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Chrysalis Youth Ministry Training Program Re-Visioning Proposal

Introduction:

Over the past four years the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has embarked on a large-scale study and re-visioning process that has engaged more than 5,000 Unitarian Universalist youth and adults. This process concluded with a Summit on Youth Ministry that established a new vision for Unitarian Universalist youth ministry, objectives to realize that vision, and specific activities to make the objectives happen. One of the main objectives identified in the report of the Summit on Youth Ministry reads as follows: “The UUA will give priority to services and resources supporting excellence in congregationally based youth ministry.” One of the activities identified that will help achieve this objective is to “develop a training and consultancy program to serve congregations and clusters of congregations by region.” A Youth Ministry Working Group was formed to implement this new vision for Youth Ministry; this group places a high priority on the objective and activity listed above.

To create a specific draft plan to reshape the Chrysalis program, the Office of Youth Ministry brought together a team of youth and adult trainers in the program, along with a district staff member and a director of religious education. Their task was to imagine what an effective training program might look like to better serve congregations. They were asked to stay focused on the structure of the program, with the hope that content would be developed and discussed later on in an implementation process. However, content needed to be addressed broadly to help form the structure. This report is based on their work but also includes further analysis and fleshing out by the Office of Youth Ministry. A complete list of the re-visioning team members can be found in Appendix 1.

Goal:

The goal of the Chrysalis Re-Visioning proposal is to present a plan that will:

- Utilize current assets that the Chrysalis Youth Ministry Training program already has, including currently trained trainers and training modules,
- Support districts and regional groupings of districts to better support congregations in their youth ministry efforts,
- Define clear roles for UUA headquarters staff, UUA district staff, youth, adults, and bridgers, and
- Create a place of empowerment for youth to be in service to their faith and to congregations.

Chrysalis Program Background:

The Chrysalis Youth Ministry Training program is currently a collection of trainings that are offered to districts for youth and adults who work with youth. These trainings lead teams of youth and adults who are trained in a specific training by the UUA’s Youth Office at a continental training of trainers. There are currently 123 trainers in the

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program. The trainings are usually 15 hours long and happen over a weekend. The specific trainings offered in the Chrysalis Youth Ministry Training program are as follows:

- Leadership Development Conference: This is a conference for youth where they build skills in leadership and community building.
- Spirituality Development Conference: This is a conference for youth and adults who work with youth to skill-build around planning and implementing worship and developing a personal spiritual practice.
- Peer Youth Chaplain Training: This is a training for youth and adults who work with youth to build skills around peer chaplaining. These skills include active listening, pastoral care, getting help, and supporting communities.
- Advisor Training: This is a training for adults who work with youth to gain basic skills to be a youth advisor. These skills include community building, safety issues, and building support structures.
- Advanced Advisor Training: This is a training for adults who work with youth to gain more advanced knowledge and skills in youth advising, such as adolescent development and pastoral care.
- Groundwork Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Training: This is a training for youth, young adults, and adults who work with youth and young adults. Its goal is to build an analysis of racism and oppression in UU communities and the community at large.

Appendix 2 shows a statistical analysis of numbers of trainers and trainings offered over the past several years.

New Basic Structure:

This proposal imagines three levels: district-level Youth Ministry Teams, regional Youth Ministry Mentoring Teams, and the national Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. (A flowchart showing how these three levels relate appears in Appendix 3.)

- *Youth Ministry Teams:* The district-level Youth Ministry Teams would be the foundation of this training program. Team members would be taught how to lead effective trainings and workshops, as well as a basic framework for quality youth ministry. They would then be asked to specialize in specific areas of youth ministry. These specific areas are yet to be developed but will likely include spiritual development and worship, peer chaplaining, conflict resolution, and trainings and workshops for various adults who work with youth, such as advisors, ministers, and religious educators. These teams would be able to offer congregations services such as youth group start-ups, trainings on meeting management, advisor team development, and hopefully much more.

