

The People Empowerment Fund of the Florida Conference was established to fund programs or events that support justice advocacy for under-represented and historically marginalized groups. This year, the Conference offered a \$1000 grant to churches in good standing with the conference that remitted 2021 per capita dues. Thanks to these congregations for their witness in the cause of justice. Brief descriptions of their proposals follow and you are encouraged to reach out to them directly when their project meets your passion.

### **Congregational UCC, Sarasota**

The target population for this project is people with disabilities and their families and lower income children and their families. To provide online activities and support resources for people with disabilities and their families as part of our Messy Church Ministry. We are a member of Messy Church (USA). 2. To support creation of printed resources to help support people with disabilities and their families in partnership with the Ray of Hope Network - a local parent created faith based ecumenical organization. 3. To help fund an in-person Messy Church outdoor event in partnership with our Mission Partner the Kid's Club Child Developmental Center of Bradenton. The Kid's Club was originally founded by our congregation and serves lower income children and their families.

### **Lakewood UCC, St. Petersburg**

“In conversations about a project that would require funding, we thought about the local elementary school with which we have a relationship. This was a failing school and it came to our attention that there were over 80 children who are ‘unhoused’ in the student body. We have been working with the school providing uniforms and other things for the students for several years. Given that relationship, in terms of promoting anti-racism, the church approached the school about providing age appropriate books for each classroom that promote anti-racism. The school was very receptive and has provided a list of books that they would like to purchase for each classroom. Any books left over would be placed in the school library. The church intends to put a book plate in each of the books purchased noting that the book was a gift from Lakewood United Church of Christ and other pertinent information” (from the grant application)

### **Longwood Hills UCC**

After a covid-necessary hiatus, Longwood Hills Congregational Church is resuming Impact Theater, a theater camp for grades k-12 in the greater Longwood community. Impact Theater provides instruction in theater and music and the opportunity to perform. Values taught include: teamwork, time management, mutual respect, self-confidence, inclusion, and healthy body awareness. We strive to have cast and crew mirror the community from which we draw. Approximately 40% of participants are ethnic or gender minorities. We also make accommodations for any disability a participant presents. The goal is for any child who desires to participate to have a place on the stage.

### **Spring Hill UCC**

SHUCC is partnering with Migrant Farmworker's Self-Help and will be providing monthly youth and family programs in the Migrant Farmworker Community. Beginning in February we will provide family friendly programming and support for this community, providing a safe place for community members to gather. We will be working to repair some of the broken playground and

sports equipment as well. We will also be providing food for their food pantry on a monthly basis.