2007 Collins Lecture to confront the moral challenge of poverty

On Thursday, Oct. 18, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) will present an all day interfair conference focused on poverty. The conference goal is to mobilize the interfair community through education and skill building opportunities, enabling them to better address the complex problems associated with poverty.

Titled “From Despair to Hope: The Interreligious Response to the Crisis of Poverty,” the conference will be comprised of panels, forums and workshops. A lunchtime keynote address will be given by two New Orleans community activists, followed by a discussion about the Katrina disaster as a paradigm for the convergence of despair and hope.

The culmination of the event will be the annual Collins Lecture at 7 p.m., delivered by E.J. Dionne, Jr., syndicated columnist for The Washington Post. Dionne’s column is frequently featured in The Oregonian. The lecture is made possible by a grant from the Collins Foundation.

Both the conference and the Collins Lecture will be hosted by First United Methodist Church, located at 1838 SW Jefferson St. in Portland.

From Despair to Hope: The Interreligious Response to the Crisis of Poverty
A morning interfair panel will kick off the conference. Religious leaders from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions will explore what our religious traditions teach in relationship to matters of material and spiritual poverty in a session called “Interfaith Perspectives on Wealth, Poverty and the Beloved Community.”

A second discussion, “How Shall We Overcome?” will be led by socioeconomic experts working directly with those living in poverty.

During lunch, EMO has invited two New Orleans residents and community leaders to speak. Tanya Harris, head community organizer for the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), and Hulen Brown, a counselor and active member of the Washington Post, will be the featured speaker at the 39th Annual Collins Lecture on Oct. 18.

Faith & recovery: Building community to heal addictions

Each year in September, people in recovery from addictions and their friends and families join with governmental agencies, religious bodies, recovery organizations and treatment centers to raise awareness of addictions recovery and prevention. “The National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month” is coordinated through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). National religious partners include Catholic Charities USA, Celebrate Recovery, General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church, and Volunteers of America.

The purpose of Recovery Month is to make the public aware of the scope of the addiction crisis in this country, to publicize the resources available and to promote the message that recovery is possible. Educating the public reduces the stigma associated with addiction and treatment and highlights the importance of treatment. This year’s theme is “Saving Lives, Saving Dollars.” In 2006, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) began developing an interreligious roundtable to raise awareness about the complexity of addictions and to help congregations work in partnership with other community organizations fighting addiction. Our partner in these efforts is the Johnson Institute’s Rush Center—a nationally recognized organization based in Austin, Texas, whose mission is to “engage and assist people of faith in the development of caring communities that promote prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse.”

The Rush Center’s “Faith Partners Team Ministry Approach” is designed to help organize and empower congregational members with particular experience or interest in the healing process for people with addictions and their affected families. With specialized training, they work as teams to advance healing opportunities within the congregation. St. Henry Catholic Church in Gresham is developing a team ministry with the Rush Center’s assistance, as are Saltwater Unitarian Universalist Church, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Pacific Northwest District Unitarian Universalist, First Congregational United Church of Christ in Salem, and St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church.

Religious communities in Oregon have developed effective recovery ministries and services using other resources. The Rev. Dr. LeRoy Haynes, Jr., senior pastor at Allen Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, has developed the “Resurrection, Prevention, Intervention and Healing” program that works with community members in recovery and their families. E.J. Dionne, Jr., syndicated columnist for The Washington Post, will be the featured speaker at the 39th Annual Collins Lecture on Oct. 18.
The urgent issue of the day is how one understands the idea of truly one holy and apostolic Church. For others, however, this myriad of Christian communions and missions approaches and historical understandings, worship practices, and denominational and church fellowship traditions in over 100 countries throughout the world, making the WCC the most expansive ecumenical body in the world. The WCC membership includes Orthodox churches, churches born out of the Protestant Reformation, and united and independent churches.

This institutional diversity testifies to a wide variety of theological understandings, worship practices, mission approaches and historical realities. Many in the church see the myriad of Christian communions and churches as a blessing and a sign that God’s spirit is alive in the world today. For others, however, this myriad of faith understandings is a symbol of our sinfulness and abandonment from the idea of truly one holy and apostolic church.

The urgent issue of the day is how we live with our differences. All too often, differences and distinctive faith perspectives become the basis for Christian sectarianism that leads to the open (and at times not so open) denigration and complete dismissal of others in the Christian community. With all this diversity, one wonders if we can live “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3). The Vatican’s recent statement reassertion of the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church makes clear the complexities of inter-Christian relations. Commenting on the Vatican statement, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) noted, “We are puzzled by the release of a statement of this kind at this time in the history of the church. At a time of societal fragmentation all over the world, the one church of Jesus Christ in which we all participate ought to strengthen its common witness and affirm our oneness in Christ. The statement released on 10 July … is not good for the mutual trust that is being developed through our bilateral dialogues.”

With all this diversity, one wonders if we can live “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3).

Metropolitan Kirill, who heads the Russian Orthodox Church’s Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, called the statement “honest” and in “full conformity with the spirit of the Vatican statement,” but noted it “does not mean a wish to exclude our church.”

