



**UNITED  
COMMUNITY  
MINISTRIES**

*At the Heart of Community*

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**UCM ANNOUNCES BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2016**



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***Photo caption:***

United Community Ministries (UCM) elected and installed its 2016 Board of Directors in December. The new officers, pictured with UCM Executive Director Nichelle A. Mitchem, Esq., who is at far left are (left to right): Board Secretary David Barbour, Esq.; Board Treasurer Joseph Conti, M.B.A.; Board Chair Charles O'Connor, Esq.; and Board Vice Chair Janet Heddeshimer, Ph.D.

Joining the UCM Board are Dr. Zeyad Mady, D.D.S., and Martin Schaefermeier, Esq.

The new Members joined the Board as the following members retired from service: Christiane Gigi Hyland, Esq., Board Chair 2014-15; Bruce Engelmann, C.P.A.; Marcelo Giugale; Doug Kennett; and Diane Tollefson.

"Thank you to our retiring board members for their dedication and service. I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to continue to serve UCM and our community as Board Chair," says Charles O'Connor. "UCM's dedicated staff works tirelessly to fulfill its mission to provide people in need with a helping hand. Our programs help children, adults, and families achieve self-sufficiency. We are fortunate and grateful that we live among caring community members who open their hearts and share their resources to help people who are struggling. UCM continues to

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need the community's support, and I would like to ask all my friends and neighbors in the Mount Vernon area to join me in supporting UCM in 2016. We have so many opportunities to participate."

"UCM has a long and impressive history of providing critical programs and services to vulnerable children, youth, families, and adults," says UCM Executive Director Nichelle A. Mitchem. "There continues to be a great need for UCM's programs and services by residents in the Mount Vernon community. It is a privilege to serve with such a dedicated Board of Directors. We are extremely grateful for their service and leadership in UCM's efforts to improve the quality of life for children, youth, and families living in poverty."

According to recent US Census data the percentage of children living in poverty in the state of Virginia is on the rise. Poverty imposes far-reaching hardships, not only on the poor but on all who share their communities. "Child poverty is too costly to continue," Mitchem continues. "Research shows that children and youth who grow up in poverty suffer detrimental and lifelong consequences, including a decrease in the likelihood of graduating from high school and an increase in the likelihood of becoming a poor adult who suffers from poor health and becomes involved in the criminal justice system. These negative outcomes reportedly cost the nation at least half a trillion dollars a year in lost productivity and increased health and crime costs. Most of these children have parents who work, but low wages and unstable employment leave their families struggling to make ends meet."

This year, UCM is putting a special emphasis on our programs that help adults obtain gainful employment and children as well as youth not only grow but also thrive. When UCM's clients and other vulnerable people are provided with a chance to earn a living wage, they are able to meet their families' immediate needs. This type of employment offers parents a sense of pride, stopping the cycle of poverty for their children and themselves. This opportunity has afforded families access to earning a living wage, an indispensable weapon in the fight against childhood poverty and hunger.

A brief biography follows for each of the new officers and new board members:

**Charles O'Connor, Esq.,** is UCM Board Chair and has served on the UCM Board since March 2011. He retired as Partner in Morgan Lewis' Labor and Employment Practice, focused on labor-management relations, particularly collective bargaining. O'Connor has a bachelor's degree from College of the Holy Cross and a law degree from Boston College. He has been involved with Holy Trinity Church in Washington DC and the Washington Jesuit Academy, and has participated in pro bono legal representation for the DC Bar. O'Connor and his wife Linda live in the Belle Haven neighborhood of Alexandria.

**Janet C. Heddesheimer, Ph.D.,** is Board Vice Chair and has served on the UCM Board since December 2013, when she retired from The George Washington University as counseling professor emerita. During her 40-year tenure, she served in many academic and administrative roles including teaching numerous graduate counseling classes, serving one term as a department chair, and 24 years in dean roles as assistant and associate dean, academic associate dean, senior associate dean and twice acting dean. She is a licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Virginia and a National Certified Counselor. A graduate of Coe College with a B.A. in English, she earned both her M.A. in Counseling and Guidance and her Ph.D. in Counselor Education at The Ohio State University. Heddesheimer and her husband Jon live in the Mason Hill neighborhood of Alexandria.

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**Joseph S. Conti, M.B.A.**, is Board Treasurer and has served on the UCM Board since December 2012. He is a retired senior banking executive, retiring in 1992 as a Senior Vice President with Bankers Trust Company after a 23 year tenure. In retirement he has served as a financial services consultant primarily to the Polish American Enterprise Fund (PAEF) in Poland, as well as other clients in Poland and Russia. Conti has served as a board member and officer at several organizations in both New York and the greater DC metro area. He is a member of the Emeritus Board of the Children's Law Center in Washington DC and of the Alumni Board of Doorways for Women and Families in Arlington VA. A graduate of Fairleigh Dickinson University with a B.S. in business management, Conti earned his M.B.A. from the Bernard Baruch College of the City University of New York. Conti and his wife Dorothy live in The Manors at Mount Vernon in Alexandria.

**David Barbour, Esq.**, is Board Secretary and has served on the UCM Board since 2011. He is an Administrative Law Judge at the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission. Barbour has served as President of two national associations of administrative law judges, as a board member at the Washington Decorative Arts Forum, and as PTA President at Hollin Meadows Elementary School. He earned his B.A. in history from the University of Michigan and his LL.B. from The George Washington University. David and his wife Nancy live in the Hollin Brook Park neighborhood of Alexandria.

Joining as new members of the UCM Board of Directors are:

**Dr. Zayed "Zee" Mady, D.D.S., F.A.G.D., F.I.C.O.I.**, was elected to the UCM Board in December 2015. He has been a practicing dentist for over 15 years and is currently a partner at the Mount Vernon Center for Dentistry and the Center for Dental Anesthesia, both in Alexandria. He is a Fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry (F.A.G.D.) and the International Congress of Oral Implantologists (F.I.C.O.I.). He has practiced all aspects of dentistry in many remote locations for underserved populations and has had the privilege to introduce both dental and medical care to several locations in need. He has been a loyal supporter of many medical charities including Doctors without Borders, CARE, Egyptian Cancer Network, and the Yacoub Heart Foundation, Egypt. Mady regularly participates with his colleagues for service days to provide low-income individuals in our area with free dental care at his office in Alexandria. He earned his Bachelor of Dental Medicine and Surgery (B.D.S.) at Alexandria University in Egypt, and his Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.) at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Mady enjoys travelling the world and is an avid soccer fan. He and his wife Rafah reside in the Glenmore community of Fairfax Station and are expecting their first baby boy in early spring 2016.

**Martin Schaefermeier, Esq.**, was elected to the UCM Board in December 2015. He is Of Counsel in the Washington DC office of DLA Piper, with more than 20 years of experience in a full spectrum of international trade matters. Schaefermeier practices international trade law, with a focus on import relief actions and litigation and on related import/export matters. He has served on the on the Board of Directors of Mansion House Club, Inc. and on the Duke Law Alumni Association. After receiving his first law degree from Albert-Ludwigs University in Freiburg, Germany, Schaefermeier earned a Masters of Law from Duke University School of Law. He and his wife Grace reside in the Mount Vernon neighborhood in Alexandria, where they are active members of Good Shepherd Catholic Church.

**United Community Ministries (UCM)** mobilizes the power of community to equip, educate, and empower people to measurably improve their lives. For more than 46 years, UCM has provided a

vital connection between people in need and the people committed to helping them thrive. Services include:

- **Immediate Help.** For families and individuals in crisis, UCM provides counseling, food, financial aid, and referrals to other resources.
- **Children's Programs.** UCM provides the next generation with essential education and enriching experiences, including full-day early care and learning, new parent education, and after-school programs for youth leadership development and computer access.
- **Workforce Development.** UCM helps adults increase their employability, with job counseling and computer training and with ESL and citizenship classes.

In Fiscal Year 2015, thanks to generous community support, UCM provided life-changing assistance to 10,200 individuals in 4,000 families in the Alexandria portion of Fairfax County. This included 5,000 children – more than any other agency in the Huntington-Mount Vernon area.

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