

It Has Always Been in the Picture

The formal portrait of the United Church of Fayetteville, often used on church bulletins, includes a private home that literally sits in the shadow of the church. In February 1999, with the support of a \$5,000 grant from the National Office for Refugee Resettlement of the American Baptist Church USA, and \$18,000 from a church member, the congregation obtained a mortgage loan from Key Bank and purchased the historic Spaid House next door to the church for a total cost of \$65,750. The home was acquired to serve as a local mission to provide a home for recently arrived refugees in Syracuse. The purchase also insured compatible neighbors for the church and alleviated future problems over the easement to the house from the church's parking lot.

The home was named "**Jubilee House**" in recognition of the tradition described in the Hebrew Bible known as the "Year of Jubilee" when the needs of the poor receive special attention.

Responding to an Urgent Need

The United Church of Fayetteville has been involved in aiding refugee families in the Syracuse area since 1947. The mission originally envisioned for Jubilee House was to provide a temporary residence for recently arrived refugees sponsored by the Syracuse Inter-Religious Council. This purpose has broadened to provide affordable housing in the Fayetteville area to those in need. Support for Jubilee House and the families who live there is the responsibility of the Church's Mission Committee, which seeks to provide opportunities for church members to be involved as volunteers.

Residents of Jubilee House

We first provided housing in 2000 and 2001 to the Olivera family, refugees from Cuba. Many of our church members were involved in providing the Olivera's with transportation to needed services. After the Olivera's moved to Florida, we made Jubilee House available to a Russian immigrant woman and her son who needed a safe place to live while domestic issues were being addressed. It became their home until the end of the school year, allowing the son to graduate from F-M High School. In 2002 a church member, Annie Mwelwa, and her three children moved into Jubilee House. The family emigrated from Zambia in 1995 and had lived in Syracuse Public Housing before moving into Jubilee House. All members of the family have become U.S. citizens, and the daughter is currently attending St. Lawrence University. In August 2006 we welcomed the Mpinga family from the Democratic Republic of Congo, who had spent 20 years living in refugee camps in Tanzania, and lived for a year in Syracuse with the help of the Interreligious Council. The children are enrolled in F-M Schools, and the parents are employed in Syracuse.



Joseph Mpinga, Immaculee Kyondwa and family

Furnishings, Repairs, Improvements

Jubilee House has 3 bedrooms, 2 full baths, a living room, dining room, family room, library, kitchen and screened porch. As an historic home built in 1831, its size and charm were obvious, but so was the need to renovate this 173 year-old home. Professional contractors updated the electrical, heating and plumbing services for the house. Church members organized clean-up, painting, decorating and furnishing of the home. We were in need of virtually everything required for a home -- from furniture, to kitchen supplies, bed linens, rugs, and artwork.



Annie Mwelwa and daughter Mwelwa Bwalya

Over the 7 years the church has owned Jubilee House, many additional repairs and improvements have been made, including: relocation of a first-floor bathroom with handicap access, rewiring of the electrical panel, shoring up of the first floor supports, fixing a gas leak at the front of the house, lead paint abatement in the porch, insulating the attic, and walls, repairs to the chimney, renovation of the upstairs bathroom, new double-glazed windows, renovated front entrance doors, and refurbishing of the oil-fired steam heating

system.

Opportunity for Hands-On Involvement

More United Church members have been involved in renovating and maintaining Jubilee House than in any other church mission project in recent memory. Members and friends have contributed significant time, effort, talent and money over the years. A task force, part of the Missions Committee, which reports to the Board, has overseen the management of Jubilee House in recent years and has planned for fund raising events (such as a spaghetti dinner and a luncheon for a Presbytery meeting). There are periodic work parties to help with landscaping upkeep. We welcome involvement on this task force or assistance with special work events and fund-raising events. There are also periodic needs of the families living in Jubilee House, such as providing transportation and helping them learn to drive. Please contact the church office or a task force member to offer your help.



Olivera Family with Rev. Phil Courtney

Financial support

While Jubilee House receives revenue from affordable rent, it also has depended on

contributions from other sources, including the United Church's New Horizon Fund, special church offerings, contributions from members of the United Church congregation, and supporters from the community, including the St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church. As of December 2006, we had an outstanding mortgage balance of about \$35,000.

Become a "Friend of Jubilee House"

We invite your help to assure that this historic structure remains a comfortable home for our current residents and for those in the years ahead. Our Mission Committee asks those who are interested in providing affordable housing in the Fayetteville community to become a "Friend of Jubilee House" by making a contribution. The funds will be used for repairs, capital improvements, and meeting routine expenses such as maintenance and mortgage loan repayment.

To make a contribution, please make checks payable to the United Church of Fayetteville, and be sure to note on the check that it is for "Jubilee House." Together, we can support the Jubilee House mission and continue to make it a valuable mission in our community.

--Jubilee House Task Force, December 2006

"Jubilee House"

A Mission of

The United Church of Fayetteville

*To Provide Affordable Housing
in the Fayetteville Community*



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