

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

We believe that the best way to bring about rural justice is to nurture and support leaders who are committed to hope, justice and empowerment within rural New York State. At Rural & Migrant Ministry we have worked for over twenty-five years and along the way have been blessed to be in the presence of many remarkable, creative and effective leaders; all committed to rural justice within New York State, whether they live in isolated rural areas or in big cities.

Always, the challenges facing rural workers are great: isolation, a lack of resources, and prejudice all work together to oppress low-income rural families. However, the current economic woes of the world are also weighing in, and the burden can be intolerable. We thank you for being a partner with Rural & Migrant Ministry as we work to overcome the challenges of rural poverty. Your support and involvement enable us to continue onward with renewed vitality and determination.

As we look forward to the future, one special highlight is the celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of our Overnight Leadership Camp, in which over two thousand people have participated. We hope that you will help guarantee another twenty years through your support of our Camp Fund.

We ask you to stay the course as Rural & Migrant Ministry continues to be a voice and a presence that honors human rights and dignity.

Enclosed is our Annual Report to give you a glimpse of RMM. For an in-depth analysis, please visit our web site [www.ruralmigrantministry.org](http://www.ruralmigrantministry.org)

In peace,

Rabbi Michael Feinberg, President  
The Rev. Richard Witt, Executive Director



Rini Templeton

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## RURAL & MIGRANT MINISTRY WORKS TO BUILD A JUST COMMUNITY THROUGH THREE MAJOR INITIATIVES

### YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

"I will never forget all that I received from RMM and thank you especially for teaching me the importance of empowerment and giving people choices." - Chakera McIntosh

For over twenty years Rural & Migrant Ministry (RMM) has been committed to youth empowerment by helping rural and migrant children overcome barriers and create opportunities for themselves and their communities. The children that we serve live in the midst of rural poverty. While rural poverty is heightened by many of the same factors as urban poverty such as racism and language barriers, it is also exacerbated by isolation and a lack of resources such as transportation and local funding programs.

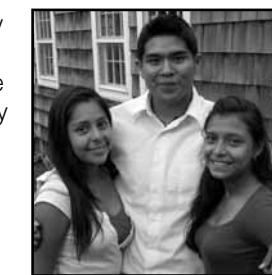


Youth Arts Group members

The history of Rural & Migrant Ministry began by responding to these barriers as The Rev. Andy McComb and RMM volunteers built the Day Care Center in New Paltz in 1985. Today we offer an innovative array of Youth Empowerment Programs that span upstate New York. Through our programs we offer a cutting edge approach to out-of-school education that truly makes a difference. We are pleased that over 90% of the graduates of our Youth Arts Group (YAG) have gone on to college - all but two, the first in their family to do so. Matt Heyd, program officer for Trinity Grants Program, calls our program one of the nation's leading Youth Empowerment Programs.



A future leader in our summer program.



Youth Arts Group members who described their RMM experiences at a fund raising house party.

Programs include: Summer Camps, The Youth Arts Group, Leadership Institutes, Internships and the Pedro Cruz Scholarship Fund

### ACCOMPANIMENT

The main purpose of Rural & Migrant Ministry's Accompaniment Program is to strengthen a rural network across New York State which empowers farmworkers and other rural workers to more effectively change an agricultural system that has historically oppressed them.



CSEA union support at an Albany demonstration for farmworker rights.

Accompaniment depends upon individual organizations, and congregations standing with farmworkers and other rural workers in their struggle to organize for equality, dignity, and just working and living conditions. A key component of RMM's Accompaniment Program has been our leadership in the Justice for Farmworkers Campaign (JFW). JFW is a broad coalition of labor unions, faith communities and student organizations committed to ensuring that the voice of farmworkers in New York is heard in the public policy process. Of specific concern is a legislative campaign that would remove those sections of New York's labor laws that exclude farmworkers.



YAG and community members participating in the 200 Miles for Justice march to Albany.

The major goals of the Accompaniment Program are:

- To strengthen the efforts of rural, poor and migrant farmworkers in New York State to change the unjust policies and structures that impact their lives
- To create opportunities for people of faith and others to mutually support these efforts as allies and in turn,
- To develop a network and creative new strategies and structures that can withstand the increasing and powerful negative reaction of agri-business as well as the anti-immigrant waves sweeping the country

### EDUCATION

Education is a key component of RMM's commitment to strengthening the leadership of rural and migrant people and raising the consciousness and support of their allies. The prime purpose of Rural & Migrant Ministry's Educational Program is to nurture leaders for rural social transformation in New York State. RMM carries out this program through presentations, publications, delegations, internships & fellowships, retreats and institutes. Each education program utilizes three foci:

1. Theological Development - Providing a vehicle for people to explore and develop their own faith tradition (no matter which faith tradition)
2. Political Development - Enabling participants to develop a deeper awareness of the political realm within New York State and in turn heighten their participation in democracy
3. Relationship Building - Working with people as they seek to overcome the 'isms' that divide them and thereby inhibit their ability to join together in working for social transformation.

We also remain committed to three levels of education:

- General education and consciousness raising
- Exploration of the issues through experiential education
- Direct involvement through action, analysis and reflection



One of the many workshops at the Rural Women's Conference in December '08 in Binghamton, including Health, Career, Spiritual Life, Youth, Domestic Violence, Education, Justice and Allies.

Brochure by Linda Gluck Graphic Design



### UNIQUE COVENANT

Historically the backbone of the Ministry has been our Covenant with several bodies of faith. These Covenanting Denominations have long supported the organization through resources, space and volunteers. In turn they have seen Rural & Migrant Ministry as a facilitator of their ministry in rural New York.



Photo © 2008 Celia Roberts

Farmworker mothers awaiting the school bus with their children.

Current Covenanting Denominations include:



Kairios Project, Sullivan County

American Baptist Churches of New York State, Capital Area Baptist Association, Episcopal Diocese of New York, Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, Mid-Hudson/Union Association of American Baptist Churches, New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, New York Conference of the United Church of Christ, New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Presbytery of Albany, Presbytery of the Hudson River, Regional Synod of New York Reformed Church in America, Classis of Mid Hudson Regional Synod, NY; Classis of Orange Regional Synod, NY; Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester

### MISSION STATEMENT

Rural & Migrant Ministry works for the creation of a just, rural New York State through:

- Nurturing leadership
- Standing with the disenfranchised, especially farmworkers and rural workers
- Changing unjust systems and structures

### VISION STATEMENT

Rural & Migrant Ministry Inc. acts to overcome the prejudices and poverty that degrade and debilitate all members of our society by building communities that celebrate diversity, achieve true mutuality and offer dignity and opportunity to all. Rural & Migrant Ministry is an interfaith organization whose members believe that inspiration comes from participation in the creation of a just world.

To this end Rural & Migrant Ministry is committed to:

- Honoring and supporting efforts of those who are disenfranchised, especially migrant farmworkers and the rural poor, as they seek greater self-determination;
- Transforming ourselves to use our privileges and actions, not as pillars of oppression, but as forces for justice;
- Nurturing the development of leaders from various communities;
- Building a ministry that brings people of diverse socio-economic, religious, cultural and racial backgrounds together and promotes the exchange of resources, ideas and hopes;
- Addressing the root causes of poverty and prejudice that are maintained in public and private policies through advocacy and the development of alternative policies and structures;
- Being equitable and just and honoring diversity within the structures, policies, programs, activities and mores of the organization.

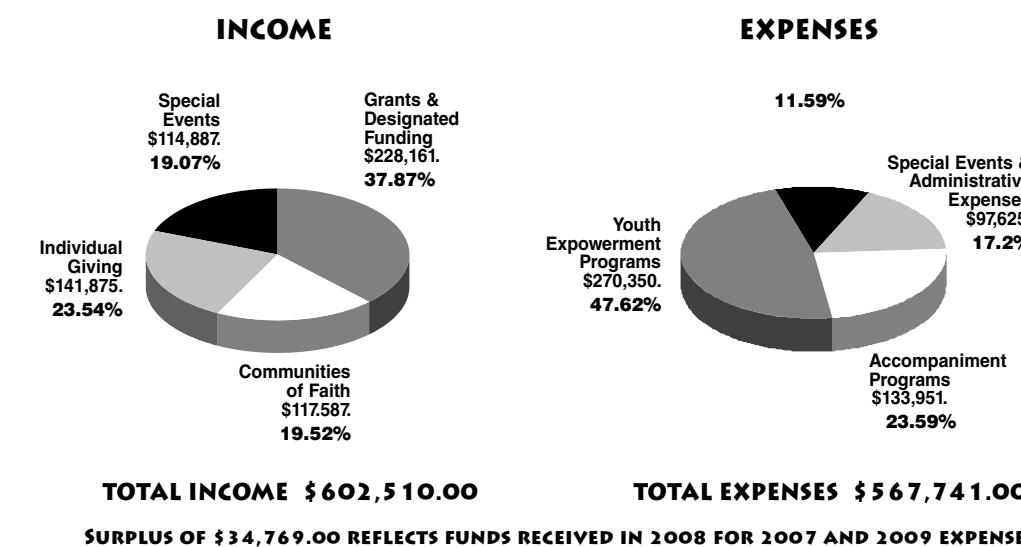
Two photos at right © 2008 Celia Roberts



The Rev. Jamie Callaway, The Rev. Jim Burns, Rabbi Michael Feinberg; Farmworkers in Western New York

### FINANCES

#### SUMMARY OF 2008 INCOME AND EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



# OUR SUPPORTERS, 2008

The success and uniqueness of the Ministry is the direct result of this tremendous array of supporters who believe in our work:

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St. James' Church, New York, NY  
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St. John's, Monticello, NY  
St. Margaret's Church, Staatsburg, NY  
St. Mary's Church, Tuxedo Park, NY  
St. Matthew's Church, Bedford, NY  
St. Michael's Church, New York, NY  
St. Nicholas-on-the-Hudson, New Hamburg, NY  
St. Paul's Church, Poughkeepsie, NY  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Pleasant Valley, NY  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Rochester, NY  
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St. Thomas' Church, Mamaroneck, NY  
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Trinity Wall Street, New York, NY  
Zion Episcopal Church, Wappingers Falls, NY

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The Reservoir UMC, Shokan, NY  
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Reformed Church, Poughkeepsie, NY  
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St. Paul's Church in Buffalo, Buffalo, NY  
Temple B'Rith Kodesher, Rochester, NY  
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Women of the Reformed Church of the Comforter, Kingston, NY  
Women's Association, Pleasant Valley, NY  
Women's Assn. of the Presbyterian Church, Jeffersonville, NY  
Women's Guild, Walkill, NY  
Women's Guild for Christian Service, Newburgh, NY  
Women's Missionary Society, Rhinebeck, NY

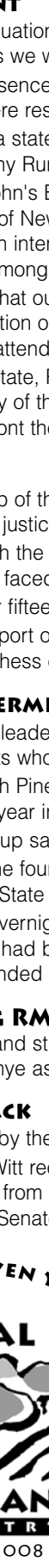
CSEA, Local 1000, AFSCME  
CSEA/RWDSU, UFCW  
NYSUT, Latham, NY  
UFCW, Local 1500, Queens Village, NY  
UFCW, CLC, Washington, DC  
UFCW, Local 888, Mt. Vernon, NY  
UFCW, Local 1458, Springfield, MA  
UFCW, Local 464A, Little Falls, NJ  
Unita Here  
32BJ, SEIU  
UFCW, Local 1360, West Berlin, NJ  
CWA, Local 1180, New York, NY  
UFCW, Local One  
UFCW, Local 1262  
UFCW, Local 328, Providence, RI  
RWDSU/UFCW, Local 338, Mineola, NY  
New York State AFL-CIO  
United University Professions  
Region 9A UAW NY CAP Council  
UFCW, Local 371, Westport, CT  
UFCW, Local 1445  
UFCW, Local 342  
UFCW, Local 791, South Easton, MA

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Great Barrington, MA  
Cramer Foundation, New York, NY  
Dyson Foundation, Millbrook, NY  
Millbrook Tribute Garden, Inc., Millbrook, NY  
Reformed Church in America  
Steward's Foundation  
United Thank Offering

American Baptist Churches of New York State  
Capital Area Baptist Association  
Episcopal Diocese of New York  
Episcopal Diocese of Rochester  
Mid-Hudson/Union Association of American Baptist Churches  
New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church  
New York Conference of the United Church of Christ  
New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends  
Presbytery of Albany  
Presbytery of the Hudson River  
Regional Synod of New York Reformed Church in America  
Classis of Mid Hudson Regional Synod, NY  
Classis of Orange Regional Synod, NY  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester

RMM is also very grateful to all of the congregations and individuals who have made in-kind donations.

Please forgive any unintentional oversights or omissions. Thank you.



1981-2008

# HOPE, JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2008

The following are some of the many wonderful efforts undertaken by Rural & Migrant Ministry in 2008:

## ACCOMPANIMENT

- The dogged continuation of the Justice for Farmworkers Campaign which included numerous Farmworker Advocacy Days as we worked to ensure that the voice of farmworkers was present in Albany.
- Our state-wide presence in coalitions and actions to ensure that immigrants were treated with dignity and that their rights were respected.
- Our effort to build a state-wide network of rural women through the third Annual Destiny Rural Women's Conference in Binghamton
- Working with St. John's Episcopal Church in Monticello and the Labor Religion Coalition of New York State to create the Kairos Project in Sullivan County: an intentional pilot program to improve working and living conditions among rural working class families.
- We were gratified that our consultations with Vassar College helped to lead to the creation of new policies that made it easier for immigrant students to attend Vassar.
- Across New York State, RMM hosted a series of vigils in honor of the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Human Rights, including one in front of the U.S. Border Patrol office in Rochester.

## EDUCATION

- Our co-sponsorship of the monthly Justice for All Speakers Forum which welcomes those who are engaged in social justice from around the country
- In collaboration with the Little Theater, we launched the Harvesting Justice Film Festival in Rochester that highlighted issues faced by immigrants and low-income workers
- We welcomed over fifteen interns throughout the year
- The continued support of a Latino ministry, initiated by Grace Episcopal Church in Millbrook, in eastern and northern Dutchess county that has led to the hiring of an organizer.

## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

- We initiated a new leadership camp in Sullivan Co. that welcomed over 30 middle school students who were committed to making a change in their schools
- In collaboration with Pine Plains Council of Churches we offered a leadership camp for the 2nd year in eastern Dutchess and southern Columbia counties.
- The Youth Arts Group saw two of its members graduate and head for college
- YAG also hosted the fourth annual JUST US Conference for youth from around eastern New York State committed to using the arts for justice.
- The 19th Annual Overnight Camp welcomed 100 children and a staff of forty (including 14 who had been former campers). During its history, over 1500 children have attended the camp.

## STRENGTHENING RMM

- We were pleased and strengthened to welcome Laura Lecour as our new Managing Director and the Rev. David Montanye as our Social Justice Education Coordinator

## PATS ON THE BACK

- YAG was honored by the Labor-Religion Coalition of New York for their creative justice work.
- The Rev. Richard Witt received the Kennedy-Hirsch Award from the Labor-Religion Coalition and the President's Award from Marist College as well as a Citation of Recognition from the New York State Senate, thanks to Senator Saland.



Youth Empowerment Program members with a banner they created.



YAG members attending the annual Justice for Farmworkers Dinner in NYC.

Rural & Migrant Ministry (RMM) was incorporated as a non-profit, non-sectarian organization in 1981. RMM works alongside disenfranchised rural residents and agricultural workers in New York State through programs of advocacy, empowerment and leadership development.

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