

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Affordable Housing Hygiene Drive

Supplies Needed to Respond to COVID-19 for Beacon Residents

As part of their commitment to the health and safety of residents in supportive housing facilities, the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative has asked for our help with a hygiene drive to collect supplies to help formerly homeless people protect themselves during this pandemic time. Items will be used at three of Beacon's St. Paul facilities, American House, Kimball Court, and Prior Crossing, that serve adults with long term histories of homelessness, some former residents of the encampments, and young adults ages 17-25.

Items needed include:

- Hand sanitizer: small refillable pump style and/or large bottles for refills
- Disinfectant soap: small refillable pump style and/or large bottles for refills
- Body lotion, disinfectant wipes, paper towels, laundry detergent
- Masks of all types

How to support this drive:

1. If you purchase these items on your essential shopping trips, they can be delivered to the collection bin located outside the Unity Church entrance in the Holly Avenue parking lot.
2. Order supplies online. For a shipping address for online purchases, email LindaFei@aol.com.
3. Make a donation to Unity's Affordable Housing Team. Send a check to Unity Church with "Beacon" in the memo, or Donate online at <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=1aadb6> (select "Other Payment" and put "Beacon" in the comments.

Update from the Sustainable Living Team

Meggie Exner and Jean Hammink, Sustainable Living Team

Though grief and outrage over the murder of George Floyd and the ongoing economic and emotional strain from the pandemic continue, a sense of possibility is also palpable. These recent weeks have seen protesters worldwide rallying together for racial justice and a new vision for community safety. A healthier, safer future seems even more conceivable after watching recent news clips of air pollution reduction as a result of economic disruption. As we continue to make space in our hearts for all of our anger and heartbreak, may we also find ways to use the upheaval of this moment to interrupt systems of oppression and destruction and to live into a future that nurtures all people and creatures.

Amidst these challenging times, the Sustainable Living Team is continuing to meet regularly to address sustainable living and climate justice. Here's what we're working on:

1. With climate justice being a priority for us and in light of the recent killing of George Floyd, we are increasing our awareness of the relationship between climate justice and racial justice in our communities. Watch for resources we'll be sharing with you in the August newsletter.
2. Our summer projects include creating a pollinator garden in the children's garden area and offering the Summer in the Garden program online. Both garden programs offer actual opportunities to work and care for the garden. Contact Anna Newton at asnewton3@gmail.com or Michelle Mecey at michelle@unityunitarian.org.
3. We are working with the thoughts and ideas that 50 of you provided at the Gather for the Earth event this last February to determine the environmental goals of the church for the next several years. In July, we will send out a list of short term actions inspired by your ideas that can be achieved in the next six months. Check the August newsletter or sign up for our bi-weekly e-blast at unitysustainabilityteam@gmail.com for opportunities to get a copy of the Gather for Earth report and to get involved.
4. In August and September we'll be reaching out to you to join us at an October rally to kick off the Unity Environmental and Climate Justice Movement and to take the next steps in using the Gather for the Earth report in developing Unity's long-term Green Sanctuary Plan.

We are excited for the justice work we are creating. We can change this world for the better. Let's all continue to do better, be more just, call out injustice, consume less, burn less, seek the local connections for sustenance on the drive towards the future of life on this planet, our only home. Peace.

Check in from Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary

Nancy Heege, Obama School Ministry Team

Unity's Barack and Michelle Elementary School Outreach Ministry Team recently met with Principal Niceta Thomas and she reported that the school district will share a plan for the coming school year by the end of July. Three possibilities for return include continuing with full distance learning, bringing the students back with social distancing and enhanced safety procedures, or a hybrid arrangement of some sort.

According to new research cited in a June 6 *New York Times* article, many school children in the U.S. will lag behind when school starts again in the fall because they've lost skills during these months away from the classroom. Some may be as much as a year behind. It is more important than ever for Unity Church to find ways to support the scholars at Obama School. If you would like to serve as a volunteer in the classroom or library, contact Karen Abraham at karen2bavol@gmail.com.