

Reflection Paper

Religious Education Credentialing, Master Level

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I am a religious educator to my core. I was born a religious educator and have spent my life in formation as a master religious educator. Connie Goodbread and Susan Smith continually say in their district work, "Everything we do is faith development. All we teach is Unitarian Universalism. The congregation is the curriculum." I would change that slightly. Everything I do is religious education. All I teach is Unitarian Universalism. The world is my classroom.

I'm a rather unconventional variety of religious educator. While I would not be chosen to write a chapter in an *Essex Conversation II*, I have equipped and supported many religious educators and other congregational leaders to stretch beyond their expectations. I know I have become a Master Religious Educator when my students surpass my own knowledge and skill. And they do so regularly. It is my work's joy.

I am relationally curious and courageously open to love. I have a deep trust that the Universe holds me and that people do the best with what they've got. I'm a natural translator between cultures and paradigms. I am an almost obsessive synthesizer of information. I see patterns and questions and connections to Unitarian Universalism everywhere. I notoriously possess an unusual energy level fueled by faith. All this colludes to create passionate learning and creative possibilities everywhere I go.

As a formally trained teacher with years of classroom experience and as a mentor teacher, I carry the principles of applied meta-cognition, multiple intelligences, Maslow's Theory of Motivation, and cultural competencies in my bones. I interpreted Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a justice imperative. If learning is a sacred process, and I believe it is, then every person has the inherent right to have their very basic needs met to be ready to learn. Making sure my students are physically, emotionally and mentally safe as well as fed and rested are as much a part of my pedagogy as integrating multiple learning styles.

In my mid-20s, I added Fowler and Dewey to my repertoire. Fowler helped me understand that learners are not only on an intellectual journey but a faith formation journey, as well, that impacts not only religious learning environments, but also secular. I am not one to compartmentalize learning situations, but rather, recognize and integrate the whole human being. I do have to admit that I have been challenged as to Fowler's applicability to cultures that are not Euro-centric and educated. Dewey's writings on real-life, experiential learning within multi-generational community resonated with me, and I was able to replicate this philosophy in my Muckleshoot classrooms (which were often not contained in a school building.) Dewey also believed that we learn as much, if not more, from our mistakes as from our successes. I have always tried to make space and explicit processes for students to make mistakes, learn, and fix them. Both Fowler and Dewey instilled in me that all true education is religious education.

I don't remember ever making a distinction between the religious nature of church life and the religious nature of public education. In some ways, public and tribal education are more sacred and hold more opportunity for religious exploration, at least in the way that most religious education programs are currently designed. When I opted to pursue a master's degree the real decision was between a Masters of Education and a Masters of Divinity. I was answering a very real call to ministry. I chose a Masters of Education, specifically to be a religious educator with a community of learners Monday through Friday.

Who am I? What is the ultimate? What is my relationship to the ultimate? What are my responsibilities to my connections with the rest of the world? What do I value, need, and love? What is the meaning of my life? These are all questions I weave into any "classroom" in my care.

Life Learning & Faith Development Touch Points

Adoption—My theological orientation emerged concurrently with my identity as an adoptee. I interpreted my story of origin as a Universalist mandate. There was a very real possibility that I could be related to any stranger I met on the street. Even at a young age, I took this very seriously. Soon after I learned to read I started pouring through newspaper obituaries looking for people who looked like me and therefore could be related. I became engrossed in people's stories. It became a life-long spiritual discipline. Theologically, I am related to every one of those stories and so I

give my gratitude for their lives, gifts, and struggles. *I am related to all of humankind.*

Sesame Street—I grew up in a small, Midwest farming community where homogeny reigned and the culture was reserved. When I was a very small child the one hour a day when I felt joyously alive and well was when I watched *Sesame Street*. I loved learning and singing and being silly. And the cultural diversity among people and monsters was very clear to me. The differences between *Sesame Street* and Vermilion, Ohio were very clear to me. I made a commitment to myself that as soon as I grew up, I would go find this *Sesame Street*. And if it really was make-believe like my brother said, I would create my own *Sesame Street*. My grandmother fully supported my plan. *I will grow up and create Sesame Street.*

Grandmother— The literature shows that resiliency can be secured by just one safe person in a child's life who deeply sees them and believes them. My Gramma Erma was this person for me. I stayed with her for much of my childhood. In the morning over breakfast we would listen to Paul Harvey and the news. She always asked my opinion, even on very serious adult matters. And when I sheepishly told her at the tender age of seven that I thought I was going to grow up to be a minister her response was, "what makes you think you aren't a minister already?" *I am a minister.*

Ms. McDonald. My third grade teacher, Ms. McDonald, instructed us to quietly work on our projects. We got up in a flurry of activity to assemble whatever materials we needed. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Ms. McDonald take a blanket and make a nest under a classmate's desk. With another blanket draped over the desk she tenderly tucked the little

boy in for a nap. Then, sweetly smiling, she hushed us and asked that we let Leon sleep and rest and later give him some extra loving. The classroom was transformed into a sanctuary. *School is holy. Our safety and well-being are more important than projects.*

Later, Ms. McDonald was my Sunday School teacher at the Methodist church. Not only was she patient with my (sometimes blasphemous but genuine) questions, she let me sit silently with her during a church retreat. She shared with me her daily scripture: "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24) *Choose joy. This moment belongs to the divine, which is big enough for my questions.*

8th Grade Vote—Our student newspaper held a survey in which students voted on "the most likely..." I was voted most likely to become a teacher. *My community witnessed and affirmed me as an educator.*

High School Baccalaureate—My senior class voted that I should give the Baccalaureate sermon for the graduation worship (remember, this was the Midwest in the mid-1980s.) I preached on giving your life to what you love, because that is the only thing that will save us. It was incredibly well-received. And that is the same sermon I preach 24 years later. *My community witnessed and affirmed me as a religious leader.*

Bowling Green State University Honors Program and the Margins—I attended college with the goal of earning my teaching credentials, but I learned more about education outside of my teacher training. I immediately recognized that the demographics of my Honors Program did not reflect the diversity which I enjoyed in the campus community. The Honors Program demographics were upper-middle-class white. This being

my own demographic, I set out to be a witness, a change-agent and a bridge. I intentionally organized to bring my Honors Program colleagues to our margins and build relationships. My studies remained simply adequate, as my attention was given to social justice: protesting apartheid and advocating divestment, expanding university policies to include protections for gays and lesbians, leading a campus-wide Human Rights Campaign, fundraising creatively for scholarships, promoting sexuality awareness programming as a Resident Advisor, and serving as a consistent witness and ally for our fledgling Black Student Union. *My community and establishment witnessed and affirmed me as an educator and a community leader.*

During this period I was a member of a group of students plotting to create a covenantal, non-dogmatic religion. A professor took us to her Unitarian Universalist Church. *Campus Ministry outreach works.*

Muckleshoot Tribal School—My first real teaching job was on the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation. I taught at their tribal school through the '90s. At that time the tribe's unemployment rate was 60%, the household poverty rate was almost 75% and the alcoholism and abuse rates were staggering. During my job interview an elder leaned over and said, "You do understand that we view teaching as a political act of rebellion? Our lives depend on it." I taught 3rd grade up through the high school, which I initially designed and opened. Magical things happened in our classrooms and I had kids testing out of special education. I had the trust and permission of the school board to create a experiential, value-based learning environment that was open to the whole community. My

classrooms were always lively and full. I taught that education comes with a responsibility and that there is a response necessary in responsibility. Class projects were never boring. Eventually an outside consultant told me through clenched teeth that I was fired for giving the kids and the teaching assistants (Muckleshoot elders) too much power. Leaving this vocation and community almost broke my heart and certainly caused a crisis of faith. I've never been able to go back to school teaching. *Relevant education is powerful, political, and righteously dangerous.*

Foster Parenting—I literally brought my work home with me. Over the course of four years my partner and I were foster parents to eight Muckleshoot-Mexican children, one of whom we unsuccessfully sought to adopt. I was made intimately and painfully aware of broken foster systems, institutional racism and classism, and the effects of generational cycles of abuse. I also learned about my own boundary and abuse issues. One of my teenage daughters, Malikah, asked, "you go all fierce for us, but when are you going to stand up for yourself?" *I must advocate for myself, before I effectively advocate for others. Also: ritual and safe, clear boundaries are holy salve.*

The Humanist Institute—I experienced this same institutional classism, racism and elitism while studying at The Humanist Institute. The theories were powerful and beautiful. The praxis was flat. As a young idealist and humanist, I observed a painful chasm between traditional, modernist humanists and post-modern, post-secularist humanists. I still experience this every year at the humanist booth at our General Assembly. The simmering anger reflected in their materials is disturbing. I haven't

given up on humanism as an emphasis with my Unitarian Universalist faith tradition, but I have fallen away from the Humanist Movement. I am very committed to soothing those old wounds in the congregations I serve. *There is often a difference between the theology and the theology of the institute and the theology reflected in the evolution of the people living the faith tradition.*

Tahoma Unitarian Universalist Congregation—While I was teaching and foster-parenting I was very active in my local church. TUUC gave me strength and space to explore my developing faith and theology, but the sad fact was that my day-to-day lived experience as a Unitarian Universalist was more authentic outside the church walls than within. This only fueled my commitment to bring my congregation into the larger community. I joyfully taught Unitarian Universalist history in Adult Religious Education. I was their first paid youth advisor and designed their Coming of Age program. I regularly ran their stewardship drive. I was their cheerleader, and in a way, their mascot. *My community gave me room to practice being a lay religious leader.*

Antioch University—While teaching at the Muckleshoot Tribal School I finished graduate school in Seattle. It was an intense and demanding program that I devoured. My M.Ed. thesis on community values reflected in tribal schools was picked up years later by a Muckleshoot scholar. I was so honored that she picked up my qualitative study and continued to pursue my hypothesis. *My community witnessed and affirmed me as a Master Educator.*

Associated Ministries—During the two and half years that I worked with our county's ecumenical agency as a development officer, I was able to teach community activists to write their own grants and develop their own donor base. It was even in my contract that 10% of my time be given away in a community building capacity. *I am a religious educator in anything I do.*

Unitarian Universalist Association in the Pacific NW District—Until my work with the UUA, my experience as a religious educator had been classroom-, church-, and community-based. As a Program Specialist, my identity shifts to that of an institutional religious educator. The scope of my job is to support programs and leaders that breathe life into the mission of the congregations I serve. My mission is to build a “welcoming religious association of thriving congregations that transform their communities by living out their Unitarian Universalist values” (PNWD District Global Ends statement.) This takes the form of recruiting and developing teams of consultants, consulting with (particularly small and new) congregations myself, coordinating district and regional trainings, and serving on the UUA Growth Team. More than technical skills, it requires a focus on cultural, adaptive changes and paradigm shifts. Instead of developing Individual Education Plans based on Bureau of Indian Affairs and Washington State learning standards, I now develop Congregational Growth Plans based on Loren Mead’s definitions of growth. All of my life experiences and training seem to have been practice and preparation for this vocation and calling. / *am a master religious educator.*

Core Competencies

Anti-Oppression/ Anti-Racism/ Multi-cultural. The motivation and learning for this competency comes from relationship. Many of my family members are on welfare, struggle with addictions and domestic violence and access to adequate health care. I have one chronically homeless uncle and two cousins in prison. Navigating public agencies with my multi-racial foster daughters opened my eyes to institutional racism. My grief is that most of our congregations currently would not be welcoming to my family.

I learn best from stories, whether they be in literature or over a shared meal or in a pastoral care moment. Stories pull my center to the margin through empathy and connection. When my own story is woven into the that of the “other” I am often transformed and I recommit to being a loving ally.

