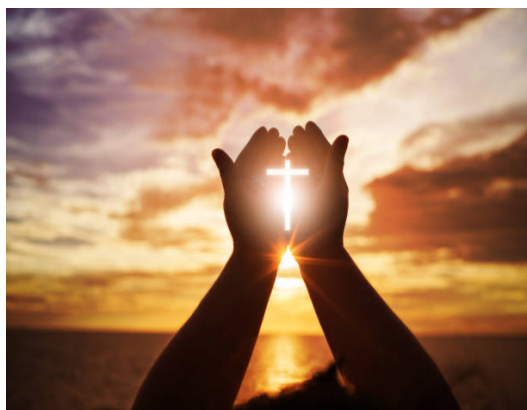




THE PHOENIX
UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH
GREATER DETROIT DISTRICT
WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER



Morning Prayer

May today there be peace within.
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.
May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.
Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance,
praise and love.
It is there for each and every one of us.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Theresa of Avila

PRESIDENT



...whose PURPOSE is to know God... to develop a creative, supportive fellowship and to expand concepts of mission through participation.

Recognize the words? Of course, you do. They are found in the Purpose of the United Methodist Women. While we are no longer United Methodist Women, WE are women united by Faith and through that union we are creative, supportive and mission driven. New name, new branded images and some needed changes as we reach women who do not have time for traditional units and circles. But what has not changed is our core purpose – to grow spiritually,

support other women and make a difference in the lives of women and children locally and globally. We will do this. It's the **how** that will have to change.

For a long time, I was a loner at my local church. I thought who needs to join a group? I can read my bible. I pray and I do service. Besides, I have small children. I don't have any time or energy to give to anything else. Why should I join a group to do what I already do? Why should I be bothered with connecting to a group? I am not a wolf. I don't need a pack. But I was wrong. John Donne said it best "No man (or woman) is an island. But it is not just a poetic sentiment. It is a matter of good health. All the reading on happiness, graceful aging and coping with the COVID pandemic have one intertwining conclusion: we need relationships. Yes! People need people. Not only are they lucky but healthier and able to do more through the synergy of working in relationships.

I am not asking that you commit to showing up at more meetings, but I am asking that you make relationship building and keeping them a priority. Yes, membership in our churches is declining; people are feeling tired and burned out. But, we have to have connections. Make time for calls, lunches, coffee dates, virtual conversations and to exercise with a buddy. Connect in a library, book club, craft group, online Facebook groups, gyms, Zoom classes. I am asking that you stay in the community and bring someone else in. It is through these connections that we will forge new membership models as United Women of Faith. Form them for your spiritual, mental and physical health.

Jeanette Harris

jharris48@yahoo.com

248.752.7147

TREASURER

A happy belated 2023 to everyone. I continue to say "time flies" but only when we look backwards. When looking to the future, I need patience because I become anxious.

The Greater Detroit UWF completed the year with \$46,668 in our Mission Giving. Last year we had a Mission Giving of \$29,748. Therefore, we are grateful for the increase of 2022. Five Star Persons declined to only 23 people vs. 51 persons for 2021. The Five Star Units supporting that program remained at 11 units for both 2021 and 2022. We are thankful for all continued support of United Women in Faith.

Things are changing with UWF. Missing Giving has declined nationwide, and they must adjust to the decreased Mission Giving. So far, the methods of giving remain the same. The five channels include the following: Pledge to Mission (general fund), Special Mission Recognition (pins), Gift to Mission (cards), Gift in Memory, and World Thank Offering. Many continue to give through the Five Star Channel program. In the Five Star Channel program you give in all five areas, and you receive or give a pin to honor someone. If you have too many pins and do not want to honor anyone, you can just donate the \$40 without receiving a pin.

Most Unit Treasurers have been treasurers for years, so none of this information is new. Previously, the Greater Detroit District would have leadership training. Over the years, fewer and fewer ladies attended the training. Now we have several officer vacancies within the GDD, so leadership training is no longer feasible. This is one of those changes I was addressing earlier. But if anyone is new as a Unit Treasurer, please feel free to call me and I will be glad to personally train anyone. In addition, if you are a seasoned treasurer, please feel free to call me with any questions you may have.

