



FaithLines

A Publication of Inter-Faith Ministries

August 2007
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Working for over 120 years to build interreligious understanding, promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged.

The Kansas Benefit Bank

Contact Us:

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View this edition of FaithLines in full color at www.ifmnet.org!

Upcoming Events:

CROP Walk 10/14 Sun., 2:00 p.m.
Sedgwick County Park

Operation Holiday Applications
November, multiple locations

Operation Holiday Distribution
Dec. 13-15, site tba

Free Tax Preparation Jan.-Apr.
The Kansas Benefit Bank,
call 316-264-9303 for appt.

Let Justice Roll Jan. 27, 2008
call 316-264-9303 for more info.

Want to help low-wage working families put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads? You should know about Inter-Faith Ministries' The Kansas Benefit Bank project.

The Kansas Benefit Bank is an easy-to-use software program that lets food pantries, charities, and congregations help families complete tax returns and applications for food stamps, childcare subsidies, children's medical assistance, and utilities assistance, plus register to vote.

Between January and May 2007, agencies in Great Bend and Wichita used The Kansas Benefit Bank to help 328 families complete tax returns for free, access over \$300,000 in refunds, and save \$50,000 in filing fees. (The average family helped had about \$13,000 in annual income and received a \$1,000 tax refund.) So far this year, The Kansas Benefit Bank has generated over \$500,000 in economic impact in these communities!

Inter-Faith Ministries and 14 partner agencies will have counselors trained to use more of The Kansas Benefit Bank software in September. If your congregation or charity is interested in using The Kansas Benefit Bank, call Pat at 316-264-9303. If you would like to be a volunteer for Inter-Faith Ministries' The Kansas Benefit Bank, call Karole at 316-264-9303.

Interfaith Understanding Has Become a Movement

Inter-Faith Ministries-Wichita is always proud to say, "We are the oldest interfaith organization in the United States." However, if that were all we could say, the statement would only be a curious piece of history. Many years ago, progressive thinking religious leaders decided "religions need to understand each other." The good news is that the idea planted 122 years ago has now grown into an international epidemic.

Obviously, Inter-Faith Ministries does not take the sole credit for today's "Interfaith Movement." Over the years there have been many progressive religious leaders representing many faith traditions that have enabled the "interfaith idea" to become a movement. Today there are interfaith organizations that literally dot the landscape of our entire globe. Outside of Wichita, Inter-Faith Ministries is often placed in "celebrity status" according to Rev. Sam Muyskens, Executive Director. That status has enabled Rev. Muyskens to lecture and advise interfaith organizations throughout our globe. If your organization or congregation would like to learn more about the incredible "interfaith movement" and hear about Rev. Sam Muyskens' global experiences, contact the Inter-Faith Ministries office. Rev. Sam Muyskens is more than willing to share the story.

Campaign To End Childhood Hunger Update on Food Stamp Reforms

On July 27, the House passed its 2007 Farm Bill, which includes \$4 billion over five years in reforms for the Food Stamp Program and other nutrition programs. The bill, H.R. 2419, includes several reforms such as increasing the minimum benefit from \$10 per month to \$16, removing disincentives for working families to save for retirement and education, and increasing the average monthly benefit.

Because Kansas is the 9th hungriest state in the nation with 1 in 8 families unsure of where their next meal is coming from, Inter-Faith Ministries' volunteer advocates visited all four Kansas House Members. Inter-Faith Ministries continues to encourage Senators Brownback and Roberts to support a strong nutrition title in the Farm Bill and the more ambitious McGovern-Emerson Bill (H.R. 2129) that would invest \$20 billion over five years for nutrition title improvements.

Update courtesy of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Food Research and Action Center.

Inter-Faith Ministries Memorial Gifts and Annuities, March - July 2007

Thank you to the families and friends of Jean Scotten Burwell, Rev. Dr. Gary Cox, Paul Curtis, Virginia Hagg, Avenell Harms, Mary MacLeod, Ruth Meier, Michael Mosseri, and Francis H. Zoglman.

