

Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative
Press Release, September 2016

The Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that was formed in 2001. Since then, the GMLKCI has sponsored an annual MLK Celebration and up to three Community Conversations per year. Community Conversations have covered issues such as "Racial Inequities in the Juvenile Justice System;" "Implicit Bias and How it Impacts our Community;" and "School Diversity in Glastonbury and Greater Hartford." GMLKCI works to increase Glastonbury residents knowledge and understanding of the philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King and to provide leadership and active engagement to build an inclusive community. Very simply, we think that getting people together to discuss issues that are important to us as individuals and as members of our community will result in a better community for all of our residents. As Dr. King noted "...whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly..." and "...the quality of a community is determined by how members of the community relate to one another."

GMLKCI's next Conversation is titled "Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things: How Glastonbury Residents Have Reached Across Racial, Ethnic, Religious, Economic And Gender Boundaries and Made a Difference." The goal of this Conversation is to inform and inspire Glastonbury residents to become actively involved in social justice issues by hearing how and why their neighbors did so. This Community Conversation will be held on Thursday, October 20, 2016, from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm at the Riverfront Community Center in Glastonbury. The Conversation will be moderated and facilitated by Rev. Dick Allen, the pastor of South Church. From 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm there will be an informal reception with tables set up for the participants where they can speak with and provide written materials to the attendees.

All of the Conversation's participants in their own ways embody Dr. King's principles: "... if you want to say I was a drum major for justice; say that I was a drum major for peace; I was a drum major for righteousness. I want to leave a committed life behind"; "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"; and "Your life begins to end the moment you start being silent about the things that matter;" and "Never stop doing little things for others. Sometimes those little things occupy the biggest part of their hearts."

The Conversation panelists include the following individuals:

REV. RICHARD ALLEN. Rev. Dick Allen served as a Peace Corp Volunteer in Malawi from 1969-1971. Rev. Allen also served as the pastor of the Dupree-Eagle Butte Parish, Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota, from 1975 to 1980, and of the Lancaster Congregational Church in Lancaster, Wisconsin, from 1980 to 1988. Rev. Allen has been the Pastor of the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury (South Church) since 1988. Rev. Allen supported the decision to have an openly gay associate minister at South Church. Rev. Allen is involved in many volunteer activities, including Trustee, Sioux YMCA, Habitat for Humanity, FoodShare gleaning captain, Malawi missions supporting an HIV Clinic and an orphanage; Devotion Leader; Buckingham Estates and The Hearth in Glastonbury; and the Inter-Faith Ministry in Greater Hartford. Rev. Allen has a BA in Sociology from Trinity University, San Antonio, and a Master of Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School.

ERIN BOGGS, OPEN COMMUNITY ALLIANCE. Erin Boggs has been a resident of Glastonbury since 2005. Ms. Boggs is the Executive Director of Open Communities Alliance, a

civil rights organization promoting access to opportunity and housing choice with the help of an urban-suburban interracial coalition. Ms. Boggs also served as a Staff Attorney and Interim Legal Director of the CT ACLU, as the Deputy Director of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, and a consultant on the Connecticut Department of Housing's 2014 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. Ms. Boggs is a graduate of Wesleyan University and Georgetown University School of Law.

BONNIE CLARK, GLASTONBURY ABC HOUSE Bonnie Clark has been a resident of Glastonbury since 1968. After graduating from Glastonbury High School, Ms. Clark attended Manchester Community College, Western Virginia Wesleyan College and the Graduate Institute. Ms. Clark has a BA degree in Education and an MA degree in Learning and Thinking. Ms. Clark has been a teacher in the Hartford Public School system since 2003. Ms. Clark has served as a member of the Glastonbury A Better Chance (ABC) Board of Directors since 2001 and as president of the Board for the past three years. The mission of the ABC House is to offer young minority men of demonstrated ability, good character and need, The ABC is a National program, which offers minority students the opportunity to obtain an excellent education in public and private participating schools across the country, has affected 14,000 young people who have been accepted into the program based on their academic record, personal motivation, and leadership promise. Currently, ABC students attend one of 180 private and 22 public schools nationally. Founded in 1974, Glastonbury ABC is among the oldest. It has been home to over 80 scholars, from New York, Boston and other east coast cities who have been afforded the opportunity for a better education than they otherwise would have been able to receive.

EILEEN CULLIANE, ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH COMMUNITY GARDEN. Eileen Culliane has been a resident of Glastonbury for 45 years. Ms. Culliane is the Social Justice chairperson and a Trustee at St. Dunstan's Church, and a member of the "Just Faith" organization which studies social justice issues. In 2010, Ms. Culliane started a garden, now located in Glastonbury's Community Garden, where she and her volunteers raise vegetables to supply food pantries in Glastonbury and Hartford. She also has enlisted the help of a number of Glastonbury farmers who donate additional food. Last year, under Ms. Culliane's leadership, over 2,000 pounds of food were donated to the food pantries.

CHRIS GEORGE, INTEGRATED REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT SERVICES (IRIS). Chris George has been a resident of Glastonbury since 2005. Mr. George is the Executive Director of IRIS, a non-profit organization which is responsible for resettling refugees in Connecticut. IRIS resettles approximately 420 refugees each year, with the help of thousands of volunteers and supporters. Currently, IRIS's refugee clients come from Syria, Afghanistan, Congo, Eritrea, Iraq, and Sudan. IRIS is funded by the US government (about 50% of its budget) and from a wide variety of private sources including thousands of individuals and groups, the Tariq Farid Foundation, The Episcopal Church in Connecticut, and the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.

THOMAS MCKEE, COMMUNITY POLICE TRAINER IN AREAS OF CONFLICT. Thomas McKee has been a resident of Glastonbury for over 40 years. Mr. McKee retired as a Police Commander with the Glastonbury Police Department where he served both in the Patrol and Detective Divisions. During that period, he also worked closely with the Glastonbury Housing Authority and Youth and Family Services to assist the people in Welles Village to feel more connected to the Town. During his retirement, Mr. McKee taught police officers in Iraq, Albania, Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia in the areas of Human Rights and professional policing. He

spent two years in Iraq, where he and another American police officer wrote the Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures for the 40,000 Iraqi police officers. Mr. McKee has also been a Community Policing consultant to the International Chiefs of Police, and involved with the Glastonbury Kiwanis Club, the Glastonbury Key Club, and the American Red Cross, where he specialized in shelter operations.

ROCHELLE RIPLEY, HAWKWING. Ms. Ripley, a Lakota descendant and an advocate for Native Americans, is the founder and President of hawkwing. Hawkwing is a non-profit organization which provides essential services and support for the people of the Cheyenne River Lakota (Sioux) Indian Reservation in South Dakota, and offers cross-cultural educational programs for the public. Fulfilling a promise to her grandmother, Ms. Ripley has been organizing drives in town to collect toys, clothing, personal-care items, beds and blankets for people living on the Reservation. Under Ms. Ripley's leadership, hawkwing has delivered an estimated \$9 million in services and goods to the Lakota people. Hawkwing is an all-volunteer group. Ms. Ripley has been honored as a CNN Top Ten Heroes of 2015 for her efforts to provide books and medical supplies, bring in photography equipment for a Lakota calendar fund-raise, and gather toys and gifts for an annual holiday giveaway for the 2,600 Lakota children. Several times a year, donated goods are hauled by a tractor-trailer to the reservation. Ms. Ripley has also expanded her group's efforts, bringing doctors and dentists to the reservation as well as archaeologist for a dig so young people can learn about career opportunities. www.hawkwing.org.

ALAN SPIER, MOUNTAIN CLASSROOM. For the past ten years, Alan Spier, a retired business lawyer and Glastonbury resident for 49 years, has run a program known as the "Mountain Classroom for the Hartford Public Schools". It is a collaboration of the Hartford Public School System, the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), and the Trust for a Mountain Classroom, Inc. (Trust), a non-profit organized by Mr. Spier. Annually, the Trust pays the expenses for 40 Hartford high school students to attend a four-day, hands-on environmental study program, focusing on water quality issues, conducted by the AMC in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. The program brings together students of diverse ethnic, religious and social backgrounds, without significant previous outdoors experience, challenging them to work together in small groups in the classroom and neighboring wilderness area on water-related issues, to socialize across school divides, and to adjust to different skills and physical abilities. The program emphasizes student cooperation and mutual help and promotes friendship among the students regardless of differences. Daily hikes introduce students to forest and wildlife ecology. The AMC provides the faculty and facility for the program and teachers from the Hartford Public School System attend as chaperone. The program is free to the students and chaperones and includes provision of any necessary outdoor clothing and equipment. The Trust pays all of the expenses of the program and is responsible for raising the \$20,000 per year needed to pay program expenses. The program also includes team building experiences on community projects, a challenge course, and a local hike. Mr. Spier serves as president and chief executive of the Trust and participates in the program as a chaperone.

ANNA TANSI. HEADS UP! HARTFORD. Anna Tansi was a Glastonbury resident for many years. Just recently she moved to East Hartford. Ms. Tansi is involved with Heads Up! Hartford, a non-profit volunteer faith-based organization of urban and suburban youths and adult advisors who work to build communities, through the promotion of diversity, developing leadership, and providing community service. Its mission is to build bridges across our many differences and

develop leadership capability in young people through community service, recreation, worship and education.

MEG TAYLOR, CAPITOL SQUASH. Meg Taylor is a longtime resident of Glastonbury and is the daughter of David Taylor, the pastor of First Church. Ms. Taylor attended Vassar College and has a Masters in Education. She spent two years teaching in D.C. Public Schools with Teach for America and worked at Glastonbury's Camp Sunrise, a camp for children with special needs. Ms. Taylor is the Executive Director of Capitol Squash, whose mission is to empower the youth of Hartford to reach their potential as athletes, students, and engaged citizens of character. Capitol Squash strives to provide urban youth with life-changing opportunities through the sport of squash, intensive educational support, mentoring, and community service activities. Capitol Squash currently serves 35 students and is based out of Trinity College.

DAWNE WESTBROOK. JUDICIAL JUSTICE. Dawne Westbrook is a long-time resident of Glastonbury and has four children attending Glastonbury Public Schools. She has been a Judge of the Connecticut Superior Court since 2009. She is currently the presiding judge over juvenile matters in the Rockville juvenile court. Judge Westbrook has served in the criminal, family and juvenile court in Hartford and the Manchester criminal court. Judge Westbrook received her BA degree Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, from Fisk University, and her JD from the Vanderbilt University School of Law. Prior to her appointment, she focused her legal practice largely on juvenile, criminal, and civil rights matters. She has served on a number of boards, committees, and commissions including the Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative. As a judge, Judge Westbrook confronts issues where a sensitivity and awareness of racial, ethnic, economic, gender, and religious divides are of critical importance in rendering decisions which are fair and impartial to the litigants who appear before her.