

JCCAvoices

Just Communities of Central Arkansas

2nd Plowshares Training in Community Conflict Transformation Set for April

Communities across Arkansas have historically experienced conflict around issues such as economic disparity, race, culture, ethnicity and other divisive matters. In such situations, trusted community leaders are often expected to be able to address community problems constructively as mediators and/or negotiators. However, experience has shown that the credibility of these leaders often needs to be supplemented by the kind of skills that allow mediation to be most effective.

The first of three Arkansas Plowshares Community Conflict Transformation Training workshops was offered late last year, and 30 diverse leaders participated. All who attended felt they would be able to use their new skills in their personal, business, organizational and community interactions.

“I need more training to build my confidence as a mediator, but Plowshares showed me that facilitating conflict transformation is something that anyone can do if he or she is willing to listen and stay focused on the common interests at the heart of the conflict.” - Sharese Kondo

JCCA is sponsoring the second Community Conflict Transformation Training by the Plowshares Institute on Tues. & Wed., April 8 and 9, 2008. Interested individuals from throughout Arkansas are invited to apply. The cost of the two-day workshop is \$50 which includes all training, materials and lunches for both days. The workshop is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day at the Butler Center, Central Arkansas Library, 100 Rock Street, Little Rock.

Continued on page 3 - see Plowshares.

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Important JCCA Events for your Calendar

Thursday, April 3, 6 - 8 p.m.

A Prayer Vigil to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the death of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tuesday & Wednesday, April 8th & 9th, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Plowshares **Community Conflict Transformation** Training.

Tuesday, May 13, 6 - 9 p.m.

45th Annual **Humanitarian Awards Dinner**.

Honorees are UALR Chancellor Dr. Joel Anderson and Little Rock City Manager Bruce Moore. Chairs are Dr. Brad & Debbie Diner.



Sunday - Saturday, Aug. 3 - 9

OurTown for Teens Retreat for high school students.



Sunday, November 2, 3 - 6 p.m.

9th Annual **Walk for CommUNITY**.

**For more information,
phone the JCCA office, 501-372-5129.**

Plowshares continued.

Plowshares Institute has proven to be effective with this program around the globe and was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 in recognition of their work in "conflict transformation."

(www.plowsharesinstitute.org)

The aim of Community Conflict Transformation Training is to develop a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural network of skilled community and city leaders to work proactively to build constructive relationships among individuals and the institutions within their communities. Participants learn and practice skills to build a sustainable process for significant, ongoing face-to-face dialogue among representatives of all constituent groups. They learn to analyze both the causes and development of community conflict, while practicing skills in cross-cultural communication and joint problem solving. The workshop includes training in listening skills, focusing on parties' needs and underlying interests rather than on demands, and conflict transformation. The training is enhanced by demonstrations and by role playing sessions so that participants can practice the skills they are learning.

Only forty can be accommodated during the workshop, and to ensure a diverse group, all participants must be pre-registered. To encourage participation from our growing Latino community, one of the Plowshares facilitators during the April sessions will be Latino. Contact Ruth Shepherd, rshepherd@justcommunities.org, or 501-372-5129 for more information or an application.



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Just Communities of Central Arkansas advances diversity, challenges assumptions and promotes understanding through educational programs and advocacy.

Unitown Participants Continue to Work for Inclusion

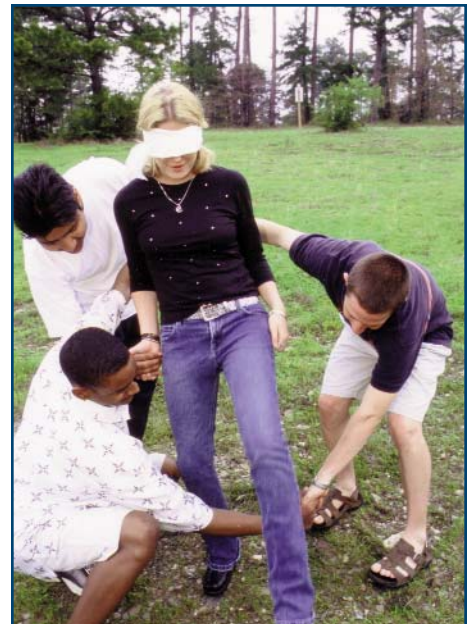
Now in its eighth year, Unitown is offered by JCCA to schools throughout Central Arkansas. Retreats are usually two days, and student leaders are recruited who will take the Unitown message back to their campus.

Specific activities help students explore and understand stereotypes, prejudice, oppression and privilege. Students also consider gender roles and expectations. The final activity of Unitown gives students the

opportunity to write a school action plan for building inclusion and acceptance on their campus.

Unitown program support is provided by Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Little Rock School District, Bank of America Foundation, Flesher Family Foundation, and Second Presbyterian Church.

High Schools who are interested in Unitown should contact Program Director, Tranett Walker, 501-372-5129 or twalker@justcommunities.org.



Students participate in team building activities along with learning how to combat bias and racism in their schools.

Photo by Matt Bradley.



Photos from JCCA programs and events can be viewed on-line.
<http://community.webshots.com/user/shepherd256>