ready to be viewed on the internet. Chris has volunteered in this capacity for a year now, and we certainly appreciate his time and efforts to keep us technologically on par with other organizations. Chris' web design skills are also put to use at the St. Stephen's Episcopal Church website: <http://www.saintstephenschenectady.org/> which he oversees.



Chris hiking in Maine.

A parishioner at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Schenectady, Chris is a retired professor from Union College, where he taught Physics for over 30 years. Since retiring, his interests have shifted a bit to photography, cooking, his grandchildren, singing, maintaining websites, and participating in the life of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Schenectady in a variety of ways.

Thank you, Chris!