

**Identity-Based Ministries
Report to the UUA Board of Trustees
April 2008**

Taquiena Boston—Director

Sofia Betancourt—Director, Office of Racial & Ethnic Concerns

Devorah Greenstein—Program Coordinator for the Office of Accessibility Concerns

Keith Kron—Director, Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian & Transgender Concerns

Simona Munson—Program Coordinator for Identity-Based Ministries and the Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns

Laura Spencer—Program Associate for Racial and Ethnic Concerns

Office of Accessibility Concerns

Work has been progressing on an interfaith accessibility manual, a complete guide to accessibility and inclusion for congregations that the UUs and Methodists are doing together. Rev. Devorah Greenstein met with Dr. Charlotte Hawkins-Shepard of the United Methodist Church to set deadlines and assign responsibilities.

Underway are the very first meetings with BookShare – a nonprofit organization in California that is a “national repository of scanned books” for people who are blind and have other print disabilities. The goal is to bring UUs and Bookshare together so that we can scan and proofread progressive/liberal books, which then can be made part of this collection.

Responses to the Assistive Listening Demo Kit have been very positive. As a result of the hands-on trying our assistive listening equipment, several congregations have been able to select and purchase the equipment that best matches their needs. The comments from hard-of-hearing congregants have been very moving.

Equal Access, the just-forming UU affinity organization of UUs with disabilities (and their families, friends, allies) has completed their mission/vision/by-laws, which can be seen on the access-L listserv. Officers are being selected and membership recruitment will begin soon.

Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns

There are nearly 580 officially recognized Welcoming Congregations, including one congregation that recently went through a process of reaffirmation of their Welcoming Congregation commitment after 11 years of being officially recognized as one. This congregation is only the second to seek WC "recertification." Over 120 Welcoming Congregations have either gone through or are currently working on the Living the Welcoming Congregation Program.

Nearly 40 congregations in search of a minister are hosting a Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop as part of their search process this year.

At the end of February, Rev. Keith Kron, Director of OBGLTC, and Simona Munson, OBGLTC Program Coordinator, attended Interweave's annual Convocation in Denver, CO. Conversations addressed such issues as to how to involve more youth and young adults at yearly Convocations and how to make Interweave a truly multigenerational organization (great thanks to Nancy DiGiovanni, Young Adult & Campus Ministry Director of Programs, for leading some of these conversations). Keith and Simona also led a workshop which covered both Living the Welcoming Congregation as well as services and resources OBGLTC provides to UU BGLT and allies.

Keith will be preaching at the installation of Robin Gray in Tallahassee, FL this spring to kick off the work of Florida UUs working against the anti-gay marriage ballot initiative on this November's ballot.

Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns

The Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns is extremely blessed by the coming addition of the Rev. Alicia Forde as our Program Coordinator for Multicultural Congregations. Alicia will be working closely with the Diversity of Ministry Team (DOMT) initiative, helping to prepare Unitarian Universalist congregations for successful ministries with ministers of color, Latina/o Hispanic, and multiracial clergy.

Rev. Sofia Betancourt has been primarily focused on the DOMT initiative in the last quarter, visiting congregations and conferences and focusing on the hiring process for the Program Coordinator for Multicultural Congregations position. She also co-taught a class with Rev. Devorah Greenstein during intersession at Starr King called Combating Oppression: Power Analysis through Anti-ableist and Anti-racist Lenses. In March she coordinated an annual retreat for ministers, ministerial candidates, and religious educators who identify as people of color, multiracial, and/or Latina/o Hispanic on behalf of DOMT. 34 religious professionals met at the Mercy Center in the San Francisco area for a very successful event. She also had the honor of preaching at Rev. Theresa Hardy's ordination.

Assessment of Ministry to youth and young adults of color and Latina/o and Hispanic descent

One-on-one interviews with youth and young adults of color continue. Design of an online survey is underway. Date and location for the summer visioning gathering in conjunction with DRUUMM YaYA has been set for August 1-7 at Simpsonwood Conference Center in Atlanta Georgia. Advocacy work continues for ministry needs of youth and young adults of color in the restructuring of YACM and Youth Office and as a part of the Youth Working Group.

Office of the Identity-Based Ministries Director

Taquiena Boston co-presented a workshop on Preparing the Way for Multicultural Ministries at the Now Is the Time – Leading Congregations Into a Multiracial/Multicultural Future Conference in San Jose, CA in February. Co-presenters were Paula Cole Jones, JUUST Change Consultancy, and Rev. Sofia Betancourt, Director of the Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns.

Taquiena met with the Northeast Regional Group (NRG) and Middle America district staff at their retreat at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico at the end of February. She was invited by NRG to talk about helping congregations prepare for sustainable multiracial/multicultural ministries. Her presentation

included an overview of the history and current status of multiracial/multicultural congregation studies, as well as information about the UUA's attempts to diversify ministry and membership, and the DOMT initiative. The meeting resulted in identifying ways that NRG and the UUA could partner in the DOMT initiative.

Staff travel schedules noted below.

IdBM Staff Group Travel Schedules
April – June 2008

Taquiena Boston

April

1-2	Boston, MA	Public Witness and Leadership Council meetings
26-29	New York, NY	Power of Story (Multiracial/Multicultural Congregations) Conference at Middle Collegiate Church

May

6-7	Boston, MA	Public Witness Meeting and Leadership Council
10-11	Richmond, VA	First UU Church for “Preparing the Way for Multiracial/Multicultural Ministries” meeting and worship

June

23-29	Fort Lauderdale, FL	UU University / General Assembly
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Sofia Betancourt

April

11-13	Oakland, CA	Meeting with leaders and preaching
26-29	New York, NY	Power of Story (Multiracial/Multicultural Congregations) Conference at Middle Collegiate Church

May

10-12	New York, NY	Preaching at 4 th Universalist in Manhattan, NY
30-31	New York, NY	Multiracial Families track at Metro NY Anti-racism conference

June

23-29	Fort Lauderdale, FL	General Assembly
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Devorah Greenstein

April

12-16	Palo Alto, CA	BookShare Meeting
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May

15-19	Lyons, MI	Disability activist retreat
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June

23-30	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	General Assembly / Professional Days
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Keith Kron

April

4-6	Duluth, MN	Opening Doors Conference, Keynote Speaker; Preaching
13	Marysville, WA	Preaching, workshop
14-17	Camp Allen, TX	Interim Ministers' Meeting—BCT/MC conversation
20	Olympia, WA	Preaching
20-23	Federal Way, WA	UUMA—PNWD Ministers' Meeting
25-27	Surprise, AZ	Preaching, Workshop

May

2-4	Tallahassee, FL	Preaching, Installation of Robin Gray, kickoff to FL work on marriage ballot initiative
10-12	Princeton, NJ	Preaching
14-15	Boston, MA	Skinner House Board retreat
25	North Vancouver, British Columbia	Ordination, Stephen Atkinson

June

4-5	Boston, MA	Diversity of Ministry Meeting
6-8	Baltimore, MD	Preaching
20-22	Memphis, TN	Preaching, Workshop
23-29	Fort Lauderdale, FL	UUMA / General Assembly
29-July 5	Potasi, MO	Midwest UU Summer Assembly, Workshop Leader

Laura Spencer

April

4-6	Ft. Worth, TX	DRUUMM YaYA Spring Summit
11-14	Boston, MA	Youth Working Group
26-29	New York, NY	Power of Story (Multiracial/Multicultural Congregations) Conference at Middle Collegiate Church

June

24-29	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	General Assembly
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