

Off Court Street



Fall 2016

the newsletter of **united campus
ministry**
at ohio university

*The mission of UCM is to engage the Ohio University and Athens communities in spiritual growth,
work for social justice, and community service guided by socially progressive and interfaith values.*

BETTER TOGETHER AT OHIO UNIVERSITY AWARDED NATIONAL BEST CAMPUS IMPACT AWARD

We are thrilled to announce that our Better Together at Ohio University interfaith student campaign recently received the 2015-16 Best Campus Impact award in the nationwide 2016 Better Together initiative, which took place on more than 200 college campuses during the past academic year. Better Together is a project of Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) with the goal of empowering college students of all and no faith traditions to identify and voice their values, engage with others in conversation about their values, and act together to improve the world.

Better Together at OU received this award specifically for our partnership with OU Student Affairs involving interfaith in-service trainings and religious diversity workshops, as well as two service projects with Rural Action's Monday Creek Watershed Restoration Project (removing thousands of pounds of debris from critical watersheds), the annual 9/11 Interfaith Peace Walk (bringing hundreds of campus and community members together to celebrate religious diversity), and campus panel discussions and speakers on interfaith co-operation, among other activities.

Better Together OU Campaign Organizer and OU student Mara Siegel reflects on the campaign's accomplishments. "Being involved with Better Together has been an incredible experience because I get to meet and talk to other students and people from all different backgrounds. It's safe to say, my way of looking at the world has been changed by this!"

The Better Together campaign has been supported by United Campus Ministry since 2010 after OU student Guru Amrit Khalsa was one of 20 students nationwide to be awarded a prestigious year-long fellowship with Interfaith Youth Core to organize around religious pluralism and social justice at OU. That year, our first interfaith watershed clean-up with Rural Action's Monday Creek Restoration Project was recognized by President Obama as an exemplary interfaith campus-community service project and helped launch The White House Interfaith Service Campus Challenge. In 2011, Better Together began on campuses around the country, and UCM sent Campus Minister Rev. Evan Young and student Rachel Hyden to the first Interfaith Leadership Institute. Better Together at OU received its first IFYC Campus Impact award in 2012 for its work with Residential Housing.

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 28

**Local Food for Local
Change
7:00 at 9 Tables Fine
Dining**

NOVEMBER 5

**UCM Benefit Bash
at Athens Community
Center**

**DO YOU UCM?
Make a contribution at**

Rev. Young believes OU's Better Together campaign represents a much-needed response to a global climate of interreligious tension, mistrust, and conflict. "We've seen in the current election cycle and in anti-Muslim responses to the Orlando mass shooting how easy it is to turn people's hearts and minds against those of other faiths. Students in our campaign learn how to work together to show people that hate is the real problem, and that people of all faiths can come together to work for common goals, shared values, and more inclusive communities."

Jamie Patton, Assistant Dean of Students at OU, says, "What I appreciate the most about Better Together at OU organization is that it is students leading this interfaith dialogue. They are willing to help us in engaging in conversations about faith, a subject that affects each member of our community, yet we rarely take time to discuss differences and similarities."

UCM partnered with the OU Office of Diversity and Inclusion to send five Ohio University undergraduate students to Interfaith Leadership Institute in August to be trained and inspired to continue the work on campus. The 6th Annual 9/11 Interfaith Peace Walk will happen on Sunday, September 11, 7pm at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, 54 University Terrace. Please join us!

FROM THE DIRECTOR ~ MELISSA WALES

Happy Fall Semester 2016! I'd like to invite you on a stroll down UCM memory lane.

In 2006, Thursday Supper intern Joe Buzzelli came to us with an idea. Thursday Supper was doing a great job in empowering students, engaging community, and filling the calendar of free meal programs during the week, but there were no free meals on the weekends! Joe worked hard on an excellent and ultimately convincing proposal for Saturday Lunch. We were hesitant, not because it wasn't a great idea. It was! But because we wanted to make sure we didn't start something we couldn't sustain. We decided to implement it as a pilot project and offer it only during Fall, Winter and Spring Quarters (remember the quarter system?)