The Orthodox Church is, according to Apostolic Succession, successor and heir to the old, undivided Church. Which is why everything contained in the Catholic document rightfully applies to the Orthodox Church.” Fortunately, these exchanges were among “old friends”—that is, ecumenical partners who conclude, at least at the moment, that the call to ecumenical dialogue and mission trumps the urge to end discussions. However, keeping the dialogue going does not get easier and not all inter-Christian relations are so genial and marked by mutual respect. Sadly, there are too many Christians willing to openly denigrate one another, use the media to castigate those with whom they disagree, and who believe they have a monopoly on truth to the exclusion of all other viewpoints.

Ultimately, this behavior adversely impacts the credibility of and positive interest in the church. In a recent Gallup Poll, only 46 percent of respondents in the United States said they had either a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in the church. These figures are among the lowest for institutionalized religion in the three and a half decades that Gallup has conducted the poll. Peaking at 68 percent in May 1975, the numbers bottomed out at 45 percent in June of 2003 (Religious News Service). Clearly there are other factors that contribute to these perceptions, but our public presence and life together are important factors.

Today, the church is one of the most diverse institutions in the world. The Christian community has much to offer as we attempt to live together in unity, mutual respect and common mission. Sadly, if we do not strengthen our commitment to these ends, I fear that the church may continue to lose its place of influence in the world, and as such, be known by its acrimony, tensions and disagreements and not by the Gospel message of unity, peace, love and patience—timeless principles so desperately needed today.

Upcoming EMO events
For more events, visit EMO’s events page at www.emoregon.org/events.php.

October 2
Green Building & Renovations for Congregations. 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church, 12405 SW Burner Rd., Beaverton. Presented by Oregon Interfaith Power & Light, this workshop will provide practical information on energy-saving congregations in saving money and caring for the Earth as they consider renovation and construction projects at their facility. The cost is $30 per person; includes materials and lunch. To download a registration brochure, go to www.emoregon.org/emo_events.php.

October 18
“From Despair to Hope: The Interreligious Response to the Crisis of Poverty” and “The Collins Lecture” featuring E.J. Dionne. Both events will be held at First United Methodist Church, 1838 SW Jefferson, Portland. See story on page 1 for more information.

November 3 & 17
Energy Stewardship Workshops for Congregations and Community, “Save Your Congregation Energy and Money,” from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., and “Energy Stewardship,” from 1 to 4 p.m. Both workshops will be held on November 3 at Atonement Lutheran Church, 2315 Coast Highway, Newport, Ore., and on November 17 at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 323 Catherine St., Walla Walla, Wash. Presented by Oregon Interfaith Power & Light, a project of EMO, pre-registration is recommended no later than one week before the workshops; however, registration will be accepted at the door. The cost for each workshop is $20 per person or $35 per person for both workshops. Lunch is available at a suggested donation of $8. To download a registration brochure, go to www.emoregon.org/emo_events.php.

November 29
Save the date: Join EMO supporters past and present at a celebration of Executive Director David Leslie’s tenth anniversary at EMO. The event will be held in the evening at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland. More information to come!
“Everyone Eats!” leaders want to know:
How can fresh, healthy food be available for all?

“I’ve been shocked to find out how many people are going hungry in my neighborhood.”
— Leadership Team Member from north Portland

Six diverse, low-income residents of north and northeast Portland have recently begun visiting food pantries, churches, grocery stores and their streets to ask neighbors some important questions. Named the “Everyone Eats” Leadership Team, this group uses a survey they helped develop to conduct one-on-one interviews to learn about the challenges low-income people face in getting enough healthy food for their families. “Everyone Eats!” is a project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s (EMO) Interfaith Food & Farm Partnership.

As north and northeast Portland neighborhoods experience rapid gentrification, low-income residents are the most deeply affected. New high-end restaurants in these neighborhoods read as signs of economic prosperity, but they overshadow the fact that neighbors are going hungry. A related EMO project—the Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP), located at NE 19th and Killingsworth—has served residents of northeast Portland and beyond for over 25 years. NEFP will soon relocate to the Cully neighborhood, fulfilling developing needs there. (See related story on page 4.)

The “Everyone Eats” Leadership Team and NEFP will work as partners to collect at least 200 surveys this summer and conduct three focus groups in English, Spanish and Russian. In mid-October, a forum will follow to inform the community of the results and invite them to participate in choosing projects to be pursued that will help get more fresh and healthy food to low-income neighbors.

The long-term goal of the project is to empower residents of inner northeast and north Portland to create a secure and sustainable local food system with nutritious, culturally-appropriate food for all. Already, the team has made some surprising discoveries. One member of the Leadership Team shared, “When I asked some folks how they get by at the end of the month, they told me, ‘We just don’t eat.’”

Landmark climate and energy bills pass: Faith community provides moral voice

The Oregon Interfaith Global Warming Campaign played a key role in educating and mobilizing Oregon’s faith community for key state-level energy and climate policies. In May, the Renewable Energy Standard Act, SB 838, passed. It calls for 25 percent of utilities’ electricity to come from clean and renewable sources by 2025. At the end of the session, House Bill 3543, the Climate Change Integration Act passed, committing Oregon to achieving greenhouse gas reductions of at least 75 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. For a full legislative wrap up, go to www.emoregon.org/earth_concerns.php.

