



Pittsburgh Courier

## NCCJ new head gears up for MLK birthday celebration

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When the National Conference for Community and Justice search committee went looking for a new executive director following Betty Pickett's June retirement, it turned out they did not have to look far--just to Bloomfield.

That's where they found Donna Fetterman, who for the previous eight years served as executive director of Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Southwestern Pennsylvania, a faith-based nonprofit that provides in-home services to the elderly.

Fetterman holds a bachelor's degree from the State University of New York, and a master's of Divinity from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. She is currently working on a master's of Public Policy and Management at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs.

She began her new job Oct. 20 and is gearing up for several new initiatives, including a revamped celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, the reactivation of the NCCJ's Green Circle program for early elementary school students and a partnership with Theta Nu Xi, a multicultural sorority at the University of Pittsburgh,

The King celebration will take place Jan. 19 at the Mattress Factory on the North Side from 1-4:30 p.m. and will feature a host of entertaining and educational intergenerational activities.

These include:

"Peace Tales," a storytelling performance and art activity for children 5 and older;

Peace-themed children's stories;

A live writing demonstration;

Writing quilt activities;

Readings of works from the civil rights era;

Museum tours; and

An intergenerational story circle where seniors from the Vintage Senior Center will be encouraged to relay their experiences of the Civil Rights Movement.

"The whole thing was designed before I came onboard. We used to just have an interfaith worship service. So this is all new," said Fetterman. "The fact that it's intergenerational and interactive is very exciting. We have to thank our partners, including the New Pittsburgh Courier, for that."

Funding for the King events are provided by Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts, the regional arts funding partnership of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

As for NCCJ's other initiatives, Fetterman said the Theta Nu Xi partnership is part of a national effort, and will probably be most valuable as a means to access and involve young leaders.

"They are an intentionally diverse sorority and because our mission--to fight bias, bigotry and racism through education, advocacy and conflict resolution is so similar to theirs, our national offices agreed we would collaborate in communities where we both had chapters."

As for new programming, Fetterman said NCCJ's board would meet in January to begin its strategic planning process.

"Because our youth programming is on such solid footing, I'm hoping we can look at other community needs--engaging business, faith, government and education leaders," she said. "It doesn't mean we won't do more with children and youth, I just want a balanced program."

Locally, the NCCJ has existed since 1945. Its flagship program is the Teen Leadership Council, which each month convenes more than 130 high school students from five counties to discuss the issues of diversity and inclusion.

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