



CHRISTIAN
ACTIVITIES
COUNCIL

Breaking Barriers
Building Communities

Bridges

SEPTEMBER 2007

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES COUNCIL • 36 UCC CHURCHES IN MISSION TO GREATER HARTFORD

CAC Joins Universal Health Care Campaign

New Initiative Will Reach UCC Churches Statewide

Health care is a universal need, but it has become a luxury many Connecticut residents can't afford. According to the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, health-related bankruptcies have become a reality. Premiums are rising four times as fast as wages. Small businesses can't cover their employees. Doctors and hospitals can't absorb any more free care.

The CAC is taking action to address Connecticut's growing health care crisis. In August, we received a grant from the Universal Health Care Foundation to engage all 246 United Church of Christ congregations across the state in the campaign for universal care. Our mission is to raise awareness, provide education on the issues and mobilize our collective forces in helping to shape a health system that provides quality care for everyone.



"We are really looking forward to working closely with the UCC on this matter," said Rev. Don Steinle, the CAC's executive director.

The CAC joins a growing number of non-profit organizations to be awarded funds from the foundation, a non-profit organization that serves as a catalyst to engage people and communities in the universal health care cause. The CAC has worked with the foundation in the past on health care issues through the Interfaith Fellowship for Universal Health Care.

"We share the belief of CAC and the UCC that universal health care is a fundamental human right," said Juan A. Figueroa, the foundation's president. Mr. Figueroa was the keynote speaker at the CAC's 2007 annual awards dinner in May.

Please join the CAC in becoming a voice for change in this critical campaign.

The Health Care Problem

- More than half of bankruptcies in the US are due to medical debt.
- About 1 in 10 Connecticut residents lacks health insurance.
- 80 percent of Connecticut's uninsured are employed.
- Taxpayers fund 80-85 percent of care for the uninsured.

Source: Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut

Universal Health Care Coverage Is...

- Universally available to all.
- Continuous and portable regardless of changes in employment or marital status.
- Affordable to all people.
- Sustainable, causing no significant extra expense to society.
- High quality, effective, safe, timely and equitable.

The CAC Is Seeking A Program Administrator...

...to educate, organize and mobilize Connecticut's UCC congregations in support of Universal Health Care Reform. The position may be filled by clergy or laity as one full-time or two half-time positions. For further information, contact Rev. Edwin Ayala at the CAC office (527-9860).

Immersion: New and Familiar

The New: Sharing Assets with Hartford Ministries

Sharing assets for urban ministry is the unifying theme for a one day immersion and social justice workshop to be led by MTAI Assistant Director Rev. Nancy Allen on Saturday, October 27.

The day will begin with a tour of the neighborhoods surrounding Hartford's eight UCC churches and discussions with church leaders on their ministries. Following lunch at El Mercado on Park Street, participants will gather for an "asset mapping" workshop to explore the assets their congregations can share with the communities they just toured: a mutual prayer shawl ministry, for instance, or shared resources such as the bus being used for the immersion.

"The intent is to help focus our efforts," Rev. Allen said, "and proactively identify opportunities for partnership."

The Familiar: Hartford and Puerto Rico

On April 14, 40 participants from four UCC congregations joined Rev. Edwin Ayala on a Saturday morning tour of Hartford and the signs of hope throughout the city.

From September 26–30, Rev. Ayala will lead the seventh annual immersion to Puerto Rico on behalf of the UConn/Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center Family Medicine Residency Program. Eleven medical residents and faculty will attend.

Annual Awards Dinner

Held May 10 at Hartford's Bond Hotel Ballroom

At our 2007 Annual Awards Dinner, the CAC recognized Daryl K. Roberts, Hartford's chief of police, and Karen A. Petersen, sculptor of Sunshine, the new bronze deer that was installed at the entryway to Deerfield Avenue last fall. Special recognition was also given to CAC board member Sara Batchelder who received the Mildred W. Walton Lay Person of the Year Award.

Juan A. Figueroa, president of the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, was the evening's keynote speaker, bringing the spotlight to the



2007 award winners: CAC board member Sara Batchelder; sculptress Karen Petersen; Hartford Police Chief Daryl K. Roberts

CAC's new health care initiative, and Katishia Cosley of Fox Channel 61 served as our mistress of ceremonies.

The evening's program also included a new kind of event: a silent auction of about 100 donations—including weekend getaways, artwork, dining, and sports and family outings—and a brief live auction. Mr. Figueroa was the highest bidder for a BBQ dinner with the four "preachers": Reverends Edwin Ayala, John Selders, Michael Williams and Don Steinle.

Many thanks to all who contributed and participated. The auctions raised more than \$7,000 to support the CAC's mission.



CAC President Robert Cushman, MD; Katishia Cosley, mistress of ceremonies; Juan Figueroa, president of the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut; Rev. Donald R. Steinle, CAC Executive Director

Homeownership Support Services Now HUD Certified

Building financial literacy is an increasingly important service that the CAC offers to Hartford's Northend community, especially in our nation's current era of mortgage foreclosures and credit card debt. Thanks to the efforts of Housing Counseling Specialist Tori Hamilton over the past year, the CAC recently became a HUD-ap-

(continues on page 4)

Adventures in the City

A Challenging but Successful Year

Despite significant cuts in funding from major foundations, Adventures in the City had another successful year in 2007. 279 children in kindergarten through grade 5 attended the CAC's standard academic and enrichment programs, "Learning While Touring Our Capitol City through Reading, Music Trips and Drama."

The program was held at four Hartford sites from June 28 through August 3: Milner and Sand elementary schools, North United Methodist Church, and a new site this year, Grace Lutheran Church on Woodland Street, which replaced Metropolitan AME.

The CAC also helped sponsor programs at Family Life Education, Friendship Camp and a special initiative on leadership development for youth. These special programs were attended by a total of over 160 children and youth.

Late-coming contributions and cuts in those received from major foundations effectively limited the number of special programs we could sponsor. Our reach would have been further limited were it not for the generous, eleventh-hour support of Reverend Davida Foy-Crabtree, conference minister of the Connecticut Conference, UCC and the UCC General Synod. A special offering at the General Synod meeting in Hart-



ford in June raised more than \$8,000 on behalf of the AIC.

Church funding for Adventures in the City is more important now than ever before. Please support this vital program in 2008.

Housing Initiatives

Irving and Vine

Construction of all five houses on Irving and Vine is complete, the houses have been sold and three are occupied. Many thanks to the Rocky Hill Congregational Church for its generous \$25,000 donation and willing team of volunteers who assisted with construction over the past two years.

Edgewood Street

Our final Upper Albany housing efforts are underway on Edgewood Street. An early start on the reconstruction of 19 and 29 Edgewood was forced by the rain-soaked collapse of the roof on one of the buildings. The CAC board of directors agreed to advance funds from the endowment until permanent financing is available later this fall.

Both Edgewood houses are "perfect six" apartment buildings that will be divided into two two-family units—the first floor being a rental unit and the second and third floors owner-occupied. Dresca and Marconi construction companies are completing the work.

West Hartford Interfaith Housing Coalition

The CAC is currently in the process of taking over management of the assets of the now defunct West Hartford Interfaith Housing Coalition. Assets comprise about 40 housing units, including co-ops, condominiums and ground lease sites.

Staff Member Nancy Allen Ordained

On June 17, staff member Nancy Allen was ordained as a pastor and minister in the United Church of Christ. The ordination ceremony was held at Nancy's home church in Killingworth, replete with ethnic and spiritual diversity, laying on of hands and a gospel choir that had everyone on their feet, clapping and singing to "Oh Happy Day."

Nancy graduated from seminary in

2005, and has been called by the CAC, where she serves in an outreach capacity as assistant director of the Metropolitan Training Advancement Institute, and Immanuel Congregational Church in Hartford, where she is associate pastor.



*Reverend Nancy Allen,
Assistant Director of the
CAC's Metropolitan Training
Advancement Institute*

Homeownership Support Services *(continues from page 2)*

proved housing counseling agency. This certification acknowledges our competence and knowledge in counseling low and moderate income families and potentially expands the number of clients we serve.

The CAC's Homeownership Counseling Program brings free information, support and counseling to the community on matters that range from the purchase and rental of housing to budgets and money management, credit counseling, prevention of mortgage default, home maintenance and fair housing laws.

Planned Giving Leaving a Legacy

If you believe in the CAC's social justice ministry and want to ensure that its inner city mission is sustained for years to come, we invite you to consider making a planned gift to the CAC in your will or through your estate planning. Your gift will benefit the poor and their quality of life. All donations, large and small, are welcome.

Planned gifts require legal and professional advice. **For more information, call Rev. Edwin Ayala at the CAC office (860-527-9860).**

Bridges

A periodic publication of
**Christian Activities
Council, Congregational**
47 Vine Street
Hartford, CT 06112
Phone 860-527-9860
Fax 860-727-9558
www.christianactivities.org

Staff

The Rev. Donald R. Steinle
Executive Director

The Rev. Edwin Ayala
Associate Director, CAC
Director, Metropolitan Training
Advancement Institute

Yvonne Chandler
Director of Housing Ventures

Candy Bordonaro
Office Manager

The Rev. Nancy Allen
Assistant Director, Metropolitan
Training Advancement Institute

Michelle Roberts
Manager, CAC Financials
Assistant to Housing Director

The Rev. John Selders
Care Coordinator, Zezzo
House

Sandra Foster
Case Manager, Zezzo House

Tori Hamilton
Housing Counseling Specialist

Flora Foster
Office Assistant

Kathy Simpson
Newsletter Designer and
Editor

 **Christian Activities Council,
Congregational**
47 Vine Street
Hartford, CT 06112

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD CT
PERMIT NO 945