

## Mission/Social Action Commission

Commission members: Carlene Gahrs, Susan Grant, Frank Hartley (Governing Board representative and Chair), Marshall Henry (Governing Board representative), Carol Larimer (served from January to September), Trish McHugh, Dee Van Horn

Monthly Updates - The commission received monthly updates from the commission members who serve as liaisons between the commission and each of the entities supported by the United Church-BR:

Women's Information Service, Inc.(WISE) - Susan Grant;

Starburst - Carol Larimer (beginning in September Dee VanHorn provided the updates for Starburst);

PRIDE Big Rapids - Frank Hartley; Mecosta County Habitat for Humanity (MCHFH) - Marshall Henry;

Our Brother's Keeper (OBK) - Dee Van Horn.

### 2023 Monthly Brief Summaries

January - OBK reported that it had a Christmas celebration for its guests (there were 15 children in addition to the adult guests) - a celebration that included the arrival of Santa (courtesy of Walmart's donation of a Santa outfit for one of the OBK staff to wear). WISE reported that it had met its "Giving Tuesday" goal of \$27,000.

February - Agreed to again promote fundraisers for WISE: a 5K Fun Walk/Run in June and the Donald Grant Memorial Golf Outing in July. Placed a collection bin for books to be donated to the American Association of University Women (AAUW) book sale. Began working with Immanuel Lutheran Church on planning for the spring "Dump and Run."

March - Continued productive conversations regarding cooperation with Immanuel Lutheran Church's "Dump and Run", Earth Day activities, support for the Pride Festival, and the highway pick-up.

April - [Met via email communication.] Continued support for the highway pick-up, "Dump and Run," and the Pride Festival. OBK celebrated Easter with the children at the facility receiving Easter baskets donated by the Spectrum Health Administration Office and Easter dinner donated by Ten16 Recovery Network.

May - Starburst reported receiving \$16,000 in Meijer gift cards during the Simply Give campaign. Learned that "Dump and Run" was successful (7 members of UCBR participated). Informed that 25 tree seedlings were distributed to UCBR members on April 30.

June - Began a monthly donation project for food for Starburst by placing a collection bin in the narthex. WISE reported a successful 5K Walk/Run. Received a thank-you from the Open Arms Child Advocacy Center (OACAC) for the commission's \$400 donation. Began posting on the bulletin board in the hallway outside of the church office information about each of the organizations supported by the commission.

July/August - The commission did not meet formally, but in August authorized a donation of \$1500 to Starburst.

September - Authorized a \$1000 donation to WISE and an additional \$1000 to Starburst. Voted to suspend for a time the Equal Exchange/Fair Trade Coffee Program. Voted to move forward with the Red Tag Christmas Gift project.

October - Approved the following donation requests: \$400 to the OACAC, \$1000 to the MCHFH, and \$1000 to OBK. Learned that due to the high need for food and dwindling resources Starburst will have to move to "an every other month" cycle for individual clients beginning in November.

November - Received thank-you letters from Starburst and WISE.

December - As of the UCBR Annual meeting (December 3, 2023) no formal meeting of the Mission Commission has been scheduled.

The summaries above describe only some of the many activities and initiatives undertaken during 2023 by the Mission/Social Action Commission. The commission continues to be a vibrant expression of the United Church's desire to serve others. Please feel free to contact any member of the commission if you want more information about any of the items listed above or about any of the other ways the commission is living out its mission for our church. We are blessed to be able to share Jesus' love and compassion with those in need.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Mission/Social Action Commission by: Frank Hartley (Commission Chair)