

Association Sunday

We are better together!

Funding Update for Association Sunday 2007 and Association Sunday 2008

On **Association Sunday 2007**, 626 congregations joined together and raised over \$1.4 million to *Grow Our Numbers* through:

- Our extensive national marketing campaign, which included advertisements in *Time* magazine and college bowl game programs. This campaign also developed the *Voices of a Liberal Faith* DVD.
- The Diversity of Ministry Team's (DOMT) Initiative to support ministers of color.
- Growth grants to our districts to help congregations share our liberal religion with those who seek it.

Funds raised helped produce marketing in *TIME Magazine*, the *Time.com Religion Pages*, and the UUA's new "UU Perspectives" essays. The UUA served 3.24 million ad impressions on *Time.com*, resulting in 5,000 "click-throughs" to the *Time.com Religion Pages* and 1,400 "clicks" to *UUA.org*. A pilot Google AdWords program with 20 million impressions netted another 10,000 "click-throughs. Overall traffic to the *UUA.org* site was up 34% year-over-year during the October-December marketing period. The UUA continues to advertise using Google Adwords which has already attracted thousands of new visitors to *UUA.org* and *UUWorld.org*.

The DOMT Initiative provided an annual, fully-funded retreat for religious professionals of color (with 56 attending this year), consulted with ministers and congregations on diversity issues, trained consultants, provided extensive education opportunities in first wave congregations (with 4 set to receive financial subsidies and more in process), and provided a subsidy to All Souls in Tulsa for its diversity initiative.

We are especially thrilled to share with you some of the incredible things that districts are doing with the grant money from **Association Sunday 2007** to help share our values with people all across the nation.

- The **Ballou Channing District** engaged a growth consultant and will provide congregation growth team training for six to eight small congregations beginning in the winter of 2010.
- The **Clara Barton District** sponsored "Leading in Congregations," a day-long leadership institute in the fall of 2008.
- The **Central Midwest District** funded a plethora of projects including: purchasing hymnals for The Great Lakes Military Ministry, the BeFriender Ministry Training, the Chicago Area UU Caucus Marketing Initiative, the creation of a podcast resource for satellite congregations, the CMwD Virtual District Project, Micah's Porch – a progressive church start-up, and more!
- The **Florida District** supported young adult ministries in three congregations in south Florida. The district also provided Congregations Grow! Grants to two congregations in central Florida for membership coordinators.
- The **Heartland District** expanded the staffing position for their Growth and Leadership Development Coordinator, hosted a growth leadership development training, gave a growth stimulus grant to an emerging congregation in Frankfort, KY, and created a new Youth Midwest Leadership School scheduled for July 2009.
- The **Joseph Priestley District** launched the Lay Leadership Development Scholarship Program to supplement the cost of continuing education opportunities for lay leaders.
- The **Massachusetts Bay District** is using the funds as seed money for a new Young Adult Ministry Coordinator.
- The **Metro New York District** funded projects in three congregations: a publicity push at the UU Congregation of The South Fork Inc. in Bridgehampton, NY, mapping software for organizing covenant groups based on geographic location to keep members of the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship tied in to the community, and the installation of a closed circuit TV system at the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, NJ to supply a live feed of their services to those parents sitting in the nursery.
- The **Mid-South District** supported the UP! Program (Unlimited Potential) which focuses support for congregations with fewer than 70 adult members and no full-time staff.
- The **Mountain Desert District** awarded money to send leaders to attend the Russell Lockwood Leadership School, and to support a part time new congregation organizer.
- The **Northern New England District** is making technological improvements and purchasing equipment that will allow the district to provide more services to remote areas through live, interactive technologies.

- The **Ohio-Meadville District** funded three programs demonstrating inter-district or inter-congregational cooperative efforts: a Regional Shared Growth Consultant, Southern Cluster Young Adult Outreach, and Northeast Ohio Cluster Marketing.
- The **Pacific Central District** awarded \$12,000 to their Regional Marketing gUerillas group to run a Google AdWords campaign and they may hire a PR specialist.
- The **Pacific Northwest District** provided grants to established congregations to support their mentoring of new/emerging and small/remote congregations, to develop congregationally based youth/young adult and family ministries, and to support the promotion and implementation of growth technology in the PNwD.
- The **Pacific Southwest District** provided grants of varying amounts for projects including: a new young adult ministry coordinator, a social justice ministry for area homeless populations, advertising on local radio, and more!
- The **Prairie Star District** created a Collaborative Growth Initiative program and invited proposals from congregations for grants. Out of this process, five different collaborative growth projects have been funded, benefitting at least 14 congregations.
- The **Southwestern UU Conference** hired a Young Adult Minister. They also did consultations with leaders from 14 congregations about their ministry to young adults and created a series of online resources.
- The **St. Lawrence District** supported: the NRG Regional Growth Consultant, an experimental worship workshop and the Small Congregation Program of the UUA that is presently working with eight congregations.
- The **Thomas Jefferson District** sponsored two district growth summits and will host a series of web conferences on growth later this year.

This past fall, 580 congregations celebrated **Association Sunday 2008**, and despite tough economic conditions, raised over \$400,000 to *Grow Our Spirit* through:

- Grants available to districts, congregations, and seminaries for developing lay theological education programs (50% of the funds raised).
- Funds enabling the Unitarian Universalists Ministers Association to expand their initiatives for continuing education (1/6th of the funds raised).
- Scholarships to students preparing for UU ministry (1/6th of the funds raised).
- New projects of the Diversity of Ministry Team's Initiative to support ministers of color (1/6th of the funds raised).

The application window for the Lay Theological Education grants is January 2009 to October 2009. Thus far there have been five proposals submitted requesting funding. Two of these have been approved. The other three proposals have been put on hold until October so that the LTE taskforce may compare them with other proposals yet to be submitted.

The two proposals that have been approved include a grant for \$15,000 to the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, New York and a grant of \$30,000 to support the creation of DVDs capturing the learning's from UU University 2009.

The fifty-word summary of the program submitted by the First Unitarian Church of Rochester is:

- Wellspring, a spiritual deepening program combining UU history, small group connection, and the experience of regular spiritual practice, has transformed the lives of many participants at our church. This project encourages the meaningful adoption of Wellspring at other churches by providing training and strong mentoring support of new program facilitators.

The fifty-word summary of the program submitted by the UU University Planning Team is:

- "UU University", now occurring in the middle of General Assembly 2009, will offer six tracks of intensive programming designed to develop our congregations' spiritual leadership. We wish to videotape all 6 tracks and produce a six-DVD set available for purchase and use by congregational leaders for years to come.

One sixth of the funds raised through Association Sunday 2008 were designated for the UUMA's new initiatives for continuing education. The UUMA Executive Committee voted to use these funds toward the hiring of an Executive Director, who will have as a central part of their responsibility the developing of new initiatives for continuing education.

Two \$20,000 scholarships to students preparing for UU ministry have been awarded – one to Elaine Aron of Unity Church Unitarian in Saint Paul and one to Pam Rumancik of West Shore UUC in Cleveland, both Meadville-Lombard students. A third scholarship will be awarded at a later date.

More detailed information about all of these programs can be found at <http://www.uua.org/associationsunday>.

~ Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations ~