

## AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN'S MINISTRIES OF RHODE ISLAND

Ministry is what we do. Our ministries are manifested in a variety of ways and venues – planning for events, promoting them, carrying them to completion; being available to help churches with programs, mission education and involvement in study and activity to those ends.

2015-16 was an eventful year.

- Needed Constitutional updating and revisions were made and approved at the June 2016 Conference. Two positions – Coordinator of Church and Community Ministries and Coordinator of Mission and Service Ministries – merged into one that describes the function of each, now called Mission and Service Ministries. With the changes to the Constitution the Love Gift position has been incorporated into the area of Personal Development Ministries. The Love Gift Associate now works with the Coordinator to plan as part of Love Gift's personal growth nature.
- State gatherings – all of which include AB GIRLS – were:
  - Saturday, April 9, 2016 – Bethany Free Baptist Church of Pawtucket hosted Church and Community Day with the theme “See... the Beloved Community”. Participating were Rev Cleo Graham, Rev Beth Jones and local church women reporting on ways that their churches are doing ministries in God's Beloved Community.
  - Friday-Saturday, June 3-4, 2016 – The 89th annual Conference for Women and Girls held at Canonicus was a general one-day event beginning on Saturday with breakfast, concluding with dinner for a remarkable 11-hour day. A select group of leaders from ABCORI churches had been trained on Friday night. They facilitated small groups throughout the day interspersed with large all-conference gatherings. The wonderful event was planned by a creative committee under the leadership of Beth Berry and Nikita McCallister. It was an outstanding experience of implementing the goal of developing leaders and empowering all women.
  - Saturday, September 17, 2016 Central Baptist Church of Jamestown hosted the statewide Mission Day with a wonderful opportunity to learn of the work of the Refugee Dream Center in Providence from Mr. Omar Bah, its Executive Director. Later, members of ABCORI churches shared experiences of participating in life-changing mission work trips.
  - Saturday, January 28, 2017, North Scituate hosted the annual Spiritual Growth retreat led by Dr Linda Bausserman. For the last 25 years, we have held a two-day spiritual growth retreat in January at Canonicus. After board discussion, it was decided to change this practice due to the frequency of weather-related difficulties or cancellations during the winter months. The already scheduled event was then modified to be held at a church and be a one-day event making possible complications less complicated. The result was an attendance increase of about 150%! In the near future, an annual spiritual growth retreat will be held as an overnight experience in the Fall as it once was. The next is scheduled for September 22-23, 2017 at Canonicus Conference Center.
- Plans are being made for
  - A hands-on Mission Day hosted by Ebenezer Baptist Church, Providence on Saturday, March 18, 2017 when attendees will visit one of several sites to work and learn, returning to Ebenezer for lunch and sharing of their experiences.
  - The annual conference: this year it will be a **Tri-State** meeting June -3, 2017 jointly planned with the women of Massachusetts and Connecticut to be held at Canonicus. It promises to be the beginning of new possibilities and relationships.
- Each year ABWMRI sets a goal and adopts a mission project that begins at the June Conference and ends at the event the following year. The current goal is to raise \$2,000 for refugee relief – well on its way to becoming reality.
- Part of the success of programming should be attributed to the work of Carol Myron, Communications Coordinator, who has consistently promoted all events in the newsletter *K.I.T.*, through email “blasts” and the ABCORI weekly e-notes. The national Executive Director recently singled her out for her work.
- National American Baptist Women Ministries celebrated the **65<sup>th</sup> birthday of ABW** in Washington DC at the end of July 2016. During the celebration, Rhode Island's own **Beth Berry** received the national “Shine the Light” award for her work with special needs adults in our state in creating G.E.A.R. (Give Everyone a

Role). We are most proud of Beth and value her love of and work among people of all walks of life. A number of women from our region were there to honor her and witness her acceptance.

Also, nationally there are some unusual opportunities for involvement of all ABWomen across the denomination. Understanding the needs of today's and yesterday's women, yearly gatherings are no longer a national conference lasting a week in a customary setting.

- a timely virtual mission encounter will be offered **May 8 – 12, 2017** on **Baptist-Muslim Dialogue**
- A 3-night **cruise to the Bahamas September 15-18, 2017** sponsored jointly with AB Women in Ministry will feature the components of a cruise plus the elements of worship and inspirational Bible study.
- A **“Wellness Retreat” September 27-30, 2018** – a national event using the facilities of our own Canonicus

It is a joy and privilege to function as president of this vital, affirming and empowering organization with an outstanding board of gifted, dedicated, creative and delightful women.

Serving with you,  
Ginny Rasmussen  
President, ABWMRI