



Heartland District
Consultation on Youth Ministry
Summary Report

May 12th, 2007

Birmingham, MI

Facilitators: Rev. Pat Hoertdoerfer and Tom Rylett

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth District Information

Full name of district: Heartland Unitarian Universalist District

Date of district youth ministry gathering: May 12, 2007

Type of gathering: Youth and Young Adult Conference

Length of gathering: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Saturday

Total number of participants: 67

Number of youth participants: 43

Number of adult participants: 20

Does your district have a Youth-Adult Committee/Youth Steering Committee/the equivalent?
Yes, the HUUD Youth Steering Committee.

What positions/roles does it include? Youth Chair, Youth Chair-elect, Adult Chair, Youth Council Rep, Social Action Coordinator, Advisor of Spiritual Support, Communications Officer, Jr. High Transitional Age Rep, Liaison from YACM Sustainability Corps, Liaison from LREC, 2 Adult At-Large members

Is there a youth on your district's Board of Trustees? Policy governance structure with youth position

Do youth serve on any other district committees? District Program Council

Does your district have a youth coordinator/minister? No

What other staff support, if any, exists for youth ministry in the district? District Program Consultant

Does your district regularly offer trainings (Leadership Development, Spirituality Development, Youth Advisor, Anti-Racism Analysis Development, Chaplain, Renaissance Modules)? If yes, which one(s)? How often? Yes, trainings are usually offered 2 times per year.

Other exciting aspects or programs of the district's youth ministry:

Heartland has a thriving, healthy, and growing District Junior High Youth Ministry with two conferences per year. These conferences exemplify a balance of fun and faith-filled activities and youth leaders are elected annually.

**The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth
State of Youth Ministry in the District
Strengths and Growing Edges**

What do the survey and congregational results imply about the current state of Unitarian Universalist youth ministry in the district?

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Challenges/Growing Edges</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth leadership at cons • Acceptance of GBLTQQ youth • Youth leadership increasing in Michigan and elsewhere • District Youth Steering Committee leadership • Money from District Budget • District e-newsletter at events • Junior High Cons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know one another • NOT finding enough racial/ethnic diversity • Accepting only those who agree with us (abortion issues etc.) • Cons not in Michigan tend to get cancelled – Michigan cluster of congregations leadership (adult) tends to lead • Non-supportive DREs, Youth Advisors • Lack of communication-clarity, timeliness-needs to be Accurate, Active, Redundant • Ann Arbor has strong leadership, but seems to carry district cons • Parents need to receive con info • Economic challenged on all levels

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Identifying Needs and Changes

PROGRAMMING

Programming Need/Change #1: BRIDGING YOUNG ADULTS TO A GREATER CONGREGATION

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps support the future of UUism • Helps prepare transitionees better 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do the bridgers need from this? 2. Do what they want 3. BRIDGE them 	

Programming Need/Change #2: EXPLAINING UUISM TO PEERS

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps them accept us better • Help slow the judgments they make 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find out what it means to us 2. Discuss it with other UUs 3. Conference for meaning of UUism 	

Programming Need/Change #3: MORE CONFERENCES

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help us get closer to each other • Attract more youth to Cons 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sign-up sheets for Con hosts 2. Planning meeting 3. Advertising everywhere 	DREs Youth Group Youth

TRAINING

Training Need/Change #1: HEARTLAND DISTRICT CON

What will this change accomplish? Special connections for HUUD, spiritual not extra-curricular	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Communication 2. Sponsorship/Commitment 3. Funding	Leaderships/DRE/Advisors HUUD District/Congregation

Training Need/Change #2: SPECIAL THEMED CONS (RANGING FROM DANCE TO CULTURAL MISAPPROPRIATION)

What will this change accomplish? Bring the Heartland UU youth community closer while providing learning and growth experiences.	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Committee to plan: Location and involvement, also funding 2. Communication of cons and needs of con 3. Veterans/experienced people to lead the themed activity	Youth, RE directors on committee, sponsors for money, Committee, volunteers

Training Need/Change #3: PARENT EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE CON

What will this change accomplish? To teach parents/RE directors/Ministers about cons and the youth experiences to better allow for a better understanding of them.	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Youth Planning Committee 2. Communication to parents/congregation 3. Sponsorship/Funding	Youth in HUUD DRE/Minister District/Congregation

RESOURCES

Resource Need/Change #1: BETTER COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

What will this change accomplish? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to information and events going on in the District • Easier to organize • More channels of information • Fewer cancelled CONs
--

NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Collecting advisor/youth e-mails at Cons	Communication Officer (CO), Registrar
2. Ask DREs for contact list info	DREs, CO, DYSC, chair-elect
3. Update listserve	CO

Resource Need/Change #2: ACCESS TO CURRICULA AND LEADERSHIP TOOLS FOR YOUTH GROUPS

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More empowering adults • Influx of leaders • Adult and youth leaders • More direction for youth groups and programming 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Ask Youth Office to create a guidebook on youth leadership within youth groups	Jennifer Teed
2. Give the guidebook/toolkit to advisors	Youth Office

Resource Need/Change #3: BUILDING CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS ON A PERSONAL, COMMUNAL, CONGREGATIONAL LEVEL WITH OTHER FAITH COMMUNITIES

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper relationships • Teamwork with other faiths 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Brainstorm project ideas	Youth Group
2. Ask other congregations to participate in project	Advisor/Youth Team
3. Do Project	Youth Group and Congregation

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure Need/Change #1: MORE TIMELY AND ACCURATE COMMUNICATION

What will this change accomplish?	
Less frustration and stress for those involved with youth activities, allowing for district wide events to work with firm deadlines.	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Multiple forms and avenues of communication	

2. Online venues (facebook, myspace)	
3. Better lateral (church to church) communication	

Infrastructure Need/Change #2: ENHANCE LEADERSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING

What will this change accomplish? Bringing congregations together, helping each other so that change can occur, makes doing work less scary, more people involved.	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Share and understand needs of different groups with the district 2. Make information about leadership opportunities more available 3. Provide opportunities for “smaller” leadership	

Infrastructure Need/Change #3: DIALOGUE WITHIN AND BETWEEN CONGREGATIONS AND FAITH COMMUNITIES

NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Interfaith group conference 2. Outreach to parents about what cons/YRUU is about	

Additional notes about infrastructure:

Communication

- Listserves
- Lateral (church to church)
- On-line (Facebook, myspace, blogs, FUUSE)
- Video-conferencing capabilities at congregations and district offices

Leadership

- Smaller more accessible leadership bodies
- Formation of a district identity
- Leadership drawn from all parts of the district
- More accessible continental leadership

Outreach

- Con/mini-con for parents (clusters?)
- Heartland district campsite
- Increased outreach to diverse groups
- Leadership from all parts of the district

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Youth Ministry

Working Definition

Unitarian Universalist youth ministry is a collaboration between youth and adults to create authentic, anti-racist, anti-oppressive,* multicultural, and intergenerational communities which empower and support:

- The spiritual and religious development of youth
- Mutual love, respect, and trust between and among youth and adults
- Relationship-based ministry and support among youth
- A youth-driven ministry of justice that calls all of us to live out our values in the world.

Like all ministry, ministry with youth is the responsibility of the whole congregation and the whole community.

“The great end in religious instruction...is not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own.” – William Ellery Channing

* Anti-racist and anti-oppressive communities are ones in which individuals actively work against individual and institutional racism and oppression while striving for safe, welcoming, and radically inclusive communities. The language of “anti-“ is used to emphasize the prevalence of oppression in the world. It is our calling as people of faith to actively dismantle oppression in Unitarian Universalist communities and the world at-large.

Comments:

- Include fostering a UU identity (sense of connection) and knowledge of what UUism is
- Collaboration
- What about ethical development? Youth – Adult

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Youth Empowerment

Working Definition

A covenantal practice in which youth are recognized and affirmed as colleagues who are essential and vital to our faith community. A practice based on mutual respect and trust between youth and adults, youth and youth, as well as adults and adults. This practice encourages all to grow in a free and responsible way.

This is achieved by:

- A youth-adult partnership in all parts of decision making, including worship, resources and programming.
 - Talking directly, openly and honestly with love and respect in that relationship.
 - Mentoring relationships.
 - Youth coming together to strengthen confidence, build collective voice, and realize a more robust expression of themselves.
 - Recognizing youth ministry history as part of our collective history.
-

Comments:

- Where is this covenant? How are youth and adults similar and different in capabilities and needs? How should this be reflected in the covenant?
- We need a district and UUA definition of Adult Empowerment. How does it intersect?
- Reminding youth of their worth.
- We need: training for youth-adult empowerment WITH congregation
- Adult to Adult- mutual respect? Good, but how does it apply here?
- Simplify Simplify Simplify
- ...achieved by youth leadership resources (more are needed)
- Youth participation on committees
- Relationship with minister

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Evaluation Summary

52 evaluations were completed and returned to the facilitators.

