

CHURCH COUNCIL BULLETIN

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Summer 2011

North Carolina Council of Churches

Year Three: Health and Wholeness Continues Growth

Entering its third year, the North Carolina Council of Churches' Partners in Health and Wholeness program continues to grow and succeed. PHW is designed to promote health as a practice of faith and to connect NCCC member congregations with existing health resources across the state.

Congregations from across North Carolina are taking charge of their health by eating more fruits and vegetables, being more physically active and not using tobacco products. Sixty-six congregations are now PHW Certified, with six achieving the program's highest honor – PHW Gold Certification. Mount Nebo Pentecostal Church in Ramseur, NC is the latest to strike gold. Some of their health-related activities include: providing children and youth

with healthy snacks at all youth events and meetings; participating in the *Human Race* in Asheboro to help raise money for the United Way; and offering free health screenings at their last women's conference.

Congregations interested in learning more about PHW Certification can visit www.healthandwholeness.org. Helpful tools and ideas to improve health are also available on the site.

In June, the program hired Joy Williams to serve as regional consultant, overseeing PHW implementation in Anson, Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Montgomery, Richmond, Robeson and Scotland counties. Williams has a master's of public health from UNC-Chapel Hill, is a Fulbright Scholar, and is passionate about health and faith.

And the Council was recently invited to serve on the Governor's Task Force for Healthy Carolinians which is charged with setting health objectives for the state, serving as an advisory committee to state leaders, and offering guidance to North Carolina's 72 Healthy Carolinians Partnerships in 77 counties. Willona Stallings, PHW Program Coordinator, represents the Council on the Governor's Task Force, bringing a faith-inspired voice to the table and ensuring that places of worship remain an important part of the vision for a healthier state.

Partners in Health and Wholeness is generously funded by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation.

ABCUSA Honor Presented to George Reed

NC Council of Churches Executive Director George Reed received the 2011 Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award from the American Baptist Churches USA at a dinner on June 24. The national honor is given to an individual for outstanding contribution to the cause of advancing ecumenism, either through sustained performance or special achievement. Reed is the 19th Mowbray recipient; the award was established in 1975 and is presented biennially.

In his remarks at the dinner, Reed noted the ecumenical work of his family's church, Pullen Memorial Baptist in Raleigh, and the NCCC. He thanked them, saying in part:

First, Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, where my wife and I are members. Pullen is probably best known as a champion of justice for all, but it has also long been a great bulwark of ecumenism. One of its former pastors, Edwin McNeill Poteat . . . was a leader in the creation of the NC Council of Churches, served on the Worship Committee of the National Council for many years, and composed a hymn which opened the 1948 meeting of the World Council. When the NC Council of Churches decided to accept individual congregations into membership in 1949, Pullen was in the first group to join. . . I am grateful to Pullen's ABC

Committee, which nominated me for this award . . . and to the congregation for the strong support it gives me in my ecumenical ministry.

Second, of course, is the North Carolina Council of Churches, today made up of 27 judicatories of 18 denominations, plus eight congregations which joined when their judicatory was not a member. We have just completed our 76th year in existence, promoting and modeling Christian unity by bringing people together across the lines of denomination and race which have too long divided us. At the time of our founding, one of the primary issues bringing together white church leaders was their shared opposition to segregation – probably not a majority position in white Christian churches in North Carolina in 1935. Today, we have work – still not universally popular – focused on immigration, care of creation, health and healthcare, peace, sustainable agriculture, and a progressive legislative agenda. I'm grateful to our Board and to the wonderful staff with whom I work.

For the full text of his remarks, visit www.nccouncilofchurches.org. For a photo from the evening, see page 3.

Council Welcomes Summer Interns

The Council has benefitted from the work of three talented interns this summer.

Lee Foster has just finished his second year at Duke Divinity School. He is a graduate of Baylor University with a BA in religion and is hoping to pursue a PhD in New Testament studies next, particularly in the theology of the Apostle Paul. He is interested in the interplay between scripture and ethics, and how they might begin to address not just the church but the wider American culture.

Returning for his second summer at the Council, Keith Gustine is also a Baylor graduate who is about to enter his third year at Duke Div. He holds undergraduate degrees in religion and history.

And Peace Intern Jim Irby is a student at the College of William and Mary who has been working with David LaMotte. Irby is pursuing a degree in government and Middle Eastern studies. This summer he has conducted independent research on grassroots peacebuilding, focusing on how local actors can transform society from the bottom-up in order to counter the direct, structural, and cultural aspects of violence.

Save the Date for These NCCC Events

Saturday, Aug. 6

PHW with Youth Empowered Solutions Training
Anson, Montgomery, Richmond and Scotland

Saturday, Sept. 17

Free film screening: *Welcome to Shelbyville*
Main Library, Durham

Saturday, Sept. 17

PHW with Youth Empowered Solutions Training
Cumberland and Robeson

Saturday, Oct. 8

Clergy Lunch on Immigration
Shaw Divinity School, Raleigh

Thursday, Oct. 13

Clergy Lunch on Immigration
Wake Forest Divinity School, Winston-Salem

Saturday, Oct. 22

PHW with Youth Empowered Solutions Training
Bladen and Columbus

Learn more at www.nccouncilofchurches.org

Two Additional Council Resources Available Soon: Curriculum on Immigration and Updated Job Loss Guide

The NC Council of Churches will soon offer two additional resources that are being completed this summer.

First is a newly published biblically based curriculum on immigration issues, "Becoming the Church Together: Immigration, the Bible, and Our New Neighbors." This groundbreaking resource integrates numerous Bible passages with prayers, discussion questions, activities and video clips. A free DVD and immigration board game will accompany the curriculum.

"People in the pews are talking about immigration – it's a hot topic and it's something that is affecting local communities across North Carolina," said Program Associate Chris Liu-Beers, who heads up the Council's immigration work.

"The challenge for many congregations is to incorporate these conversations into the life of the church. This curriculum was designed to meet that challenge by offering a flexible, dialogue-oriented structure that anyone can facilitate."

The curriculum will be available for free at www.nccouncilofchurches.org/immigration-curriculum or in a printed version for \$1 per copy by calling 919-828-6501 or e-mailing nccofc@nccouncilofchurches.org.

Generous funding for the Council's immigration work is provided by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

The second resource is an updated and revised version of the 2003 publication, "Job Loss: A Guidebook for Pastors." Its aim is to help ministers

and congregations offer advice and guidance to people who are seeking employment, so updating it for the current economic climate was crucial. Continuing in the basic format of the earlier edition, the new guidebook contains more current information with regard to the economy, the amount a person needs to earn to reach financial sustainability, and updated information on social and economic resources.

Among its findings, despite the increase in minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 per hour, it would take more than two full-time minimum wage jobs to reach subsistence levels.

Watch for the revised guidebook online soon under the Resources tab on the Council's website, www.nccouncilofchurches.org.

Peace Update

A lot has been happening in the NC Council of Churches' peace program in recent months with efforts ranging from organizing and education to even some non-violent direct action.

When David LaMotte, Program Associate for Peace, spoke recently at a press conference at the legislature on the importance of maintaining the Racial Justice Act, it was his first time back in that building since being arrested there a month earlier during a protest. Seven like-minded activists were arrested during an act of civil disobedience calling attention to regressive decisions being made by the General Assembly. Rev. William Barber, a past recipient of the Council's Faith Active in Public Life Award, and Council board member T. Anthony Spearman were also among those arrested.

As part of the community-building work of peacemaking, the NCCC co-sponsored The Wild Goose Festival, and it was a huge success, drawing about 1500 people to a gathering at the intersection of justice, spirituality and art. The conversations were rich, challenging and inspiring. Expectations are for the festival to happen again next year.

Wild Goose was preceded by the National Restorative Justice Conference, which came to Raleigh in early June. Leaders like Naomi Tutu and Howard Zehr led explorations of the various applications and challenges of restorative justice work, and LaMotte had the privilege of introducing each of the plenary speakers with a song and a few words of context-setting before they began.

Looking ahead, a concert is in the works at Duke University celebrating the deeply interconnected traditions of the Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. LaMotte and summer intern Jim Irby will be working with students from the area in the intervening months to organize that. Look for details on the Council's website and in the weekly e-newsletter.

Over the coming weeks, LaMotte will transition from his position as NCCC staff to serving as a consultant. In that new role, he will be working on one project at a time for the Council. "Though some family matters are requiring me to step back from my deeper involvement, I look forward to ongoing work with this extraordinary organization," LaMotte said.

A Busy Summer for the NCCC



Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award Presentation

L to R: Dr. Neville Callam, General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance; George Reed; Susan Reed; Dr. Roy Medley, General Secretary, ABCUSA



Wild Good Festival

Council Intern Jim Irby with Sojourner's Jim Wallis



Statewide Summit on Immigration

NCCC Governing Board Member César Carhuachín who took part in a discussion on African American and Latino reconciliation

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We Welcome Your Summer Support

As with most non-profits, donations to the Council drop off during the summer months. While we are always grateful for financial support whenever we receive it, your gift during the summer is particularly helpful as a way to sustain our work year-round. We would welcome your contribution.

You can give online at www.nccouncilofchurches.org and click on the Donate Now button, or make your gift to the NCCC at 27 Horne St., Raleigh, 27607.

The ongoing nature of our work, and the increasingly difficult climate in which progressive faith voices are needed, make your gift to us now especially valuable.

Last Call for Your Printed Copy of CCB

The NC Council of Churches is reducing the amount of printed material we send out. As a result, we are greatly reducing the number of Church Council Bulletins we print and send by postal service. The newsletter will still be available by e-mail and on our website. However, beginning with our fall edition, we will send printed copies only to those who have requested them. If you would like to continue receiving a printed copy of CCB, please call the Council office at 919-828-6501 no later than Oct. 1. If you would like to begin receiving it by e-mail, please contact us at nccofc@nccouncilofchurches.org.

We never share your e-mail address with anyone.