

## NBA Board of Trustees Meets in Oakland November 2015



Members of the Board of Trustees for the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) met together November 12-14 in Oakland, CA, for their second in-person meeting of 2015. On Thursday evening, board members joined with NBA staff for dinner and two presentations. Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, director of the NBA Incubate Initiative, provided an update on the current Incubate projects and process; and Mark Anderson, NBA president and CEO, looked back at the NBA's last five years, setting the foundation for the upcoming board conversations. "The NBA is being bold because we have been called," said Anderson, referencing Psalm 138:3: "On the day I called, You answered me. You made me bold with strength in my soul" (*New American Standard Bible*).

Committee meetings were held Friday morning, followed by the plenary session convening Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. The Friday meetings were held at Oakland Peace Center (OPC), which represents the three mission areas of the NBA: Incubate, Initiate, and Connect. OPC is an NBA Incubate Project; a community engagement site for NBA XPLOR, hosting intern Rachel Thomson; and a participant in the Disciples Care Exchange. Rev. Sandhya Jha, executive director of the OPC, supervises Thomson at OPC and at East Bay Housing Organizations, and Jha also led anti-oppression training for the XPLOR Residents earlier this year.

On Friday, colleagues from several ministries across the life of the Church joined the NBA board and staff for presentations and fellowship, including:

- Rev. Vy Nguyen, executive director of Week of Compassion;
- Rev. Toni Bynum, regional minister for the Christian Church in Northern California-Nevada, which also serves as a community engagement site for NBA XPLOR, hosting intern Eula Pagdilao;
- Rev. Sandhya Jha, executive director of Oakland Peace Center;
- Mel Hurley, Eula Pagdilao, and Rachel Thomson, NBA XPLOR Residents in Golden Gate, and Rev. Nancy McKee Jolda, their spiritual companion;
- John Rodenberg, vice president of philanthropy and mission implementation, and Kathleen Mertz, vice president for real estate development, of CCH, which also serves a community engagement site for NBA XPLOR, hosting intern Mel Hurley, and is a participant in the Disciples Care Exchange.

Rodenberg and Mertz provided an update on Woodland Christian Towers (WCT), a CCH property in Houston, TX, in partnership with the NBA that is going through a major renovation. The new WCT will offer 72 units of permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless households and will also include a new federally qualified health center to serve WCT residents and the local community. Additionally, Rodenberg and Mertz led a tour of nearby Westlake Christian Terrace, another newly renovated CCH property.

On Saturday, trustee Bob Cooper led the closing meditation and communion, as the group reflected on the November 13 terror attacks in Paris. He noted a quotation the trustees had seen from one of the peace partners while touring OPC: "In truth, we are all one. In reality, we are not."

As a final sending-forth upon the meeting's conclusion, Mark Anderson and the NBA staff recognized three NBA trustees who are beginning their service on the search committee for the next General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Jackie Compton Bunch, chair; Rev. Mary Lou Kegler, second vice moderator; and Bill Jennison, alternate. Together, the NBA staff and board members laid hands on and prayed with them as they commence this important service.

The NBA Board of Trustees will meet again via conference call in February 2016. The next in-person meeting is scheduled for June 2016, where the NBA board and staff will meet at the NBA offices in St. Louis, MO.