

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

Taquienna Boston—Director

Sofia Betancourt—Director, Office of Racial & Ethnic Concerns

Alicia Forde—Program Coordinator for Multicultural Congregations

Devorah Greenstein—Program Coordinator for the Office of Accessibility Concerns

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

Tracy Ahlquist—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

Identity-Based Ministries welcomes Tracy Ahlquist as Program Coordinator. In addition to providing administrative support to Identity-Based Ministries, Tracy will provide staff support to the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee.

Office of Accessibility Concerns

Equal Access, an organization of Unitarian Universalists (UU) with disabilities, their friends and families, held their first meeting in Boston in September. Identity-Based Ministries is supporting Equal Access in its early stages of formation and growth. Currently with 70 members, Equal Access advocates on behalf of Unitarian Universalists with disabilities and their families, serves as an umbrella organization for disability identity caucuses, and is creating a website (www.equalaccess.org) and electronic newsletter. The first identity caucus includes 18 people concerned with psychiatric disability issues.

The **UU World on Tape**, which provides free cassette tape subscriptions to UUs who have print impairments, is joining with the UU World staff to produce a professionally read and digitized version of the magazine, which will be available both as mp3 audio files on our UUA website and in cassette or CD form for our disabled readers. The pilot project will begin with the next issue of the UU World.

In the second year of offering the **Assistive Listening System Demonstration kit**, OAC is promoting the use of a small battery-operated portable unit that is suitable for use in meetings and religious education classrooms as well as the larger, stationary equipment designed for use in the sanctuary.

Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns

Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT)

The program, designed to help congregations conduct their ministerial search in fair, anti-oppressive ways, continues to grow with 28 congregations signed up for training to date (9/18/2008) -- more than the program has generally handled in any year. In September, 20 new BCT facilitators will receive

training to help offset the higher demand. Most will observe the BCT training with First Universalist, Minneapolis on the weekend of Sept. 19-21, and three trainers will receive apprenticeship trainings with Rev. Keith Kron this year.

BCT has been revised to address current issues related to ministerial search and calls, and the program identifies subtle ways that congregations and search committees have acted out unintended biases toward ministers who are people of color, Latino/a/Hispanic, bisexual/gay/lesbian/transgender, and ministers with disabilities.

BCT's are also being done with congregations entering the Diversity of Ministry Initiative as one way to open deeper conversations about issues of race and ethnicity in the congregations. Uncovering unconscious biases and providing an opportunity for reflection and conversation may be the best benefit of Beyond Categorical Thinking -- though more and more ministers in search, particularly ministers of color, are asking whether or not a congregation has done a BCT as part of its search process.

Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns

Alicia Forde continues to work closely with Sofia Betancourt and members of the Diversity of Ministry Team (DOMT) in shaping the DOMT Initiative. As of June 2008, resource material that will include an application and introduction packet were compiled and made available to congregations via the UUA's website, at General Assembly where Alicia co-facilitated the workshop *Preparing the Way for Multicultural Ministries* for congregations, and upon request.

To date, there are three congregations pursuing settled Associate Ministry in the Initiative, with a timeline of settlement in 2009 – 2010; three congregations with applications pending; and another two (solo sites) in serious discernment.

In July 2009, Alicia served on the U.U. Leadership Team Staff as one of the anti-racism/anti-oppression/multiculturalism (AR/AO/MC) facilitators. This was an opportunity to work closely with lay leaders and ministers from four districts on furthering their AR/AO/MC journeys.

This fall, Alicia will finalize a design team for U.U. University's Multicultural Track 2009. The team's focus will be to design programming for U.U. University and model one way of living in to multicultural community.

Traces of the Trade

Rev. Sofia Betancourt and Rabbi Julia Watts Belser have recently completed a Leader's Guide for the new documentary, *Traces of the Trade*. *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North* chronicles the journey of nine descendants of the largest slave-trading family in the United States, as they probe the history of their New England ancestors and confront the contemporary legacies of slavery. The documentary follows producer/director Katrina Browne as she and her family travel to Rhode Island, Ghana, and Cuba to retrace the notorious Triangle Trade – and search for the hidden history of their family, the region, and the nation.

The complete leaders guide can be found at http://www.uua.org/documents/idbm/traces_trade_guide.pdf

Additional DOMT Info

The seminarians of color group is experiencing a positive resurgence. There is new energy from co-conveners Chris Long and Walter LeFlore. A Diverse Religious Professionals Retreat will be held at Simpsonwood in Atlanta, GA from March 5-8, 2009.