CROP Hunger Walk

- What: Walking to end hunger in Wichita and around the world.
When: Sunday, October 14. 1:00 p.m. sign-in and entertainment; 2:00 p.m. kick-off
Where: Sedgwick County Park Horseshoe Shelter
Why: Because we are called to walk with our brothers and sisters around the world
Who: You, your family, friends, and congregation are invited! To get involved, call Inter-Faith Ministries at 316-264-9303.

Each year, Inter-Faith Ministries and area congregations organize the Wichita CROP Hunger Walk. The Wichita CROP Hunger Walk raises funds for local and international hunger relief.

What does that mean? It means that 75% of the funds raised by Wichita CROP Walkers go to Church World Service to provide refugee assistance, literacy and education, farm resources (water wells, livestock, etc.), vocational training to AIDS orphans, landmine removal from farmers' fields, and other crucial assistance to make sure that millions around the world have food and water for their families. It also means that 25% of the funds raised by Wichita CROP Walkers go to Wichita charities to provide emergency meals and food boxes for Wichitans who need help. Also, last year's Wichita CROP Walkers raised over 1000 lbs. of peanut butter for local charities. This year, the goal is 1,200 lbs. of peanut butter, an important source of protein that is often in short supply at food pantries. Because peanut butter doesn't have to be refrigerated, it is most helpful for people in dire situations who might not have electricity or even a home.

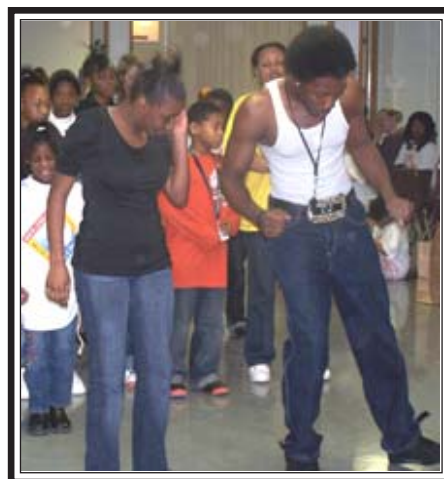
CROP is a chance to stand up together for what we believe in! Each year, CROP teams are encouraged to take action for families in poverty. This year, the Wichita CROP Hunger Walk will host a STAND UP event to raise awareness of and support for the UN Millenium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs are steps that the United States and most governments pledged to take to end extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. The goals include universal education, gender equity, reducing child mortality, combating HIV/AIDS, and other steps to give our brothers and sisters around the world a chance for a healthy, happy life.

Inter-Faith Ministries GoZones!

With the help of "Marching White Tigers," Woodland GoZones! brought people out to E. 15th Street the last Sunday in June. The White Tigers, a Wichita drill team, performed for the neighborhood to help Woodland GoZones! raise money at its annual Art Benefit Concert.

The explosive drumming, timely whistling and fast-paced dancing helped draw a crowd to the afternoon fundraiser. Local artists contributed paintings, drawings and woodburnings to be auctioned off. The proceeds raised money for Woodland GoZones! after-school and summer programs for elementary and middle school youth. The *Wichita Eagle* was present at the event and featured a front page article, *Drumming Up Assistance*, in the June 25th local section of the newspaper.

GoZones!, a program of Inter-Faith Ministries, helps strengthen neighborhoods by providing activities and educational opportunities that enrich the lives of the youth and adults in Wichita. While each of the eight GoZones! sites offer slightly different programming, the focus of all sites is to *meet unmet neighborhood needs*. Many sites offer after-school programming while others provide ESL for adults and Friday night recreation for teenagers.



Volunteer Spotlight



A luncheon was held at Inter-Faith Ministries on May 17th to honor GracePoint Fellowship UMC as our 2007 Volunteer of the Year. The award was accepted by Mike Snow, GracePoint's worship pastor. Their name was added to the permanent plaque located in the Inter-Faith Ministries program office. Mike is pictured at left with Jane Frederick, last year's recipient.