Once again, please send all monies by November 30, 2023, or by September 15, 2023, if you want to be honored or mentioned at the District Annual Meeting held the 2nd Saturday in October. We recognize all Five Star Persons and Units at the annual meeting.

Where does the money go? And this has not changed. A quote from the 2022-2023 Program Resource Program: “Our money goes to support National Mission Institutions: we support Regional Missionaries: we work towards climate justice: and we give to eradicate racism and injustices throughout the world. With every gift, we renew our commitment to improve the well-being of women, children, and youth.”

Due to the new scam of check washing, please do not put treasurer on the envelope.

Viola Jones

3975 Cornerstone Drive
Canton, Michigan 48188
(313) 530-7987 (cell) (734) 221-5478 (home)
jonesaja342@yahoo.com

CO-COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATORS

We would love to highlight the great work Women United in Faith units are doing – not only service projects but events, even if it is just getting together and sharing each other’s company. Send what you are doing to Kris Miranne at Kristine.miranne1921@gmail.com and we’ll feature you in the next *Phoenix*. Photos are certainly welcome!

We include these websites in each issue of *The Phoenix* because we think they are valuable resources. These are websites you should bookmark in your “favorites” list. Be sure to visit them on a regular basis so you can keep up with the great work of United Methodist Women!

National

<http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/>

Michigan Conference United Methodist Women

www.umwmichiganconference.org

Once you open the page, you can scroll down to the Greater Detroit District.

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/MichiganUMW/groups/>

Reading Program

<http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogram>

MIConnect

[http://news.michiganumc.org/.](http://news.michiganumc.org/)

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We Serve
We Advocate
We Make a difference

HARRIET IS RETIRING!!!



A few years ago, Harriet Jane Olson, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of United Methodist Women, visited the Michigan conference. Women all over the State had been wearing green buttons which said, “Harriet is coming”. Now after 15 years at the top of the newly rebranded organization, Harriett Olson is retiring.

Ms. Olson’s tenure saw significant changes. The organization is an autonomous agency with a flexible local structure. Significantly, the School of Christian Mission evolved into Mission u allowing a single focus Bible-based justice-oriented theme for women, youth and children. In 2015, Ms. Olson led the organization in launching a 150th anniversary celebration including the creation of The Legacy Endowment Fund designed to cover the core expenses of mission. In 2022, Ms. Olson ushered in a broad refreshing of the organization’s brand that opened opportunities for women to join and participate through an online All Access National Membership option that introduced the new name United Women in Faith, making clear the organization’s lifetime open door to women within and beyond The United Methodist Church.

The Greater Detroit District recently made a Gift in Mission to honor Ms. Olson’s work.

READING RESOURCES PROGRAM

The Reading Program is a cherished United Women in Faith tradition that brings together members in mission as they explore, share and discuss the written word. To participate, select one of the four plans and start reading! From captivating mysteries and heartfelt biographies to urgent messages about issues like immigration, racism and mental healthcare, there’s something for everyone. Reading Program books are divided into five categories: Education for Mission, Leadership Development, Nurturing for Community, Social Action, and Spiritual Growth. Books are available for people of all ages and reading levels. Books that are suitable for children or youth will be listed among the five categories; look for “Suitable for children” or “Suitable for youth” following book descriptions.

Find out more about the 2023 Reading Program by going to:

<https://uwfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ReadingProgramCatalog2023.pdf>

Be sure to download the tally sheet to keep track of your reading selectins.

Listen to Podcasts: Faith Talks

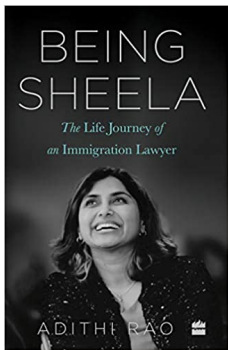
There are monthly conversations with United Women in Faith, hosted by Jennifer R Farmer. Each month, will explore timely themes and resources, from expert insights on ways to live your faith to inspiring interviews with spiritual leaders.