Most Helpful. Small group discussions. The beginning of a shared understanding of youth ministry, leadership, and empowerment. Hearing results of the survey and listening to youth. The group. Being a part of decision-making and planning for the future. Meeting people and learning about the district. Reassurance that change will come from this. Learning about resources available. Visioning.

Least Helpful. Statistics/Power Point. Focus on the district. Lack of participation by any senior ministers. Large groups. It was long. Needs/next steps – nothing was decided, no one seemed committed. Would have liked more info/discussion on keeping YRUU going and successful on a local level. Repetition of points. It was all valuable information. Youth ministry/youth empowerment working definitions.

Comments on Process and Facilitation. The process was very focused on the district levels – cons and youth leadership – leaving some participants confused because they did not have knowledge of or experience with district programming. Wonderful facilitators. Facilitators kept things moving and frequently changed pace to keep things exciting. Well-organized. Sometimes the questions were too broad. The gathering was long. It prompted people to think. Too much adult participation at times. Expected more radical changes and reforms. More energy breaks would have been helpful. Good facilitation, good process, good job! Good mix of small/large groups. Facilitators are amazing public speakers. Awesome.

Other Feedback. One participant was concerned that the new committee formed will have the same shortcomings as the current DYSC (difficult to have face-to-face meetings). One person said their vision for youth ministry is: “A holistic, intergenerational experience for youth which feeds their minds, bodies and spirits within the context of beloved community.”

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Process Schedule

9:00	<p>Worship and Welcome</p> <p>Opening Worship Pat with HUUD youth</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Reading #502 and Gathering Song</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Youth Consultation Prayer (adapted)</i></p> <p>Facilitators' Welcome Tom Pat</p> <p>Participant Introductions</p> <p><i>Where Do We Come From?</i> Game Pat</p> <p>Creating Our Covenant Pat</p>
10:00	<p>Survey and Congregational Data: Power Point Presentation Tom</p> <p>Survey Presentation: Power Shuffle</p> <p>Spiritual Needs/Intergen/Involvement/Jr Youth/Welcoming Youth</p> <p>Reflection Questions: different Small Groups</p>
10:50	<p>ENERGY BREAK</p>
11:00	<p>HUUD Congregational Conversations Pat</p> <p>Small Groups: Discussion Questions on HUUD Strengths? Challenges?</p>
11:30	<p>LUNCH BREAK</p>
12:30	<p>Identifying Needs and Next Steps Small Groups Tom</p> <p>Four Key Areas: programming/training/resources/infrastructure</p> <p>Station Go-Round</p> <p>What needs to change in this key area for youth ministry to be the best it can be?</p>
1:00	<p>Deep Discussion (Choice) Small Groups Pat</p> <p>Prioritize, define, next steps, report back</p>
2:00	<p>HUUD Follow-Up Task Force Tom</p>
2:15	<p>Youth Ministry and Youth Empowerment: A Common Understanding</p> <p>Discussion: Working Definitions from Newsprint PLUS their comments</p>
2:40	<p>Appreciation and Evaluation Tom</p> <p>Distribute and then collect Evaluation Forms</p>
2:50	<p>Closing Ritual Pat</p> <p>UU Youth Ministry Gifts and I'll Carry on ... (See Appendix)</p>
3:00	<p>FAREWELL on to the CON</p>

**YOUR YOUTH MINISTRY GIFTS
RESPONSIVE READING**

Your gift of **ACCEPTANCE**

PAT

that teaches those around you that they are loved for what they are, and who they are becoming
For you accept individual differences and reinforce respect for all.

Your gift of **TRUST**

TOM

that helps youth and adults to understand and accept that no one can be perfect all of the time,
but to trust themselves in expressing their faith
For you create an environment that encourages conversation and mutual learning in an
atmosphere of kindness and caring.

Your gift of **POSSIBILITIES**

PAT

that encourages youth and adults to know that they have the freedom to become who they
want to be
For you encourage them to discover truths, learn cooperatively, make decisions, and
take responsibilities.

Your gift of **APPRECIATION**

TOM

for all of life that allows each person to have spiritual adventures, chances for laughter and fun,
time for creativity
For you provide moments of silence, an environment to express feelings, activities that
encourage their creative efforts.

Your gift of **FAITH**

PAT

that nurtures a UU identity, inspires spiritual practices, and promotes ethical action with
people of all ages
For you have shared faith-filled stories, have asked wondering questions, have
challenged injustices, and have offered words of encouragement.

THESE GIFTS LAST FOREVER.

THESE GIFTS LAST FOREVER.