SECTION H

RECOGNIZED MISSION PARTNERS

1 BACK BAY MISSION
2 CROSSROAD - Child & Family Services
3 DEFIANCE COLLEGE
4 GRACE COMMUNITY CENTER
5 HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY
6 INSURANCE BOARD
7 OHIO COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
8 UNITED CHURCH HOMES
Greetings from the coast of Mississippi to our United Church of Christ family in the Northwest Ohio Association!

We are getting prepared to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of Back Bay Mission serving the gulf coast of Mississippi. We are so grateful to the Northwest Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ for your generous and ongoing support that is even more critical now than ever! You help us continue our mission of strengthening neighborhoods, seeking justice, and transforming lives!

Certainly, this has been a unique year at Back Bay Mission. The pandemic over the past year has offered challenging and creative times for the Mission. We saw far less volunteers coming from places like Ohio and other partner churches. But the amazing and essential staff of Back Bay Mission continued serving people living in poverty and the unsheltered along the coast of Mississippi. Back Bay Mission is an essential service and will be even more critical as we continue to live into the pandemic which has clearly uncovered many inequities and health disparities potentially leaving many more people without jobs and shelter in the near future.

Back Bay Mission’s Micah Day Center continued through the pandemic providing a place for unsheltered people to take a shower, wash their clothes, secure housing through the services of our case managers and find physical, emotional, and spiritual nurture. We also continue providing housing for veterans experiencing homelessness suffering the effects of PTSD and other physical and emotional scares due to their service in our military.

The staff of Back Bay Mission have also been instrumental in helping keep those who have a home during the pandemic by offering utility and rental assistance. We have also had small teams of staff and a limited number of volunteers helping make necessary repairs and rehabbing homes for those who do not have adequate resources to take care of their homes. We continue to invest in the pride of home ownership for those most in need on the coast of Mississippi.

We look forward to volunteer mission teams returning in full force at the Mission. As the new Executive Director of Back Bay Mission and a UCC minister, I am determined to be a stronger voice for equity and justice for the populations we serve on the Gulf Coast and throughout the Deep South. As a son of Mississippi come home (I was born and raised in Booneville MS until 11 years old), I look forward to serving Back Bay Mission and continuing and expanding the amazing work done on the coast for nearly 100 years by the United Church of Christ. At Back Bay Mission “we stand on the shoulders of giants” (Thomas Newton) as we continue the good work of “doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with our God”. (Micah 6:8)

Doing Justice on the Coast - Rev. James B. Pennington, Executive Director (MSW)
Greetings & Thanks to our United Church of Christ family in the Northwest Ohio Association!

Founded in 1883, by one of the predecessor denominations to the United Church of Christ, we are proud to have a covenantal relationship with the Heartland Conference. You are our UCC family! We have served tens of thousands of children with your help! And, would not have the resources to do this work without your help! Today, we serve children with very complicated emotional and mental health issues. On any given day, we are serving about 250 children. We served close to 500 children during this past pandemic year.

Children who are residents on our campus are as young as age six. They have very challenging diagnoses most often as a result of physical, sexual (including trafficking) abuse and neglect. Many are not just emotionally troubled. They may also be mentally retarded/developmentally disabled, autistic, medically fragile, or they may be impacted by brain trauma. Nearly half of children in our residential services are also diagnosed with a physical disability of some kind. Many are also impacted families with opioid addictions. These kids - they are just kids! Our mission has led us to accept children other treatment providers will not work with, but, our outcomes are as good as or better than the benchmark with those we measure against. We are not just claiming we help kids, we are proving it!

What a year 2020 turned out to be! For Crossroad it was definitely a year marked with change.

- We opened two new buildings on our campus! In October, we opened our new 15-bed living unit. Children are now living in this beautiful, safe, much-needed new building. In October, we were able to start using our new treatment and welcome center. We are so glad for this area that is helping us work more collaboratively and see clients in a fully accessible, more private space.
- Our school, Crossroad Academy, became a New Tech Academy School providing a formal project-based learning culture and structure for children who live on our campus, or students who live in the community and attend our alternative education program.
- The pandemic changed how our organization operates. Our priority is to keep our staff and our clients safe. Meeting that priority has demanded a significaicate financial output beyond our regular annual expenses. However, the challenges also taught us new ways to communicate and work together. They helped us center on the things that are most important to Crossroad: our clients, staff, families, volunteers and supporters.
- Crossroad celebrated the announcement of David Mullins as our new President/CEO. We also honored our former chief executive, Randall J. Rider, for 14 years in that office and almost 41 total years of dedicated service to Crossroad Child & Family Services! David is not new to us; he has been our Chief Operating Officer since 2009. He started his new position on January 6, 2021.
- Thank you keeping our mission as one of your priorities! Thank you for your gifts to help fulfill financial needs for the work we do. Thank you for caring about the Crossroad children and families. Together, we do life-changing work! We Create Promising Futures!

You are so important to us and appreciated by us! We thank you for both your gifts and your prayers!

We would love to send you a video mission moment or worship with you in person to thank you for being in mission with us. We have special project and work-camp opportunities for youth and adult groups; on our campus or remotely.

And if you would like to receive our newsletter to churches, please email or call Liz or Kyle (below)

***

You can learn more about Crossroad Child & Family Services and how you can help at: www.crossroad-fwch.org or www.facebook.com/crossroad.cares

Liz Bergren, Development Director: ebergen@crossroad-fwch.org 260.484.4153 x 2003

Kyle Zanker, Chief Development Officer: kzanker@crossroad-fwch.org 260.484.4153 x 2090
Defiance College
Chartered in 1850

Defiance College is an independent, liberal arts-based institution in Northwest Ohio offering more than 40 undergraduate programs of study as well as graduate programs in education and business. The College graduates students to lead distinctive lives in their chosen professions through a spirit of service by preparing them To Know, To Understand, To Lead, and To Serve.

At its February 2021 Board of Trustees meeting, a new vision and set of core values were accepted. Both were developed with the mission statement as the foundation and with the 175th anniversary of Defiance College in 2025 as the inspiration:

**VISION:** Holistic Learning and Adaptability for Life.

**CORE VALUES:** At Defiance College, we go Together:

Defiance College was recently awarded a $2.1 million Title III Strengthening Institutions Program Grant that will focus on reinforcing the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programs on campus. This grant from U.S. Department of Education is one of the largest Defiance has ever received and involves facility improvements such as classrooms and a new tutoring center, research grants and paid internships as part of its five year plan.

In August 2020, Defiance College launched Jacket Journey, a readiness program designed to prepare students for careers or graduate school by ensuring they can articulate their knowledge, skills, and dispositions for success in their careers. Originally conceptualized by Defiance College’s 19th President, Jacket Journey is designed to address key problems facing higher education and the 21st century workforce. Jacket Journey, housed in the Institute for Career Readiness and Lifelong Learning, is a unique learning opportunity that is a required, four-year program with one academic credit hour for each of those four years. Jacket Journey involves a required course for students each year focusing on their individualized career readiness tied to a three day kick off each January. To connect employers and industry leaders with faculty and staff to ensure the curriculum and other programming prepares students for the 21st century workforce, each summer Jacket Summit brings them together.

Finally, Defiance College is known for its award winning community based research program housed in the McMaster School for Advancing Humanity. The fifteen plus year old program allows faculty and students to conduct research locally and globally with community partners in Belize, Panama, Cambodia, Tanzania, among others. The impact of the program is impressive with a 100% graduation rate for student participants, over 200 different projects and an estimated impact on 27,000 different individuals.
GRACE COMMUNITY CENTER, INC
TOLEDO, OHIO

When the Corona Virus Pandemic shut down our community, we at Grace responded like a crew of fire fighters, abruptly dropping what we were doing, and coming to the rescue of our neighbors. We started by becoming an accurate source of information about how folks could protect themselves against COVID19... with masking, social distancing, and good nutrition. Then, we helped people who had been evicted from their homes find shelter and security. Next, we opened our doors to parents whose children needed space to do virtual schoolwork. And finally, more importantly than anything else, we became a primary source of food for many Toledoans.

We went from feeding roughly 37 households, in January 2020, to feeding over 1000 families in the month of October. We even partnered with a USDA food source in Cincinnati to distribute 1,372 food boxes in a single day. We deliver to 217 homebound seniors completely free and we’ve recently expanded our mobile services to distribute on site to residents of low income and senior housing. Portions of the food we provided during the growing season were harvested right from our on-site co-op garden.

All of this activity has not only met the physical needs of our neighbors, but also their mental, emotional, and spiritual needs as well. Strengthening the sense of community among residents, and building their social and personal leadership skills will always be part of who we are.

In the middle of this highly reactive work, we have not forgotten to keep looking forward. Grace has big plans for the future! Throughout our 50 years, we have always, and will always, be committed to supporting parents and youth as the kids grow into successful adults. In recent years, we’ve put special emphasis on our work with seniors and their contributions in building the co-op garden. Later this year, that garden will be expanding onto the old Fulton School site, which is located next to our existing property. The garden will occupy at least 10,000 square feet of the 2.75 acre space. Along with the garden addition, there are plans for walking trails, park benches, and a playing field. Future developments will likely include an enclosed venue that can be used by youth and adults for a variety of purposes, both educational and social. We’re working closely with the neighbors and local businesses and groups in this overall planning and with local farmers to make our garden a key element of a whole new food production and distribution system, designed to end food insecurities in our neighborhood.

As we look to the year ahead, we have hope – hope that this expansion project will continue to build energy in our neighborhood, hope that the services we provide will bring healing to our community, and hope that that worst of this pandemic is behind us.

Bryce Harbaugh, Board Chairman                          Elaine Page, Executive Director
Heidelberg was founded in 1850 by the Ohio Conference of the German Reformed Church and is now affiliated with the United Church of Christ. The school continues to offer scholarships to members of the United Church of Christ, children of UCC clergy, and students considering ordained ministry. We are thankful for support from the Heartland Conference, the Northwest Ohio Association, and local churches.

Located on 125 beautiful acres in northwest Tiffin, Ohio, Heidelberg University combines a challenging liberal-arts curriculum with professional preparation. Our welcoming, enthusiastic community includes 1,054 undergraduate and 132 graduate students from all over the world, working closely with caring, insightful faculty members and staff. International students and domestic students of color account for 20% of students. We are led by our 14th President, Dr. Robert H. Huntington.

Heidelberg offers intellectually rigorous, hands-on courses in a wide range of majors, minors, concentrations, and pre-professional programs. Our energetic campus overflows with activities, including 20 athletic teams, clubs, musical performances, and Greek life. The student-faculty ratio is 13:1 and the average class size is 17. We have the Life of the Mind Honors Program. Graduate School programs are offered in Counseling, Business Administration, Education, and Athletic Training. 84% of our students live on campus. In 2021 we are completing renovation of France Hall and will start the renovation of Miller Hall making our 7 residence halls more contemporary for student life.

The school supports a vital religious life with Berg UCC, the Catholic Newman Club, CRU, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. The Office of Religious Life supported by the University Chaplain sponsors events to promote religious literacy. Civic Engagement is a key component of student life on the campus under the Ralph and Sue Quellhorst Student Community Service Fund that employs Assistants for Civic Engagement for Voter Registration, Community Service, Sexual Assault Prevention, Student Food Pantry, Habitat for Humanity, PACE Mentoring Program, and Alternative Break trips to Back Bay Mission and Habitat for Humanity. The HYPE Career Ready Program features six high-impact speakers each academic year, followed by smaller sessions with experts in the areas of values, work styles, job search skills, communication, collaboration and conflict management. We offer many programs including the National Center for Water Quality Research, the School of Music and Theatre, and the George Barlow Body Donor Lab.

Heidelberg University has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion fueled by the voice of student leadership and the strong leadership of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

Please visit our campus. Stop by and take a tour through the Admissions Office or have a meal at one of the Parkhurst Dining facilities on campus where meals are prepared from fresh ingredients and we have Clean Plate for those with food allergens. All alumni are invited to return to campus June 18-20, 2021 for our annual Alumni Weekend.
The Insurance Board (IB) has been serving churches for almost 40 years. In 1979 a local church trustee and entrepreneur in northern California believed churches could improve insurance coverage, costs and services if they were to unite and buy as a group. In 1981, a program was established in northern California and shortly after that the Insurance Board was formed by the UCC Conferences. Today, the program is available to all UCC churches across the Country. The Program also serves churches and ministries in five ecumenical partners: The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Alliance of Baptists, the Presbyterian Church (USA), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and Reformed Church in America (RCA).

There are currently more than 4400 church entities participating in the program, with more than $16 billion in total insured values, making IB one of the largest denominational programs in the Country. A primary purpose of Insurance Board is to help churches manage the risks that are inherent in their operations. We have developed, and continue to develop, risk management resources and programs to assist ALL UCC churches (not just those in the IB Program) with their loss prevention initiatives. Resources are on our website at www.InsuranceBoard.org

**MISSION**
To support and protect churches and church ministries by offering superior property and casualty risk and insurance management services.

**VALUE**
Choosing to be bound together in mutual care and concern we will maintain:

- Integrity
- Excellence
- Exceptional Customer Service
- Open Communication
- Inclusiveness

**VISION**
Become the insurance program of choice for the denominations we serve.

To find out more about the program or to get a proposal for your church please contact:

Ben Rupp, the Rupp Agency
at 877-480-7877, x3.
I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” John 17:20-21 NRSV

Our Mission:
To be a transformational church body that makes visible the unity of the church; engages in worship, education and fellowship; and proclaims Christ’s love and justice ethic through public witness.

Our Ministry Priorities: Relationships, Anti-Racism, and Social Justice/Anti-Poverty

Our Member Communions:

During 2020, we...
Responded to the COVID-19 pandemic as informed by our faith and good counsel from the medical-scientific community;
Carried out Faith Leaders Zoom Prayer/Information sessions on Mondays at 3:30p (ongoing)
Offered a virtual, four-session clergy retreat;
Responded to the ongoing pandemic of systemic racism that consumed George Floyd and Breonna Taylor by calling for September 20 to serve as Anti-Racism Sunday;
Assembled a toolkit for use in defining, detecting, disrupting, and dismantling racism and white supremacy;
Presented and interfaith Zoom youth event, “Youth 2020” that helped youth express their feelings about COVID-19, racism, and more;
Participated in over 30 events held by member communions, congregations, interfaith organizations, universities, and civic bodies;
Held webinars on opioid overdose prevention within African American communities;
Gave leadership to voting rights and voter registration efforts;
Offered four fellowship gatherings of OCC-connected denominational leaders; and
Relocated our offices from north Columbus to a suite in the building of Trinity Episcopal Church, Columbus

In 2021, we...
Held a Legislative Advocacy Event that addressed hunger, housing, and school funding. Featured speakers were Bishops Michael Curry, presiding bishop, the Episcopal Church, and Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, presiding bishop, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
Are naming defeating the death penalty and redistricting reform as legislative priorities;
Are working with Ohioans to Stop Executions, Death Penalty Action, the Catholic Church, ACLU, and bipartisan legislative leadership to defeat Ohio’s death penalty;
Held and Co-Sponsored Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Zooms on young adult ecumenism, moving past social chaos to community, bridging the rural-urban divide, and advocacy, activism, and allyship;
Held a three-part training on white supremacy;
Planning ecumenical and interfaith social justice-oriented youth events; and
Will offer more Zoom discussions—see https://www.ohcouncilchs.org/events

Our Staff:
The Rev. Jack Sullivan, Jr., D.Min., Executive Director
Pastor Brandi N. Slaughter, JD, Director of Public Policy/Communication
Elizabeth Cattunar, MA, Executive Administrator
Cindy Ries, BS, Bookkeeper
In a year filled with uncertainty, **UNITED CHURCH HOMES** found opportunities amidst the challenges. The nature of this pandemic demanded that we grow in every way, allowing our innovation and creativity to soar, our focus on health and safety to shine, and our people to become everyday heroes.

**GROWTH**

Beyond survival, we grew our ability to provide abundant life by adding two new Ohio communities in Niles and Brunswick and expanding our ability to provide independent housing for middle income older adults.

Seeing the opportunity to serve more people, we continued to develop our service coordinator program through UCH Engage, which provides personal advisement to residents and family members and connects seniors with services they need to live a healthy and full life.

**INNOVATION**

Fairhaven Community welcomed new administrator, Jean Smith. At the same time, Parkvue Community celebrated the retirement of Rev. Cathy Lawrence, who was instrumental in providing creative ways to celebrate the spirit during a challenging time.

We had to rethink the ways that we provided for our residents’ needs, as staff members stepped up with engaging activities. All UCH communities created a new position, the Virtual Visitor Guide, a dedicated person to help connect residents and families through technology until they could visit once again in person.

Through the Ruth Frost Parker Center for Abundant Aging, we launched The Art of Aging Podcast offering ideas, information and inspiration on improving lives as we age. Another resource made available through the Parker Center is the Another Day Older curriculum. Designed for virtual or in-person group discussions, this free guide sparks conversations on ageism, and includes four videos which provide a centerpiece for the conversations.

**SAFETY**

2020 demanded we prioritize the health and safety of our residents and staff. The dedication shown by every individual within our communities kept outbreaks to a minimum. We were among the first senior living communities in the country to receive the vaccine, a sign of better days ahead.

**EVERYDAY HEROES**

The dedication of our staff to the residents has been nothing short of inspiring. From a staff member who stayed overnight during inclement weather to cover another staff member’s shift, to a maintenance man who sang throughout the buildings to entertain residents, to service coordinators finding beds for residents who were sleeping on couches, people are what truly made 2020 the incredible year that it was. We are so appreciative of the support of the congregations of the Northwest Ohio Association showing your love and care in many ways even when visits were not possible. **Thank you.**

To learn more, visit [unitedchurchhomes.org](http://unitedchurchhomes.org)