

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth

Report to the UUA Board of Trustees

April 2007

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth is nearing its culminating event – the Summit on Youth Ministry. The process continues to be broad, inclusive, and participatory as the Task Force engages numerous stakeholders in conversations on youth ministry. The report below highlights the work currently being done to engage districts and stakeholders and to prepare for the Summit.

Task Force on Youth Ministry

The task force membership has changed in recent months. Due to changing life situations and availability, Homer Karvonides (DRUUMM youth representative) and Ian Moore (YRUU youth representative) have left the task force. While the DRUUMM Youth & Young Adult Steering Committee chose not to fill their open position, the YRUU Steering Committee has chosen Sean Capaloff-Jones to represent YRUU. Sean has been involved in the Consultation process since its inception in February 2005.

The task force met March 8-11, 2007 in Newton for its final meeting before the Summit. Agenda items included: revisiting youth ministry visions, articulating definitions of youth ministry and youth empowerment; planning for upcoming stakeholder conversations; evaluating the work done so far; and planning for the Summit.

District Gatherings on Youth Ministry

After the first few district gatherings in the fall, feedback from facilitators and participants helped us to revise the discussion process laid out in the process guide and provide more guidance to facilitators and district leaders.

By the time the Board meets in April, thirteen UUA districts will have held gatherings on youth ministry. These gatherings have continued to be successful at energizing districts, empowering youth leaders, working through tough issues, and generating ideas for strengthening youth ministry at the local and district levels. Participants at every gathering have expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to exchange ideas and strategize with an intergenerational group from throughout the district.

Stakeholder Conversations

A few important stakeholders have held conversations on youth ministry over the past few months.

UUA Staff –

In December, conversations with UUA staff groups began. These conversations are an opportunity for UUA staff to learn about the Consultation process, to give their input, and to strategize about their unique role in ministry with youth. Congregational Services, Stewardship & Development, and the International Office have all had fruitful discussions of youth ministry as it relates to their work. Discussion topics have included: growth and outreach; congregational fundraising; safety and ethics; stewardship and generosity; large congregations; justice-making;

young adult and campus ministry; and opportunities for international travel, education, and advocacy for youth. These conversations have already led to increased collaboration between the Youth Office and other areas of the Association.

Upcoming staff group conversations: Communications; Ministry & Professional Leadership; and a meeting for staff and consultants/trainers about ministry with youth around issues of racism and oppression.

UUA Board of Trustees – In January, the UUA Board held a conversation about youth ministry to offer their input for the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth. They brought a wealth of experience with UU congregations to the discussion and offered valuable feedback about the Consultation process.

Commission on Social Witness – In January, the Commission on Social Witness had a conversation about youth ministry and social justice. With the new process for introducing Congregational Study Action Issues, youth and YRUU have new opportunities to have their social justice priorities acted on by the rest of the Association. They discussed this new opportunity, congregational social justice work, and how the Association can better support ministry *by youth to our world*.

Interweave – In February, Hannah Stampe (GLBTQ/Interweave representative on the task force) met with Interweave members and leaders for the second year at their annual Convocation. Staff in the Youth and Young Adult & Campus Ministry Offices worked with Interweave to increase youth attendance and relevant programming under the theme “Interweaving Generations.” Hannah led a workshop on ministry with GLBTQ youth, which resulted in lively discussions about support for GLBTQ youth in congregations. This year’s workshops, combined with a meeting of GLBTQ youth at General Assembly and meetings with Interweave leadership in 2006, have provided valuable input about the hopes, needs, and priorities of Interweave and GLBTQ youth.

Religious Education Credentialing Committee – In March, Beth Dana met with the RE Credentialing Committee in San Jose, CA. RECC members reflected on some of the data gathered so far on education, training, and support for youth advisors and religious educators working with youth and came up with concrete actions they can take to better prepare religious educators to work confidently with youth.

Upcoming stakeholder conversations:

- Ministerial Fellowship Committee (March 22)
- DRUUMM Youth & Young Adults West Coast Summit (March 30)
- UU Ministers Association Executive Committee (April 10)
- General Assembly Youth Caucus Staff (April 13)
- DRUUMM Youth & Young Adults East Coast Summit (May 11)

Youth Advisor Survey

In order to better understand the diversity of adult involvement in the lives of youth across the Association, we conducted an online survey. Among the 386 responses were volunteer and paid

youth advisors, youth ministry staff, religious educators, OWL teachers, Coming of Age mentors, ministers, and parents. The survey results include a wealth of data about the experiences of adults working with youth. Reports will be available on the Consultation's website and will be shared with Summit participants along with the data collected from the Youth Survey, and congregational, district and stakeholder conversations.

Plans for General Assembly

The Task Force on Youth Ministry will have a strong presence at General Assembly in Portland. The task force is planning several opportunities for GA attendees to learn about the progress of the Consultation and to discuss some of the themes that are emerging from the data. These opportunities include: a multimedia exhibit hall booth, a report during Plenary, a workshop, and discussions as part of Open Space Technology.

Summit on Youth Ministry

The Summit on Youth Ministry will take place on July 16-20, 2007 at Simmons College in Boston. The purpose of the Summit is to bring together youth and adult leaders from throughout the Association to make recommendations for change. These recommendations will be based on the reports of stakeholder conversations sent to participants ahead of time, and on discussions that occur at the Summit itself.

The Summit will incorporate a global perspective of what's happening in the world, how this impacts our ministry with youth, as well as what other denominations are doing to create vibrant youth ministry. This learning and awareness will allow participants to look more deeply into the past, present, and future of Unitarian Universalist youth ministry. Small working groups will focus on specific theme areas to develop a vision and a plan for changes to that particular aspect of our ministry with youth.

Thirty youth and thirty adults have been invited to participate, and the list is close to being confirmed. Once all attendees have confirmed, it will be posted on the Consultation's website.

The Summit is being planned by the UUA's Task Force on Youth Ministry, and facilitated by U.T. Saunders and Beth Dana.

Task Force on Youth Ministry

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| Sean Capaloff-Jones | YRUU Youth |
| Beth Dana | Youth Ministry Associate, UUA |
| Rachel Davis | DRUUMM Youth |
| Megan Dowdell | Co-Convener |
| Sara Eskrich | Locally-Based Youth |
| Judith Frediani | Director of Lifespan Faith Development, UUA |
| Jesse Jaeger | Youth Programs Director, UUA |
| Tera Little | LREDA, District Staff (Pacific Southwest) |
| Rev. Shana Lynngood | UUMA |
| Tom Rylett | CUC Youth |
| Julian Sharp | Youth Trustee on the UUA Board |
| Rev. William Sinkford | Co-Convener, UUA President |

Hannah Stampe
Jova Vargas

Interweave/GLBTQ Youth
YRUU Youth