

## **Church Women United in Greater Dayton**

*Agreed to Differ – Resolved to Love – United to Serve*

Women of a diverse spectrum of denominations and faiths in Dayton joined together for ministry in 1911. We officially became known as Church Women United in Greater Dayton in 1941.

CWU Dayton was very active in issues that touched the lives of others such as the Ohio Migrant Ministry and the Farm Workers Ministry Program during the 1970s. For example, we joined the boycott of lettuce and grapes during Farm Worker Week in 1971. We also prepared meals for farm workers passing through Dayton.

In 1948, we began working with the Federation of Jewish Women's Club planning Interfaith meetings and teas. In 1965, over 1000 Protestant, Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Jewish Women gathered for interfaith fellowship! History records that in 1961-1962 we supported City Mission, Goodwill Auxiliary, Social Health Association, Urban League, Women's Temperance Union, and the YWCA! There was the CAN-A-LOT project, Birthday Party Project, Miami Valley Literacy, Boys and Girls Clubs, adopting a ward at Dayton Mental Health Center, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Metropolitan Civic Women, Miami Valley Literacy Council, and Goodwill Doll Sale. June 1, 1988, we were one of 20 co-sponsors in Dayton for the Hiroshima Day Vigil.

In 1973, 3869 pounds of clothing was collected for Church World Service (CWS). Today CWU Dayton continues supporting CWS by completing health and school kits, participating in CROP Walk (Christian Rural Overseas Program – raising money for hunger) and collecting money for Blanket Sunday. We still support UNICEF, Jail Ministry, Life Enrichment Center, Daybreak, Peace Museum, Fellowship of the Least Coin and ministries for the homeless.

In 1986, a national CWU imperative was conceived. Each local unit was to consider the pauperization of women and children and commit to a ministry. A task force was organized in CWU Dayton (May 1987-May 1992) and the idea for "Dream House" began in January 1988. Sister Jean Foppe a CWU member who worked with jail ministry suggested we begin transitional housing for 5-6 women coming out of prison or jail. In a family like environment counselling, job training, etc. would be provided while the women worked on changing their lifestyles. Beginning in October 1988, the "Dream House" task force planned for grants, gained church support, found a house, and oversaw so many details. Under the leadership of our President Charlotte Leasure, Vice President Joan Brown, task force members, and many others, Mercy Manor became incorporated April 11, 1991. The first house was opened in 1992.

CWU in Greater Dayton continues in 2018 to be committed to four issues of Human Rights, Hunger and Poverty, Health and Wellness, and Diversity and Inclusiveness. In April of this year, we are sponsoring "Pumped Up About Heart Health" as advocating for women's healthy-heart disease prevention. This is one of our current priorities.

*President Jerri Wood, March 2018*