

[Sabeel Continued]

Meaghan has returned to American University in Cairo where she is studying for her Masters in International Human Rights and seeking a Graduate Diploma in Forced Migration and Refugee Studies.

Meaghan has been asked to come back to serve on the program staff at Sabeel next year for the 7th Young Adult Conference in Jerusalem.

Meaghan sends her thanks to her Hinesburg church family, the Champlain Association, and the Vermont Conference for their financial support.

[This article is excerpted from the Sabeel 6th Young Adult Conference Report. To read the entire report go to: <http://tinyurl.com/7a5sssml>]

[Photos courtesy of Meaghan McKenna.]

Mission: 1 Accomplished!

Mission: 1

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Mission:1's goal was four-pronged: to collect more than 1 million food and household items for local food banks; to raise \$111,111 for hunger-related ministries and \$111,111 in online donations for East Africa famine relief; and to advocate for hunger-related causes worldwide by sending more than 11,111 letters to Congress.

By campaign's end, the letters goal had been tripled and the food goal had reached 125 million items. The online tote board used to track accomplishments has been left online so that churches could complete their Mission:1 efforts.

By Wednesday, Nov. 16, monetary donations received for hunger-related ministries had topped \$101,000 and monies for East Africa relief also stood at more than \$101,000. However, tallies of committed funds to the two causes not yet received by the UCC's national offices in Cleveland added up to more

than \$130,000. An updated total will be announced in a few weeks.

During Mission:1, congregations across the United States found new and innovative ways to spread the spirit of the campaign motto, "that they may all be 1" (John 17:21), throughout their local communities.

Across the United Church of Christ, from urban settings to rural communities, local churches expressed thanks for a mission campaign that connected to the denomination and yet stressed the importance of the local community.

Updated tallies are available on the toteboard at: www.ucc.org/tally.html.

[Adapted from an article by Barb Powell posted Nov. 14, 2011 on UCC.org.]

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Send them to: information@vtcucc.org.

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News

Are You Prepared?

At the Champlain Association fall meeting in September, Rev. Barbara Purinton led a session using Laurie Long's *My Life In A Box: A Life Organizer*. The Vermont National Guard Family Readiness Program (from which Barbara recently retired), along with other National Guard programs around the country, has used this book to help families prepare for deployments. This tool is also useful in preparing ahead for the type of emergency recently experienced by many Vermonters.

Consider the following:

- Family emergencies and natural disasters happen when you least expect them.
- Do you have a personal emergency tool box?
- Can you quickly locate your legal, financial and personal documents within minutes and be able to rebuild your life if something happens to your home?
- If you were injured could your family or close friends locate your documents quickly? Does anyone know your end-of-life wishes?
- If the power goes off in your community, do you have enough supplies to shelter in place for 7 days?

My Life In A Box: A Life Organizer can help you say "YES" to those tough questions. Using a simple plan, you will

be able to build an emergency tool box so that everything needed to successfully survive a family emergency or natural disaster will be easily accessible.



Laurie Long is an emergency specialist with ten years of experience as an author and national speaker. She provides a wealth of information relating to surviving natural disasters, terminal illness, family loss and elder issues.

My Life in a Box covers ways to be prepared for any kind of emergency, as well as preparing for funerals and end of life issues. By preparing for any of these events ahead of time, one does not have to try to make decisions at a time when it is hard to cope. The book includes checklists and forms, as well as a website to obtain extra forms, including a 4-month emergency calendar.

Copies of the workbook are available to borrow from the Conference Resource Center (resource.center@vtcucc.org).

If you are interested in offering the training to your church, please contact Barbara (barbara.purinton@gmail.com).

[Thanks to Rev. Barbara Purinton for letting us know about this valuable tool.]

Sabeel (Jerusalem) 6th Young Adult Conference

This Conference, hosted by Global Ministries and the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center (part of an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians), and a Global Ministries partner, focused on the theme: *Christianity in the East, Islam in the West: Prophetic Voices from Palestine/Israel*. In July 2011 after many months of planning, fundraising, and publicity, fifty-five young adults from twelve different countries arrived in Jerusalem. **The group included Meaghan McKenna, a young adult member of the United Church of Hinesburg.** Gathering from near and far, they congregated as a Christian community of faith to bear witness to the truth of the situation of Jews, Christians and Muslims alike in the Holy land.

The first few days were filled with adjustment to the hard truths of life under occupation. The beauty of the holy sites of Jerusalem were shown in stark contrast with the fragmentation of Palestinian communities; communities which are constantly being torn apart by the separation wall, being devastated by the demolition of houses, being suffocated by military checkpoints that stifle freedom of movement in the Palestinian territories.



Checkpoint

All of this they bore witness to, while also receiving briefings detailing the humanitarian crisis caused by the siege of Gaza and the West Bank, and the inability of the international community to take action without Israel's consent.

However, through daily devotions, nightly debriefing sessions led by conference leaders in small groups, and the building of fellowship through shared meals and cultural activities, the diverse groups of conference participants from across the world came together with a commitment, as Christians and people of conscience, to take a stand against occupation and for peace and justice.



Meaghan & Friends from At-Twani



Separation Wall – West Bank & Gaza

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Vermont Conference Disaster Response



Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak & Rev. Bert Marshall with cleanup buckets before Irene.

How does a Conference respond in a time of disaster? The Vermont Conference, UCC lived our way into the answer following the recent flooding caused by the remnants of Irene. When the storm hit, our conference was without a permanent Disaster Relief Coordinator and our Administrative Assistant, Lynn Thomas, was filling in. Well, Lynn and Jim Thomas' home was hard hit, knocking out power, their well and septic system. Their road was also destroyed so they couldn't get out for several days.

After the first couple of weeks, Rev. Susanna Griefen, pastor of the Dummerston Congregational Church, UCC stepped forward and took over the coordination that was being temporarily handled by our Conference Minister. At this point we were able to better coordinate the churches and communities needing help with volunteers from our churches eager to lend a hand. The Conference was able to:

- access **cleanup buckets** from Church World Service and get them where they were most needed
- request and receive **\$2000.00 emergency grants** from the national UCC through One Great Hour of Sharing for churches affected by flooding or who have had significant expenses associated with helping their communities recover.
- begin an **Irene Relief Fund** that has enabled us to respond to very specific needs not met by FEMA or other federal, state or local programs. We will also be able to offer assistance with fuel for individuals recommended by their churches who have suffered loss of income and/or home damage in the flooding and need assistance with fuel.
- Request and disperse **2000 biohazard suits** to protect volunteers cleaning up homes where there is a high probability of contamination in mud and debris..
- **Share requests** from church communities where the need for **food or other donations** is critical.

Your Vermont Conference is shifting to assist with Long term Recovery efforts by: providing volunteers and housing volunteers from out of state, working closely with our churches and community organizations to identify homes where assistance with rebuilding is needed.

THIS IS YOUR OWCM DOLLARS AT WORK! Thank you for your support that enables us to respond with compassion and concrete assistance in times of disaster.

--Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak
Conference Minister