<https://uwfaith.org/resources/podcasts/>

You can also receive Reading Program credit for listening to the Faith Talks podcast. Listening to at least two episodes of Faith Talks counts as the equivalent of one book. Listen to three Faith Talks podcasts and the trio will count as two books in the category Spiritual Growth.

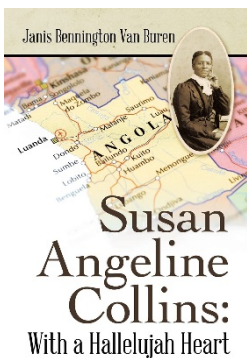
Several movies are also available for Reading Program credit, including *Hidden Figures*, *Pushout*, *The Hate U Give* among others. In determining the category for credit, identify the category of the original book and apply credit for the film to the same category.

Just a few reviews of 2023 books:



BEING SHEELA: THE LIFE JOURNEY OF AN IMMIGRATION LAWYER by Adithi Rao (2020). A young mother separated from her children for eight long years; a man facing deportation after being mistaken for a terrorist; a woman forced to endure domestic violence so she can retain her right to remain in her adopted country - these are just a few of the thousands immigration lawyer Sheela Murthy has helped in her long career as a philanthropist. From her birth in India through law school at Harvard and starting one of the world's most successful immigration law firms, Adithi Rao explores the journey of a woman driven to help others overcome injustice, dispossession, and legal tangles so they may live a life of dignity in an

increasingly challenging world. The book takes a close look at a few out of the countless cases that Sheela and her dynamic legal team have handled over twenty-five years in the face of rapidly changing American attitudes towards immigrants. "Being Sheela" is about the human side of a successful professional, an immigrant and woman of color, who has made it her purpose to strive for a better world.



SUSAN ANGELINA COLLINS: WITH A HALLELUJAH HEART by Janis Bennington Van Buren (2021). Years before Mary Jane McLeod Bethune started her school for girls in Florida, one Midwestern woman was steadily doing her part for girls in the northern Angolan high plateau. For more than three decades, African American missionary Susan Angelina Collins made a tremendous difference in the lives of countless African women and children, some orphaned and homeless and others escaping early marriage and subservience. This book explores the remarkable service-oriented life of Collins from her 1851 birth in Illinois until her 1940 death in Iowa. Collins overcame economic, education, gender, race, religious and other obstacles surrounding Africa's colonization to

serve as a stalwart missionary, leader, teacher, nurse, construction manager and surrogate mother to "her girls."



PACHINKO by Min Jin Lee (2017). Among New York Times Top Ten Books of the Year and National Book Award finalist, the novel details the four generations of an immigrant family as they fight to control their destiny in 20th-century Japan. When teenaged Sunja discovers she is pregnant - and her lover is married - she accepts an offer of marriage from a gentle, sickly minister passing through Korea on his way to Japan. But her decision sets off a dramatic saga that echoes through the generations. From bustling street markets to the halls of Japan's finest universities to the pachinko parlors of the criminal underworld, Lee's complex and passionate characters survive and thrive against the indifferent arc of history.

We equip women for leadership

In our sisterhood, we lift each other up.

We equip women and girls around the world to be leaders in their communities, their agencies, their governments and their churches.

We are committed to ensure these opportunities reach women of all races and ethnicities, across every language and economic group.

REMEMBERING SUSANNA WESLEY



Susanna Wesley was born on January 20, 1669. She never preached a sermon, published a book, or founded a church, yet Susanna Wesley is known as the Mother of Methodism. The example of faith and religious reverence she set for her children John and Charles inspired them to become powerful spiritual leaders, and to launch the Methodist movement.

Born in 1669, Susanna Wesley was the youngest of 25. At age 19, she married Church of England pastor Samuel Wesley and bore 19 children. Managing a home took great planning but she made time to nurture each child. Dale Patterson, General Commission on Archives and History states "She would mark out at least an hour, and so it might well be that Tuesday at 3 was a time that was exclusively devoted to John, let's say. Now that doesn't mean she ignored him the rest of the week. But that was their time to sit down and be together. She did that with all of her children."

