



Report to the UUA Board of Trustees

January 2010

As the UU Women's Federation moves into 2011, we are continuing to focus on three key organizational growth areas:

1. Strengthening our connections with and support of women's groups in local congregations.

As I wrote personal thank you notes during the recent holiday season to renewing UUWF groups in congregations across the country, I was reminded of how many women have been connected in this way in our efforts to promote these bonds, to work together as liberal religious women to secure justice and equity and to encourage spiritual growth by advancing religious feminisms in their many forms and settings.

These groups go by many names now, from Women's Alliances to Womansphere, and we are discovering that there are groups formed and forming that are taking on different labels with evolving formats, emphases, and partnerships. Our General Assembly programs in Charlotte 2011 will focus on this, with one, titled "How Women Gather in 21st Century UU Congregations," highlighting several different congregationally-based women's groups, their commonalities and their diversity, and how they deepen their connections to their religious communities. Our second GA program slot will be a look at "Justice Work for and by Women," an opportunity for attendees to learn about UU projects in the U.S. that affect positive change in the lives of women, funded through UUWF's Equity and Justice Grants program. We've also invited the International Convocation of U*U Women to share with us accounts of similar work they support abroad. One outcome we hope for is the encouragement of more of these projects in congregations throughout our Association.

To aid the UUWF Board of Trustees in its goal of revitalizing Unitarian Universalist women's groups and encouraging them to join UUWF, our development activities will include reaching out to approximately 70 existing and former women's groups to re-establish connections and identify best practices regarding fundraising and membership. We will use letters, phone calls, e-mails or a combination to target these groups. We also plan to experiment with an 'ambassador' program, whereby we will attempt to recruit representatives from active women's groups who, in turn, will reach out to women and women's groups in nearby UU congregations and introduce them to UUWF membership. We also plan to continue our active direct mail campaign to women's groups in UU congregations across the U.S. and Canada to inform them of UUWF and invite them to support our organization.

2. A second goal is to be intentional in promoting diversity in our leadership: racial and ethnic, age, geographic, sexual orientation, and theological. We have openings in a couple of our grants panels and one open slot on our Board of Trustees. We are exploring best practices, including that of the UUA Nominating Committee, as we fill these crucial volunteer roles, and we are also looking at our nominations process in general.

3. In order to clarify and streamline the application process for all three of our funding groups (the Margaret Fuller Grants Panel; the Equity and Justice Grants Panel; and the Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Scholarship Program) we decided to evaluate and renew the written application materials currently available to interested persons.

Taking as a kind of template the materials already posted on the UUA website for individuals seeking grants from the UU Funding Program, we have modified the materials so that they are more parallel for the three programs and include guidelines, restrictions, grant award sizes, how to apply (including budget forms), the evaluation criteria, and a history of each of the funding panels. This includes sample projects that have received funding, those demonstrating what we consider to be best fit and best outcomes. These changes are being shared with the members of our funding panels. We will be finalizing them for posting shortly, as the deadline for this annual cycle of applications is March 15, 2011.

Faithfully,



Rev. Marti Keller
President, UUWF