

SECTION H

RECOGNIZED MISSION PARTNERS

- 1 BACK BAY MISSION
- 2 CROSSROAD - Child & Family Services
- 3 THE DEFIANCE COLLEGE
- 4 GRACE COMMUNITY CENTER
- 6 INSURANCE BOARD
- 7 OHIO COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
- 8 UNITED CHURCH HOMES



We thank the Northwest Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ for their faithful support of Back Bay Mission! Because of y'all we are able to fulfill our mission of **strengthening neighborhoods, seeking justice, and transforming lives**, not only on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, but among many of our siblings in the United Church of Christ in the Northwest Ohio Association, the Heartland Conference, and beyond! Listed below are a few of our current or new initiatives as we live into our 103rd year of service and justice seeking:


- Back Bay Mission is attempting to change our national narrative from “we have a problem with homelessness” to “we have a problem with poverty” in our country. We find that a high percentage of children who grow up in poverty continue in poverty into their adulthood due to lack of opportunities, education, and the context into which they were born and nurtured. We understand that the racial demographic and distribution of modern-day poverty can be traced back, in part, to policies such as gentrification, redlining, and the systems keeping poverty in place. Back Bay Mission offers a “hand-up” rather than a “hand-out” to those we serve through all of our programs, helping lift people from poverty to sustainability, from surviving to thriving.
- Our Housing Rehabilitation or “Homeless Prevention” program continues to grow as we utilize UCC volunteers from across the country to rehabilitate homes for persons living in poverty. These people live on the edge of homelessness due to inadequate housing. 70 university students from historic UCC colleges (Heidelberg being one of them!) joined us this year for our first “Spring Break with a Purpose”. Students worked hard learning about the effects of poverty and environmental racism.
- In 2024, Back Bay Mission was able to secure new funding sources. One source will allow us to house people living with HIV and AIDS. The new grant we secured through HUD is HOPWA or Housing Opportunities for Persons Living with HIV and AIDS. We are excited to provide housing on the Mississippi Gulf Coast for those living with this disease which still carries stigma and many health challenges.
- Back Bay Mission also secured funding through the Mississippi Department of Health to train and hire two Community Health Workers (CHW) that work with unsheltered persons and those individuals and families living in poverty. This is a new initiative for Mississippi, and we are excited to be a part of this project roll-out as we are able to serve those who are underserved. The CHW’s focus is on the social determinants of health (SDOH) in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship. These social determinates affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.
- We continue to advocate for the unsheltered in our community by hosting quarterly “Town Halls on Homelessness.” The community is invited to share their concerns and listen to a cadre of “experts” in the field as they explain the complexity and intersectionality that keep people in homelessness. The Town Hall is solution focused and the empowerment of attendees to be a part of the change they want to see in the world!
- Back Bay Mission continues to be committed to creating a “Tiny Village” for those experiencing homelessness as they transition to a more permanent housing solution. The Gulfport High School STEM class built our prototype. The project has morphed into three tiny bedrooms on a platform with wheels that can be easily moved when there is a risk of inclement weather. We envision starting small with 18 units on property about 3 blocks from Back Bay Mission.

This is just the “tip of the iceberg” that is Back Bay Mission. To learn more about Back Bay Mission, please go to www.thebackbaymission.org. 1012 Division Street, Biloxi, MS 39533. 228-432-0301.



APRIL UPDATE

National Child Abuse Prevention Month



childwelfare.gov/preventionmonth

Child Abuse Prevention Month

As part of Child Abuse Prevention Month, April 28th will be the 30th annual Blue Sunday Day of Prayer. This is a day for churches nationwide to offer prayer for child abuse victims. You can register your church at Bluesunday.org

Learn more about how your generous support impacts the children and families we serve

Request a Mission Moment

March Maddness

We hosted our own version of March Maddness this year. Students and staff teamed up for some friendly competition and an afternoon of basketball. Those who didn't want to play made posters and chered from the sidelines.

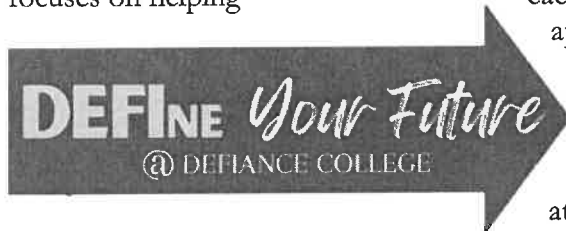


www.crossroadcares.org



If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.
~African proverb

In October of 2023, Defiance College launched a program to announce two exciting changes. The *DEFine Your Future* program is designed to let prospective students know that Defiance College focuses on helping



each of them find their passion and realize it with appropriate levels of challenge and support. That announcement came with a 25% tuition reduction – tuition now stands at \$28,500. DC also announced that its athletic governance model would move to the NAIA from NCAA Division III. The NAIA allows athletic scholarships to be offered; and in the new

conference in which DC will begin playing in Fall 2024, travel will be less, thus allowing more time for student athletes to engage in their classes, studying, and other activities available through the 40+ student organizations functioning on-campus.

Focus has been further strengthening the academic foundation of the college, diversifying academic programmatic offerings and fortifying STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) programs, meeting or exceeding benchmarks for quality in all aspects of college administration, increasing opportunities for appropriate partnerships, securing grant dollars just shy of \$9 million, and growing enrollment.

To fill the program gaps articulated by regional and national professionals, DC added or rekindled 17 academic programs including the addition of engineering (civil, mechanical, electrical) in partnership with the University of North Dakota. Through a task force of faculty leaders and key administrators, DC developed and has now fully implemented, an award-winning, nationally unique career readiness program called Jacket Journey. Through four years of competency building that augment academic classroom/lab learning, undergraduate students prepare for the work force.

Additional fundraising contributed to athletic facility improvements including a new basketball court and rims; a golf simulator, upgrades to outdoor athletic fields, and the expansion of the Karl H. Weaner Community Center to enhance the wrestling program and provide new, improved locker room space, as well as improved facilities for public use.

The Tri-River Alliance was launched in 2021 in cooperation with the City of Defiance and many stakeholders that have a keen interest in improving the watershed runoff of this region into the Maumee River. Its new water lab, located on campus, was dedicated in October 2023. In 2017 the Charles K. and Esther C. Krieger Foundation established the Visiting Krieger Scholar program at DC with a \$1 million gift. The program is designed to enhance interfaith understanding between the three Abrahamic traditions.

Thus, Defiance College continues to reDEFine its future!

2023 Report of Grace Community Center Mission Accomplishments

The Mission of Grace Community Center is: To foster the health and well-being of children, adults and seniors In our service area, through programs that promote food security, education and job readiness, and quality senior living.

Mission Accomplishments for Youth

With Our After School Program: (It's back after 3 years & we're calling it "Learning Heroes")

Enrolled 52 youth, ranging in age from 5 to 13...AND, with them, importantly...

- Logged an average of 120 homework assistance hours, EACH.
- Got 100% of them to sign a pledge to remain violence free.
- Got 98% of them to set at least one goal, determine what would be needed to accomplish it, and take steps toward getting it done.

With Our Summertime EduCamp Program:

Enrolled 58 youth...

- Prevented ALL our K through 5th graders from losing any reading competency; and all but 20% of them from losing any math competency.
- Gave everyone daily exposure to physical exercise, good nutrition and gardening practices.
- Prevented everyone from participating in violence or committing violent acts.
- Gave everyone the following learning and enrichment experiences: weekly swim outings, visits to 10 different City and Metro Parks, a visit to the Toledo Zoo.
- Gave various age groups exposure to life lesson messaging and education from: OSU Extension personnel, CSU Extension personnel, City Violence Interrupters, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, the Toledo Police Department, The Toledo Museum of Art, City and Lucas Co. Soil and Water Conservation Office, Foster Grandparents, Pathway Summer Jobs Program leaders, Parents, GCC Board members and other volunteers.
- Gave everyone nutritious breakfast and noontime meals (supplied by Connecting Kids to Meals).

Mission Accomplishments for Seniors

Among the Center's Savvy Seniors, as a result of healthy living classes being presented to them, there have been reports of lower cholesterol levels, lower blood pressure, and lower glucose levels. Beginning in September 2022, and extending to the present time, neighborhood seniors have participated in Fast Track Farming program offered by Central State University at Grace. Total enrollment in that program, this year, was as high as 32...and has remained at 27.

8 Seniors have participated in our EduCamp program through the Foster Grandparents program...on assignment from Senior Center, Inc. This team was instrumental this summer in providing support to the Friday "Chill out and Read" activities.

Mission Accomplishments for Persons Facing Food In-Security

With our food pantry operation, Grace has:

- Served a total of 2202 different households, 1472 of which were eligible to receive a food box weekly.
- Made monthly food deliveries to 730 live alone seniors and disabled persons.
- Distributed a total of 9723 food boxes and 5500 hygiene bags.

With our garden program, Grace has:

- Served 100 families: enabling them to sample and showing them how to prepare locally grown vegetables; and sending garden produce home with them.
- Grown and harvested over 4000 pounds of vegetables...and distributed 95% of it to food-insecure families.

The IB here to serve you!

The Insurance Board (IB) has been serving churches for more than 30 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 California and shortly after that the IB 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 three ecumenical partners: The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Alliance of Baptists and the Presbyterian Church (USA).

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.

There are currently 4200 church entities participating in the program, with more than \$16 billion in total insured values, making the IB one of the largest denominational programs in the Country. A primary purpose of the 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) in their loss prevention initiatives, resources are on our website at www.InsuranceBoard.org

To find out more about the Program or to get a proposal for your church, please contact Jeff Gisser or John Bouhall CPCU of the Richey-Barrett Insurance Agency at 440.835.4800



**Report to the
The 61st Annual Meeting of Northwest Ohio Association, United Church of Christ,
Heartland Conference
Saturday, April 27, 2024
Saint Stephen United Church of Christ, Sandusky**

We are a Jesus Christ Movement for Unity, Justice, and Peace!

