

January Spire Article
Congregational Life

Looking Back, *and* Looking Forward ...

January is a perfect time to simultaneously look back and look forward.

The Congregational Life Team finished out 2007 celebrating with many friends at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Fellowship Party. Good food, fellowship, and a few carols as well as many laughs filled the evening. We again *salute you* and *thank you* for ALL that you do helping out in both large and small ways throughout the year. And a special thanks to all who brought such delicious desserts to share! Here are a few pictures of the festivities for you all to share in the fun!

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As you turn your attention to the new year, we encourage you to look prayerfully at how you will engage the world around you ... what activities you yourself will embrace and *participate in*, as well as what *service you might provide* to family, friends, or neighbors. As you do so, we hope you will consider adding some from the NPC repertoire of offerings. A quick look through the Spire, Noroton Notes, the web, or bulletin boards and posters around church will provide eye candy for all the programs available to you.

So as you open your 2008 calendars, we'd like to highlight one possible service opportunity for you *this month* that is just a few miles from our church home. **Friday afternoon 4-6pm, January 18th, marks Career Fair Day** at The George Washington Carver Community Center, one of our local mission partners in Norwalk.

- ***Share your vocation*** at a table set up in the gym. **Come one; come ALL!**

Excited about your vocation? Willing to share your knowledge and enthusiasm with Middle and High School students on a path to determine their future? Come and share on a one-to-one basis. Visuals and handouts are suggested; (we'll help you sort this out.) A number of members have already signed up; we're looking to *provide a wide array of career path choices* to the youth: advertising, carpenters, caterers/cooks, firemen, graphic artists, journalists/writers, policemen, landscape workers, law-related, music-related, nurses, photographers, physicians, pharmacists, public speaking, seamstresses, small business owners, teachers, *and as many others as we can orchestrate!*

- ***General volunteers*** are also needed onsite the day of the event, held 4-6pm, where we're hoping to engage upwards of 100 youth!

The Carver Center was founded to serve at-risk children and their families, *specifically to provide educational, social and recreational programs*. Their mission is designed to motivate and support youth to reach for a post-secondary education and thus to break the cycle of poverty in their families.

(Of significant note: 85% of Carver's youth enroll in college or post-secondary education; 66% earn a degree - compared to 17% of African Americans nationwide.)

NPC is seeking to deepen our commitment to partner with The Carver Center. If January is not a good month for you, but you DO want to support the efforts of this particular mission partner, there are also ongoing programs throughout the year which you may feel led to participate in over the coming months:

- The Youth Development Program encourages, supports and prepares middle and high school students for college admission.
- CASPER Club provides a safe, secure after-school environment for elementary children enriched by tutoring, homework help, recreational activities and arts and crafts.
- For more details, please go to NPC's website/Missions/The Carter Center.

If you would like to help our neighbor children succeed in school, at work, and in the community, *EITHER* for several hours at the January 18th Career Fair, *AND/OR* for an hour here or there in the coming year in youth-related mentoring activities, please contact Jane Malcolm at 655-0649, or jkmalcolm1@aol.com.