ShopIPL.org

New Web site provides congregations with education and discounts on energy efficient and water saving products

Oregon Interfaith Power & Light is one of 23 state “IPL” (Interfaith Power & Light) organizations that are collaborating to bring energy efficiency and emissions reductions to congregations across the country through ShopIPL.org—the new online energy-efficiency store for congregations and their members. It is an especially good resource for consumers who are new to the idea of energy efficiency. The site includes detailed descriptions of products and explains how they save energy and water. It also calculates the greenhouse gases saved from the purchase of energy efficiency products. Congregations and their members who purchase from the site can receive a 10 percent discount. Just enter the discount code “Shop IPL” when you sign up. A portion of the proceeds from ShopIPL.org support Oregon Interfaith Power & Light’s education programs.

For more information, go to www.emoregon.org/power_light.php or call (503) 221-1054, ext. 214.

AmeriCorps members contribute to Interfaith Food and Farm Partnership

Volunteers are a key part of Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns projects. This is especially the case for Interfaith Food and Farm Partnership (IFFP). We are fortunate to have two very talented LINKS AmeriCorps Members serving in Portland. The following is a little bit about them.

Jocelyn Furbush, master’s student at Portland State University in Non-profit Management

When I first heard about the Interfaith Food and Farm Partnership of EMO in late 2005, I was incredibly excited. Its mission ties together two of the things I care about most: the livelihood of farmers and farmworkers, and access to healthy food for low-income people. I had been involved with sustainable food systems work for several years, including farmworker organizing and food security projects, and I found that these two communities had little connection with each other. By working to connect new and immigrant farmers with congregations that are concerned about food security, IFFP has a great potential to bridge this gap.

I called EMO, learned that IFFP was hosting a community food assessment training for north/northeast Portland and got involved! I helped out a bit over the summer, and I started my term as a LINKS AmeriCorps Member in November 2006. My role as the coordinator of the north/northeast food assessment has been to organize and support low-income neighbors in coming together to learn about food issues and make decisions. We’ve invested time in building relationships, and I have learned a lot about working with diverse groups.

I also work part-time as the marketing manager at the Alberta Cooperative Grocery in northeast Portland. It’s a great group of folks who run the shop and are a leader in nonprofit management. I am also now a part of the Interfaith Food & Farm Partnership leadership team, and was recently elected to the board of the Oregon Food Bank. I am excited to be part of the farmers, food security and farming movement in Oregon.

Sabrina Kosak, degree in Environmental Anthropology

In June, I began working with the IFFP program. I will be working on a variety of projects. Most of my work is assisting Jocelyn Furbush with the north/northeast community food assessment and helping establish, support and evaluate new farm stands being hosted by various congregations throughout Portland.

I grew up in southeast Portland, but my first farming exposure was in New York. I interned at Hawthorn Valley, a 450-acre farm that included not only a diverse variety of produce but a small dairy herd and pasture-raised beef. I worked at the Union Square farmers market in New York City and saw how excited people were about fresh, organic meats and cheeses and fresh veggies, all of which had come from less than 100 miles away.

It’s exciting to be working with EMO on issues of food security and furthering my commitment and support of local farmers, while also ensuring greater food access for low-income families.
Luther Memorial Lutheran Church and EMO’s Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP) have formally agreed to work towards a combined food and clothing program called “Northeast Emergency Food at Luther Memorial.” Located at the corner of NE 72nd and Wygant in the Cully neighborhood, Luther Memorial has had its basement empty since the closing of a preschool over a year ago. As previously reported, NEFP has lost its lease because Redeemer Lutheran Church sold the food house building, land and parking lot to a housing developer.

“While the move is challenging, locating NEFP in the Cully neighborhood provides a unique opportunity for us to serve people living in an area of Portland with great need and to partner with a congregation engaged in community ministry,” said David Leslie, EMO executive director. “We are grateful for the support that Redeemer Lutheran has provided to NEFP and look forward to developing new ministry opportunities.”

The expanded program has many new features. The food program will offer a shopping-style pantry, allowing people to “shop” for groceries according to their family size. This approach will enhance the experience for food recipients and reduce waste or returns, allowing people to get food they like and better fit their needs and preferences.

The clothing program will be new for NEFP and allow expansion of the current Luther Memorial program. John Elizalde, NEFP program manager, hopes to use the kitchen for cooking classes to help food box recipients learn about tasty ways to prepare foods available at the program. “We’ll need trained volunteers for this work, but it sure seems like a great opportunity,” Elizalde said.

The space available could provide a social services resource and referral area, where people could use the Internet to access social services, or at least find out what services are available and how to gain access. “There are just lots of possibilities, and we are very lucky to have this opportunity to expand our offerings to people,” commented Elizalde.

The new location is over 50 blocks away from the historic NEFP neighborhood. There are plans in the works to purchase a van and make shuttle runs into inner northeast Portland to continue to serve people in the current service area. Not surprisingly, most people currently coming to NEFP live nearby and would be greatly inconvenienced by the new location. The van would allow for transportation back and forth as a means to mitigate the distance issues.

Even as plans move ahead for a grand opening this fall, fundraising is underway. Your financial support will be critical to this expansion. NEFP needs financial help to purchase services and materials necessary to prepare the Luther Memorial basement for its new uses, labor to help with construction and additional volunteer support for our operations.

A new day is dawning—lend a hand and get on board. Call NEFP at (503) 284-5470 or send donations to NEFP, 1912 NE Killingsworth, Portland, OR 97211. To receive updates about the move or volunteer opportunities, send your e-mail address to nefp@emoregon.org.

