

Off Court Street



● Fall 2011

the newsletter of **ucm: center for spiritual growth & social justice**
at ohio university

UCM's 29th Annual **Benefit Bash**

Saturday, November 5, 6:00 PM

Athens Community Center, 701 E. State St.

Free On-Site Childcare Available!

Auction conducted by **Shamrock Auction Service**
and emceed by local media personality, **Chris Riddle**

Silent Auction with musical entertainment
provided by Tom Daniels and Lynn Sullivan

Assorted appetizers and **beverages**
served throughout the evening provided by Avalanche Pizza,
BellaVino, Chica Chica Chop Chop, Crumbs Bakery, Gourmet
Your Way, Salaam Restaurant, Zoe and more!

Live Auction featuring locally donated items, artwork,
gift certificates and weeklong stays at a lakefront cabin in
Vermont (Cathy & Aaron Wright) and a cottage on the
Outer Banks, NC (Freve Pace & Chris Eaton)

Make your reservations now at 593-7301 or jennifer@ucmathens.org.
If you cannot attend, you can still make a donation to this event and be
listed in our program and other post-event publicity as a sponsor.

Thank You!



*UCM continues to
empower student
leaders in this
movement to unite
the campus and
community across
faith traditions around
community service
and social justice.*
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FALL CALENDAR:

TUESDAYS

VEGAN COOKING -

Vegan (no animal products)
meal and cooking
demonstration

7:30 - 10:00PM

THURSDAYS...

THURSDAY SUPPER -

weekly free meal open to all
UCM, 5:30pm

INTERFAITH IMPACT -

weekly student group,
UCM, 7:00pm - 8:30pm

SATURDAYS...

SATURDAY LUNCH -

weekly free meal open to all
UCM, 1:00pm

OCTOBER 24

CAMPUS MOVIE-NIGHT - THIRST

Bentley 124

NOVEMBER 5

UCM BENEFIT AUCTION

Athens Community Center
6:00pm (see p. 1)

NOVEMBER 9

CAMPUS MOVIE NIGHT GASLAND

TBA

NOVEMBER 10

GIRLFRIENDS GUIDE TO ACTIVISM

Loraine McCosker of the Sierra
Club, noon - 1pm, OU
Women's Center

SOCIAL JUSTICE MEDIA!!!

+++++

Better Together blog -

<http://www.bettertogetherou.blogspot.com/>

Better Together on Facebook -

<http://www.facebook.com/BetterTogetherOU>

UCM's Facebook Page -

<http://www.facebook.com/Ucmathens>

9-11 Interfaith Peace Walk

As part of our Better Together campaign and the White House Interfaith Service Campus Challenge, UCM led the 9/11 Interfaith Peace Walk where 450 students, faculty and community members walked through campus, uptown Athens, past many local congregations and ended up at the Islamic Center for a candlelight vigil, song and refreshments. Cosponsors included the OU Office of Diversity, Access and Equity, Residential Housing, the Muslim Student Association, Hillel at OU, Christ Lutheran Church, the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Appalachian Peace and Justice Network, Athens Friends Meeting, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens, and Athens Seventh-Day Adventist Church.



Interns Rachel Hyden and Michael Lupsa led the interfaith walk.



Rabbi Danielle Leshaw and students at Hillel recited the Mourner's Kaddish before joining the walk.

White House Interfaith Service Campus Challenge

This past spring, UCM partnered with the OU Office of Diversity, Access and Equity and Residential Housing to develop a proposal in response to the White House Challenge, an initiative inviting institutions of higher education to commit to a year of interfaith cooperation and community service programming on campus. Building off the momentum of our Better Together campaign of 2010-11, we saw this challenge as an opportunity to expand our campus and community partnerships, engage more students, and ultimately have a greater impact on our service priority issues: domestic poverty (food security) and the environment (water security).

Over the summer, Rev. Evan Young and intern Rachel Hyden attended an Interfaith Leadership Institute at Georgetown University to network and learn strategies for launching our 2011-12 Better Together campaign. Melissa Wales and Vice Provost for the Office of Diversity, Dr. Brian Bridges, attended a White House convening in August with other participating universities and colleges to learn more about our participation in the Campus Challenge. We are grateful for the financial support of the OU Office of Diversity for enabling UCM staff and student participation in these events!

What we've done so far:

9-11 Interfaith Peace Walk (page 2)

Campus Challenge Kick-Off – September 19 in Baker Center Ballroom – 80 students, faculty and staff and community members turned out to learn about how they can get involved.

Interfaith Impact – we rescheduled our weekly student group meeting to Thursdays at 7pm to allow participants in Thursday Supper to engage in post-service reflection and discussion.

Better Together Steering Committee – led by intern Rachel Hyden, this student committee meets weekly to strategize and plan. Upcoming events include showing of two films (*Gasland* and *Thirst*) that explore the water crisis, tabling to raise awareness about water issues (including the effects of hydraulic fracturing) and to raise money to build a well in a developing nation through Charity: Water, submitted a funding proposal to bring Charity: Water founder Scott Harrison to speak on the global water crisis.

UCM-Muslim Student Association Picnic - interfaith social event at Stroud's State Park, open to everyone, Sept. 24.

Interfaith Stream Clean-Up – October 2, partnered with Rural Action's Monday Creek Restoration Project to remove hundreds of pounds of trash and tires out of Wayne National Forest.

Thursday Supper/Saturday Lunch – continue to provide nutritious, locally-sourced meals every week and to engage students and the community in service to one another.

HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE GOALS OF THE STUDENT LED BETTER TOGETHER CAMPAIGN???? SEE PAGE 4!

AREA EVENTS:

MONDAYS...

PEACE VIGIL –

11:30-12:30, Athens County Courthouse

PEOPLE FOR PEACE & JUSTICE –

4:30 – 6:00 pm, at UCM
Contact rodnip@hotmail.com for schedule and topics

WEDNESDAYS...

OPEN DOORS - weekly meeting (while OU is in session), open to all, 8:00-10:00 pm, at UCM

NOVEMBER 24

THURSDAY SUPPER THANKSGIVING 5:30pm

Join us for a traditional turkey dinner with vegan options. Both meals will happen over winter break so holiday volunteers are needed! Contact Shea to donate or to get involved!
ss298506@ohio.edu



No tire was safe from these determined OU students!

THURSDAY SUPPER AND SATURDAY LUNCH



2011-12 Thursday Supper/Saturday Lunch Interns! Samantha Fersky ('12, Social Work), Shea Daniels ('12 English), and Michael Lupsa ('12, Communications Studies). Shannon Stewart is still with us through the end of fall quarter when she'll finish her honors tutorial theses and graduate!

INTERN REFLECTION

SHEA DANIELS, '12

I was having dinner with a friend last night, catching up after spending the summer in different places. "You've changed a lot in the past couple of months," she said.

"It's all UCM," I answered.

She knows what UCM is--I've convinced her she needs to start volunteering with Thursday Supper--but I felt the need to explain anyway.

"You see," I told her, "I've been trying to meet this certain kind of person for years. People who actively advocate for human rights and equality, who accept others as they come, who walk the walk they talk, or at least try really hard to. I was in a holding pattern for a long time but then I discovered UCM, and it validated that the people I was looking for, really exist."

So that's what I've been up to at UCM--cooking lots of yummy local food in the basement, and being amazed at all the incredible people I'm meeting.

UCM 's WISHLIST

- Repairs to our outdoor accessible ramp and railings
- Onsite bike rack
- Volunteer gardener/landscaper
- Volunteer tech support for computer maintenance and video editing and uploading
- Dish towels & scrubbing pads
- Large wooden cutting boards
- Eco-friendly dish soap
- Large stainless steel pots and pans
- Projector
- Funds to replace outdated office equipment
- Funds to replace worn-out tables
- Painting of the interior back hall staircase
- Community volunteers to help coordinate/oversee Thursday Supper/Saturday Lunch when OU is on break

BETTER TOGETHER CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING GOALS!

THE ENVIRONMENT (WATER SECURITY):

- RAISE funds to purchase wells in a developing country through Charity: Water (a non-profit organization bringing clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations. 100% of public donations directly fund water projects.) *Send YOUR donation to UCM payable to Interfaith Impact with charity water in the memo line.*

DOMESTIC POVERTY (FOOD SECURITY):

- Raise awareness about poverty in Athens County and engage students in fundraising and food donation drives for local food pantries and free meals. *Send YOUR donation payable to UCM with food security in the memo line!*

BECOMING AN ACTIVIST

RACHEL HYDEN, '12

When I found United Campus Ministry, I was at a point in my life where I had never been so unsure of the person I was. I was a sophomore studying magazine journalism and I thought I was going to be a music writer. I had nothing going for me so I asked my women and gender studies professor about internships on campus and she brought up a public relations opportunity with UCM. I met with Melissa and took the position. Little did I know what life changing opportunities were in store...

...And here I am one year later, a new person, not only very sure of who I am, but empowered to stand up for what I believe in. I am the Campus Organizer for the Better Together Campaign, which gives me the opportunity to voice my values and put what I consider most important into action. I take very seriously the right to clean and safe drinking water and now Better Together will be fundraising \$10,000 to build a well in a developing nation. I also work for the Ohio Sierra Club as a Clean Water Fellow, protecting Southeast Ohio's clean water from contamination.

Everything I do, from organizing an interfaith initiative to raising awareness about the dangers of fracking, I do because I have the courage to stand up for social and environmental justice. I didn't find this courage all on my own; I found it working with UCM. So it's safe to say that without UCM, I wouldn't be the Rachel Hyden I am today.



Rachel protesting outside the OU Inn during a lease-signing event in early October 2011.

UCM LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE!

A huge UCM thank you goes out to recent OU graduate Corey Hutton for building a new UCM website! You may have noticed that it was down for a while over the summer due to technical problems with the host company. Corey swooped in with his skills and talents and hours and hours of labor to get UCM back online just in time for fall quarter! We are still in the process of polishing the site, but please visit us at www.ucmathens.org!

Thank you, Corey!!!

To Serve the Spirit - Rev. Evan Young, Campus Minister

When I started here at UCM six years ago, it was with a firm conviction that our ministry was called to move into an intentionally interfaith identity. We saw divisions between faith communities, we saw people working to widen those divisions, we saw the hurt and violence and alienation caused by those divisions. And we knew we had to act on our vision of a truly inclusive and welcoming human community.

We also knew that we didn't know how to do this.

We weren't clueless--we were simply on the cutting edge of something that was being born. We were aware of individual pioneers--Art and Peggy Gish come to mind--but there weren't many models of organizations, especially campus ministries, putting this kind of vision into action.

Now, six years down the road, we're well into a year devoted to a multi-pronged collaboration with Ohio University that addresses precisely the mission we set out for ourselves years ago--to build community among and between faith traditions and religious groups on OU's campus and in the wider Athens and southeastern Ohio communities. And we've made friends and contacts and developed insights and strategies that have equipped us to excel in this work.

I could tell you about Dr. Brian Bridges, OU's Vice Provost for Diversity, Access, and Equity, and his determination to include religious diversity in OU's definition of diversity. I could tell you about Barb Harrison, OU's Assistant Director of Residential Housing, and her commitment to engage RAs and other residential housing staff in interfaith community service projects. I could tell you about the Interfaith Youth Core, and their global campaign to build interfaith understanding and collaboration by recognizing and acting together on our common commitment to serving our communities. But I'm going to tell you about Interfaith Impact instead. Because something amazing is happening there. And it's happening because UCM--our staff, our interns, and the questing students who find us--were able to envision it and build it together.

Interfaith Impact is our weekly student group. We meet on Thursday nights, after Thursday Supper. And we talk about . . . well, it varies. But what we talk about is not nearly as important as how we talk about it. Because we've used four big ideas to create a space that invites genuine communication about what we believe, what we care about, what we've learned & how, and so much more.

The first big idea? Faith builds bridges, not walls. In practice this means that when we hear something different or unfamiliar about someone's beliefs or faith tradition, we ask questions and try to understand. In practice we've found that it's just as easy to say "tell me more about how that works," or "that sounds like something we do" followed by a description, as it is to say "that's not right" or "I don't see how you can think that."

The second big idea? Dialogue --> understanding --> community. If we allow ourselves to have genuine conversations (including genuine listening to different points of view), we develop understanding of one another's experience, beliefs, and convictions--we see each other not just as the faith labels we come in with, but as whole persons. And seeing each other that way leads to treating each other with compassion and concern--it just happens. Because, when we remove the obstacles and prejudices, that's what people do.