Long before women were ordained, Susanna would sometimes gather friends around the kitchen table and lead prayers when her preacher husband was away. She kept the parish going in his

absence. Susanna also planted the unconventional idea of letting lay people serve as local preachers. <https://www.umc.org/en/content/susanna-wesley-mother-of-methodism>

SISTERHOOD OF GRACE

We are a sisterhood of grace. As a community of women organized for mission it is important that we be the creative, supportive fellowship espoused in our Purpose. In that spirit, we offer this covenant as a guideline for interactions in our programs. These ground rules provide us with a framework to ensure that dialogue and participation is open, respectful and brave as we share, pray, learn and listen together.

Sisterhood of Grace Covenant:

- Listen actively with head and heart
- Speak from your own experience
- Be aware of body language
- Respect confidentiality
- Respect personal space
- Own your intentions and your impact
- Practice sustainability
- Expect unfinished business - both discomfort and joy

NEWS FROM UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH UNITS

Metropolitan UWF



The Metropolitan unit recently celebrated the 90th (!!) birthday of our very dynamic president, Mary Floyd. Her family managed to pull off a surprise party after church on February 19th. Many congregants joined Mary and her family for this wonderful meal and celebration. Our UWF unit gave Mary a certificate honoring her faith and devotion to the community along with a sapphire UWF pin. Nellie Brown and Jeanette Harris are shown with Mary.



The Metropolitan unit also collects “loose change” on the 5th Sunday of every month. People save their change, and often dollar bills as well, to donate to our unit. These funds are donated to various programs throughout Detroit. Our last collection went to the Corner Shower and Laundry. This program provides private bathrooms, showers and laundry facilities to the homeless and others in need where they can shower and launder their clothes. They average 455 showers

and 568 loads of laundry in a given month. The unit's donation was used to purchase flip flops to be used by those taking a shower. See how a little bit of change can make a difference!

We're a sisterhood acting in faith to tackle the hard work of the world without hesitation.

Driven by God's love and united in sisterhood, we work to improve the lives of women, children and youth. Every day, we show up. We take action. We get it done.

ONGOING ADVOCACY

Every four years, the national office identifies a specific focus of advocacy along with their ongoing work for gender and racial justice and for oppressed and dispossessed communities, with special attention to the needs of women, children and youth. Currently, Just Energy 4 All is one such campaign. Below is an article from the January/February response magazine but it bears repeating for those who may not have read it.



Bizzy Feekes Brings Her Whole Self to the Work of Climate Justice

by Maryann Verghese

Bizzy Feekes uses many words to describe herself: artist, seminarian, writer. Feekes is Indigenous from the Winnebago tribe and the Ho-Chunk People—People of the Big Voice, multiracial, and Christian. She does not feel that any of these descriptions is isolated, but that all are gifts bestowed by God. In her work, whether with children at church or with undergraduates at Seattle Pacific University where she is a seminarian, she brings all these connected elements of herself to the work of climate justice. Feekes says that integrating her identity and work has been a process, however.

“For most of my life I have tried to compartmentalize the different sections of my identity,” she says, crediting time and teachings from other Indigenous people to helping shift that narrative. “I began to challenge that notion of seeing everything as separate, and instead I try to see my life as everything deeply interconnected, inseparable, and intrinsic to my being,” she adds.

In turns, she says, her whole being, work, and passions are of “an act of reverence and worship to Creator.”

Feekes brought all these passions and experiences together in her project for the 2022 Faithful Climate Action Fellowship. As one of the 15 Faithful Climate Action fellows, Feekes created a Bible study with original artwork featured in this article.

Faithful Climate Action Fellowship

The 2022 Faithful Climate Action Fellowship was a collaboration with United Women in Faith, Creation Justice Ministries, Wisconsin Green Muslims, Dayenu, Interfaith Power & Light, and Green Faith. Through funding from the United States Climate Action Network, the fellowship was a virtual and paid opportunity for young Black, Indigenous, and people of color aged 18-26 who identify as Christian, Jewish, or Muslim. The fellows participated in different skills-based trainings throughout the summer, completed a faith-based climate justice project for their fellowship, and received mentoring and guidance from the partner organizations.

Using her fellowship project as an opportunity, Feekes created a climate justice-focused Bible study titled “Maʔanegi Hirera—Belong to Earth,” connecting her identities as Indigenous Christian artist, seminarian, and writer.

