



# SOCIAL ACTION MATTERS

*A publication of the Social Action Council  
Unitarian Universalists of the Cumberland Valley*

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Most of the bursary girls who attended school in Molumbo during 2007 are singing in front of the lar.

## **NEWS FROM MOZAMBIQUE: UUCV AND LONDONDERRY SCHOOL FUND A PROJECT IN MOLUMBO VILLAGE**

Priscilla Laws

*"Here in Mozambique, many teachers haven't a blackboard, and not so much as a mud brick and pan by way of teaching aids, though some cleverly make do with what local found objects they've got. Hundreds of thousands of children don't go to school, and many who do must study beneath a tree, or in a rickety stick classroom with sun beating in through the ragged thatch. They haven't textbooks, notebooks, pencils."*

-- Karen Butt, May 2008

School in many rural villages ends after 5th grade. A few students, mostly boys, whose parents' can pay school and residence fees, attend upper grades in regional schools. Molumbo, a slightly larger village with a school building, has been adding new grades each year so that this year (2008) some of the students can complete 10th grade there!

Several years ago a Molumbo women's group called AMER raised funds and organized community workers to build a small lar to serve as residence for girls.

This has enabled girls from small outlying villages to attend upper grades in Molumbo. Currently almost 25 of the 100 bursary girls from northern Mozambique that UUCV is supporting this year are living in the AMER lar. But, the lar needs to be expanded.

Early this month Karen Butt, our onsite Bursary Coordinator, and her associate, Adelia Raul, met with members of the Molumbo parents association to discuss improving the lar. The lar needs to be expanded and bunk beds have to accommodate more girls. The roof needs to be fixed. When the parents installed a new roof on the lar last year after a storm blew the original one off. This "new roof" consists of used corrugated metal, and rain leaks through nail holes leftover from its previous installation. The parents are anxious to fix the roof, expand the building and install bunk beds. They have agreed to make bricks and contribute the unskilled labor needed for the improvements, but they need funds for building materials and specialized labor. This year thanks to funds raised by a dance-a-thon held at the Londonderry School of Harrisburg (\$3500) and extra funds raised in UUCV's 2008 Bursary campaign (\$1500) the Molumbo Parents Association hope to complete needed improvements by this September.



A group of parents from villages near Molumbo meet informally to discuss lar improvements. Photo by P. Laws, Sept 2007.

Here are some highlights of Karen's report on the Molumbo visit:

*"...The lar has a new guard whose wife and two small children live with him in the compound. I think this is good because it means another woman around to mother the girls.*

*We met with about forty of the parents -- mostly fathers and a few mothers. Eight members of AMER the group that started the lar also attended the meeting. Before we arrived the parents, AMER members and our PEDRA AIDS prevention club educators met with the mae (the lar housemother).*

*When we arrived we learned that AMER members are helping the girls who live in the lar farm a section of land. The parents were pleased with the project because food from the garden helps feed the girls and the produce they are able to sell is being used to buy cooking oil and sugar.*

*The parents elected a new president and assistant. The Pastor who used to be President was killed in a motorcycle accident and his assistant got a job in Milange and moved away. So once again the group has two strong leaders. Next Adelia and I asked what the parents would be willing to do to help with the new construction. The parents volunteered to gather the sand and stones needed to make bricks and carry these materials to several locations for pickup. Some of the funds donated from UUCV and Londonderry School would then be used to rent a tractor to bring the materials to the lar where the parents could then make the bricks. The rest of the funds would be used to pay for their building materials and skilled labor -- a bricklayer and carpenters.*

*Now that Molumbo goes to grade 10 there is a need for more beds because the girls do not need to leave to go to school outside the region. In addition a group of at least 6 new girls will be ready to start sixth grade next January. We purchased bunk beds and they should be delivered by the end of May at the latest. They need new mattresses. We have about 18 sheets on hand and we'll try to find a way to buy new sheets for all the beds.*

*We have been so pleased with the behavior of the girls in the Molumbo lar and our mae house mother is good and works hard.*

*Please thank the UUCV Bursary Donors and Londonderry School pupils who worked on the*

*dance-a-thon for their generous donations. We hope to send some construction photos by July."*

*--Karen Butt, May 2008*



Several lar residents and a little sibling sit on their mattresses. They sleep 2 to a bed. The bright spots on the beds are sunlight shining through nail holes in the new "used" roofing. On rainy days, they become water spots.

***Effective January 2008, UUCV will be publishing Correctional Justice Matters, a new quarterly newsletter focusing on the congregation's Correctional Justice Initiative. It will be available on the SAC page on the UUCV website or on the SAC Table in the Social Hall.***

◆ **Honduras Work Party Spring 2009 / An Opportunity for UUCVers to Help Build Sustainable Communities in Honduras**

By Terri Smiley

The indigenous Chorti Maya people of northern Honduras make their homes in small villages that cling to the steep mountainsides in Central America. Located near Copan Ruinas, and just a few miles south of the Guatemalan border, the Chorti primarily live off the land, as they have for centuries, growing corn, beans and squash among the boulders. They operate essentially outside of the cash economy. Country statistics indicate that those who are fortunate enough to

get work in the tomato fields, coffee harvest, or construction labor reap an average annual income of about \$600.

Typical homes are constructed of stick and mud walls, dirt floors, and thatched roofs. The roof thatch provides a home for the Chagas bug, which infects children and eventually leads to heart failure. Cooking facilities are open wood fires inside the huts, which contributes to rampant respiratory disease and leads to deforestation.

Heifer International has been working with local Chorti communities to build a more sustainable lifestyle, and to improve living conditions for children. Once village leaders have achieved consensus about their priorities, Heifer works with the community to implement improvements such as cement block houses with metal roofs, efficient woodstoves, latrines, as well as the traditional Heifer gifts of livestock. Volunteers work alongside villagers in these various efforts to “pass along the gift” of the many blessings we as US citizens have received.

Terri Smiley and the Rev. Jennifer McKenna of the Second Presbyterian Church in Carlisle are looking for 15 people to join them as volunteers with Heifer International in Honduras next Spring from March 7 - 15.

For more information please contact Terri Smiley.

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## **CHILD SURVIVOR SPEAKS AT HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL SERVICE**

Julie Ham

Nicholas, now Benjamin, described his childhood in Italy, as a Jew in hiding from the Nazis at this year's Holocaust Memorial service on Thursday, May 1.

His story began when he was four. His mother came and unexpectedly took him out of school. They headed straight for the train station, and took a train to Italy. Even though Italy was a German ally World War II, many Italians worked to rescue Jews.

His father had been taken from the family a short time before, and the Germans were about to arrive in his Slavic European town.

He told how his mother cleverly used their knowledge of German on the train; so that German officials assumed they were also

German, and so did not ask to see the travel documents – which of course they did not have.

Nick spoke of choosing a new name and assuming a new identity; and of other close calls and several brave people who helped him and his mother as they were shuttled around central Italy, in a manner he compared with the Underground Railroad before our own Civil War.

After a childhood in hiding, he carried his fear of revealing his true identity through most of his adult life; even after moving to America after the war, at the age of fifteen. He finally overcame his fear after his mother's death in the 1970's.

He shared some documents with the modestly-sized assembly: two photographs before that fateful train ride, one of his Italian report cards, and a compensation check he received from Germany but never cashed.

As he poignantly ended his presentation, he sadly but proudly noted he is once again Benjamin.

The 2008 Holocaust Memorial service, also included a poetry reading, and two musical selections, and prayers by local clergy. Those attending also chanted the Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead, for Holocaust victims, especially those who have no relatives to say Kaddish for them.

The annual service was sponsored by Dickinson College and its Hillel chapter, Congregation Beth Tikvah, and the Carlisle Area Religious Council.

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## **CARC Meets CARES at Monthly Meeting**

Julie Ham

CARC is an interfaith organization serving the Carlisle area, by sharing information about community needs, area agencies, as well as special events. The council sponsors interfaith worship services, and promotes other area organizations working to benefit the Carlisle community. Member congregations may have up to three (3) representatives on the council.

Shari Bellish, executive director of Combined Area Resources for Emergency Shelter (CARES), visited the Carlisle Area Religious Council (CARC) at their recent monthly meeting, with an update on CARES' efforts to help the homeless in the Carlisle area.

Shari informed CARC members that a planned Day Center for the homeless is currently on hold, as the proposed location raised objections from downtown business owners. CARES is seeking an alternative location, with hopes of opening the Day Center by the end of this year.

The Day Center will provide our area's homeless with lockers, a place to shower, do laundry, a safe place to rest when they have a cold, as well as giving them an address and phone number to assist them in obtaining assistance and applying for jobs. A case manager at the center will also coordinate with area agencies to assist the homeless in obtaining needed services.

Shari stated that finding a location for the Day Center has been difficult due to fears and misunderstandings about the homeless. She described the hardships and vulnerabilities faced by the homeless, especially women, families, and those with mental illnesses.

She also stated that CARES has experienced a decline in both funding and number of volunteers in recent months. The decline has made it impossible, on some occasions, to assist homeless families in need of shelter.

Shari asked council members and other supporters to attend a future borough council meeting, when CARES will seek approval for the Day Center's proposed location. CARC members offered to help Shari notify area congregations about the meeting and to promote community support.

More information about CARES can be found at [cares.carlislegrace.org](http://cares.carlislegrace.org), or call (717) 249-1009.

### Other CARC News

At the May meeting, CARC also discussed a recent meeting of their Institutional Pastoral Care Committee with Cumberland County representatives to plan for future funding to help the county prison and nursing home.

The council will begin reviewing community needs and discussing possible new projects at their first fall meeting.

CARC's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 17, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the United Church of Christ, at the corner of Pitt and Louther Streets in Carlisle. New ideas and new faces are always welcome.

To join CARC or for more information, please contact UUCV's own CARC representative, Julie Ham at [jlham1959@netzero.com](mailto:jlham1959@netzero.com), or call her at (717) 243-6056.

### GLBT Justice Initiative (GJI) Update

Alan Franklin

SB1250 was introduced in the Senate to revive the attempt to amend the State Constitution to restrict legal benefits to man - woman married couples only. On May 5, 2008, the Bill was reported to the Senate floor from the Appropriations Committee by a vote of 18 to 8. Senator Pat Vance, who represents most of us at UUCV, voted for our side, against reporting the Bill to the floor.

However, on May 6, when it came time for the full Senate to vote on it, the sponsoring Senator requested that it be "laid on the table", that is put into limbo for the moment, without a vote, but available to bring back up again if conditions change.

The "conditions" thus referred to were that the Speaker of the House, to which the bill would have been sent next for their action, indicated he would send it to the House State Government Committee. The chairperson of this committee, Representative Babette Josephs of Philadelphia, is a staunch supporter of the GLBT community, and she stated that she would not let it be reported out of her committee, thus bringing its progress to a halt. These "conditions" are very likely to remain unchanged for the rest of this session. Proponents of the Bill will have to start again from scratch next session. And we'll be there to meet them!

Attending the rally, organized by UUPLAN, against the Bill at the Capitol on May 5 from UUCV were: Dan and Joan Bechtel, Tom DeWall, Ann Duckworth, Kit and Alan Franklin, Sylvia Hardman, Priscilla Laws, Gisela Roethke, and Rachel Teates. There may have been more UUCV faces hidden in the crowd. In addition to UUCV, there were at least 10 other UU churches present. UUPLAN is developing clout!



## Project S.H.A.R.E. Update

Gail Black

As part of UUCV's deepening commitment to Project S.H.A.R.E we delivered half a garage-full of items that were not sold at our yard sale to SHARE's big white box truck on July 7th for the yard sale SHARE is having on June 14th. Items not sold at that event will be placed in SHARE's warehouse to be given to recipients who need them during SHARE's clothing distributions. These clothing distributions occur on the Wednesday afternoon's of the weeks in which there is no food distribution. Volunteers work at SHARE on Monday's, Tuesday's and Wednesday's to sort and organize items for the distribution and assist people in finding what they need and carrying those items to their cars. Folks who would like to help with this part of SHARE's mission can call Pam Bream, Volunteer Coordinator, at 249-7773.

Project S.H.A.R.E is the beneficiary of the profits of the Boiling Springs Triathlon, which will be held on August 16th this year. The triathlon ..."was an idea born out of the desire to help people maintain good health while assisting others in our community who are in need." Its' "mission is to provide a fun-spirited, and yet competitive, event for people who wish to challenge themselves with a swim/ride/run experience." The BST raised \$1300 for SHARE in 2007, the 3rd year of its' running.

Registration for the triathlon will be limited to 40 individual participants and 10 teams with registration on a first come first served basis. In addition to the race participants there is a need for a number of volunteers in order for the event to be a success. Interested persons can contact the Boiling Springs Triathlon committee at [bstriathlon@yahoo.com](mailto:bstriathlon@yahoo.com) .

## UU PEACEMAKERS

Jon Tarrant

Our congregation has been invited to join over 120 UU congregations nationwide to participate in peace activities.

We would benefit from newsletters, program ideas, resources and curriculum and this would give our congregation a voice in writing and approving the UUA Peacemaking Statement of Conscience.

Social Action Committee is seeking an individual willing to be the point of contact and local leader of this incentive. Could this be you? Contact Priscilla Laws or Jon Tarrant if interested

Please forward this message to your minister and Social Justice chairperson or a GA enthusiast.

*UU Peacemakers*

Is your congregation a **Peacemaking Congregation**? Over 120 UU congregations nationwide are. They are sponsoring workshops, lectures and book clubs exploring peaceful **alternatives to violence** on the personal, societal and international levels, as part of the national Congregational Study/Action Issue on Peacemaking (2006-2010).

**Ministers:** We invite you to share your best Peacemaking sermons on our Peacemaking Website (under construction) email [john@schaibly.com](mailto:john@schaibly.com) for details.

*How do you become a PARTICIPATING CONGREGATION?*

**Identify** an individual to be your point of contact and hold at least one peacemaking activity. Have them **reply to this email** with the word "Participate" in the Subject Line.

*Help Spread the Peace*

### SAC Members

Kathy Bell

Alan Franklin

Julie Ham

Priscilla Laws

Drew Lynch

Jon Tarrant