

COMMON GROUND



Volume 1, Issue 1

November, 2004

Officers

- J. H. Flakes – Chair
- Carmen Cavezza – Co-Chair
- Ron Hinze – Secretary
- Ed Wilson – Treasurer
- Katie Harris- Asst. Secretary

The Chairman's Statement

The Phrase "One Columbus" has been used over and over again in many settings and countless venues. If you talk to the mayor, he would probably say that it is a state of mind and a condition that he hopes will eventually be a living breathing part of his city where all people who live here, regardless of their backgrounds, heritage or economic circumstances can live together in peace.

As I see it, One Columbus is God's gift to our community. It is a sense of being and it is in the minds and hearts of the people.

If each of us in the community can seek common ground where we can advocate for improving race relations (and other relevant issues) through constructive dialogue, then we will have opened the door for better understanding about others as well as ourselves.

Rev. J. H. Flakes, Jr.

One Columbus – Many Faces



Up Coming Events:

- Mon. Nov. 1, Mixer - Columbus Government Annex - 11:00 AM. Ann Caggins, facilitator.
- Mon. Nov. 22 – National Family Week begins.
- Wed. Dec. 1 Race Relations Breakfast -South at Mill Towne Restaurant – 7:30 AM. Ed Booth/J.P. Moore facilitators.
- Mon. Dec. 6 Mixer – Columbus Government Annex – 11:00 AM. Ann Caggins, facilitator.
- Wed. Dec. 8, Race Relations Breakfast – Uptown at Ruth Ann's Restaurant -7:30 AM. Lee Brantley/Ken Crooks facilitators.
- Tues. Dec. 21 – Community Prayer Breakfast – Plaza Level of Government Ctr. Ernie Green will be guest speaker. Contact Chair Rosa Stanback for more information at 689-7277.
- Plan now to attend the Inaugural Recognition Dinner on Jan.13, 2005. See page 2 for more information.

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Connections Count - National Family Week November 21-27

This year One Columbus is proud to co-sponsor the Family Friendly Business Awards that are awarded during National Family Week. It will also sponsor an essay and drawing contest for elementary, middle and high school students throughout Muscogee County. The winners are recognized with Savings Bonds and are featured on local television.

"Connections Count" is this year's theme. It is a well known fact that families thrive when they are connected to the opportunities, networks, and services that enable them to succeed.

Anyone desiring to take part in the National Organizations letter writing campaign to show support for our military stationed around the world may visit the website below.

www.nationalfamilyweek.org/familysalute.htm

Everyone is invited to combined Thanksgiving Services that week at 7 PM at Fourth Street Baptist Church.

For More Information call Terry Sybrant at 327-3238

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Happy Thanksgiving

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The One Columbus Story

The year was 1992. An African American pastor, Rev. J. H. Flakes, Jr. of Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church, invited Rev. Charles Roper of St. Thomas Episcopal church to join him in developing a Unity Service, and from that invitation grew what we now know as One Columbus. When Rev. Flakes made the overture to his brother in the cloth, Rev. Roper replied. "Yes, I will help, but first I want to know you as my brother."

The two men began eating together periodically and before long others were invited. Their goal was expanded. They decided to start building bridges across racial, economic, religious and social lines. These meetings, bringing together people of varied backgrounds, eventually evolved into the Valley Interaction Ministry.

Although from different backgrounds, participants, found some common ground through dialogue, communication and association. Gathering around that common ground they found they could reduce the hatred, suspicion and distrust that had pervaded the South for hundreds of years. They felt themselves drawn together, with changed attitudes and a better understanding of one another.

From these humble beginnings has come a series of meetings, conferences and events. In 1999 a Race Relations Summit was held. One Columbus was born from that singular event.

The organization is now a 501(c) (3) non-profit, tax-exempt corporation. Successful, ongoing programs include Bridge Building activities such as twice-monthly Race Relations Breakfasts, the quarterly One Columbus Community Prayer Breakfasts, Study Circles and Discussion groups in local neighborhoods, on college and university campuses and soon to be in corporate boardrooms.

The Inaugural Recognition Dinner for One Columbus will be held on Thursday, January 13, 2005 at the Columbus Trade Center. The keynote speaker will be Aubrey Miller, Director Tourism and Travel for Southern Living Magazine. The time is 7:00 PM.

Good News!

Chairman J. H. Flakes, Jr. announced recently that AFLAC has made a contribution to One Columbus in support of its work for which we are all grateful... He also indicated that the company has formed a partnership with One Columbus to launch a diversity initiative modeled after the Study Circles component that the organization is using throughout the community. This model will be used to introduce Study Circles to local businesses and corporations in the area.



Bridge Building

Bridge building is the flagship activity of One Columbus. It takes place in homes, restaurants, houses of worship, businesses, and organizations all across the Valley. It is designed to promote and encourage multi-cultural dialogue among all sectors and at every level in this community. Dialogue Groups are ongoing opportunities for corporations, institutions and neighborhoods to hold constructive discussions on intercultural issues. A training facilitator assists the group in promoting unity and respect through democratic exchanges. Study Circles, like Dialogue Groups, are structured sessions that culminate in action forums to address issues in the community.

For more information on Bridge Building call Chair Ann Caggins at 568-3238

Contributions to One Columbus, Inc are tax deductible.
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