

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2017

### **Earth Day Run/Walk to Benefit Climate Change Victims**

On Earth Day, Saturday, April 22, the Iowa City Climate Advocates will host the Barbara Schlachter Memorial Run/Walk for Victims of Climate Change. The 4.1-mile charity run/walk will benefit the American Red Cross's Disaster Relief Fund as well as honor the late Rev. Dr. Barbara Schlachter, a local environmental leader and Episcopal priest who passed away in February 2016.

The timed run/walk will follow the Iowa River pedestrian trail, starting at 9:00 a.m. at lower City Park and ending with an awards ceremony at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, with prizes for each age group, plus speeches about climate change activism and Schlachter's legacy, treats, tabling, and Earth Day-themed face-painting for kids. A shuttle will be available to transport participants desiring a shorter, 2-mile option from a midway point directly to the finish area, as well as take runners/walkers from Terry Trueblood's parking area to City Park before the race. Registration is \$30 for adults and includes an event t-shirt; kids 12 and under are free. Participants are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible at the event's website, [www.runforvictimsofclimatechange.org](http://www.runforvictimsofclimatechange.org).

"People are already suffering from climate change-related weather extremes, including intense storms, heat, and drought," says Eric Johnson, the event's chief organizer and co-leader of the Iowa City Climate Advocates. "While we absolutely need Congress to pass climate change legislation, we must also help victims who need relief now." Johnson chose the American Red Cross's Disaster Relief Fund as the recipient of the run/walk's proceeds, as the Red Cross is daily tasked with meeting the humanitarian needs caused or exacerbated by climate change, including the severe flooding of eastern Iowa last fall and the current evacuation of residents beneath California's Oroville Dam. "We need as many people as possible to participate in this event," Johnson adds. "Not only will a good turnout send a message to legislators and raise money for Americans in need, but it'll be a fun, meaningful way to mark Earth Day."

Rev. Dr. Schlachter was one of the first women to become an Episcopal priest in the late 1970s. Recognizing that climate change imperiled vulnerable communities and her grandchildren's future, she co-founded two local environmental groups: the Iowa City Climate Advocates—a local chapter of the national, bipartisan Citizens' Climate Lobby, which seeks to put a price on carbon emissions—and 100 Grannies for a Livable Future, whose mission is to "educate, advocate, and agitate for renewable energy, pure water, clean air, and a healthy environment for future generations" both locally and regionally.

In a *Press-Citizen* column last spring, Schlachter drew a comparison between her cancer diagnosis and climate change: "I continue insofar as I am able to be active in action related to

climate change, and it has given me pause to realize how cancer and our runaway reliance on fossil fuels are so similar to each other. “

Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, a founding member of 100 Grannies and former CEO of the global Women’s Environment and Development Organization, recalls, “Barbara was a great leader and friend and an excellent counselor and healer, in addition to being a compassionate parish priest. Especially after becoming a grandmother, she saw and felt how much our planet needs healing, needs our love and care. That inspired her fierce activism.”

The run/walk is sponsored by Iowa City Climate Advocates, 100 Grannies, Environmental Advocates, Trinity Episcopal Church, Scheels, the University of Iowa Community Credit Union, and Hills Bank and Trust. Organizations wishing to co-sponsor the event—and anyone wishing to volunteer—should contact Eric Johnson at (319) 400-9903.

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