

## Report to the UUA Board of Trustees October 2012

The UU Women's Federation is built on a culture of shared vision, leadership, and hands on work within our Board and the circles of women connected to us. For your upcoming meeting, I've called upon a number of those dedicated women to report to you directly about some of that work. First, I've asked Linda Lu Burciaga, immediate past UUWF president, to tell you about preliminary plans for the observance of an upcoming UUWF milestone.



"It's hard to believe, but the UU Women's Federation will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this coming year. As convenor of the group that's organizing its celebration, I'm honored to work with UUWF's living past presidents, all of whom have agreed to serve on our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee: Kay Aler Maida, Denny Davidoff, Tina Jas, Clarise Jefferson, Arlene Johnson, Linda McAffrey, Phyllis Rickter, and Nancy Van Dyke.

"There is much excitement in the group as we narrow down realistic plans to best celebrate this anniversary and carry the tradition of the UUWF into the future. The actual in-person celebration will be held in Boston in April of 2013, the date to be finalized soon. In addition to this event, we hope to coordinate with other UU organizations, such as the newly revised UU History and Heritage Society, in researching and promoting women's contributions to our faith tradition.

"We plan to highlight our anniversary at this year's General Assembly in Louisville, via our report to the convention and at our workshop, and we all look forward to your participation when and where possible. Here's to 50 years of commitment to Unitarian Universalism, bringing women's voices to our faith tradition!"

Rev. Terry Davis, our Vice President/Communications and Outreach, has this to report about her area of responsibility:



"We have been working closely with the current UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues, Jessica Halperin, to host two webinars in 2012 on the issue of reproductive justice.

"On September 26, we offered the webinar "What is Reproductive Justice?" as an exclusive event for UUWF members, as well as for members of UU Women and Religion (UUWR). UUWF President Marti Keller

offered introductory remarks, providing a brief overview of UUWF's multi-decade justice work in the area of reproductive rights and choice. The webinar's featured presenter was Monica Simpson, Interim Executive Director of SisterSong, a national organization dedicated to seeking justice for women whose race and economic status negatively impact their ability to access reproductive health services and information.

“Approximately 30 women participated in this event. Plans are underway to distribute an audio/visual recording of this webinar to UUWF women's groups and upcoming UU women's conferences. We are also in conversation with UUWR on ways we might collaborate on future projects.

“We also have made available on the UUWF website Rev. Keller's 2012 General Assembly plenary remarks and slideshow presentation, which recaps the work of UUWF and that of our most recent grant recipients.

UUWF's annual membership renewal letter was mailed in September. We currently have about 40 member groups, including the recent addition of a large Women's Alliance in Missouri.”



Finally, we're looking forward to two meetings in Boston later this month. The first is one of the two in-person board meetings we hold each year, in addition to our monthly meetings via conference call. At this meeting we welcome a new member, Kathy Calhoun, from the First Unitarian Church in Dallas, who joined us in June as Vice President/Leadership Development. Immediately following the board meeting, we will host a retreat for two of

our three funding panels. I'll let Kirstie Lewis, Vice President/Funding Programs, tell you about the programs, their 2012 funded projects, and plans for the retreat:



“As Rev. Keller reported to you in April, this year we elected to commission projects for our grants programs, intentionally setting out to identify projects that related directly to the theme of the special justice General Assembly held this past June.

“Our **Margaret Fuller Grants Program** funds scholarly, prophetic and innovative explorations of UU religious feminisms, so our 2012 goal here was to find a project that deepens our appreciation and understanding of woman-centered religious beliefs or spiritual practices of immigrants and indigenous cultures. Our grant recipient is Sofia Betancourt, a doctoral candidate at Yale University, who will examine eco-womanist ethics drawn from the experiences of female laborers of African descent who were brought from several Caribbean nations to work on the Panama Canal. Ms. Betancourt has received a \$4,000 grant to assist her in this work.

“Our **Equity and Justice Grants Program** supports projects that advance justice for women and girls in the continental United States. This year, we awarded a \$5,000 grant

to the UU Congregation of Green Valley, AZ, for “Amigas de Amado,” a project that will assist marginalized Hispanic women and girls in their congregation’s home community by working in partnership with existing local agencies. These organizations – a youth alliance, an adult education program, and a local elementary school – are already providing services to the local Hispanic population, but they are under-serving the women and girls.

“We are all looking forward to the retreat for our grants panels, which both have new members and leadership. The retreat will provide an opportunity for the panelists to:

- establish connections with each other and with the UUWF board;
- reach agreement on basic responsibilities held by each panel;
- set timelines and tasks for the 2012-13 funding cycle;
- learn how the work of the panels is an integral part of implementing the UUWF’s overall mission, priorities, and goals;
- begin developing a vision of how the work of the panels can be expanded and enhanced to bring an awareness to more UUs of the work that these programs accomplish; and,
- increase our knowledge and understanding of the work of our Unitarian and Universalist foremothers in the UUWF and in the women’s organizations that preceded them.

“Our **Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Scholarship Program** received no applications this past year. The board is in discussion about this, with the twin goals of developing plans to promote the program more vigorously and of strengthening its relevance to the work of the late Rev. Bowens-Wheatley, in whose honor the program was founded.

“The names of all our panelists will be posted soon on [www.uuwf.org](http://www.uuwf.org), which already contains more information about the funding programs (including applications).”



It is both an honor and a privilege to work with these and the other hard-working women of the UUWF. I hope that hearing from a few of them directly has given you some insight into the dedication and energy we all bring to the work driven by our mission: *advancing justice for women and girls and promoting their spiritual growth.*

Faithfully,

*Rev. Marti Keller*

Rev. Marti Keller  
President