



UNITED We Find a WAY to Help People Succeed

United Way and the LCCC's New Partnerships

Ed came into the Lehigh County Conference of Churches office with palpable wariness. On his release from prison over a year ago, he had first lived in a car, then moved into one of the informal encampments of homeless in Allentown. He had been working with our Homeless Supportive Services staff, getting assistance for his medical conditions and his other basic needs. As his situation stabilized, he was told to see Pam, our tenant-based

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rental assistance specialist, for possible housing. He didn't really expect anything to come of it. He was waiting for the "catch."

Even through the qualification process for the housing, Ed never got too excited. The day he was to sign his lease, he sat quietly in our lobby with his few possessions in plastic bags beside him. As they prepared to leave for a walk-through of his new apartment, Pam had to remind him to gather up his possessions, something we never have to do with the homeless. For the first time he smiled and said, "This is enough to make an atheist thank God. I really mean that, I am thanking God for this."

Great story, but what if there were one more success? What if Ed could get a job? Thanks to a recent grant award from United Way, soon folks

like Ed who have been chronically unemployed will have a new opportunity to prepare themselves for re-entry into the working world. The **Transitional Work Development Program** (TWDP) will:

1. Assess interest and basic job skills; address barriers to employment (month 1).
2. Train the hard-to-employ onsite at the LCCC, teaching workplace culture, interviewing skills, on-the-job skills in the areas of office administration, food service, and custodial services, AND PAY THE TRAINEE so that they gain immediate gratification from their efforts (months 2-4).
3. Place the trainee in a real job in a real company, one of the LCCC's many partners, in the areas of food service, custodial services, and office administration. The company gains the benefit of an LCCC support coach to mentor their new employee (months 5-9) and the LCCC gains the satisfaction of helping formerly unemployed people succeed!

The United Way considers this one of their WOW! programs, meaning: "Wow, look at what out-of-the-box thinking may be able to accomplish with a little seed money!" We think it plugs a hole in our Continuum of Care to help people succeed. We can help people get food, housing, medical and emotional care, but we had to say "you're on your own" when it came to finding a job. Now we can

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Mission Statement

Responding to the call of Jesus Christ, the mission of the Lehigh County Conference of Churches is to unite communities of faith as ecumenical partners. Putting our faith into action, we minister to and advocate for those in need and encourage all to reach their full potential.

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Vision Statement

Lehigh County Conference of Churches...Striving to be the face, feet, hands and heart of God's grace in the Lehigh Valley. Leading the faith community in feeding, clothing, healing, housing and uniting God's children.

534 Chew Street
Allentown, PA 18102
(610)433-6421
(610)439-8039 (fax)
lccc@lccconfchurch.org

Rev. Dr. Christine L. Nelson
Executive Director
cnelson@lccconfchurch.org

Ira Faro
Development Director
ifaro@lccconfchurch

CAMPBELL LECTURES ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

Dr. John Perkins Brings Message of Reconciliation and Hope

“Where there was despair, there is now hope. Where there was oppression, there is now opportunity. Where there was defeat, there is now purpose. And where there was weakness, there is now strength – a strength that comes only from God.”

Dr. John Perkins
Let Justice Roll Down

Can't we all just get along? This question was made famous after rioting wreaked havoc in the city of Los Angeles. On March 11th, from 4-9 PM, the LCCC Campbell Lectures on Christian Unity at DeSales University will feature internationally

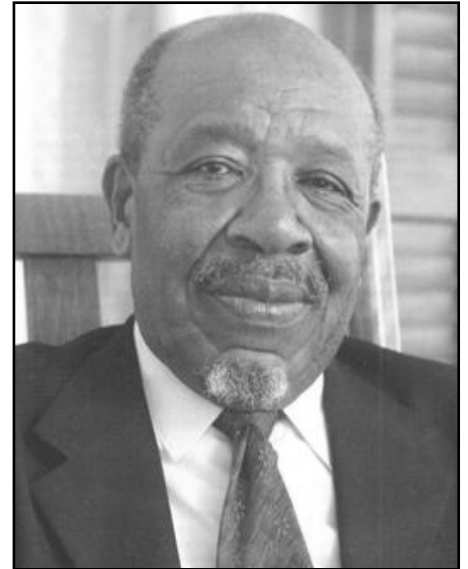
Dr. Perkins will conduct a more interactive lecture accompanied by round table discussions on reconciliation and unity. He is also the author of *Let Justice Roll Down*, a memoir that teaches the true meaning of Christianity and racial reconciliation.

known community development expert Dr. John Perkins.

Hailing from Jackson, Mississippi, where he has spent more than 40 years ministering to the poor, Dr. Perkins travels across the world calling communities to work together for good in the name of Christ. His attributes include innovative work in race relations and ecumenical networking.

Dr. Perkins is scheduled to make two presentations. The evening will open with “A Model of Wholistic Christian Community Development,” a movement that Dr. Perkins has helped to pioneer. Following the lecture, a light dinner will be available. The renowned DeSales Chorale will be featured at an ecumenical worship service along with local gospel recording artist Bernice Green of Allentown.

Dr. Perkins' second lecture is entitled “When the Foundation is Being Destroyed, What Can the Righteous



Do?” (Psalm 11). Ending the day will be roundtable dialogues to discuss how churches and organizations can work together for positive change in the community.

Registration information can be accessed at www.lcconfchurch.org or you can register by contacting the Conference office at 610-433-6421 or emailing lccc@lcconfchurch.org.

United Way, Cont'd

support them all the way to true self-sufficiency!

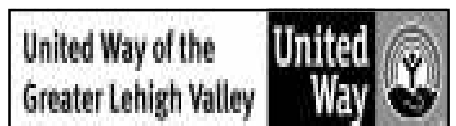
We are also grateful that the United Way deems our Aspires Mentoring Program worthy of expansion. They are giving us the means to move to a full time Assistant which will enable our work with Communities in Schools to double the number of young people we mentor to high

school graduation, preparing the future workforce today!

Finally, we are appreciative for United Way's continuing support of the Daybreak Drop-in Center for persons with mental health concerns. Without such safety net services, so many more people would be living on the streets. Instead, our Daybreak members find the confidence and

support to develop themselves far beyond what they had ever thought possible. They teach us the true meaning of success:

You have succeeded in life when all you really want is only what you need.





CHAT ROOM

Conversations with People Making a Difference

We chatted with **Daybreak Director Christine Morrison** about her first six months on the job.

Q. Have there been any surprises as you've settled into your new position?

A. I've been surprised and impressed with the depth to which Daybreak members are invested in the program and the eagerness of Daybreak members to learn and grow. Attendance at life skills, self-esteem and self-empowerment classes has been increasing steadily. So has volunteerism. The more responsibility we ask members to accept, the more eager they are to become involved.

Q. What do you see on the horizon for Daybreak in the coming year?

A. We're going to use our kitchen facilities more intensively, and not only to provide cooking and nutrition classes for members. Food service training will be an important part of the new transitional work program that United Way will help fund. And we're also looking forward to spring when Daybreak will help create a community garden on Alliance Hall grounds.

Q. It sounds like you'll be very busy.

A. Never a dull moment. But our great staff, our dedicated volunteers and, of course, our Daybreak members make it all so very rewarding.

Charles Gilbert is a retired social worker with 35 years of experience in psychiatry and mental health. He volunteered to participate in the Point In Time Survey of the chronic homeless on the night of January 24th.

Q. Why did you volunteer to spend a frigid night outdoors among the chronic homeless?

A. Over my years in the mental health field, I've had a lot of experience meeting with homeless men and women on my turf. This was an opportunity to meet them on theirs. It shattered some of the stereotypes.

Q. How so?

A. While the people that we met had certainly made poor choices and were depressed, they weren't psychotic or demented. They had hopes and dreams for a better life just like the rest of us.

Q. Do you think that's possible?

A. I was impressed with the way that your case managers had obviously built up a relationship with the people that we met. Developing that relationship over time will lead to a difference in their lives.

Q. Has this experience made a difference in your life?

A. I've been talking about it with my friends for days, encouraging them to get involved. I really appreciate that I had the opportunity to do this.

How You Can Help



Gain a Tax Advantage

Did you know that you can name the Conference of Churches as beneficiary of your IRA? Doing so may ease your estate tax burden. More importantly, planning your gift to the Conference is a statement of your faith that will serve the community through the years. For information, contact Rev. Nelson or Development Director Ira Faro at (610) 433-6421.

Visit our Website at:
www.lcconfchurch.org

And click the **"Donate Now"** button to contribute online.

Donations may be made as a one-time gift or monthly.

The Lehigh County Conference of Churches
534 Chew Street
Allentown, PA 18102

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Events

Campbell Lectures on Christian Unity

Tuesday, March 11, 2008, at DeSales University, Station Ave., Center Valley, PA. Welcome and Registration at 4pm; Lecture I begins at 4:15 pm. Dinner will follow presentations. Lecture II starts at 7:45. The Rev. Dr. John Perkins, speaker, is the founder of Voice of Calvary Ministries and the John M. Perkins Foundation for Reconciliation & Development. Deadline for registration is February 29, 2008.

Noontime Lenten Service

Wednesday, March 19, 2008, 11:55 am at Zion Reformed UCC on Hamilton St. in Allentown. A lunch is provided afterward for a donation of \$3.50. Dr. William Scott, speaker, is the Chairman of the African Studies Department at Lehigh University and will provide a meditation on *Beyond Shame*. Dr. Scott will explore the meaning of Christ's last words as declarations of reconciliation and peace. (This is the only remaining Lenten Service for 2008.)

Bread for the World Workshop

Saturday, March 29, 2008, at 1st Presbyterian Church, Cedar Crest Boulevard and Tilghman Street, Allentown. Registration begins at 8:30 AM. Workshop is from 9AM to 3PM. LCCC and Bread For The World will partner to educate congregations as to what they can do to advocate for people who experience hunger and poverty. The workshops will center on conducting an Offering of Letters Campaign, poverty-focused development assistance, Farm Bill reform, and local hunger advocacy initiatives. Workshops are free. All are invited to attend.

Ecumenical Service Award 2008

Nominees for the Ecumenical Service Award are sought. See the LCCC website for the form. Nominations are due April 10.

FOR INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS CALL OR CONTACT US AT
534 Chew Street - Allentown, PA 18102 - (610)433-6421 - (610)439-8039 (fax)
lccc@lccconfchurch.org - www.lccconfchurch.org