

Common Call

Community of Congregations of Oak Park and River Forest

P.O. Box 3365, Oak Park, IL 60303-3365

(708) 383-6369

<http://www.Lgrossman.com/comcong.htm>

April 2010

CONTENTS

Page 1– WIM

Page 2– WIM cont

Events of Note

Page 3– WIM Volunteers
Needed

CoC Hosts and
Volunteers

Ten Thousand
Villages

CROP Walk

First United Peace
With Justice News

NAMI Fundraiser

Page 4– Food Pantry

Page 5– Green Tips

Membership News



Our mission: To develop a community among the churches, synagogues, and other congregations of faith in Oak Park and River Forest and enable common service.

Special Announcement

Community of Congregations is moving to delivering the newsletter electronically. Please e-mail Jane Wood, editor, to have your name added to the e-mail list. This month's newsletter was sent electronically to all for whom we have e-mail addresses.



OPRF Nonprofit Seeks Clergy Input On Homelessness

Rev. Harriet Cross remembers her days of being homeless. The Northwestern University journalism major had one quarter left before graduating, but a series of personal and financial struggles weighed in, forcing her to move into a shelter in Evanston.

After staying the maximum of three months at Hilda's Place, Cross, now pastor of Cornerstone United Methodist Church, 171 N. Cuyler Ave., moved into a transitional apartment with a woman whom she could best describe as frightening. Cross said she regularly pushed furniture in front of her bedroom door at night for fear her roommate might kill or injure her. The woman had threatened her repeatedly.

That was 19 years ago, Cross told a group of clergy and faith-community members Tuesday at a clergy breakfast at First United Church, 848 Lake St. The event, sponsored by the Oak Park/River Forest Walk-In Ministry (WIM) and Community of Congregations, sought to help faith leaders uncover different approaches to tackling the increasing problems of homelessness and poverty in the area.

Cross, who also is president of the Community of Congregations, shared her story in hopes that it would shed light on the emotional and psychological components of homelessness and help attendees develop strategies for assisting those who are vulnerable and lacking basic resources.

"People who go to homeless shelters are on a journey," Cross said. "There were lots of stories of relationships that fell apart --of alienation. We all were looking for someone who cared enough to share with us ... to treat us as human beings."

That's where an agency such as WIM can make the biggest impact, said Cristy Harris, WIM executive director, after Cross' speech.

“We are a place where people can come to be treated with respect and kindness,” Harris said. “We are seeking a better approach to poverty, to help people long term. We listen to them and try to help them with solutions that hopefully will prevent them from ever becoming homeless.”

WIM was founded in 2005 in response to the homeless and at-risk people who came to the doors of churches/religious organizations in the Oak Park/River Forest area asking for assistance. The faith leaders found that they were running out of discretionary funds to help those in need and that there was no reliable way to track those who went from church to church asking for help, and who used the aid to buy drugs or alcohol. The faith leaders of several organizations decided to pool their discretionary funds to better serve those in need.

“We are sensitive to the plight of those we endeavor to help,” said Rev. Renee Willet, director of faith partners at WIM and one of its founders. Willet also is pastor of Fellowship Christian Church, 1106 W. Madison St. “This event is a step in reclaiming the connectivity to the human spirit ... to bring humanity back to inhumane conditions.”

Despite its name, WIM is a social-service agency, not a ministerial group. The agency helps clients, regardless of religious affiliation, with emergency assistance such as bus passes, funds to get state IDs, rental assistance, and referrals to agencies such as Public Action to Deliver Shelter, Inc. (PADS), which provides shelter and supportive services to the homeless and those at risk.

The Oak Park/River Forest Area Walk-In Ministry(WIM) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in November 2005 by local faith communities who wanted to provide assistance to the many people who sought emergency aid, but did not have the expertise or resources to do so. WIM is headquartered in the First United Church of Oak Park, lower level parking lot entrance, 848 Lake Street Oak Park, IL 60301. 708•386•1946 info@walk-in-ministryopr.org.

Events of Note

Easter Vigil

Friday, April 2, 2010

7:00–8:00 p.m.

First United Church of Oak Park
848 Lake Street, Oak Park

For more information contact Bob Haisman
at 708-997-1993 or

Gardenopr@sbcbglobal.net

Greg Mortenson Fundraising Dinner

Saturday, April 3, 2010

For more information contact Bob Haisman
at 708-997-1993 or

Gardenopr@sbcbglobal.net

NAMI Fundraiser Dinner

Sunday April 11, 2010

5:00–8:00 p.m.

Skrine Chops

Forest Park

More information at <http://namimetsub.org>
or call 708-524-2582

Labyrinth at Euclid

Tuesday, April 13, 2010

Friday, April 23, 2010

7:00–9:00 p.m.

Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church
405 S. Euclid Avenue, Oak Park

For more information call Rev. Cossy
Ksander at 708-386-2669

Taizé at Euclid

Friday, April 16, 2010

7:30 p.m.

Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church
405 S. Euclid Avenue, Oak Park

For more information call Rev. Cossy
Ksander at 708-386-2669

Taizé at Unity Temple

Friday, April 23, 2010

7:00 p.m.

Unity Temple Unitarian Universalist
Congregation

875 Lake Street, Oak Park

For more information visit their site at
www.unitytemple.org

Peace Vigil

Every Friday Evening

7:00-8:00 p.m.

First United Church of Oak Park
848 Lake Street, Oak Park

For more information contact Bob Haisman
at 708-997-1993 or

Gardenopr@sbcbglobal.net

WIM Volunteers Needed

Walk-In Ministry needs volunteers for all of its shifts as well as volunteers who are interested in researching its referral resources who do not need to be available during our client hours. Contact Catherine Rison at 386-1946 or send an e-mail to info@walk-in-ministryopr.org and indicate "volunteer" in the subject line. Hours are:
Monday–Friday 10:00-11:00 a.m.
Saturday 9:30–11:30 a.m.
1st Wednesday of the Month 7:00–8:00 p.m.
All other Wednesdays 3:30–5:00 p.m.

Community of Congregations Hosts and Volunteers

CoC is in need of:

- Host congregations for its May 20th and October 21st 2010 community meetings
- A host congregation for the Interfaith Thanksgiving service on Sunday, November 21, 2010
- Volunteers to serve on the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service planning committee
- Volunteers to serve on the Program Committee. The duties include planning and presenting the programs for the community meetings

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Jane Wood at 708-383-6369 or woodnflute@comcast.net.

Community Shopping Nights at Ten Thousand Villages

Support global artisans and help your organization grow. Ten Thousand Villages, a nonprofit fair trade store in Oak Park, is partnering with churches, schools and other nonprofits to host Community Shopping Nights. On a designated Thursday evening, your members will enjoy shopping for unique, handcrafted products made by artisans from around the globe. **Ten Thousand Villages will donate 15 percent of that evening's net sales to your organization.**

We hope you'll consider partnering with us. For more information, contact Clare Leavitt, Store Manager, at 708-848-4572 or manageroakpark@sbcglobal.net.

CROP Hunger Walk–Come walk with US.....

Our theme this year is “**A Million To Feed Millions**”. This year we have challenged our walkers to raise \$60,000. This will put us over the \$1,000,000 mark in contributions to Church World Service and our local food agencies over the past 27 years. We are very optimistic because last year we raised \$66,107.72!

Please rally around your church recruiter and help make this walk our best yet.

CROP Hunger Walk

Sunday, May 2, 2010

Registration: 1:15 p.m.

Step-Off: 2:00 p.m.

Pilgrim Congregational Church

406 Lake Street

Oak Park, IL

First United Peace With Justice News

April 2nd–Good Friday Night–Join First United's Peace With Justice on the front steps of First United from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. for a Special Easter Peace Vigil. All Oak Park River Forest Congregations are warmly invited to witness for peace! Bring a prayer, bring a hymn, bring a home-made sign and join us in a vigil for peace. For more information contact Bob Haisman at gardenopr@sbcglobal.net or 708 997 1993.

April 3, Saturday–Greg Mortenson Fund Raising Dinner. Join us at the "Oak Park" Table at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare. Net proceeds go to support Mortenson's 137 Schools! Order and pay for your tickets as individuals at www.ikat.org/cai-annual-fundraiser. Please let Bob Haisman (gardenopr@sbcglobal.net) know you are attending so you will be seated at the "OPRF Table"!