“My attentiveness to climate justice comes from the teachings of my Indigenous culture and the deeply held convictions of my Christian faith, and my response to all of it is almost always through art,” she says. As Feekes does in her work, her Bible study integrates all these aspects of herself. Her goal in this study was to create a readable introductory text that shared both Indigenous and Christian teaching and included art as part of the practice of thinking about loving creation and acting for climate justice.

From start to finish, the artwork created for the Bible study was both personal and intentional. Although Feekes had no previous experience with watercolors, she decided to use paints made by an Indigenous producer with environmentally friendly ingredients. She chose to paint from photographs that highlight her personal connection to creation.

“Most of them come from moments where I stopped in my tracks and said, ‘I love the beautiful creation that Creator has created,’ and I also felt connected to it in those moments,” she said.



All My Relatives”

One painting, for example, highlights the recurring theme of blue herons throughout her life. Blue herons kept appearing in her dreams and are found in the original location of her people in Wisconsin, where she lived in Michigan, and in her current context in Seattle. Through conversations with her mother, Feekes learned that blue herons represent a sense of following your calling, and she

now views them as guideposts for her life. Including artwork in her study, Feekes can share her own connection with creation and invite others to find their own connections.

Inspiration from All Creation and Stories

Feekes shared that her inspiration for her work for climate justice relates to both her Christian and Indigenous teachings. In studying both traditions, she found that they have similar views on the intrinsic goodness of creation. Additionally, in both traditions, God gives a mandate that people should care for creation. Feekes interprets this mandate as a “rulership that has everyone’s best interest in mind.”

Understanding these creation stories and the responsibility we as humans are given over the Earth, Feekes shares a familial relationship with God’s creation. She views all of creation as her relative: the land, the air, the water, and all people. Because God says all is good, she says that means seeing not only people, but also all of creation as “image-bearers of God.”

As Feekes says, “When I see [creation] as all related to me, I have a responsibility to care for these relatives and advocate for them and work for reconciliation.”

In doing this work for reconciliation and right relationship with creation, one recent theme for Feekes has been lament. However, Feekes does not see this as despair or hopelessness.

“Lament isn’t just being sad,” Feekes says. “That’s part of it, it’s an important part of acknowledging your sorrow and your grief. But further than that, it helps us understand and recognize that things aren’t the way they should be. It’s an act of uncovering truths of life as we know it.”

Feekes says uncovering the truth is a step to working on reconciliation and repairing our relationship with the Earth. “Things don’t have to be this way. We can work on a future not marked by this hurt, this loss, this climate crisis.” Through this process and focus on lament, she can see where God is already at work.

You can see more of Bizzy Feekes’ art, writings, and other work at: <https://sites.google.com/view/bizzyfeekes/>

CHICKEN FARMING?

By Patience Chapata

United Women in Faith Training for Transformation team conducted listening surveys in three districts of Zimbabwe. The local team heard from women who expressed the need and desire for income generation. What topped their list for potential entrepreneurial activity? Chicken farming. This would be a new venture. For example, in the local Great Dyke United Methodist Church and Concession United Methodist Church, the primary economic activities are maize and tobacco farming or mining, which are not ideal vocations for women.

The local leaders sought to empower women with chicken farming, businesses which require less capital and physical labor to launch. The local team’s intent was to transform women’s livelihoods by imparting skills and knowledge to be successful poultry farmers.



“I am a qualified teacher, but I have been looking for a teaching placement since last year. The UWF (United Women in Faith) empowerment program came at the right time,” says Lindsey Dandajena, 27, a youth member at Great Dyke church. “While it is unfortunate that I lost four chicks, I am so happy that I now have an income-generating project. Doing chicken farming has improved my life and taught me certain skills that are valuable in this harsh economic environment where white collar jobs are scarce. Many thanks to UWF for their empowerment program which accommodates us young women.”