Volunteers from GracePoint have completed over fifty projects on the five IFM properties, including cleaning, painting, making repairs, and providing many meals.



GracePoint volunteers serve a brunch on the second Saturday of the month at Inter-Faith Villa Central for clients and neighbors of Inter-Faith Ministries. Every other Monday a meal is planned and provided for clients at Inter-Faith Ministries' Ti'Wiconi Safe Haven. On Sundays, GracePoint provides transportation for several clients that wish to attend church services held at Maize South Middle School.

ASAP Haiti



Sam Muyskens and fellow IFM staff member, Keith Williams, went to Haiti in July to check on the progress of the Lambert school and the solar oven project. They were pleased to hear that ten students had just completed the 12th grade and were preparing to take exams to qualify for college. They attended a summit meeting in Jacmel on the reforestation of

Haiti. About 60 people were there, including the Haitian Minister of Agriculture and the Director of Internal Affairs of the Dominican Republic. Sam and Keith demonstrated a solar oven and cooked rice for the group. Solar energy for cooking in Haiti is an alternative to the charcoal and wood being used which are health hazards and contribute to deforestation.

Help Us Get Ready for Operation Holiday 2007!

2007 Operation Holiday planning has started. We are pleased to announce that just before Christmas in 2006, Operation Holiday provided 12,711 low-income persons (over half of them children) with food, clothing, blankets and toys. It took 1,011 volunteers over 6,500 hours of volunteer time to get the job done.

Please begin planning how you can volunteer your time or donate food, clothing, blankets and cash towards this wonderful event. *Mother Teresa said, "To keep the lamp burning we must put oil in it."* Thank you in advance for helping Inter-Faith Ministries keep our Operation Holiday lamp burning for Wichita's less fortunate.

National Night Out

Inter-Faith Ministries participated in the 24th annual National Night Out on August 7th by hosting a block party with an emphasis on neighborhood violence reduction. National Night Out is a night for neighborhoods to come out and stand united against crime.

We welcomed GracePoint Fellowship UMC, Target, and UniCare as hosting partners. Jerry Wills, Head House Manager of IFM's Ti'Wiconi Safe Haven, was the coordinator. Jerry said, "This is our way of saying that we are not going to let criminals and drug dealers take over our community and it is our sincere hope this event continues to grow year after year and spreads to other at-risk communities within the city."



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Welcome to the New Members of the Board of Directors:

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Sr. Margaret Knoeber, Adorers of the Blood of Christ
Rev. Dr. Cathy Northrup, First Presbyterian Church
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Ivonne Goldstein, Community Service Coordinator

**Change Service
Requested**

Building Neighborhood Capital Campaign Update!

If you have driven on North Market lately, you have probably noticed that some of the buildings are being demolished or moved. The rain has slowed us down – but we're all looking forward to the building/renovation progress of the affordable housing units (Villa Courts) that will include Enrichment and Learning Centers.

Our funding goal increased due to unforeseen historic preservation delays which resulted in rising costs in building materials, but we're nearing our goal of \$6,412,536! With the generous help of Thornton and Kathleen Anderson, Drs. Mark and Kathy Melhorn, Cargill Cares and Cargill Corporate Offices, The Dwane and Velma Wallace Foundation, Cessna Aircraft Company, Spirit Aerosystems, The Wiedemann Foundation, and many other loyal donors, we have almost reached our goal.

IFM is especially thankful to Mert Buckley and Ivonne Goldstein for their work as co-chairs of the Capital Campaign. Thanks Mert and Ivonne for your leadership!

We have \$326,497 remaining to complete our campaign. We still need your support! Please consider helping Inter-Faith Ministries move forward to sustain and improve our community's families with emergency shelter, food, and life-assistance. There are many ways to help. Send a contribution in the envelope provided (please make a notation of BNCC), contribute at www.ifmnet.org, or call Karen Dobbin @ 316-264-9303.

