

**Congregational Services Staff Group
Report for UUA Board of Trustees March 2009
Prepared by Tracey Robinson-Harris, Director for Congregational Services**

Young Adult Ministries

We are in the second (and final) year of a transitional time for the Office for young Adult Ministries. For this year, the mission and priorities that guide the staff are:

With a commitment to creating anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and multicultural institutions, communities, and ministries, the Office of Young Adult Ministries advocates, educates, trains, and develops resources for young adults and those engaged in young adult ministry. This year we have prioritized 1) fostering effective intergenerational ministry to and with our bridgers that results in congregational membership and lifelong relationship with Unitarian Universalism for our young adults, 2) the strengthening of current campus ministry programs and leaders as well as the nurturing of new campus ministries denomination-wide, and 3) the sharing of practical ideas and best practices for programming and ministry to and with older young adults in congregations. Most recently:

- We continued to support young adult ministry staffing, events, and projects with one-time and multi-year grants. We estimate we will distribute a total of \$41,750 in FY09. Additionally we have provided ~\$2,500 in scholarships to young adults this fiscal year.
- A revised edition of *The Guide to Young Adult Ministry* is in the final phases of production and will be available on line and in print prior to General Assembly.
- We are seeking nominations for new Young Adult Ministry Anchor Congregations and for the Donna DiSciullo Award. These will be announced at General Assembly.
- Office Co-Directors Nancy DiGiovanni and Erik Kesting attended the Allies for Racial Equity conference March 13-15 (this is an update to the travel schedules submitted with the January Board Packet).
- Office staff members have worked cooperatively with the Administration in responding to the 2008 Responsive Resolution: *Youth and Young Adult Empowerment: Accountability* by developing and deploying congregational and organizational surveys.
- Nancy is preparing a workshop on campus ministry for General Assembly and Erik is helping organize the Thursday evening multigenerational worship.
- The Office continues to provide consultations and to collaborate with District Staff in developing sustainable structures to support young adult and campus ministry and to train leaders in these ministries.
- The Office received the external evaluation report of the Groundwork Program, our Unitarian Universalist Youth and Young Adult Anti-Racism Training and Organizing Program.
- Materials for the newly revised Bridge Connections program were sent to all congregations in February. This program allows the UUA staff to provide districts, congregations, and campus ministry groups with contact information of young adults in their area so that they can reach out and welcome them if they transition geographically.
- Office members are making preparations provide young adult ministry staff in the new structure with helpful information and organized records on the programs and services the Office of Young Adult Ministries has historically provided.

JUUST Change – anti racism, anti oppression, multicultural transformation

Conversations have been initiated in ten districts regarding a regional strategy to support congregations that have multicultural ministries or that are interested in developing multicultural ministries and

partnerships. These conversations are being held with some combination of District Execs, Board Presidents, program staff, and lay leaders and JUUST Change coordinators. District leaders have been very receptive and working relationships are being established to help districts access information and resources.

As part of the district strategy we have also been working with UUMA chapters and in some cases jointly with LREDA chapters with a goal of getting a minimum of one-third of the full-time ministers and/or religious education professionals to volunteer to be proactive in their congregations doing ARAOMC work. The following UUMA chapters have been engaged: Chesapeake (southern JPD), Mountain Dessert, Florida, Ohio Meadville, and Metro New York is scheduled for May 1st. Each time we meet with the UUMA or LREDA chapter the goal has been reached. Efforts are underway with several other UUMA chapters to engage them in the process.

Journey Toward Wholeness Teams were previously established in the following districts Joseph Priestley District, Metro New York and Prairie Star. In each of these cases there is readiness and existing infrastructure, which means that they do not need to get board authorization or to build a team. Two district boards have authorized new teams and teams are now being formed in the Florida District and the Pacific Central District. As other districts are ready, JUUST Change Consultants will support the formation of new teams.

In March, JUUST Change Consultants came together for a regional strategy orientation to share resources and be retooled to work with districts. The plan is to match consultants with districts. Our focus for the rest of this program year is to get district teams in place and to engage districts and congregations in writing summaries of their work to document their processes and increase accountability for racial justice and inclusion.

