



FEBRUARY 2009

P.O. BOX 250, LEWISBURG, PA

CARE NEWSLETTER

Website: www.care4diversity.org

Email address:
care@dejazzd.com



Recent Events

Martin Luther King, Jr., Day: Two Local Events

Had Martin Luther King, Jr. not been assassinated in 1968, he would have celebrated his 80th birthday in January. Despite his untimely death, however, we can be grateful that his special place in American history is still and will continue to be publicly acknowledged. CARE was directly engaged in two local events honoring Dr. King.

On Sunday, January 18 the St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church in Milton held its annual MLK event under the direction of Helen Williams together with the Rev. Donald Spiller. Besides a rousing rendition of James Weldon Johnson's *Lift Every Voice and Sing* by those gathered, Denise Guinn-Bailey and James Thompson sang several songs appropriate to the occasion. The keynote address, "Martin Luther King's Prophetic Vision: Recapturing the Revolutionary Spirit," was presented by Doug Sturm from CARE. King's mission, Sturm declared, was not merely that we learn to respect each other across racial differences; it was also that, out of love, we must engage in the continuing struggle for social justice throughout the world. In particular, we need to overcome the pervasive evils of racism, poverty, and militarism, creating instead a beloved community, honoring the human rights of all.

On Monday, January 19 the Donald Heiter Community Center in Lewisburg sponsored its annual MLK Day event with after-school activities for young children, a dinner (Jamaican food this year!), and an evening family program. With Quentin Faison serving as moderator, the evening program included a theatrical performance by Heiter Center youth, an interactive presentation by Selinsgrove's Tolerance Troupe, poetry reading by Taylor Faison, and a guest speaker, Edward Jackson. Jackson urged all of us to become agents of social transformation, seeking to surmount prejudice through promoting not only appropriate legal changes, but more importantly, a change of heart. The meal was provided by CARE.

From the desk of Doug Sturm

Racial Profiling: Does it happen here?

In the winter issue of its newsletter, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) reports its continuing effort to force the New York Police Department (NYPD) to cease its practice of racial profiling in the city. In a recent lawsuit (Floyd), the Center charged

"the NYPD with engaging in illegal racial profiling and stops of law-abiding city residents. According to CCR attorneys, the plaintiffs in the case represent the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who over the last several years have been stopped on the way to work, in front of their house, or just walking down the street without cause, primarily because they were people of color."

A district judge in this case directed "the NYPD to turn over to CCR all 'stop-and-frisk' data for the preceding 10 years." In an earlier case (Daniel), the NYPD was required to abolish its Street Crime Unit, to provide a written racial-profiling policy, and to provide specific data to the CCR.

At that time, partial data "revealed that police stops increased by more than 500% between 2002 and 2006, with Blacks and Latinos accounting for 90 percent of those stopped." The Floyd case challenges the adequacy of the Department's policies and



seeks more stringent adherence to the decree in the Daniel case.

That's New York City. What's it like in the Central Susquehanna Valley? Do local police departments have racial profiling policies? Should they? What are the experiences of persons of minority status (racial, ethnic, sexual orientation) in their encounters with police? Any stories of significance to share with CARE?

The Economic Crisis & Structural Racism

United for a Fair Economy (UFE) released its annual report on Martin Luther King's birthday this year: *State of the Dream 2009: The Silent Depression*. As an organization, UFE "raises awareness that concentrated wealth and power undermine the economy, corrupt democracy, deepen the racial divide, and tear communities apart."

This 70-page report declares that Blacks and Latinos "are already experiencing a silent economic depression" far deeper than the recession experienced by white citizens. Among its findings:

- Black unemployment rate is currently 11.9 percent. Among young Black males age 16-19, unemployment is 32.8 percent
- People of color are disproportionately poor in the US. Blacks and Latinos have poverty rates of 24 percent and 21 percent respectively, compared to 10 percent for whites.
- Nearly 30 percent of Blacks have zero or negative worth (wealth), vs. 15 percent of whites.
- Only 18 percent of people of color have retirement accounts, vs. 43.4 percent of whites.

Following a detailed analyses (including many informative comparative charts), the report concludes with eight pages of specific recommendations for deep-seated changes in public policy directed toward racial and ethnic equalization in the US.

This invaluable report is available free as a PDF download from www.FairEconomy.org or for \$10 (including S&H) from UFE, 29 Winter Street, Boston MA 02108.

The Ugly Head of Hate Groups in the Central Susquehanna Valley, Again

Once again, we have evidence that hate groups are engaged in mini-forays into the Valley. On January 17, the *Daily Item* (B1) reported that KKK leaflets were distributed in the small town of Pillow (about 30 miles south of Lewisburg) and that Neo-Nazi posters were found on Bucknell campus. On January 22, a strongly worded letter from six Christian pastors in Pillow was published in the *Daily Item* (A5) in opposition to the KKK, declaring that "the fears and prejudices [of hate groups] must not blind us to the traditional American and Godly values of peace, justice and tolerance....instead let us stand up to these hate groups."

Any ideas of what CARE should be doing throughout the Valley to follow through?

President Barack Obama: A New Era?

A true confession: I, too, wept tears of joy on Inauguration Day. Obama's election to the presidency, by itself, marks a major moment in our national history. What more to say, except to commit ourselves to the massive task of redirecting and reconstructing America, and the world, in a more humane direction.

Yet those of us so minded must remember the obstacles. See Chip Berlet's "Poking the Racist Beehive" in the January issue of *The Progressive* (pp. 26-29) about the backlash among Hate Groups to Obama's election (black churches burned; crosses set on fire; nooses tied to trees; cultural conservatives raising critical questions and stimulating fears). Jeff Chang of *Jibe* magazine is quoted as declaring we need to "make racial justice explicit, talk about why it was at the core of his victory, and move forward." How, dear friends might we of CARE take this step?



Upcoming Events in the Community and Beyond

Watoto presents the African Children's Choir, *Concerts of Hope*

St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Lewisburg, PA
Sunday, February 1, 2009 at 10:30 A.M.
42 S. 4th Street
Lewisburg, PA
FREE ADMISSION

Watoto provides holistic, residential care for orphaned and vulnerable children in Uganda. Their core vision is to "rescue a Child, raise a Leader and rebuild a Nation." Their goal is to rescue 10,000 children in Uganda by 2023.

The Watoto Children's Choirs are comprised of Ugandan children who are part of Watoto's program, many of whom have lost one or both parents. Through their music, the choirs share their unique stories and express their new found hope. The children's energy and sincerity continue to inspire audiences all around the world.

The Choirs have toured internationally since 1994. Watoto's performances are a soulful blend of African rhythm, contemporary gospel, and ethnic dance. The choir performs to present Watoto's vision and to give audiences the opportunity to respond to Africa's HIV/AIDS and war crisis. These choirs bring a message of hope to many parts of the world, including countries such as Uganda, Australia, Canada, UK, USA, South Africa, Brazil, Israel, Germany, and France.

There will be a lunch reception following the service at St. Paul's. Bucknell students are invited to attend, but please email c.yaged@bucknell.edu if you plan on going so we can give the church an estimate beforehand.

For more information and to RSVP, contact Christine Yaged at c.yaged@bucknell.edu

You can also visit www.watoto.com

Landmark Exhibition: *Of Rage and Redemption*

Samek Art Gallery, Bucknell University
January 26 - March 27, 2009

"This landmark exhibition, the first of its kind in the United States in more than 50 years, presents the work of the great Ecuadorian painter and graphic artist, Oswaldo Guayasamin," said Dan Mills, director of the Samek Art Gallery. "I am delighted the Samek Art Gallery is able to bring this important exhibition to Bucknell and the region." h

Guayasamin's work focuses on difficult subjects, including the horrors of war, the injustices of inequality and discrimination, and the rights of women, children and indigenous peoples. Works in the exhibition speak to Latin American and universal issues of war and peace, social conflict, and human compassion.

According to curator of the exhibition, Joseph Mella, *Of Rage and Redemption* includes more than 80 works from the artist's early paintings responding to Ecuador's four-day civil war of 1932. Also included are representations of his mature work focusing on the plight of indigenous people, human suffering in the context of war and justice, and what he called *La Ternura* (The Tenderness), his final period beginning in the mid-1980s.

After premiering at Vanderbilt University in early 2008, the exhibition has traveled to the Art Museum of the Americas in Washington, D.C., Museo Alameda in San Antonio, and Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. After Bucknell, the exhibition will complete its North American tour at the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach.

Williamsport Events

Lycoming College

Fireside Chat: *Music and the Civil Rights*, presented by Dr. Andrew Leiter, assistant professor of English. Snowden Library Fireplace (1st Floor), February 9, 7:00 P.M.



Slam Poet Luis Iona presents *Brown is Black, Red, White & Yellow* at the Jane Schultz Room, Wertz Student Center, February 13, 8:00 P.M.

Bamboozled (movie) screening and talk back discussion. Barkley Lecture Hall, Heim Building, February 24, 8:00 P.M.

PA College of Technology

Reggae Band *Anthem*, Field house, February 11, 9:00 P.M.

The History of the Williamsport Underground Railroad: Mamie Sweeting Diggs, a Williamsport native, will offer the true story of the Underground Railroad through Williamsport that led many slaves to freedom. Penn's Inn, Bush Campus Center, February 18, 5:00 P.M.

The Meeting: an educational, entertaining, and dramatic play that depicts a fictional meeting between Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Winner of 6 NAACP Theatre Awards. February 21, 9:00 P.M.

Update on Mediation Work

Tonia Wilson and Allan Sobel from the Neysa C. Adams Pro Se Assistance and Mediation Clinic at Susquehanna University have been invited to the next CARE meeting. The group is looking to train new mediators. One of the requirements for becoming a mediator is the commitment to a year of service. The Neysa C.Adams Pro Se Assistance and Mediation Clinic is located at the Career Link building in Selinsgrove. Call 570-374-5414 for more information.

Looking Ahead

Recruiting Help to Plan for Puerto Rican Picnic

Anyone interested in helping with coordinating the Puerto Rican Picnic in Sunbury's Marina for the month of July please contact Margie at 524-2100 or 374-5558.