Faith & recovery

Continued from page 1

Support Group for Drug Abuse. “Pastor Tim Baker at Bethany Baptist Church in Salem uses the “Celebrate Recovery” ministry, which engages the entire congregation in applying Biblical principles to address ‘addictive, compulsive and dysfunctional behaviors.’ The Episcopal Diocese of Oregon’s Recovery Commission helps Episcopal parishes develop their own recovery commissions, educate parishioners about addictions and their impact, and promote liturgically-focused events like “Recovery Sunday.”

Faith community can be an oasis of healing

Despite these advances, we are aware that in many communities of faith addictions are still a taboo subject. Often congregational members and clergy struggle with their own addictions or those of family and friends, and find congregational resources lacking. Pastoral staff and lay leaders may not have adequate information about the medical aspects of addiction or about the continuum of recovery resources in their community. Those struggling with the disease may be reluctant to approach their religious leaders for help, and addictions may even lead them to leave their faith communities. Yet, as many in the recovery community will testify, an educated, supported and connected community of faith can be an oasis of healing and a key part of the circles of support needed for recovery.

Building connections between the faith community and the recovery community are critical in meeting this growing spiritual and public health challenge. This is why EMO is promoting Recovery Month in September. “Recovery Month gives us a timely opportunity to raise awareness in communities of faith in cooperation with the efforts of the broader community,” said David Dean, EMO executive director.

In the greater Portland-Vancouver area, “Hands Across the Bridge” is one of the most visible Recovery Month events. Organized by the Recovery Association Project (RAP), this annual event brings people from Oregon and Washington to publicly celebrate freedom from addiction and building a stronger healthier community.

Wayne Kline, Oregon Recovery Homes program manager, explains “On Labor Day, Sept. 3, we will gather people from Washington and Oregon who will literally join hands across the Columbia River on the Interstate 5 Bridge to show that recovery is real and communities heal.” Opening ceremonies will be at 10 a.m. in Washington and Oregon, and at noon participants will join hands in a chain of support across the bridge. An estimated 1,500 people in recovery and their family members and friends will participate, along with representatives from businesses, faith communities and Native American tribes.

Throughout the state, Recovery Month also provides an opportunity for the Alcohol Drug Prevention Community Coalitions in Oregon to highlight community-based efforts to prevent youth drug and alcohol usage, as well as promoting broader addiction prevention. Community Coalitions bring together people from education, youth services, religion, prevention and treatment fields. There are Community Coalitions in rural and urban communities throughout the state. Planned events include the No Meth—Not in My Neighborhood-sponsored “Recovery Rocks II” on Sept. 15 at Salem’s Riverfront Park, and the “Treasure Valley Recovery Celebration” on Sept. 8 in Caldwell, Idaho, near Ontario, Ore.

The financial, physical and spiritual costs associated with drug use, alcohol abuse and other addictions are increasing in Oregon. It is essential for the faith community to increase our awareness of the problem and to act as a supportive force to address the costs of addictions and support people in recovery. “It is important that faith communities realize the importance of this unique ministry opportunity,” Leslie notes. “While some denominations and congregations have made a concerted effort to develop prevention and recovery ministries and to connect to community resources, many have not.” National Recovery Month is an excellent time for faith communities to both celebrate the successes and commitments already being made and to initiate new or expanded ministries, educational opportunities and liturgical opportunities, such as a recovery Sabbath.

“The need is great and impacts every one of us,” says Leslie. “The ecumenical community is being called to develop congregations full of hope, healing and understanding, so that all of God’s people can live a life fully, with better health and life full of new possibilities.”

Resources


Allen Temple Christian Methodist Church— Resurrection, Prevention, Intervention and Support Group for Drug Abuse Program (503) 287-0261

Bethany Baptist Church—Celebrate Recovery (503) 362-2488; www.bethanybaptistchurch.com

Episcopal Diocese of Oregon Recovery Commission jleach@cparish.org; www.diocese-oregon.org/programgroups/recovery.htm

Gambling Hotline (800) 233-8479

Oregon Department of Human Services— Addictions and Mental Health Services (503) 945-5763; www.oregon.gov/DHS/addiction/index.shtml

Oregon Partnership (503) 244-5211 or (800) 282-7035; info@orp partnership.org; www.orpartnership.org

Recovery Association Project (503) 493-9211; www.rap-nw.org/frist.html

Rush Center at the Johnson Institute (888) 451-9527; www.rushcenter.org
In 1990, Dionne joined the best in two decades. His op-ed column for The Washington Post was syndicated to more than 100 other newspapers, including The Oregonian. His best-selling book, Why Americans Hate Politics (Simon & Schuster), was published in 1993. The book, which Nowaday called "a classic in American political history," won The Los Angeles Times book prize and was a National Book Award nominee.


Ticket prices are as follows: $30 for the conference on poverty, "From Despair to Hope," which includes continental breakfast and lunch; $10 for the Collins Lecture with E.J. Dionne, Jr.; or $40 for both events. Students with ID are half price.

For more information or to purchase tickets, call Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon at (503) 221-1054 or check our Web site at www.emoregon.org.

Collins Lecture

Continued from page 1 of the United Church of Christ, will share their personal stories of loss and hope as they work to rebuild their communities after Katrina. A longtime activist, Harris was featured in Spike Lee’s film, “When the Levees Broke,” and was the first on her black block to build her home in the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans.