Learning in action:

- Changed district registration and volunteer policies that address classism and elitism, such as compensated childcare for board members and consultants.
- Collaborated with the Muckleshoot Tribe and the Unitarian Universalist Services Committee to create a Human Rights Camp. We brought together Unitarian Universalist youth and Muckleshoot youth for a week-long experience of analyzing how race, economy, and ecology are all intertwined.
- Helped create The Pierce County Interfaith Middle School Camp, now in its fifth year. I led stereotyping sessions for the first two years and

then trained campers who had grown into camp leaders to take over the session and make it their own.

Conflict Management. Being an ad hoc member of our district Healthy Congregations Team has allowed me to be trained by Speed Leas within the context of serving Unitarian Universalist congregations. I am also privy to the cross-training of the team and have found understanding polarity management very helpful in coaching leaders through adaptive cultural changes. I have learned conflict management best through role plays, case studies, and debriefing with a colleague at an incident or consultation.

Learning in action:

- Facilitated conflict management training for inmates in Washington State prisons through the program Alternative to Violence Project.
- Mediate congregational disagreements (both planned and on the spot.)

Family Ministry and Pastoral Care. Through parenting classes and individual coaching, my foster care licensor made me snap out of my developmentally-appropriate, early-20s self-absorption. I had to quickly learn to own my responsibilities and authority and set clear boundaries as a matter of spiritual safety for my children. I learned to prioritize family and make choices that created down-time for us to just be together and know each other. Through foster parenting, I learned that loving someone sometimes means releasing them back into a situation that is far less than

ideal. As a parent with “home-made kids who I get to keep” this lesson is still true: sometimes love means surrendering our children into less than ideal situations and trusting that what they’ve learned with you will serve them well.

Through my seminary training at Seattle University I’ve had both Pastoral Care Skills and a comparable 3-semester unit of Clinical Pastoral Education as an intern with a Lutheran Mission in the Salishan Housing Authority. This experience was rich with constant theological reflection and loving challenge among my cohort of peers. I learned that I am most successfully present and differentiated when I am faithful to my own self-care.

Learning in action:

- Gave volunteer physical and spiritual care to people living and dying with AIDS every Tuesday evening for 3 ½ years.
- Taught the class *10 Practices of Spiritual Parenting* through my local ecumenical agency.
- Co-raise two sons among four parents and two house-holds in a model we called a *Graphed Family Tree*. Coach other families to do the same with tools we have developed.

Human and Faith Development. Full disclosure... although I have taken graduate courses in this area and have read a stack of books on various theories, I am less interested in the academic and theory aspects of this competency than I am in real life examples. Study of human and faith

development should never objectify, but rather give us tools to equip and empower each other. I believe that each one of us is chronologically, developmentally, academically, faith-formationally, and emotionally on varying spots on our complex journeys, but we are all soul-peers. I think it's very important to keep that in mind when studying Human and Faith Development.

Learning in action:

- Designed multiple Individualized Education Plans for my Muckleshoot classroom students and an integrated whole class plan based on diverse development, academic, sociological, and emotional needs.
- Developed and facilitated a district religious education teacher retreat that helped participants go deeper in their understanding of both human and faith development with regards to the specific age they work with in their congregation.
- Train youth ministry consultants to work with youth advisors in the areas of differentiation and healthy empowerment/equipping.
- Separated district youth and young adult programming based on human and faith development theories.

Jewish and Christian Heritages. Being a development officer for an ecumenical agency gave me a great working knowledge of Christianity as a plurality of faith traditions and interconnected institutions. I learned the most by asking questions in the lunch room and letting people's personal stories unfold. Going to seminary at a Jesuit school has also given me a rich appreciation for Christianity and its varying theological expressions.

Constant translating for my own and others understanding has become a spiritual discipline and has brought me closer to my Unitarian Universalist faith.

I attended the Saltwater Church for a number of years. We shared not only a building with Bet Chaverim (a Jewish synagogue), but community and cross education. Being invited to worship with the Bet Chaverim community after we had worked on a social justice effort or something as mundane as a grounds work party was precious to me. We appreciated and honored our differences, but also our common relationship.

Learning in action:

- Created the *Salmon-Seder-Communion* ritual for the GoldMine Training of Trainers.
- Facilitated a process of forgiveness and community reparation based on Jewish *teshuva* for the Eliot Institute family camp when a group of young adults broke the camp rules.
- Lead morning prayers for the Christian community at Seattle University.

Leadership Development & Small Group Ministry. I watch leaders I admire and respect. I read their blogs or books or sermons. I ask them questions and sometimes follow them around and soak up their example.

I have learned best as a leader when I'm thrown into a situation that I'm not fully prepared for. When I make mistakes I am careful to problem solve or reflect with colleagues and try to fix the mistake or break the pattern. I find again and again our saving message: we are not alone.

I was first introduced to Small Group Ministry (SGM) by Bob Hill and later Calvin Dames when I worked with them on the District Staff team. They informally trained me and instilled in me the importance of SGM to not only build cohesion within a group, but to help them learn to let go of niches and be open to a new group and new stories.

Learning in action:

- Served as Dean of *GoldMine Youth Leadership School*. Later served the new Dean and staff as district support.
- Coordinated and facilitated the continental *Training of Trainers* for *GoldMine Youth Leadership School*, which planted 6 new camps across the continent.
- Designed the Small Group Ministry curriculum for the Tahoma Unitarian Universalist Congregation's year of Interim Ministry.

Liberal Theologies. I am currently taking *Theologians of the 20th Century* from Jon Luopa through Seattle University. I am relieved to finally be equipped with the academic depth to meet the challenges of some of our congregational leaders. I work primarily with small congregation void of ministerial leadership. When I arrive at the church congregants are not only thirsty for pastoral care and leadership guidance, but also theological instruction. I am particularly grateful to UUA curricula that can guide Adult Religious Education programs.

Learning in action:

- Facilitated *Building Your Own Theology* as adult religious education and also as part of a youth Coming of Age process.

- Preach regularly from the pulpit and in consultation with small congregations on the topic of what Unitarian Universalists believe.
- Adapted Rebecca Parker's *Theology as House* model for an ecumenical class in which we literally built our theological houses as art projects.
- Constantly translating and explaining to fellow seminarians at Seattle University "what Unitarian Universalists believe" within the context of liberal theology.

Philosophy of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education. My knowledge was gained in trial by fire fashion. Having never been a Director of Religious Education, there was resistance among long-time DREs when I was hired as the Pacific Northwest Program Consultant. Who was this newcomer with no apparent experience? I met the resistance with the plea to educate me. "Teach me all that you wish I knew so I may support and serve you in the way you deserve." My first years on the job were a flurry of books being borrowed to me, life stories shared, and religious education programs observed.

Learning in action:

- Supervised the independent study graduate course of a seminary student called *History, Philosophy, and Practice of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education.*
- Regularly consult with congregational boards on how to support a vibrant religious education program.

- Served on the *UUA Growth Team* (2007-present) with the lens of religious educator.
- Developed and regularly preach a sermon series called, *Putting Religious Education in Its Place*, which supports the concept of congregation as curriculum.

Right Relations and Professional Ethics. I am bound by not one, but three different codes! I honor the LREDA, UUMA, and District Staff Codes of Ethics. They are all very similar, but the multiplicity requires that I am in right relations with a larger group of people and held to a slightly stricter standard as far as boundaries. This discipline has actually been a healthy relief. The mindfulness of three professional codes requires that they are alive and active in my life.

Learning in action:

- Phone conference monthly with the LREDA Good Officer in my region.
- Continually voice the district expectation that all congregations will abide by and uphold the LREDA Professional Standards. Consultants who serve our congregations are aware of them and support them as well. All boards of emerging congregations are required to have a conference call with the LREDA Good Officer on standards. I direct all new presidents of congregations to the supporting documents on the LREDA website.