Assessment of Ministry to Youth and Young Adults of Color

The **Mosaic Project** Summit was held August 1-7th in Atlanta, GA. Thirty participants included youth and young adults of color, ministers of color, Identity-Based Ministries Staff, and other adults of color. Results underscore the real and immediate need to increase the level of support and ministry to youth and young adults of color locally, regionally and continentally.

Laura Spencer is part of the planning team for the 2008 LREDA Fall Conference where the focus will be “Building a Multigenerational Faith: Creating Wholeness in our Congregations”

Office of the Identity-Based Ministries Director

Taquiena Boston is serving as the curriculum editor for Building the World We Dream About, a Unitarian Universalist curriculum on race and ethnicity, developed by Mark Hicks, a professor of transformational education and member of All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, DC. Taquiena will spend the fall revising the curriculum based on survey evaluations submitted by then field test congregations.

Staff travel schedules noted below.

**IdBM Staff Group Travel Schedules
September – December 2008**

Sofia Betancourt

September

19-21 St. Paul, MN Beyond Categorical Thinking training

October

9 Boston, MA DOMT fall meeting

25 Minneapolis, MN President's Council

November

1-3 Chicago, IL AAR

9 Murray Grove, NJ DRUUMM Annual Conference

11-13 Boston, MA IdBM staff meeting

15 Orlando, FL Florida District Board Meeting

23 Tarpon Springs, FL Preaching

22 Miami, FL DOMT meeting with Congregational Leadership

December

7 Annapolis, MD Preaching (DOMT)

Taquienna Boston

September

9 – 12 Boston, MA
Essex, MA UUA Leadership Council meetings

October

1 Boston, MA UUA Leadership Council

7 Boston, MA Ministry & Professional Leadership (Building
Multiracial/Multicultural Congregations

25 Minneapolis, MN President's Counsel

November

7 – 9 Murray Grove, NJ DRUUMM Fall Conference

11 – 13 Boston, MA Identity-Based Ministries All-staff Meeting

19 – 22 Boston, MA Journey Toward Wholeness TC fall meeting

December

3 Boston, MA UUA Leadership Council

Alicia FordeSeptember

19-21	St. Paul, MN	Beyond Categorical Thinking training
23-27	New York, NY	The Maafa Commemoration

October

9	Boston, MA	DOMT fall meeting
18-19	Queens, NY	Preaching - UU Revival hosted by the UU Congregation of Queens

November

7-9	Murray Grove, NJ	DRUUMM Annual Conference
11-13	Boston, MA	IdBM staff meeting

December

10-12	Seattle, WA	Excellence in Ministry Summit
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Devorah GreensteinOctober

1	Boston, MA	Leadership Council
31	Chicago, IL	American Academy of Religion meeting

November

7	Flagstaff, AZ	UU Fellowship of Flagstaff congregation
11	Boston, MA	IdBM staff meeting
19	Boston, MA	JTWTC meeting

December

5	Plantation, FL	River of Grass UU congregation
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Keith KronSeptember

18-22	Minneapolis, MN	BCT training of trainers/BCT weekend
23-24	Denver, CO	Guest lecturer sexuality class, meetings
28	Blaine, WA	Welcoming Congregation start up; preaching

October

6-9	Boston, MA	UUA meetings
10-11	Dallas, TX	Beyond Categorical Thinking meeting
11-12	Akron, OH	BCT weekend
17-18	Philadelphia, PA	UU Church of the Restoration - consultation, meetings
18-19	Pittsburgh, PA	BCT/Diversity of Ministry weekend
20-21	Seattle, WA	Gay Men's Health conference (presenter)

November

1-2	Palo Alto, CA	BCT weekend
7-8	Laconia, NH	workshop
8-9	Littleton, MA	BCT weekend
10-14	Boston, MA	IDBM staff meeting
15-16	Baltimore, MD	BCT weekend

December

6-7	Modesto, CA	preaching, workshop
13-14	Milwaukee, WI	BCT weekend
18	Boston, MA	UUA/Diversity of Ministry meeting

Laura Spencer

September

28-30	Boston, MA	Interviewing candidates for Ministry to YaYAOC position.
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October

1-2		Working from Boston
2-5	Boston, MA	Youth Ministry Working Group
9-12	Titusville, NJ	YACM training
24-28	Albuquerque, NM	LREDA Fall Conference

November

7-9	Murray Grove, NJ	DRUUMM Fall Conference
11-13	Boston, MA	IdBM Staff retreat
11-14	Boston, MA	Youth Working Group