Brown and her husband, a UCC minister, fled their New Orleans home two days before Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast. She has used her training as a professional facilitator to help evacuees work through their grief and assist communities in rebuilding. Many Orangonians have gone to New Orleans and other Gulf Coast areas hit by the hurricane in order to work on the Katrina-damaged sites. This discussion will provide an opportunity to bring to light the quandary that exists as we seek to understand what has unfolded in Louisiana in the aftermath of the hurricane and what it says about our understanding of poverty, race, class and the challenges of rebuilding community.

An afternoon series of workshops will provide participants with training and lift up the success stories of people who work in poverty alleviation. Two key areas of attention include training individuals and congregations to enhance skill development and an examination of underserved populations living in poverty. Workshop leadership will be provided by organizations such as the Interfaith Health Ministries Network of Oregon, Oregon Faith Roundtable Against Hunger and the Oregon Jubilee Network.

E.J. Dionne, Jr.

In addition to his work with The Washington Post, evening keynote speaker E.J. Dionne, Jr. is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and professor of the Foundations of Democracy and Citizenship at Georgetown University. He has spent 14 years with The New York Times, reporting on the operations of the European Union and local and national governments, as well as assignments in Paris, Rome and Beirut. The Los Angeles Times praised his coverage of the Vatican as the best in two decades.

In 1990, Dionne joined The Washington Post as a reporter, covering national politics. He began his op-ed column for The Washington Post in 1993, which is now syndicated to more than 100 other newspapers, including The Oregonian. His best-selling book, Why Americans Hate Politics (Simon & Schuster), was published in 1993. The book, which Nowaday called “a classic in American political history,” won The Los Angeles Times book prize and was a National Book Award nominee.


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Individuals needed to provide therapeutic foster care

During 2004-2006, 16,978 children entered foster care in Oregon. In 2007, that number continues to swell. The need for new foster parents to work with these children is very real.

Trillium Family Services provides training in Therapeutic Foster Care to enable caring, committed individuals to make a real difference in the lives of the neediest of these children—the faces behind the statistics. Trillium Family Services also provides significant compensation, allowing foster parents to make this important investment without being burdened financially. Just as importantly, the training and support system they provide are designed to give confidence and paved the way for success in this critical endeavor of love.

If you are at least 21 years of age and have room in your heart and your home, Trillium Family Services can take care of the rest. Please help meet this need. Contact: Steve Strombom, (503) 813-7742, astrombom@trilliumfamily.org; MJ Driscoll, (503) 813-7774, mjd@trilliumfamily.org.

HIV Day Center celebrates 18 years of service

Over 130 supporters gathered on June 6 at EMO’s HIV Day Center to celebrate the center’s 18th Anniversary. Oregon State Representative Chip Shields joined founders Rev. Dr. Rodney Pape and Dr. Mark Loveless and several Day Center clients to speak about what the center means to the people of the state. The event raised more than $5,000, matching a $5,000 challenge gift from Mr. Barney Pia. The event included food, music and a chance to meet with many Day Center clients who joined the celebration.

This year has been a critical time for the Day Center and its Daily Bread Express meal delivery service. Once a respite center for people dying of AIDS, the Day Center has changed with the circumstances of HIV, to a multi-service organization providing dozens of critical benefits for low income individuals living with HIV disease.

Client numbers are at all time high—30 or 40 clients visit each day, and there were more than 7,000 visits in 2006. While services continue to expand in response to increasing needs, government support for the program has been cut back sharply due to decreased Ryan White grants to the Portland area and changes in the reauthorized Care Act.

For the Day Center to continue to help the increasing numbers of low income people living with HIV in the Portland area, direct individual support is vital. It is easy to make a donation to the Day Center—just go to www.emoregon.org, click on the “donation” button and choose HIV Day Center as the program that you wish to support. Any donation is welcome. An ongoing monthly pledge of $23 will purchase a monthly bus pass for one of our very low income clients.

Please feel free to call Leocen Berman, HIV Services program manager, at (503) 460-3822 with any questions or comments, or to arrange a visit to the Day Center.

Mara Steen, HIV Day Center staff, chats with Penny Mazzoni, speaker at the event and Day Center client.
Faith community celebrates several victories in 2007 Session of the Oregon Legislature

Key victories in areas of predatory lending, human services, health care and civil rights marked the 2007 Session of the Oregon Legislature. The Legislature also expanded funding for education, set up a rainy day fund for periods of economic downturn and passed several important environmental bills.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) took the lead on organizing the largest ever Interfaith Advocacy Day, which brought over 300 members of many faith communities to Salem to lobby their legislators for programs to reduce hunger, provide affordable housing and expand health care access to all. Jenny Holmes, who heads up EMO’s Environmental Ministries programs, organized a very successful Interfaith Environmental Advocacy Day for the first time.

Perhaps the biggest victory was the passage of several bills to tighten regulation of predatory lending. The most important of these was HB 2871, which imposes a 36 percent APR interest rate cap on short-term loans under $50,000. Another important achievement for low-income families was the passage of HB 2149, a bill that greatly improved the state’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The Oregon Food Bank Network appropriation was increased by $1.2 million to a total of $2 million per biennium. The new funds will support capacity building for increased local support in rural areas of the state.

