

Newsletter

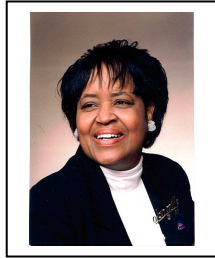
Ministerial Alliance of Champaign-Urbana and Vicinity (MACU & V)

Volume No. 1

Issue No. 1

Date: February 2010

"...Uniting to promote the welfare and moral, social and spiritual condition of all citizens of our community"



Rev Dr. Evelyn Underwood
President, MACU&V

We trust that each of you continue to be blessed in the New Year. We want God to be pleased with the work we have done to uplift each other and the community. As the MACU & V President, I am continually enthusiastic and excited about how God has allowed me to be his instrument to lead our team to work to bring the clergy closer together and expand so the MACU & V members will look more like "Heaven" on the Earth.

We are still working to bring our congregations together as "one" as we seek to change Champaign-Urbana and Vicinity for the better. As we reflect on 2009, we see that we were involved in several areas: (1) Consent Decree for Champaign Unit 4 Education, (2) Letter to the U.S. Department of Justice, (3) Urbana School District 116 and Budget Cuts, (4) Soldiers in Iraq, (6) Retreat, (7) Call to Action, (8) Urbana Civilian Police Review Board, and (9) the MACU & V 2009 Awards Program.

Consent Decree for Champaign Unit 4

We worked tirelessly with parents and children to keep the Consent Decree alive by writing letters to the Honorable Judge Billy Joe McDade.

President Underwood and Rev. Jimmie O. Holmes were allowed to speak before the judge. As part of the final order, Judge McDade included language from the Superintendent and President of the School Board that will allow the community to hold the school district accountable to the spirit of the Consent Decree. Further information is available from the MACU & V.

Letter to the U.S. Department of Justice

On December 28, 2009, the MACU & V sent a letter to the Criminal Section of the U.S. Department of Justice requesting the investigation of the fatal shooting of 15-year-old African-American male named Kiwane Carrington by Champaign Police Department Officer Daniel Norbits which occurred on October 9, 2009.

Our letter to the U.S. Department of Justice ended with the words: "We, as spiritual leaders of this community, feel that Kiwane Carrington's blood is crying out for justice" (Genesis 4:9-10).

In response to our letter, we received a letter dated March 5, 2010, from the U.S. Department of Justice confirming that the FBI is currently investigating the shooting. Once the investigation is complete, the FBI will forward the results of that investigation for review by the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division. The letter from the U.S. Department of Justice noted, "please be assured that if the evidence shows that there is prosecutable violation of federal criminal civil rights statutes, appropriate action will be taken."

Urbana School District 116 and Budget Cuts

Currently the Urbana District is facing severe budget cuts. Therefore, we expressed support by attending Board meetings to prevent the loss of the following positions and programs that directly benefit African American students: (1) District Parent and Community Outreach Liaison who serves our African American children and families and is currently filled by Janice Mitchell. (2) Minority Enrichment Program Coordinator who serves African American students at Urbana High School and is currently filled by Kellie Marshall. (3) Alternative Education Program which allows students (majority African American) alternative opportunities to make up class credits toward promotion from middle school and graduation from high school. The Director of this program is Grace Mitchell.

Soldiers in Iraq

While communicating with her son, who is stationed in Iraq, Ms. Bernice Harrington of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was moved with compassion when she discovered that many of our minority soldiers were receiving very few letters and care packages from home.

With the assistance of the MACU & V an action plan was formulated to let our soldiers know how much we appreciate their dedication and sacrifice for freedom and democracy. Through the Women's Missionary Society of all the churches in the Chicago and Illinois Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, The Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club of Champaign County, Church Women United and individual churches in our community, care packages and letters are being sent to our soldiers.

Under the supervision of Mrs. Lovia Henderson and the direction of Mrs. Anita Lott, the YDP Director of Bethel AME Church, our youth knitted 75 caps for the helmets of our soldiers. If you want to get involved please contact the MACU & V for a listing of our soldiers and send all correspondence to: Friends of Soldier, Alpha Company, 121 BSB, APOAE, 09331

Retreat

Rev. Dr. James Thomas, Senior Pastor of Living Word Community Church, of Chatsworth, California and former life-long resident of Champaign-Urbana was Guest Speaker by phone during our first retreat on December 19, 2009. Dr. Thomas shared his perspective on spiritual leadership followed by a period of questions and answers. We also listened to excerpts from "In Search of Freedom" from the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A Call To Action

By Rev. Larry D. Lewis

The church and our community had a wake up call when the Urban League was in trouble. The alarm bell went off, but we sat on the sideline of neutrality and watched silently as our historical organization, that gave assistance to the disenfranchised citizens of our community, closed its doors and now ceases to exist.

Another wake up call went out to our community when The Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club was in financial trouble. This time, the alarm cut at the very fiber of our existence, because it dealt with our children; bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh and the lifeline of our community.

The MACU & V, by the grace of God, saw the handwriting on the wall and quickly mobilized our community to action. As a community, we came together and took control of our destiny by pooling our resources and sponsoring our children. The action that we took has forever changed the face our community and empowered us as a people, to come together and take control of our destiny. We can no longer afford to be mere benefactors of our historic organizations and not become financial contributors.

We are living in a changing world and we must respond to the change of the time. Change can be a simple and ordinary experience with extraordinary results or formidable moments that have impact not only upon the individual but entire populations for generations to come.

There is a quote in a book titled, The Destruction of Black Civilization: "What became of the Black People of Sumner?" the traveler asked the old man, "for ancient records show that the people of Sumner were Black. What happened to them?" "Ah, the old man sighed. They lost their history, so they died."

A wake up call is circulating in our community and it is a call to action and community involvement. Will we heed the alarm and respond accordingly, or will we sit passively on the sideline of neutrality, forgetting the lessons of our past and slowly watch our historic organizations cease to be? The Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club need our help. It only takes \$558.17 to sponsor one child for one year. What is the investment that you are willing to make in order to guarantee our children a future in our community?

Urbana Civilian Police Review Board

We will be meeting again with the Board to discuss the current process for reporting complaints, and they can be more effective in the community. You can access complaint forms from the City of Urbana website at <http://www.city.urbana.il.us/Urbana/>. More information regarding this effort will be communicated later.

The MACU & V 2009 Awards Program

The Ministerial Alliance of Champaign-Urbana & Vicinity held its 2009 Awards Program at Stone Creek Church, 2502 S. Race Street Urbana, IL 61801 on Friday, November 13, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. The Host Pastor was Reverend Gary Grogan. Our guest Speaker was Evangelist Faith Nagel of Gastonia, North Carolina.

We recognized and honored the following named recipient in three categories who served the community and helped us to promote the Mission of the Alliance by working for a better community as we promote the welfare of all citizens—moral, social and spiritual:

Category 1 – Laypersons of the Year

"For your Tireless devotion to Education for all Children and Uplifting the Community" –

1. Sis. Carol Ammons
2. Sis. Ronna James
3. Elder Herbert D. Burnett, Sr.
4. Bro. Verdell Jones
5. Bro. Eric Dixon
6. Mother Ethel Kennedy
7. Sis. Annquanetta Ewing
8. Sis. Barbara McGee
9. Sis. Sharon LaShaun Ford
10. Evangelist Maggie Lou Perry

Category 2 – Minister Member: Outstanding Contributions

1. Elderess Vanessa Buchanan
2. Elderess Melinda Carr
3. Rev. Larry D. Lewis
4. Bishop King James Underwood

Non Member – Outstanding Contributions

1. Bro. Devon Chambers
2. Sis. Angela James
3. Sis. Linda Grady
4. Mother Nina Sibley
5. Dr. Delois Henry
6. Sis. Lynn Stuckey

Category 4 The Villager Award – "It's takes a village to raise a child," Pastor & Church Recommendations:

1. The Truth Penecostal Holiness Church
Sis. Leona Brown
2. Stone Creek Church
Sis. Rhoda Bryars
3. Morning Star Free Will Baptist Church
Sis. Sarah Edwards
4. Salem Baptist Church
Sis. Alvena Monroe
5. New Free Will Baptist Church
Sis. Davanda Williams

Thank you all for helping us to make this a very special and well-attended spiritually led community event. We in some small way sought to reward and or award a group of people for their outstanding work to better and uplift our community.

MACU & Vicinity are committed to pray, fasting and action to address our community concerns.

We will continue to partner and collaborate with other groups.

We look forward to working with and praying with you in the New Year. Mondays and Wednesdays are still our pray and fasting days.

We thank the following churches and pastors for hosting and/or sharing their facilities with us for our meetings for future meetings on the First and Third Saturdays: January (Rev. Larry Lewis, Bethel AME), February (Rev. Debra Owen, Parkland College), March (Bishop McGhee, Alpha & Omega), April (Apostle Smith, Center of Hope), May (Douglass Branch Library), and June (New Birth, Pastor Michael Carter), October (Rev. Charles Nash, New Hope), November (Pastor Charlotte Blissit, The Truth Penecostal Holiness Church). Other meeting dates will be communicated to members. WBCP Radio Station (1580 AM) also announces meeting dates and locations the week before the scheduled meeting.

There are two compelling themes that under gird our work, give meaning to our mission and compel us to press on in the face of countless obstacles and resistance. First, we understand completely that “At the foot of the Cross all ground is level.” That is, we are all equal in God’s eyes and He alone has the last word. Second, we hold to the promises that we all must take part in the pursuit of the American Dream.

As we continue to collectively work to open access for all, we recognize that “all” have a role in the process. You may ask—what can I do to help? Plenty! -- Armed with the promises of God we “all” have EQUAL opportunity to take petitions before our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, EQUAL opportunity to reach back and EQUAL

opportunity to give back. Finally, we have an EQUAL opportunity to under gird the efforts of those who are working on our behalf. The Ministerial Alliance need and covet your prayers as we strive to bring about positive change in the lives of our citizens.



Newsletter Contact Information:

Please feel free to give us **feedback** on this Newsletter at “The Ministerial Alliance of Champaign-Urbana and Vicinity, P. O. 6693, Champaign, IL 61821.

Officers:

President, Rev. Dr. Evelyn B. Underwood
Vice President, Rev. Zernial Bogan
Recording Secretary, Rev. Vanessa Buchanan
Treasurer, Pastor Larry Lewis
Chaplin, Vice-Bishop Jimmie O. Holmes, Sr.
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