Social Justice Theory & Practice. I learned the importance of a having a theological center to social justice work from a secular group, the

Women's International League for Peace and Justice. The Tacoma chapter had about 20 women who met every-other week in a circle with food passed around. We lit a candle, shared a reflection, and listened to personal check-ins. And then we did our work. Our peace and justice work involved going deeper into our personal stories, reading books and studying issues leading to systemic or cultural change, discerning, processing, building community, supporting our individual efforts, and celebrating little victories. And when it came time to act together for peace and justice, after all that, acting was the most natural thing in the world. It was sacred work.

Learning in action:

- Developed a youth Human Rights Camp with a theological reflection component.
- Developed a spiritual retreat for social justice activists.
- Taught *American History* at an American Indian tribal school.

Spiritual Life & Self-Care. The very first thing I encourage new DREs and new presidents to do is to identify or develop a spiritual practice and stay faithful to it. A spiritually centered and differentiated leader can really deal with most anything as long as they are taking care of themselves first. Most of the times I have failed a congregation or a workshop was because I neglected self care and wasn't fully present. Those are hard lessons.

Learning in action:

- Take regular retreats with the UU Ministers Association, personal retreats, and spiritual direction.
- Annually post to the DRE list-serve a directory retreat centers and spiritual directors in our region.
- Facilitate a webinar on combating burn-out for church staff and key volunteers.

Stewardship. I became a major donor solicitor when I was charged with opening up a tribal school high school within three months. I was mercifully (and joyfully) mentored by Fred Haley of Brown & Haley candies and a Unitarian Universalist. I became a grant writer to give my students the resources and experiences they deserved. I began chairing my congregation's canvass when I could see a mission-driven fiscal plan beyond our adequate, operational budget. I became a development officer when I yearned to be a fairy godmother and turn possibilities into realities and help people put their checkbooks where their faith and values are. I devoured stewardship books, attended professional conferences, and called upon the advice of skilled and proven leaders. Development and stewardship is about creating a culture and vision of abundance and possibilities. They are as much about mission as about relationship and joy.

Learning in action:

- Coordinated and solicited stewardship of congregations, individuals, foundations, and businesses to support the \$2 million budget of Associated Ministries.

- Lead a stewardship workshop at the district Annual General Meeting (2000.)
- Served on the Pacific Northwest Growth Foundation.
- Raised my own children to tithe as an expression of their faith.

Systems Theory. Teaching at a tribal school was perhaps my most effective systems training for working with congregations. Everyone in the school (and most of the staff) were literally related, so if something was effecting one nuclear family, it effected the whole school. I quickly learned how everyone was connected by blood family, history, and experience.

I have thoroughly enjoyed learning by leading along side such systems experts on the Congregational Life staff team as Terasa Cooley, Nancy Bowen, Kenn Hurto, and Stefan Jonasson. I tag along as they analyze specific congregations or emerging trends as well as the UUA institutional structure as a learning system.

Learning in action:

- Lead committees in my purview through the change from a board liaison form of governance to Policy Governance form of governance with staff lead teams.
- Observed, analyzed, and diagnosed the strengths, challenges, and learning opportunities within West Hills Unitarian Universalist Fellowship to get them ready to call a part time minister.

Unitarian Universalist History & Polity. As a trained classroom history teacher, this is the part that sparks my imagination the most and

unfortunately gets the least of my attention. Before I became a professional religious educator I taught a UU History course in my home congregation. For an entire year a group of us collaboratively and creatively (read messily but with gusto) fashioned a timeline on a huge piece of butcher paper that captured not only Unitarian Universalist moments in history, but that of American and world history and other religious. We had a constant social analysis going. I suspect I learned more than I taught.

Learning in action:

- Rewrote the *Religious Values and Heritage* section of the *GoldMine Youth Leadership School*. The first edition was a series of lectures. It now includes lessons that turn the exploration of history into team games, acting, and art lessons.
- Lead workshops on UU history and polity with emerging and tiny congregations which includes a meal time with storytelling. I always tell the story of John Murray and Thomas Potter. And I always cry. I also tell them the stories of the congregations in our district and weave their own congregation into that unfolding story.

Worship. I learned hermeneutics from Roger Kuhrt and Peter Raible, who were traditional preachers with big voices, magnificent metaphors, memorized scripture, and entertaining stories. I have been in worship formation for five years under Thomas Anastasi, who is from a Pentecostal tradition and known for his transcendental, ecstatic worship. While with Associated Ministries I was in a different Christian church at least once a month experiencing the diversity within the Christian tradition. And Seattle

University has developed in me an appreciation for the liturgical calendar and *Book of Common Prayer*.

Learning in action:

- Regularly create worship with congregational leaders as a reflection and celebration of the training and work we accomplished the Friday and Saturday prior. The worship creation process is designed to be training in itself.
- Co-created wedding and child welcoming ceremonies for well over 25 families as a certified Humanist Celebrant.

Youth Ministry. I became the sole youth advisor at age 24 with no other adult back up or permission slips for spontaneous field trips. Yes, I learned what to do, by horrifying the seasoned youth advisors I met at my first Youth Con who mercifully took me under their wing and educated me. Once I had an idea of the magnitude I didn't know, my real education could begin. And I vowed that no other youth advisor in my district under my leadership will take those risks or wander without resources and mentors.

Learning in action:

- Develop youth and adult Youth Ministry Consultants to serve congregations with youth group start-ups, re-visioning, and youth integration of wider congregational life.
- Contributed to the latest edition of the GoldMine Youth Leadership School participants' manual and trainers' manual.

- Gave an ultimatum to the district Youth Empowerment Services that youth conferences transform into a culture that is radically inclusive, spiritually deep, and religiously contagious or they would cease to exist. They exceeded my expectations.

Young Adult Ministry. You'll notice that I separated Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry. I believe they are unique and important enough to require separation from each other (with a bridge implies, of course.) The communal and spiritual needs of young adults were not a natural understanding for me. By my early 20s I was a full time teacher, wife, mother, and in various graduate programs. I felt like an adult. Period. My home congregation met my needs for multi-generational community and supplied me older mentors. It was Joseph Santos Lyons who opened my eyes to the various needs, isolation, possibilities. Over the years, I have taken various trainings from him on young adult and campus ministry.

Learning in action:

- Shifted district resources away from young adult conferences serving people who have given up on congregations to connecting and supporting young adults in congregations.
- Recruited and supports Young Adult Program Consultants who help congregations serve young adults.
- Created and annually send a packet on "How to Start/Support a Campus Ministry Program" to congregations.

Vision for Future

I would also like to see the Unitarian Universalist Association take a larger part in public school reformation as both an expression of our justice seeking and an extension of our religious education. Horace Mann (Unitarian) started what became the public schools. It's time we took them back and restored them to his great vision within our modern context.

I envision congregations running candidates for school boards and getting involved in their local teachers associations. Many congregations are already involved in tutoring programs within schools or out of their own church buildings. I would like the UUA to develop resources to help programs expand and flourish. I see spiritual retreats and conferences for Unitarian Universalist public school teachers. I see a Blessing of the Educators ritual that becomes an annual ceremony. Can you imagine the impact if 50% of our congregations gave scholarships to students or classrooms for field trips, camps, sports, or other experiential resources? Or sponsored an after school club? Or showed up at board meetings and volunteered for task forces? Or became a sanctuary community to foster families?

This is a natural area for us. We are a denomination of people who highly value education and we have abundance to share joyfully with the world. Can you imagine if literacy became an Associational focus? Or if our Association-wide mission was to address poverty, domestic violence, hunger and homelessness in the context of learning readiness? That all may have access to education and their hidden, emerging wholeness!

Whatever my individual professional path may be, I know I will continue to build the *Sesame Street* ideal of my childhood through relationship and reverence. Everything I do is religious education. All I teach is Unitarian Universalism. The world is my classroom.