A number of faith communities, including the Community of Welcoming Congregations, led efforts to increase the passage of SB 2, the anti-discrimination measure, and HB 2007, which established domestic partnerships for committed gay and lesbian couples under Oregon law. Opponents are gathering signatures on referendum petitions in an effort to overturn these laws at the ballot box in the November 2008 election.

The 2007 Legislature also took important, though partial steps to expand health care coverage for children, to move toward universal health care coverage in Oregon by passing SB 329, and to strengthen the Earned Income Tax credit.

**Battle for health care access will continue**

When it came to passage of the governor’s highest priority, the Healthy Kids Program, the Legislature could not gain sufficient votes to pass the expansion of health insurance called for by the program. In the end, the Legislature could only vote to refer the tobacco tax increase to voters in a special November 2007 election, where it will appear on the ballot as Measure 50. A companion measure that enacts the policy changes required by the Healthy Kids program was enacted by the Legislature, but it will only take effect if Measure 50 is supported by voters. Passage of Measure 50 is not only important in its own right but is critical to building momentum for broader health care reform in Oregon as well. EMO will be very involved in supporting Measure 50 this fall.

The passage of SB 329 establishes a process for moving toward affordable health care coverage for all Oregonians. It sets up a seven-member Oregon Health Fund Board (OHFB) that will oversee the development of a comprehensive plan for health care reform in Oregon, and it provides guidance and resources for that board as it undertakes that work. A final proposed plan must be completed by Oct. 1, 2008, which must then be considered and acted on in the 2009 Session of the Legislature.

Key issues that the OHFB must address include how to finance the expansion of health care coverage to all Oregonians, what the basic benefit plan will look like, and how to create a more efficient and effective health care delivery system. The development of the comprehensive plan will include a series of public hearings. EMO expects to be quite involved in this process, and will be reaching out to the faith community throughout Oregon to ensure that the faith community is actively involved in shaping the health care system in Oregon.

**Partial victories on Earned Income Tax Credit, human services funding**

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon had two goals with regard to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) this session. The first was to double the value of the credit, so that most working families living below poverty would no longer have to pay state income taxes in Oregon. The second was to make the tax credit permanently refundable. In the end, the Legislature made the credit permanently refundable but failed to increase the value of the tax credit. Advocates for low-income Oregonians have pledged to continue to advocate on this issue.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon also worked hard for funding for health and human services programs in the closing weeks of the session. Several weeks before the end of the session, advocates for human services funding had identified some $166 million in additional funding that was needed for programs such as Alcohol and Addiction Services, Employment Related Day Care, Community Mental Health, Oregon Project Independence and the Oregon Health Plan (Standard). An intensive lobbying and media outreach effort ensued. The Oregonian ran an op-ed piece jointly authored by David Leslie, EMO executive director, and Robin Christian, Children First for Oregon executive director. In the end, there was an increase of funding for human service programs of approximately $60 million.

**Biggest disappointments**

There were several disappointments. Unfortunately, new funding for affordable housing did not fare as well as was projected early in the session. Although advocates did win some $26 million in new funding for affordable housing programs, the biggest piece of their agenda was defeated. HB 3551 was designed to secure a dedicated stream of funding for affordable housing programs by increasing the Document Recording Fee by $15. House leaders were unable to secure the necessary 3/5 vote to pass this revenue increase as required by the Oregon Constitution.

Another disappointment was the defeat of HB 2575. This bill would have helped working families take advantage of Oregon’s Family Leave Law by setting up a paid family leave benefits pool—so that workers could afford to take time off to be with a newborn child or care for a sick or dying family member, and receive up to $250 per week for up to six weeks during this leave time. Despite some business opposition, the bill passed the House of Representatives on a 31-28 vote. However, when it came to a vote in the Senate, with two days remaining in the session, it failed on a 13-16 vote.

A bill to restore General Assistance (HB 3139) for disabled Oregonians was defeated, as was a bill introduced by Rep. Dave Hunt to expand workplace religious freedom. This bill, HB 3599, would have expanded protections for employees who wished to wear religious apparel in the workplace, or take available vacation or leave time for religious holidays or observances.

“In the end, the Oregon Legislative Session was a big step in the right direction but left much important work to do,” said Kevin Finney, director of EMO’s Public Policy Advocacy. “Our advocacy efforts will need to grow in the months ahead if we are to secure quality health care for all Oregonians, expand tax relief and affordable housing for Oregonians living in poverty, and continue to defend civil rights and religious freedom.”

For further information, contact Kevin Finney at (503) 241-0545, ext. 204, or kfinney@emoregon.org.

**Canos takes the lead at Oregon Farm Worker Ministry**

In May, Andrea Cano became the new executive director of the Oregon Farm Worker Ministry (OFWM), a 22-year old organization dedicated to seeking and assuring just earnings, working conditions and housing for the seasonal, migrant and permanent workers in the state’s ever-expanding agricultural industry.

Born in East Los Angeles, raised in Downey and Anaheim, Calif., Cano left a career as a TV journalist to serve the church in the early 1980s. Her journey of service began with heading ECUMEDIA of the Southern California Ecumenical Council, serving as a communications officer for the Geneva-based World Council of Churches, coming in as the consultant for the Latin American Council of Churches, and director of a bi-national center for lay theological and religious studies in Mexico. She was the national organizer for the Justice and Peace Action Network of the United Church of Christ’s Public Life and Social Policy Office.