Our Member Communions:

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The Alliance of Baptists, The Armenians Apostolic Church; The Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ) US and Canada, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Christian Science, The Church of the Brethren, The Community Churches, The Episcopal Church in the USA, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, The Greek Orthodox Church, The Moravian Church in America, The Ohio Baptist General Convention, The Presbyterian Church (USA), The Religious Society of Friends, The United Church of Christ, and The United Methodist Church.

www.ohcouncilchs.org

Report of 2023 Activities

- The OCC's Anti-Racism Team sponsored our third Anti-Racism Sunday on October 15, 2023.. Several OCC member congregations participated in this effort which was designed to draw attention to the faith that racism is sin. We also held a focused consultation with member churches who have anti-racism ministries.
- Facilitated conversations regarding camping ministries with the United Church of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, and the United Methodist Church.
- The Faith and Order Commission is working on developing theological and scholarly resources on gun violence prevention.
- The Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr., participated in the Appalachia Working group along with the West Virginia and Kentucky Council of Churches. He traveled to West Virginia and spoke at the conference in Logan, WV. He spoke on the subject, "Seeking the Beloved Community in Appalachia."
- The Executive Director and Associate Director, Rev. Dr. Amariah H. McIntosh spoke in person at the Ohio Statehouse and provided written and in-person testimony on several bills, including opposition to raising the threshold on citizen led ballot initiatives, and abolition of the death penalty.
- The Executive Director and Associate Director planned and moderated an OCC Bishops and Executives Prayer Forum focused on the wars in Israel-Palestine and the Ukraine.
- In partnership with the State of Ohio, we received a grant from the State of Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services. We hosted a conference at Trinity Seminary titled "Building Bridges and the Intersection of Faith and Mental Health.
- We began planning with the Anti-Racism team an event that will honor the ministry of Dr. Otis Moss, Jr. and initiate a institute focused on non-violence and anti-racism.
- The Executive Director attended the 12th General Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches in Abuja Nigeria.
- The Executive Director and the Associate Director attended the Christian Unity gathering of the National Council of Churches in Nashville, TN. The Executive Director began his term on the Governing Board representing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- The Associate Director attended the National Workshop on Christian Unity in Milwaukee, WI.
- The Executive Director presented during an interfaith forum on white Christian nationalism and was part of a panel discussion on death penalty abolition in Cincinnati.
- Developed a program titled "Pastors and Laity Advocating Nonviolence (PLAN)". This will recruit and equip clergy and laity in OCC member churches (and others) to preach and teach peacemaking and nonviolent conflict resolution.
- The Executive Director is a co-author and participant in the song "Ceasefire" that was developed during the Red Letter Christians retreat at the Alex Haley Farm in Tennessee.

In 2023, United Church Homes (UCH) upheld its commitment to enhancing the lives of older adults across more than 90 communities spanning 15 states and two Native American nations. This mission was pursued through strategic growth initiatives, collaborative partnerships, and the implementation of innovative technology and engagement platforms.

Key Highlights:

- **Radiant Alliance Formation:** The establishment of the Radiant Alliance, a transformative collaboration involving United Church Homes, CareSource, and Ohio's Hospice. This alliance is poised to revolutionize the landscape of healthcare, housing, and services for older adults.
- **The Parkvue Community Expansion:** The Parkvue Community experienced significant expansion with the acquisition of a senior living community on Catawba Island, aptly named The Parkvue Community on Catawba Island.
- **The Hamlet on Darby Inauguration:** The Hamlet on Darby, located in Plain City, opened its doors, welcoming its initial residents. Construction activities are set to conclude later in 2024.
- **UCH Management Portfolio Growth:** UCH Management expanded its portfolio by adding The Northridge in North Ridgeville and Friends Fellowship Community in Richmond, Indiana. In January 2024, UCH Management assumed responsibility for six St. Mary Development Corporation communities in Dayton.
- **Abundant Aging Podcast Launch:** UCH introduced the Abundant Aging podcast series, tailored for older adults and their families. The series garnered more than 400 downloads in 2023.
- **NaviGuide Launch and The Fairhaven Community Divestment:** The Fairhaven Community was divested, and NaviGuide was launched in Upper Sandusky, Ohio. NaviGuide has served more than 304 individuals and is available in all 50 states.
- **Leadership Changes:** Rev. Darla Metz, Chaplain for Community Engagement, offers program and engagement opportunities for residents and staff within UCH's housing communities. Following initiatives of the Parker Center and pastoral care, Darla assists with the UCH Chaplain program and offers engagement opportunities to support local church ministries and congregations.
- **Educational Initiatives:** The Parker Center organized a successful 8th annual symposium, focusing on Dismantling Ageism in Columbus, Ohio. The Center also facilitated Wisdom Conversations: The Power in Ministries for Older Adults, conducting quarterly online meetings for congregations interested in addressing the spiritual needs of their older members. Additionally launched the Abundant Aging Ministry Network (AAMN), a Facebook group to initiate ministry-related conversations.

As we reflect on these accomplishments, UCH expresses gratitude for the opportunity to serve older adults since 1916, with special thanks to the continued support and engagement of UCC churches through NWOA and the Ohio Conference. Together, we look forward to a future marked by continued growth, service, and impact in the lives of older adults.