Saturday Lunch hummed along nicely, taking summers off, until the Fall of 2009 when we realized that we didn't have enough interns to staff it. We made the difficult but necessary decision to cancel the program. It was probably the 2nd or 3rd day of Fall quarter, when I got a determined knock on my office door. Standing there was bright-eyed Shannon Stewart, an OU undergrad who had been a committed volunteer for quite a while. "What can I do to bring back Saturday Lunch?" I invited her in and we sat down to discuss the lack of interns, food budget concerns, etc. Shannon nodded and said confidently, "I can round up volunteers and food for this week" and sure enough, she did. And the next week. And the next week. And the next. Another UCM intern was born and Saturday Lunch was saved! It soon joined Thursday Supper in running year round, every week including holidays, and providing more than 5,000 meals annually.

So, thanks Joe, Shannon and ALL the other interns and volunteers, and HAPPY TENTH BIRTHDAY, SATURDAY LUNCH! Please join us for a party on Saturday, October 15, to celebrate!

We are excited to celebrate this milestone and the news that we've been invited to submit a proposal to the Sisters Health Foundation to remodel our kitchen and dining area! (Wow, does it need it!) But we need your help in matching some funds, so you can send a check today, donate on our website, or go to www.youcaring.com and search United Campus Ministry \$10K for 10 Years! *Thank you!*

With EVERYONE'S help, we can ensure that these community meals continue long into the future!

GROWING TOGETHER ~ REV. EVAN YOUNG

When I say "campus ministry," what do you imagine? If you're like most people these days, maybe you think of a group of college students doing bible study together. Maybe you imagine a bunch of young adults on a mission trip. Maybe your mind's eye fills with images of young religious folk preaching salvation through conversion to their religion, or maybe you think of programs that help young people stay connected to the faith community in which they were raised.

Of course, if you're reading this, you're not like most people. You know UCM, and you know what campus ministry looks like when we do it. It looks like students digging deep into what they care about most, and finding ways for those beliefs to shape what they actually do day-to-day. That might mean planning, preparing, and serving an experience of radical hospitality and community disguised as a free meal. Or it might mean standing up and speaking out for social justice on issues of race, or sexual assault, or full equality and inclusion of LGBTQ people. Or bringing people of different faiths together in conversation and shared community service, building bridges of relationship that transcend the divisive, prejudiced fear-mongering that so often passes for public discourse around religious difference.

And more. It means speaking truth to power—whether that power is the University, or local government, or religious institutions. It means envisioning a better world for all, and then rolling up our sleeves and doing the hard work of bringing that vision to reality. And it means celebrating the lives, the work, and the achievements of courageous, visionary, joyful and spirit-filled people like you who have dedicated themselves to building the beloved community.

When we do it, campus ministry means helping young (and not-so-young) people give their engagement with the biggest questions—of meaning, purpose, principle, and responsibility—power to change their lives. This is campus ministry that matters; this is UCM.

UCM INTERN KELSEY GERARD

The chance to bring interfaith work and knowledge to my campus is an honor. Ohio University may not be the most diverse of colleges. However, we all walk the same bricks together - Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Pagans, and people of many different faith traditions. Our interactions may require some uncomfortable conversations. By working with the coaches and IFYC staff, I have started to develop the tools to facilitate those dialogues while maintaining safe spaces. Participating in two Interfaith Leadership Institutes has contributed greatly to my personal growth so far in my college years. IFYC founder Eboo Patel gave an inspiring speech that complemented our participation in the 50th Anniversary of Martin Luther King's 1966 March on Marquette Park. This was an incredible experience. To hear someone say, "They hit him (Dr. King) with a rock, and he built the foundation with it" left me speechless. I heard people speak about race, socioeconomic, and LGBT issues and the gentrification in Chicago. How it didn't matter if you were more Malcolm or Martin - we're all in the struggle together. And that's what better together is.