Oregon Farm Worker Ministry’s primary mission is to educate faith and justice communities to stand with farm workers in their struggle to organize. An important example of this ministry was the witness and support churches and congregations provided during the development of the recently-signed union contract for 300 farm workers and the management of Threemile Canyon Farms in Boardman, Ore.

“Canos is that essential to do now,” says Cano, “is to assure that AGJobs as well as other related legislation moves forward in Congress, for a win-win situation for the farm workers as well as for the farm owners. Our rich theological heritage, ground us in the oikoumene as we look heavenward in creating a world where everyone belongs.”

Visit www.nfwm.org and click “Oregon” for a wealth of resources—including information about the 2007 Harvest of Justice Table Prayers, this year written in Spanish and English by the farm workers—and opportunities for youth and young adults to get involved in regional and national campaigns.
The New Sanctuary Movement:
Faith communities build on tradition of hospitality for refugees

In the early 1980s, thousands of Central American refugees poured into the United States—being wars, repression and extensive human rights violations by their governments. The U.S. government refused to grant these families and individuals political asylum and legal status in this country and, in fact, was directly implicated in the very wars these refugees were trying to escape. Many of these refugees had participated actively in the liberation theology movement and naturally sought protection from congregations.

Several congregations from different denominations responded positively by offering these refugees hospitality, social services and advocacy support, as well as engaging actively in efforts to change federal immigration policy, which at last was accomplished.

Now, over 25 years later, the New Sanctuary Movement (NSM) is coming together as a coalition of interfaith religious leaders and their participating congregations who feel called to address injustices currently suffered by undocumented immigrants, including workplace discrimination and unjust detentions and deportations. The NSM is also working for just and equitable immigration reform and helping faith communities understand that the challenges immigrants face are important to all in this country.

The Oregon New Sanctuary Movement (ONSM) is an effort supported by religious leaders and many immigrant rights organizations, including the Portland Immigrant Rights Coalition. Congregations like Augustana Lutheran Church and Ainsworth United Church of Christ have declared themselves “Sanctuary Churches” and made the commitment to offer sanctuary and support to immigrant families facing imminent deportation that threatens to tear apart families.

The detention on June 12, 2007, of more than 160 workers employed at the Fresh Del Monte Produce plant in north Portland, and the resulting family stress as a result of this raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), makes clear the basis for the mission of the New Sanctuary Movement congregations.

Since November of last year, the ONSM has been meeting regularly to build the regional movement. Nationwide, there are hundreds of communities of faith that are developing local New Sanctuary Movements.

Oregon New Sanctuary Movement principles and goals include:

• Take a public, moral stand for immigrants’ rights. Engage in education and advocacy, in order to reveal the suffering of immigrant workers and families under current and most proposed legislation.
• Protect immigrants against hate, workplace discrimination and unjust deportation.

For more information on the Oregon NSM, contact portlandsanctuary@gmail.com or call (503) 230-9427; for the National NSM, go to www.newsanctuarymovement.org.

You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.
Deuteronomy 10:19

I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
Matthew 25:35

Extend hospitality to strangers.
Romans 12:13

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.
Hebrews 13:2

The Interfaith Spiritual Center (ISC) celebrates its Tenth Anniversary with an Open House on Sunday, Oct. 21, from 3 to 6 p.m. Last spring, ISC moved into their brand new offices at the Rodney Page Community Ministries Center, located at EMO’s Patton Home.

The Open House will feature a presentation at 3 p.m., “Cultivating Your Spirit: Six Tools for Daily Awakening.” This engaging presentation will be offered by the six spiritual directors of the Interfaith Spiritual Center: Irene Lundquist, Judith McGowan, Gretchen Meyer, Eanie Schroeder, Oralee Stiles and Pam Wood. A reception follows at 4 p.m. with delicious food and a drawing for a free spiritual director for a day.

Created in 1997 through the vision of St. Cecelia Ranger, ISP is committed to facilitating spiritual growth and well-being within and among individuals, organizations and spiritual traditions. The spiritual directors welcome all for spiritual direction, meditation, and in creating and presiding at personalized ceremonies for life affirming events such as weddings, home blessings and memorial services. The ISC staff also designs retreats, classes and workshops to enhance the spiritual life, including practices from the world’s major spiritual traditions. Recent offerings have included: Introduction to Dream Work, The Sacred Labyrinth, Engaged Eco-spirituality in a Troubled World, Inspired Writing (women’s support group), Sacred Knitting Circles and Wild Communion-Blue Moon in June, a night hike.

Please celebrate with the ISC on Oct. 21 at the newly renovated third floor office suites in the Patton Home, located at 4619 N. Michigan Ave. (*entrance on the side of the building on Going St.), in Portland. For information about the Open House or to inquire about spiritual direction, you may call (503) 233-2026, e-mail isc@spiritone.com or visit www.InterfaithSpiritualCenter.com.

Marylhurst University offers a Doctor of Ministry degree

While there is a depth of mystery and humility in faith, San Francisco Theological Seminary’s Doctor of Ministry program at Marylhurst University is designed to give students’ faith a practical application, allowing it to achieve its full meaning as a force for positive change.