NAMI–Metro Suburban (serving persons and families who struggle with mental illness) is hosting a buffet supper fundraising event Sunday, April 11th from 5:00–8:00 p.m. at Skrine Chops Restaurant in Forest Park. The cost is \$40 per person. For more information please check our website at <http://namimetsub.org> or call the Drop-in Center at 708-524-2582.

GREEN TIP

HOUSEHOLD BATTERIES: Don't throw your used household batteries into the trash; they are full of noxious ingredients that shouldn't go into landfills where they can leak out into the soil or water system. Instead, take them to a pickup center where they will be disposed of properly. In Oak Park, you can take them to Green Home Experts on Oak Park Avenue. All Walgreens locations in the City of Chicago will also take them, as well as branch locations of the Chicago Public Library.

GREEN TIP 2

This is the time of year when vegetable gardeners select and order seed for the upcoming growing season. Whether you are a gardener pondering your seed order or a food consumer without garden it is important to know where your food comes from. While you may be busy with many other activities know that our food is threatened by corporations that produce genetically-engineered seeds. Many seed companies have taken a pledge NOT to genetically engineer their seeds. As The Safe Seed Pledge states: "Agriculture and seeds provide the basis upon which our lives depend." So, get to know what you and your children are eating. Before ordering vegetable seeds take a look at the list of seed companies that have signed the Safe Seed Pledge. Go to: <http://www.councilforresponsiblegenetics.org/Help/TakeAction.aspx>



GREEN TIP: LIGHTEN UP

Most of us are concerned about energy consumption and doing the right thing for the environment. We have responded by purchasing compact fluorescent light (CFLs) bulbs. Now we ask how to recycle the CFLs. Here are a few helpful tips:

1. Take time to read about CFLs by going to The Environmental Working Group website at <http://www.ewg.org/home> and reading: "Lighten Up in '09: Shopper's Guide to Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs: Green Lighting Guide." This guide is full of great information, especially when it comes to safety concerns surrounding CFL's (where best to place them; breakage issues, etc.)
2. Where to recycle: Dressel's Hardware at 1137 Chicago Avenue in Oak Park, accepts CFL recycling. Please don't throw CFLs out in the trash or recycling bin as they contain mercury. For other recycling questions, go to <http://Earth911.com>.

2010 COMMUNITY OF CONGREGATIONS

About 50 congregations in Oak Park, River Forest and surrounding communities have contact with the Community of Congregations through membership and/or participation in its ministries including the Holiday Food and Gift Basket Program and the Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry.

The following congregations and faith communities are current with their 2010 dues:

**Ascension Catholic Church
Cornerstone United Methodist Church
Faith In Place
Oak Park Friends
SHEM Center for Interfaith Spirituality
St. Catherine-St. Lucy Parish
St. Edmund Parish
St. Luke Parish
United Lutheran Church
Unity Church of Oak Park**

We thank these congregations for their support. This list includes all payments received by March 8, 2010. Additional payments will be noted in the May Common Call.

Oak Park-River Forest
Community of Congregations
P.O. Box 3365
Oak Park, IL 60303-3365
Visit us at: <http://www.lgrossman.com/comcong.htm>

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Oak Park IL

Save These Dates

Friday, April 2, 2010 1:00 p.m.
Easter Peace Vigil
First United Church of Oak Park

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Greg Mortenson Fundraising Dinner
Hyatt Regency O'Hare

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Unity Temple Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Every Friday Evening
Peace Vigil
First United Church of Oak Park

If your congregation or organization has a special celebration or activity that you would like to share with the Community of Congregations community, please send your information to Editor Jane Wood at woodnflute@comcast.net by the 5th of the month.

Community of Congregations Executive Committee

Officers: President, Rev. Harriette Cross; Vice President, _____; Secretary, Pam Meyerson; Treasurer, Valerie Lester; Immediate Past President, Rev. Lowell Eckberg

At-large committee members: Joe McDonald, Harriette Robinet/McLouis Robinet, Dr. Bradford Wainer

Administrative Secretary: Jane Wood