Rudo Mundondo, 33, a mother of three, was also motivated to succeed after receiving her training on the upkeep of chicks. “I am grateful to UWF for this empowerment project that has improved my livelihood and my skills. The upkeep of chicks needs someone who is smart, as the environment/fowl run has to be tended to regularly. I’m checking on the chicks, water and feed supply and also the ventilation. I also use natural remedies as medicine for the chicks to boost their immunity. For example, I use donkey dung and mutiti plants, a natural and traditional herb. I am happy my 25 chicks are healthy. So far, I have been able to impart knowledge and skills to 40 people (including my church and community members.”

Mundondo’s aim and prayer is to expose the Great Dyke community to other ways of making money so they can move away from selling kachasu, an unhealthy home-made beer. Mundondo says, “As a long-term vision, I am thinking of selling eggs, having an incubator for hatching chicks and also building a bigger fowl run. I have looked for a bigger plot where I want to run the project at a larger scale. I also balance the project with my duties as a mother and wife.”



Tarisai Chigwamba, a 40-year-old mother of three, agrees, “Due to the harsh economic conditions in Zimbabwe, one’s salary might not be enough to meet the family food basket. As such, the environment now calls for women to not wait for their husbands to provide.”

Her work has paid off. Chigwamba could not hide her joy as she said, “I am so happy that I was fortunate enough to be one of the beneficiaries of the program. This project has changed my life, as the upkeep of the chicks has made me an organized woman.

I had to renovate my fowl run after two chicks were eaten by mice. I draft my timetable to feed the chicks, do my household chores and my duties as a mother and wife. I also schedule time to impart the knowledge and skills I learned to my church and community members, especially on the importance of being innovative and creative.”

These new chicken farmers are surely innovative and creative. Blessed are they who have visions for they shall not perish. As Proverbs 31, verse 10, says, “Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.”

Patience Chapata is the journalist on the United Women in Faith Zimbabwe country team.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spiritual Life Retreat, May 12 – 13, 2002 (see the attached registration information)

Mission u of Michigan is located at First United Methodist Church in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. Registration begins at 4 PM Thursday, July 13 and goes through Saturday afternoon. ·

The adult study is based on The Lord’s Prayer and called **Living the Kin-dom: Exploring the Lord’s Prayer as a Spiritual Practice for Social Transformation**. The youth and children’s studies are also based on Living in the Kin-dom. **YOUTH AND CHILDREN ARE FREE** and must be accompanied by an adult.

Click on the link to find registration and accommodations information for Mission U

<https://michiganconferencemissionu.square.site/>

Claudette McMillan of Scott Memorial United Methodist Church is researching bus transportation. If you are interested in riding a bus, contact her at mcmillano48@yahoo.com



United Women in Faith Greater Detroit District Spiritual Life Retreat

May 12 – May 13, 2022



**Rev. Elizabeth Hill
Facilitator**

Lake Huron Retreat Center
8794 Lakeshore Drive, Burtchville, MI 48059-1115
810-327-6272 www.lakehuronretreat.org

Arrival time: Friday, May 12, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Departure: Saturday, May 13, 2:00 p.m.

Prices include room, 3 meals, snacks and materials

2 per Room	\$140.00 per person	Single Room	\$175.00
3-4 per Room	\$120.00 per person		

We only have Littleton Lodge – 14 rooms*

Littleton Lodge features 14 guest rooms (each with 1 queen/2 twins)

Limited rooms – first paid, first served.

REGISTRATION must be POSTMARKED by April 30, 2023 (late fee \$10.00 after that date)

Checks made payable to **Greater Detroit District UMW**

Send to:

Linda Pittman 18121 Midway, Southfield MI 48075. Email: deedeeppittman@gmail.com

Questions? Jeanette Harris jharris48@yahoo.com or 248 (752-7147)

Registration form is on the next page.

ATTENDEES

Name of UMW Unit (City first) _____

Contact person _____ Phone _____

Email or Mailing Address _____ Total enclosed \$ _____

Number in the room = Names written under each room

Room A (3 – 4 individuals)

	Name	Special Needs*	Email Address	Phone Number
1	_____	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____

Room B (2 individuals)

	Name	Special Needs	Email Address	Phone Number
1	_____	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____

Room C (1 individual)

	Name	Special Needs	Email Address	Phone Number
1	_____	_____	_____	_____

*Note special physical/dietary needs for attendees by name