Students from all major traditions—Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism or Islam—will learn to apply theology to a concrete pastoral discipline. The convergence of clergy and lay pastors from many faiths provides students with opportunities for networking and support. Doctor of Ministry graduates leave with greater career potential and a deeper appreciation for the many connections among faith, community and personal goals.

For more information, contact the Marylhurst University Religious Studies Graduate Department at (503) 699-6246. Master of Divinity degree is also available.

Festival of Faith 2007

The Interfaith Council of Greater Portland will present the Festival of Faith 2007—Learn, understand, inspire, act. The festival will be held on Sept. 9, from 1 to 6 p.m. at Portland State University, Smith Student Center, Ballroom and classrooms. This year’s festival will feature display tables by different faiths, mayor’s proclamation, question and answer sessions, entertainment and great food available for purchase and include workshops related to major faiths. The keynote speaker will be Imam Toure. An interfaith panel will conclude the day with a discussion on the different religious perspectives on interfaith relations.

For more information, visit www.sfcp.org.

“From Conquest to Community, From Violence to Reversen”

On Oct. 8, participate in the National Council of Churches (NCC) sponsored “interfaith fast” to end the war in Iraq. The NCC is calling on all Americans to join in fasting from dawn to dusk in solidarity for ending the violence in Iraq and throughout the world. The fast seeks to join the Muslim community, fasting during this time period for Ramadan. The fall is also the convergence of many faith traditions who share a season of sacred self-transformation. This holy season includes Ramadan, the High Holy Days and Sukkot in Judaism, the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi and Worldwide Communion Sunday in Christianity, and Dariusan/Sangha Day in Buddhism.

Check the National Council of Churches Web site for more information at shabat@ncc.us.org.
Collins Foundation offers matching grant—Double your money now!

The Collins Foundation recently awarded $155,000 for the programs and projects of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO). The grant will support the EMO Annual Fund and the Collins Lectures.

An exciting part of this award is the $70,000 challenge grant for the Annual Fund. The Collins Foundation will match all contributions by new donors and any amount given by previous donors over the amount they gave last year, dollar for dollar, up to the designated amount. The purpose of the challenge grant is to not only raise contributions from individual supporters but also help increase awareness of the ministries and services of EMO. Through the end of July, EMO has raised $33,660 toward the match.

The Collins Foundation was founded in 1947 and provides funding for religious, charitable and educational purposes in the State of Oregon. The Collins Foundation has a rich history of supporting community organizations like EMO. We are blessed to have a collegial partnership with The Collins Foundation in effecting change in the lives of so many Oregonians.

To make a donation or for more information on the challenge grant, please contact Carla Starrett-Bigg, director of Development and Communications, at (503) 221-1054, ext. 275, or csbigg@emoregon.org.

Honor and memorial gifts

Gifts in Honor
January-June 2007

- In honor of all care givers
- John H. Hudson Properties
- In honor of Bob Beane's birthday
- Dan & Janet Blair
- In honor of Lauren Berman
- Keith & Laurie Raines
- Rick & Stephanie Stoller
- In honor of Alena Bonzer
- Madeline B. Moore
- In honor of Don Duntau
- Franklin Wilson
- In honor of Kent Harrop
- Martha E. Van Cleave
- In honor of David Leslie's tenth anniversary at EMO
- First Unitarian Church
- In honor of Ron Louie
- Anonymous Donor
- In honor of Roger M. Melrose
- Sam & Aileen Pobanz
- In honor of Rodney Page
- Sylvia B. Gates
- Donald & Carol Purkey
- In honor of John E. Pitney
- Marina L. McIntire
- In honor of Mike Powers
- Gail S. McDougall
- In honor of Luculli R. Reagan
- William L. Reagan
- In honor of Richard Sintz
- Anonymous Donor
- Bradley J. Applegate
- Pat & Kathy Carpenter
- John Henderson
- Bruce & Janice Prunk
- Fred & Jane Rosenbaum
- In honor of Gregory Takayuki
- Murad & Elena Nuryagdiev

Gifts in Memory
January-June 2007

- In memory of Gordon Anderson
- Rebekah Anderson
- In memory of John T. Conner
- Kathryn H. Conner
- In memory of Berta Delman
- Leonard L. Gardner
- Julia & John Hall
- Catherine C. Kershner
- Steven & Stacy Sarkowski
- Ron Turker & Colleen Naughtin
- In memory of David V. Dobson
- Helma L. Carlson
- In memory of Marsha A. Frey
- George E. Frey
- In memory of Tom Gardner
- NaDyne & Ron Lewis
- In memory of Phyllis A. Knaton
- Mark & Tammy Knaton
- In memory of John Lafrenz
- Joyce & Jack Borgward
- In memory of Duane C. Lemley
- Darleane T. Lemley
- In memory of David Lilly
- Margaret V. Lilly
- In memory of Doreen Margolis
- Alicia A. Morgan
- In memory of Kelly McCoy
- Dennis & Jane Hickman

EMO celebrates recent grants & gifts

EMO's Board and staff extend their appreciation to those who have supported EMO's ministries. The following is a partial list of foundation and community support received by EMO since the Spring 2007 issue of The Voice.

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Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

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www.emoregon.org

MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

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Church of the Brethren • Community of Christ
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon • Episcopal Diocese of Oregon
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Greek Orthodox Church
Presbyterian Church (USA) • Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

United Church of Christ • United Methodist Church
Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches