

THE GCC CONNECTOR

MAY 2012

BUILDING CONNECTIONS. INFORMING OUR WORK.

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

Antioch Baptist Church
Beth Israel- the West Temple
Bethany Baptist Church
Catholics for a Greater Cleveland
Cleveland Jewish Federation
Christ Episcopal Church
Community of St. Peter Cuyahoga Mission Area Council
ELCA Gift of God
ELCA Synod
Elizabeth Baptist Church
Euclid Ave. UCC
Fairmount Presbyterian Church
Fairmount Temple
First Baptist Church
First Unitarian
Friendly Inn
Islamic Center of Cleveland
Kol Halev
Liberty Hill Baptist Church
Mt. Zion UCC
Olivet Institutional Baptist Church
Park Synagogue
Pilgrim UCC
Progressive Action Council
Shiloh Baptist Church
St. James AME
St. John AME
St. Malachi
St. Paul AME Church
St. Paul Episcopal Church
St. Paul UCC
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Suburban Temple Kol Ami
Temple Emanu El
Tifereth Israel
Trinity Cathedral
UU Society of Cleveland
West Shore UU

GCC UNIVERSITY

3 DAY ORGANIZING TRAINING

Date: Sunday, June 10 4-7 pm
Monday & Tuesday, June 11, 12 9 am-5pm
Location: Trinity Cathedral
2230 Euclid Ave., Cleveland
RSVP: Gwen Stembridge: gstembridge@dohio.org by May 15

* Free of charge and lunch will be provided

INDUSTRIAL AREAS FOUNDATION (IAF) NATIONAL TRAINING

DATES: June 26, 2012 begins at 3:00 p.m.— July 3, 2012 ends at 12:00 noon
LOCATION: UNIVERSITY OF ST. MARY OF THE LAKE CONFERENCE CENTER
1000 EAST MAPLE AVENUE
MUNDELEIN, ILLINOIS, 60610
COST: \$1,000 - Single Room
\$850 - Double Room
DEADLINE: May 15, 2012

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Greater Cleveland Congregations is a new coalition of religious congregations and community organizations who are working together to make our region a more just and prosperous place. If you are interested in supporting or joining Greater Cleveland Congregations, please contact us.



Ari Lipman, Lead Organizer..... 614.557.5650
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Khalilah Worley, Organizer..... 773.269.1736
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Monique Smith, Organizer..... 216.854.6590
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GCC CORE TEAM SPOTLIGHT

April 19, 2012 the Education Team from Antioch Baptist Church hit the streets. Going beyond the walls of Antioch, the group went door knocking in the Fairfax Community. The community walk was an action step in order to meet and have conversations with parents and residents. On the journey the group met residents with strong connections to Antioch and the Fairfax community. On April 30th the team held a community education forum providing full details of the Cleveland Transformation Plan and history of education in Cleveland. The forum was attended by over 50 residents with presentations from Piet Van Lier of Policy Matters and City of Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson.



ACTION TEAM UPDATES

EDUCATION TEAM:

After four weeks of research and deliberation involving hundreds of conversations with parents, students, teachers, administrators, and others connected to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, GCC announced its support for Mayor Jackson's Education reform legislation in a Plain Dealer op-ed. Our teams launched a letter-writing campaign to our State Representatives and Senators in Columbus to urge passage of this legislation without changes. Thanks to our education team for all of the hard work. Our next steps are to understand the details behind the proposed fall school levy in Cleveland and discern our role in that campaign, and to investigate how we can work to bring more resources to the crucial area of early childhood education. Meanwhile, we are working to build teams of parents in CMSD schools that be an active voice in the implementation of school reform. Our next team meeting will take place on **Tuesday, June 5 at 7 p.m.**

JOBS TEAM:

The jobs team is launching a pilot program to help job hunters in our congregations improve their effectiveness in seeking employment, and to connect them with potential employers in our congregations. Find out more about this program at our next jobs team meeting on **Tuesday, May 22 at 7 pm.**

FOOD ACCESSIBILITY TEAM:

The Food Accessibility team is working to build a constituency of residents living in neighborhoods identified as food deserts. Our future action steps will be determined by the interests and commitment of this new constituency.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE TEAM:

After a successful County Prosecutor Accountability Action, the Criminal Justice team is looking at local and state legislation that can remove barriers to employment for ex-offenders. Groups are also working to assess the viability of making an impact on the death penalty, racial profiling, and expungement. The next meeting will take place on **Monday, May 21 at 7 pm.**

HEALTH CARE TEAM:

Our team successfully mobilized to support the Cuyahoga County health and human services levy this March, which preserved funding for numerous crucial programs. In the midst of uncertainty about the fate of the federal health care reform law, the Health Care team has decided to focus on the provision of mental health services. In May and June, the team will conduct individual meetings and house meetings with members of our congregations connected to the mental health system as patients, professionals, and family members to discern where GCC can make a difference. Our next Health Care team meeting will be on **Thursday, June 7 at 7 pm.**

GCC LEADER SPOTLIGHT



Charlotte Robison has been a source of energy and inspiration for many in the Central neighborhood. A parent of two talented and intelligent daughters, Charlotte is a dedicated and caring Marion Sterling School parent. She stepped up to take the role of School Parent Organization (SPO) President in February after starting an after-school empowerment program for young girls called the Princess Club. Charlotte is connected with Trinity Cathedral through the Blessings in a Backpack program, and it seemed natural to begin meeting with parents of this program because of GCC's interest in both Food Accessibility and Education. Marion Sterling is one of several Cleveland schools with which GCC has launched a partnership to help engage more parents. In just a short time, with the support GCC organizers, Charlotte has already begun to gather parents to talk about community concerns such as security and extra-curricular activities for students.

COMMUNITY NEWS



Samira (Sam) Malone
East Technical High School

On December 8, 2011 Greater Cleveland Congregations held an education action attended by over 1000 at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church. The highlight of the action was the testimonies of four students who shared their personal stories and gratitude for the reversed cuts. Two of those great students are heading to college in the fall.

Samira (Sam) Malone will attend Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio, and **De'Angelo Walker** will attend Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio. Congratulations to both

students and we wish them great success in their future endeavors!



De'Angelo Walker
East Technical High School

GCC warmly welcomes our newest staff organizer, **Monique Smith!** Monique was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio and attended Kent State University where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism. Upon graduation, Monique worked for a television production company and started a videography company, Royalty Studios, to encourage and inspire youth through media and the arts. In 2004, Monique co-founded Shades, a faith-based organization created to empower tween and teen girls ages 11-18. Monique has also worked in the social service field with children who have been diagnosed with mental health issues and/or behavior problems for the past five years, assisted on the strategic planning team of the Defending Childhood Initiative, presented at the NASW of Ohio Conference, and worked with Burten, Bell, Carr Development Corporation spearheading community engagement efforts. She is a recent graduate of Case Western Reserve University where she earned a Master of Science in Social Administration with a concentration in Community and Social Development and a Certificate in Nonprofit Management. We are excited to have Monique on the GCC team!



GCC members **Christine Thompson** and **Gwen Stembridge** are performing in the Near West Theater's production of the musical "Ragtime"! Based on E.L. Doctorow's distinguished novel, the musical intertwines the stories of three extraordinary families, one upper middle-class white, one socialist immigrant Jewish and one Harlem black family, as they confront history's timeless contradictions of wealth and poverty, freedom and prejudice, hope and despair, and what it means to live in America.

Friday May 4 – May 20, 2012 • Near West Theatre • 3606 Bridge Ave., Cleveland • For more information visit <http://www.nearwesttheatre.org/NWTWeb/pages/shows/ragtime.html>