

Unity in the Community
General Membership Meeting
6:30 P.M., Sunday, July 15, 2012

Buckhall United Methodist Church
Moore Drive & Prince William Parkway
Manassas, VA 20111

Members Present: Kathy Clark, Bob Gaskill, Gregg Reynolds, Jeanette Rishell, Ric Clark, Jim Amaral, Humaira Ali

Guests: Safiya Samman, Director of Environmental Education for the Department of Agriculture

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 P.M. by Chair Kathy Clark. A quorum was not present.

1. **Secretary's Report.** Paper copies of the minutes for the June 17, 2012, meeting were distributed for review. The minutes were accepted as presented.

2. **Treasurer's Report.** Gregg Reynolds reported that Unity in the Community (UITC) has a balance of \$1,623.50, \$878.53 of which is in the general fund, \$150.00 in the humanitarian fund, and \$594.97 in the study circles fund. The report was accepted as presented.

3. **Vice Chair's Report.** Lydia Gonzalez was not present to give a report this month.

4. **Chair's Report.** Kathy Clark reported that she received a call from Washington Post reporter Jeremy Borden to ask her what the local immigrant community thought of the recent Supreme Court ruling on Arizona's immigration bill (S.B. 1070). Kathy referred him to Carlos Castro, owner of Todos Supermarket. Soon after, articles on the topic and Carlos Castro himself appeared in The Washington Post ("Latinos returning to Pr. William after immigration crackdown, but scars remain," June 26, 2012) and The Huffington Post ("Carlos Castro, Founder of Todos Supermarket, Says Business Climate Much Harsher For Immigrants Today," June 27, 2012).

Kathy also represented UITC at the funeral prayer service for Brother Mohammad Mehboob, President of the Muslim Association of Virginia. Over 2,000 people attended the service.

Finally, Kathy reported that she, Gregg Reynolds, and others members of UITC attended a recent meeting concerning Holly Acres Trailer Park. (See the New Business section of these minutes for additional information about the meeting.)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5. **International Day of Prayer for Peace (IDPP).** Though Illana Naylor was not present to give a report, she submitted a written update which was summarized by Kathy Clark. The committee met on Monday, June 25, 2012, at First AME Church of Manassas and finalized the

theme for this year's event (Loving One Another as People of the World). The event will be held from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. on Sunday, September 23, 2012, at the First AME Church of Manassas and will be followed by a fellowship meal. Leaders of faith communities will be the primary points of contact for this event's participants. The leaders will also determine what type of contribution and/or involvement participants from their faith communities will have.

The following faith communities or leaders have confirmed their planned participation in this event: All Saints Catholic Church, Congregation Ner Shalom, First AME Church of Manassas, First Baptist Church of Manassas, Holy Family Catholic Church, Rev. Jonna Humphrey (Chaplain, Prince William Hospital), Manassas Church of the Brethren, Manassas Mosque, and Unity in the Community. Representatives of additional faith communities who would like to participate should contact Illana Naylor at 703-975-3737.

The next planning meeting will be held at 1:00 P.M. on Friday July 20, 2012, at the First AME Church of Manassas. Interested members of UITC are invited to attend the planning meeting.

In addition to UITC's IDPP event, Illana reminded us that the public is invited to attend an interfaith service that St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Triangle will be hosting at 7:00 P.M. on the following Sunday (September 30). The theme of the service, "Spirit of Assisi," parallels UITC's IDPP event theme.

6. Sharing the Not-In-Our-Town Message. This agenda item was skipped.

7. Nature's Revival Garden – U.S. Forest Service Proposal. Safiya Samman, Director of Environmental Education for the Department of Agriculture, was present to provide additional information and answer questions about this project that was brought to UITC in May, 2012, for consideration as a UITC project. UITC's responsibility would include advertising the program to faith and civic communities who might have youth interested in participating in an environment project. The core group for this program would consist of fifteen to twenty 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students who will meet as a group beginning this fall to learn how to plan and carry out recycling, composting, and planting activities that will improve and enhance a community site. The first project the group will plan and complete will be a model project. The planned model project is a pollinator or herb garden on the grounds of Dar al Noor. It is hoped that participating youth will use the knowledge and skills obtained by completing this project to plan and complete similar environmental projects within their own faith communities. The first youth meeting is expected to take place in late August or early September. It was the consensus of the group that UITC would participate in this project. Youth and adult advisors who are interested should contact UITC Chair Kathy Clark as soon as possible.

8. VOICE Agents of Restoration. Kathy Clark reported that members of Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE) recently surveyed communities in the Woodbridge area to identify homes that might be used as part of an affordable housing program. VOICE members will be surveying communities in the Manassas area next week. The information they gather will be used in VOICE's continued housing crisis negotiations with banks and mortgage companies. The next VOICE event related to this concern will be a rally scheduled for Monday, October 1, 2012, at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Woodbridge.

9. **Chinn Library Fall Interfaith Tour.** Carol Ahmed of Chinn Park Regional Library (Prince William County Library System) recently contacted Kathy Clark to tell her that the Houses of Worship tour that was planned for this fall has been rescheduled for spring 2013. Carol is applying for a National Endowment for the Humanities grant for this project and has invited UITC to be an event co-sponsor with Chinn and Dar al Noor. It was the consensus of the group that UITC will co-sponsor the event.

NEW BUSINESS

10. **Nominating Committee.** Kathy Clark stated that she will be forming a nominating committee for the offices of UITC vice chair and secretary. Both positions are open for election this coming September.

11. **Holly Acres Situation.** Kathy Clark, Gregg Reynolds, John Steinbach, Carlos Castro, Nancy Lyles, the owner of Holly Acres Mobile Home Park, and Holly Acres's attorney met with county code official Eric Mays to discuss how the group could work with licensed electricians, plumbers, and engineers, to improve mobile homes and mobile home sites so that families displaced from the park due to last fall's flooding incident can return to Holly Acres. Gregg Reynolds reported a demonstration of genuine concern on part of Prince William County staff in working with the group to resolve building and occupancy issues at Holly Acres. It is hoped that nine mobile homes will be certified as suitable for occupancy in the near future. Gregg also reported that the Woodbridge Workers Committee and Carlos Castros donated funds to store some personal belongings of displaced residents while they are waiting for suitable housing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

12. The **African-American Heritage Festival will take place on Saturday, August 4, 2012, from noon to 6:00 P.M. at Metz Middle School** in Manassas. Kathy Clark will register Unity in the Community so it can host a booth at this event. Anyone interested in helping staff the booth should contact Kathy.

13. Members of UITC have been invited to a **communal Ramadan iftar (breaking of fast) at Dar al Noon on Sunday, August 5, 2012, at sundown.** Members who plan to join Dar al Noor at this function should call or email UITC member Dr. Humaira Ali at 703-680-5048 or drhrali@gmail.com by Sunday, July 29, if they are planning to attend.

14. The **next meeting of UITC will take place on August 19, 2012.** The location of the meeting will be announced at a later date.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Amaral, Secretary