The third big idea? We speak from our experience. This is actually the unique gift each of us has to bring to the table. And sharing it is a generous act that can benefit all of us. That's how it's given, and that's how it's received, pretty much all the time. Amazing.

The fourth big idea is my favorite--the "so what?" question. We ask this question all the time: so you've done this, or listened to that, we've had this conversation and gained that insight. So what? What difference will it make in the way you live your life, the things you do, the beliefs you embrace? It's the growth moment, when reflection circles back to action and we embrace who we're becoming.

We've learned a lot in six years. And we're sharing the knowledge. Every Thursday at 7pm.

We Are Grateful....

To the following organizations and individuals who contributed to Thursday Supper and Saturday Lunch last summer and so far this fall:

OU Black Student Union, Civitan, Community Food Initiatives, Hillel at OU, OU Little Monsters, OU One Campaign, OU Women's Track Team, Pie In the Sky, Susan B. Anthony Memorial Unrest Home Land Trust, Witten's Produce Stand and everyone else who has volunteered and donated.

A special thanks to Mickey Hart and the LGBT Center at OU for spending an entire Friday (September 30) DEEP cleaning the kitchen, dining area, storage areas, and behind the stage (shudder!) The good news -- it's cleaner than it's been in a long time! The not-so-good news -- the dirt and debris were hiding rotting wood supporting the stage, so we have a significant building project in our future. Anyone want to volunteer to help us with this????

Open Doors (OU's LGBT student group) also donated materials to help us better organize our recycling and kitchen supplies. That space suffers a great deal of wear and tear and we are extremely appreciative of all the hard work Mickey and his students engaged in! THANK YOU!

ALUMNI UPDATE



Joe Buzzelli '08 began volunteering at Thursday Supper as a freshman, coordinated the program his sophomore year and in 2006, began Saturday Lunch because there was no free community meal on the weekends.

Five years later, and the programs are going strong.

Thanks, Joe!

So where in the world is Joe Buzzelli!? I feel like I have been a little like Waldo in a "Where's Waldo" book the past few years. Whether it has been living in Chicago, Indianapolis, Columbus, Phoenix, or traveling in Europe it has all been fun.

As some of you may know, I graduated from OU in 2008 with a Mathematics and a Philosophy degree, then literally the next day, jetted to Phoenix for my next adventure. In Phoenix I spent 3 months training to become a high school math teacher with a program called Teach For America. Then to Indianapolis where I taught Calculus, Algebra 2, and Pre-Calculus for two years with the program. It was a fantastic experience where I got to know some of the most inspiring people I've ever met.

Next I went to Chicago for 3 months to be an adviser to new teachers coming into Teach For America during their summer institute. After Chicago I went to work closer to home to teach 7th grade math for a charter school in Columbus. I can easily say this was one of the most challenging periods of my life. It was here that I really saw the kind of commitment and dedication necessary for a small group of people to make big changes happen in education of low income communities in America. Our school days and year were longer, we held amazingly high expectations for the students and each other as teachers and our kids performed! It was one of the years that I am most proud of.

This past summer, I went backpacking with my sister through Europe where we climbed mountains, saw the sights, and got lost way too many times to count. It truly was an adventure. This brings me up to the past few months. After the trip I decided that the best thing for me to do was to take the plunge and get out of the classroom to pursue what my permanent career would be. I've decided I love math and want to use it every day, so I am currently taking classes to prepare for a certification exam to be something called an Actuary at OSU. (An Actuary is like a financial mathematician.)

I am really excited for the next things to come. The future looks bright for this young adventurer and I have experiences like UCM's free meal programs, and Teach For America to thank for it!

UCM STAFF

Melissa Wales • Executive Director
melissa@ucmathens.org
Evan Young • Campus Minister
evan@ucmathens.org
Jennifer Kelly • Office Manager
jennifer@ucmathens.org

STUDENT INTERNS

Samantha Bergstein • Shea Daniels
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United Methodist Church

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS:

Athens Friends Meeting
Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd
First Presbyterian Church of Athens
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Athens (UUFA)

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We depend on individual donors like you for a large portion of our annual operating budget. UCM is a registered non-profit organization.

Contributions are tax-deductible and will finance operating, facilities and programming expenses.

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ANNUAL BENEFIT BASH!

SATURDAY, NOV. 5th 6:00PM
(see Page 1)

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