This is my couch.
This is the mask exhibit created by the SIU School of Architecture students, on display during the SIU faculty strike in the building right behind Occupy Carbondale.
Views of Carbondale’s Veteran Activists

BY SHARON WITTKE

Carbondale has a tradition of activism fueled, in part, by the presence of Southern Illinois University. Two longtime residents who attended SIU during the turbulent 60s and early 70s—Hugh Muldoon and Imam Abdul Haqq—spoke about Carbondale’s activist culture during that time and how the lessons learned then are applicable today.

Hugh Muldoon

Hugh Muldoon arrived at Southern Illinois University in 1968, the same year Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated, the Viet Cong launched the Tet Offensive and Chicago was rocked by “police riots” during the Democratic National Convention.

Muldoon, who completed his undergraduate degree at St. Bonaventure in Allegheny, N.Y., said he was attracted to SIU because of its graduate program in American philosophy, which quickly became an integral part of his activism.

Charter for Compassion

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

We therefore call upon all men and women to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion—to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate—to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures—to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity—to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.
This is the ALA Building Common Ground grant we received, funded by the Fetzer Institute. There are fantastic community engagement resources here: http://ppo.ala.org/commonground

Programming Resources
Charter for Compassion
Common Ground Tours
Films and Videos
Project on Civic Reflection
Reading and Discussion
Speaker Resources
Story Collections Projects
Websites for Additional Resources

The following resources have been assembled to assist libraries as they plan their Building Common Ground program series. Libraries should review these resources after identifying their institutional and community goals for this project. Building Common Ground programs should be multifORMAT so that participants may find their own level of interaction and involvement with issues raised through this project.

Charter for Compassion Programs

Libraries may create reflection, engagement, and action programs using the Charter for Compassion as the overarching theme. Libraries may wish to convene reading and discussion groups on Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life, include resources found at the International Institute for Compassionate Cities in a resource fair for the community, or market relevant Building Common Ground programs through the Compassionate Action Network. The Charter for Compassion is a document that transcends religious, ideological, and national difference. Supported by leading thinkers from many traditions, the Charter activates the Golden Rule around the world. Building Common Ground applicants are encouraged to integrate the Charter for Compassion resources into their program plan.
This is what we did with that grant: 11 Days for Compassion. Thousands of participants. 41 programs community-wide.
A growing awareness of compassion, and a growing collection of masks made by community members, lead by artists, displayed in the library, and all over town:

- Compassion Is Sweet at Cristaudo’s Bakery
- Dayshift Boutique
- SIU School of Architecture mask at Civic Center
- Carbondale Public Library
Thanks to all that, this is the Excellence in Library Programming Award we won from ALA.

This gave us $5,000, which we put toward future compassionate programs and initiatives.

The Carbondale Public Library continues to co-chair Nonviolent Carbondale alongside our community partners.

Together, our community has organized five 11 Days initiatives, totaling 184 programs throughout the community, exploring peace, compassion and social justice issues.
Leadership: The group’s informal co-chairs are:

Diana Brawley Sussman, Director Carbondale Public Library

Sarah Heyer, Executive Director Keep Carbondale Beautiful

Peter Lemish, Ph.D., Facilitator Civic Soul; Imagining Geographies SIU School of Journalism

Participation: Thousands of community members have participated in 11 Days programs, while hundreds have developed, promoted and assisted with 11 Days programs. Typically, a call for programs is released, then community members and organizations submit, develop and promote their own programs and exhibits during the 11 Day period. A comprehensive schedule is posted.
This is how we organize 11 Days (in a nutshell):

- Maintain a listserv.

- Call a meeting to decide on dates, theme and focus.

- Solicit programs via email, word of mouth, meetings, and advertising.

- Use an online survey to collect program proposals.

- Meet to approve programs.

- Gather and distribute program schedule on website, brochures, press releases, and advertising.

- Each sponsor promotes the full schedule as well as their own programs.
Try to reach every community sector.

**Program hosts have included:**
- Local United Nations Association
- Local Peace Coalition
- Interfaith Council
- Local businesses
- City Human Relations Commission
- Park District
- Boys & Girls Club
- Student Service Organizations
- Veterans groups
- Keep Carbondale Beautiful (Nonviolent Carbondale Co-Chair)
- SIU Civic Soul / Imagining Geographies (Nonviolent Carbondale Co-Chair)

And about 100 more!

**Programs have included:**
- Community forums
- Documentary screenings
- Art projects & exhibits
- Author visits
- Book discussions
- Story time
- Hunger Sale (giant annual yard sale fundraiser)
- Book discussions
- Poverty simulator game
- Newspaper insert publication

Consider highlighting regular community events (such as annual fundraisers for social service providers), and incorporate the theme into regular programming.
Host a Human Library

To promote compassion and cross-cultural understanding.

Consider inviting people with disabilities, veterans, police officers, people of various religions, formerly incarcerated people, and anyone who has experienced prejudice to volunteer as a Living Book. Invite the public to check them out, converse and hear their story in the library.

humanlibrary.org
Author and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee John Dear came to Carbondale for the 2015 11 Days for Compassion. He was impressed. He launched a nationwide Nonviolent Cities project inspired by Nonviolent Carbondale.

There are step by step instructions provided at www.paceebene.org/programs/campaign-nonviolence/the-nonviolent-cities-project/
We want Carbondale Illinois to be a Compassionate Community. This is an international initiative.

There are lots of resources at charterforcompassion.org
Our networking has lead us to involvement with other community action groups, like the Sparrow Coalition, a community partnership addressing issues of homelessness and poverty in Southern Illinois.

This has lead to a series of Community Forums on Poverty at the library, and a Social Work Intern program in partnership with the SIU School of Social Work. We now have 2 master’s degree students assisting 60+ clients, mostly with finding affordable housing, and jobs.

Carbondale library debuting social work intern

13 HOURS AGO • BY STEPHANIE ESTERS

CARBONDALE — When Shannon Butler arrived for her internship at the Carbondale Public Library on Thursday morning, the graduate social work student already had a young woman waiting to talk to her about helping her find her mother a job and a place to stay.

That’s Butler’s job these days, helping people — especially those who are homeless — find shelter, secure jobs and other resources they need. Butler works from the Carbondale Public Library as its first social work intern, mirroring a young, but growing trend of placing outreach workers in public libraries to address the needs of the homeless who congregate there.
Libraries are Vital Community Leaders

No matter the model, or the initiative:

- Show up for the opportunity.

- Say yes (whenever possible and appropriate).

- Figure out what the library can offer.

- You won’t organize and host every program in a community-wide initiative. You’ll help make the big picture happen.
The library may offer to...

- Gather information (maintain a listserv; create online surveys to gather program proposals and feedback).

- Distribute information (post program schedules online & in brochures; press releases; listserv communication; maintain project website; host community forums; provide a venue for social work interns).

- Offer leadership to keep conversations going (co-chair meetings, etc.).

- Write grants.

- Provide some programs.

- Be a venue for exhibits and programs hosted by other organizations.
Presented by Diana Brawley Sussman, Director
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618-457-0354, ext. 313
www.carbondalepubliclibrary.org

Presented at Public Library Association Conference
Denver, CO, April 8, 2016
Better Together: Civic Engagement and Civic Dialogues
Miriam Anderson Lytle
Gail Borden Public Library District, Elgin, IL
Susan Benton
Urban Libraries Council
Diana Brawley Sussman
Carbondale Public Library
Amita Lonial
Skokie Public Library