Additional updates on ARAOMC:

- ❖ A thorough assessment of Groundwork Program has just been completed. The report is circulating to the GroundWork Collective and to those who gathered for the November consultation where the assessment was proposed.
- ❖ A tool for leaders (designed to shift understanding and provide frames and direction for conversation) is being developed for use by JUUST Change consultants and other trainers.
- ❖ Implementation of the GA 2007 resolution on Truth, Repair and Reconciliation continues with a focus on researching the relationship between the AUA and Native American tribes in the mid to late 1800's. An exhibit of our findings will be part of GA 2009 focusing on the relationship of the AUA and the Ute as part of the "Peace Policy" of the Administration of President Ulysses Grant. A letter has been sent to the Ute tribal leadership regarding our efforts.

Marketing

National Campaign - Google AdWords

Google AdWords provide a tactical and ongoing way for the UUA to get its message out. A primary benefit of Google AdWords is that ads can be created quickly to respond to timely news and media events. The UUA has developed an umbrella Google advertising strategy that uses both topical ads and generic branding ads.

Currently the UUA is running a series of Google Ads around Marriage Equality. These ads began running immediately following the November 4th passage of California's Proposition 8. The first set of ads ran through December 2nd. We restarted the campaign in the month of February. These ads continue to run. Below is the summary of these ads:

TOPIC	TIME PERIOD	TOTAL IMPRESSIONS	TOTAL # CLICK-THROUGHS	CLICK-THROUGH RATE	COST PER CLICK
Marriage Equality & Proposition 8	11/4/08 - 12/2/08;	5,359,273	13,875	.26%	\$.49
	2/6/09 – 2/19/09	3,925, 455	4,310	.11%	\$.37

Summary:

Total Impressions: 9,284,728

Click-Throughs: 18,185

In addition to the AdWords campaign the UUA, in collaboration with Swardlick Marketing, has worked to improve the “landing pages” for the respective ads. These landing pages are critical to each campaign's success because they support the message of each Google ad, as well as direct the visitor to important information about Unitarian Universalism.

Given the success of our Google AdWords program we anticipate an ongoing campaign. With ads focusing on interfaith families (Passover/Easter season) and on environmental justice (Earth Day).

Regional Marketing Campaigns

The UUA's goal was to launch three regional advertising campaigns each year for the next two years. The economy has impacted the ability to fully implement this strategy.

Twenty-nine congregations in the Baltimore Washington area were enthusiastically working to raise \$600,000 for a fall 2009 marketing campaign. In November 2008, based on the economy, they postponed the plan and instead decided on an interim “phase one” plan to do a 12-18 month Google Ad campaign. A chalice lighters grant was approved for \$30,000. The UUA's marketing staff is working with the Baltimore Washington Growth Committee on this project.

Four congregations in the Capital Region of New York (Albany/Schenectady) are in the fund-raising stage for a fall 2009 campaign. The fund-raising goal is ~\$50,000. The model for this campaign is different. The congregations are doing their own fund-raising, with limited UUA support. The UUA's marketing staff will manage the advertising campaign as it unfolds. This campaign – where the congregations take a leadership role in the fund-raising - may become the new model for future regional marketing campaigns.

FYI from Congregational Stewardship Services

Small Project Loan Pilot Program

The purpose of the program is to provide financing for relatively inexpensive projects in three broad categories: congregational mission, environmental stewardship, and critical/emergency. Administered by

the UUA director of Congregational Stewardship Services and the UUA treasurer, the criteria are as follows:

Eligible Borrowers must be an Annual Program Fund Fair Share congregation at both the district and national levels; must have total annual debt service that does not exceed 25 percent of annual income; must have had a balanced budget for the previous year as well as for the current year; must meet a minimum level of property and liability insurance; must take a congregational vote to accept a loan.

The term of the loan will be from three to seven years. The minimum loan is \$15,000 and the maximum loan is \$100,000 but must not exceed three-times annual financial commitments from congregants. The interest rate is based upon the United States seven-year treasuries plus 2 percent. A congregation must pay 15 percent of the project costs before a small project loan can be approved. There is a \$250 application fee.

Additional Comments

Congregational Services Offices are planning new ways to deliver our products and services to congregations, including marketing tips and tools for individual congregations. "Tool kits" in development include guides for direct mail, Google AdWords, mystery worshipper, research and mapping tools, public radio, and social networking. These plans include having more resources on the UUA website (including congregational case studies), as well as delivering tutorials via webinars and other electronic methods. Congregational Services Offices also plan on using these same delivery techniques to provide resources around stewardship, governance, leadership, and young adult ministry.