UCM INTERN ROBIN KELBY

Going to the Interfaith Leadership Institute in Chicago was a terrific learning experience. We spent a lot of time developing leadership skills and finding ways to bring people from very diverse backgrounds together for a common goal. My favorite part of the weekend was participating in the 50th anniversary march of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s march in Chicago over housing discrimination. Learning the history of the march and how interfaith values were involved was incredibly powerful, and the rally after the march featured speakers from many races and ethnicities, languages, religions, and backgrounds. Issues of social justice are highly important to the interfaith movement, and there is much work yet to be done, but having the opportunity to see interfaith cooperation both in our past and our present gives me hope for our future.



Kentisha Dinham, Aleks Tyler, Kelsey Gerard, and Robin Kelby at Interfaith Leadership Institute in Chicago in August

THANK YOU!

As always, we could not do what we do without the generous and ongoing support of our Sustainer Circle, donors, and others who give to UCM...

Special thanks to Wood & Stone for employing the volunteer labor we provided during their extensive landscaping cleanup. Their willingness to work with student volunteers saved us lots of money and the UCM grounds look oh so nice!

THANKS TO THOSE WHO SUPPORT OUR FREE MEAL PROGRAMS:

Athens Civitan Club for home-cooked dishes and volunteers on Fifth Thursdays; **Avalanche Pizza** for pizza on First Thursdays; Donations of food: **Athens Food Rescue, Chipotle, CFI Donation Station**; Volunteer organizations: **Four H Club, Fulbright Scholars**, and **SUBAMUH**.

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS: [SPRING & SUMMER]

Carolyn Allen, Charles Atkins, Michael & Mary Baron, Carol Beale, Mary Jane Black, John L. Butler, Liana F. Cahen, Heather Cantino, Janet Carleton, Andree & James Cavender, Bobbi L. Conliffe, John Corlett, Emilie Falc, Mary Anne & Don Flournoy, Sara Gilfert, Jan Griesinger, Jenny Hall-Jones, Mimi Hart, Wallace Higgins, Amanda Hobson, Jack Humbles, Theo J. Hutchinson, Rachel Hyden, Ralph & Janet Izard, Sarah Jenkins, Angelina Johnson, Jeff Kelby, Jennifer Kelly, Guru Amrit Khalsa, Amy King & John Gilliom, Bill Kuhre, Jim & Marilyn Kunstel, Arline McCarthy, Dick & Judy McGinn, Danny Moates, Estate of Mary Morgan, Heather Moyer & Amy Sens, Janet & Greg Polzer, Andrea Reany, Marcia Ruhling, Robert & Arlene Sheak, Wenda Sheard, Shannon Stewart, Andrew Stuart & Harvey Ballard, Barry Tadlock & Jonathan Leal, Daniel Torres, Jack Turner, Arnold D. Turrin, Melissa Wales & Greg Kessler, William Wemer, Evan Young

Shannon Stewart, former Saturday Lunch intern, is currently the Ohio Stream Restore Corps Program Assistant at Rural Action.



UCM STAFF

Melissa Wales, Executive Director
Rev. Evan Young, Campus Minister
Jennifer Kelly, Office Manager

STUDENT INTERNS

Kentisha Dinham • Kelsey Gerard
Robin Kelby • Kaitlan Needs
Sarah Reichert • Aleksandra Tyler

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Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens

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UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY

18 N College Street • Athens OH 45701
740.593.7301 • www.ucmathens.org

 /ucmathens  @ucmohiou  /ucmohiou

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FAITH SYMBOLS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Pagan Goddess,
Unitarian Universalism,
Wicca, Sikhism, Confucianism,
Humanist Emblem of Spirit,
Taoism, Atheist Symbol, Islam

