

100+ SUPPORTERS JOIN UCCCN'S DARFUR AWARENESS WALK

by Janet Lombardi

With placards, banners, and a rainbow peace flag held high, congregants from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Central Nassau (UCCCN) were joined by their faith neighbors in a 2-mile Community Walk for Darfur Awareness in Garden City, N.Y. on Sunday, March 25, 2007.



To mark Justice Sunday and the Darfur relief cause advanced by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), the youth group at UCCCN initiated and planned the walk to raise awareness about the deadly conflict in Darfur, a region in western Sudan. Every year on Justice Sunday, Unitarian Universalist congregations in North America stand together to speak out about a humanitarian concern.

Nearly 100 supporters--including representatives and members from the Ethical Humanist Society, The Garden City Jewish Center, St. Anne's Church, Christ Episcopal



Church, Shelter Rock Unitarian Universalist Congregation, The Garden City Community Church, South Nassau Unitarian Universalist Congregation, and the Long Island YUUTH Group—walked through the streets of residential Garden City.



The youth group, grades 7 – 12, initiated the Community Walk for Darfur Awareness after viewing the film “Paper Clips,” about a middle school in Tennessee that collected 6 million paper clips to memorialize victims of the

Holocaust. The youngsters constructed and carried a 7’ felt banner saying, “Not on Our Watch! Save Darfur.” Rev. Hope Johnson, Minister, walked near the front of the group and stated, “I’m proud that the congregation I serve is taking a leading role in justice making.” She added, “We in Garden City have a responsibility to our brothers and sisters throughout the world.”

At the end of the walk, accompanied by sunny skies, walkers returned to UUCCN for refreshments, merchandise sale, and a resources table where people donated to Darfur relief. The walk was



preceded by a Justice Sunday service, co-ministered by Rev. Johnson and the youth group.

Darfur is acknowledged to be a humanitarian and human rights tragedy.

According to reports, 3.5 million people are now hungry, 2.5 million have been displaced, and 400,000 people have died in Darfur. Not since the Rwandan genocide of 1994 has the world seen such a calculated campaign of displacement, starvation, rape, and mass slaughter.

For information about Darfur relief, contact the UUSC, www.uusc.org, or email UCCN at office@uuccn.org.