The makeup of the Youth Ministry teams will be at the discretion of the district staff. It is recommended that selection of team members be done in consultation with the mentoring team for their region and youth leaders in the district. It is

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imagined that the teams would be made up of youth and adults who would be asked to serve specific terms (likely longer terms for the adults). Hopefully, the adults on the team would include ministers, religious educators, and youth advisors. It is also hoped that youth will get pulled into these training teams at a younger age than has been traditionally possible in the current program. Districts would also be able to decide the size of their team, with a recommendation of two team members per twenty congregations in a district.

It is imagined that districts would manage these teams in much the same way as many districts are already managing training and consultancy programs. Districts would incorporate these teams into their current fee structures, or if they do not already have consultancy programs, the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry would help them develop a fee structure. The goal is for the Youth Ministry Teams to become an extension of the services provided by the district staff. Primary responsibility for administering the Youth Ministry Team program will depend on the district and its staffing structure.

- *Regional Youth Ministry Mentoring Teams:* District staff have been meeting in five regional teams over the past several years. It is imagined that these regional groups would be an effective level at which to do trainer development for the district Youth Ministry Teams. This trainer development would be the primary task of the regional Youth Ministry Mentoring Teams. Each of the five regions would have a mentoring team charged with leading a yearly Youth Ministry Team Development Retreat. This yearly retreat would act as training of trainers for new Youth Ministry Team members and a continuing education opportunity for existing team members. All new Youth Ministry Team members would be required to attend a development retreat before they start leading workshops and trainings. Districts would be able to decide how often they wished to send existing team members, but it would be recommended that they attend at least every two years.

The regional Youth Ministry Mentoring Teams would be selected in collaboration with the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, district staff for the region, and youth leadership and have the following makeup:

- Youth Member: an experienced youth who has been on a district Youth Ministry Team for at least two years.
- Bridger Member: a young person between the ages of 18 and 24 who has been working in the training program for several years.
- Adult Member: an adult who has been in the Chrysalis program or Youth Ministry Training program for at least four years.
- District Staff Member: one of the district staff from the region, who will help maintain a connection between the training program and the rest of the district staff.

Besides providing training for the district Youth Ministry Teams, these mentoring teams will also help develop training modules for the program, consult on more

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complex youth ministry issues within districts and congregations and provide ongoing mentorship for Youth Ministry Team members throughout the year.

- *Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry:* The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry would be charged collecting best practices from across the district, the regions, and other denominations to create new training modules and update existing modules. To do this, they would work closely with the regional Youth Ministry Mentoring Teams and district staff. They would also convene an annual meeting of the five regions' Youth Ministry Mentoring Teams. The purpose of this meeting would be to prepare team members for the regional retreats, educate team members on new and updated modules, evaluate the program, and share best practices among the five regions.

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression:

The group that developed this plan spent a significant amount of time discussing how to make this new training program as anti-racist and anti-oppressive as possible. Three areas of consideration were discussed:

1. *Trainer Selection:* Diverse District Youth Ministry Teams will be important for this structure to be anti-racist and anti-oppressive. To ensure this it is imagined that youth and adults from diverse back grounds will be intentionally recruited to join the Youth Ministry Teams. These diverse backgrounds include people of color, lgbtq people and youth and adults who have primarily been involved in their congregation.
2. *Program Evaluation:* Consistent evaluation will be essential to the success of this program. All evaluation will need to include measuring the programs effectiveness related to anti-racism and anti-oppression. Participant and trainer evaluation forms should contain questions that help measure effectiveness. Metrics should also be established to measure the number of people of diverse backgrounds who are taking part in the program.
3. *Training and Workshop Content:* It will be important for anti-racist and anti-oppressive values be incorporated through out the training material. People with experience in developing anti-racism and anti-oppression resources should be involved with the development of training and workshop content. Also, all Youth Ministry Team members and Youth Ministry Mentoring Team members should receive significant anti-racism and anti-oppression training.

Financial Cost:

A detailed proposed budget can be found in Appendix 4.

Total Cost for Each Level	
Congregations	Set by districts

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Each district (assuming full six-person teams)	\$2,400.00
UUA	\$50,000.00

Congregations: The fee charged to congregations would be up to the districts to decide. This proposal imagines that the fee structure would be very similar to existing fee structures that many districts already have for specific consulting services. The fee would probably need to cover Youth Ministry Team members' travel to the congregation, a stipend to the team member, and possibly something extra to help the district cover the cost of training the Youth Ministry Team members.

Districts: This proposal imagines that the training of Youth Ministry Team members would be heavily subsidized by the UUA. However, each district would need to pay an equalization fee for each of Youth Ministry Team member it sends to the annual retreat. It is proposed that this fee be \$400 per team member sent. This fee is mostly a travel equalization but also helps cover some of the site and program expenses. Districts could send up to six team members per year at this rate. If the district wished to send more than six team members, the rate would need to be \$1,000 per extra team member sent (or the full, unsubsidized cost of the retreat). The average cost to a district for this program if it were to send a six-person team would be \$2,400 annually.

The reason for an equalization is that there can be dramatic differences in cost of travel among the different regions. For this program to be successful across the UUA, travel costs will have to be shared by the regions regardless of geographical size.

UUA: The UUA would cover much of the expense of the program. The UUA will pay the full cost (\$14,000) for the annual National Mentoring Team meeting. The UUA will also pay most of the site and programming cost of the five regional Youth Ministry Team retreats (\$36,000). The overall cost of the program would be \$50,000 for the UUA.

Outstanding Issues:

The purpose of this proposal is to lay out the basic structure for a new youth ministry training program. However, there are several questions and issues that still need to be addressed if this structure is to be implemented.

- A formal evaluation system needs to be created that will evaluate both team members and the overall program.
- Support structures for District Youth Ministry Teams need to be more formalized. Each district should have minimum standards for safety policies for youth trainers and should specify how the mentoring teams will relate to Youth Ministry Team members.
- A plan for how current Chrysalis training modules can be adapted to the new program and for how new modules will be created. Work will also need to be done to collect other resources for the Youth Ministry Teams.

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Appendix 1 – Re-Visioning Meeting Participant List

Tsuki Naka, Youth Leadership Development Conference and Chaplain Trainer

Bart Frost, Youth Chaplain and Advisor Trainer

Elandria Williams, Adult Chaplain, Advisor, and Groundwork Trainer

Tim Murphy, Adult Chaplain and Advisor Trainer

Jennifer Nichols Payne, District Staff for the Southwest Conference

Esther Rosado, Director of Religious Education for the UU Church of Medford

Beth Dana, Adult Leadership Development Conference, Advisor, and Groundwork Trainer

India McKnight, Youth Ministry Associate for the Chrysalis Training Program

Jesse Jaeger, Youth Ministries Director

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Appendix 2 – Chrysalis Training Program Fact Sheet

This fact sheet is compiled with information from January 2004 to April 2008. Youth are defined as being under 21 years old, young adults are defined as being 21 to 24 years old, and adults are defined as being 25 years old and older.

Age Range of Trainers

Chaplain Trainers (Training of Trainers held in 2006)

- 30% of trainers were youth
- 20% of trainers were young adults
- 50% of trainers were adults

Leadership Development Conference Trainers (Training of Trainers held in 2004 and 2007)

- 39% of trainers were youth
- 14% of trainers were young adults
- 47% of trainers were adults

Basic Advisor Trainers (Training of Trainers held in 2006)

- 30% of the trainers were youth
- 20% of the trainers were young adults
- 50% of the trainers were adults

Advanced Advisor Trainers (Training of Trainers held in 2005)

- 6% of the trainers were youth
- 35% of the trainers were young adults
- 59% of the trainers were adults

Spirituality Development (Training of Trainers held in 2005)

- 35% of the trainers were youth
- 15% of the trainers were young adults
- 50% of the trainers were adults

Trainer Geographic Representation

There are currently 123 trainers in the United States and Canada (from the 2004–2007 Training of Trainers).

- There are no trainers from Joseph Priestly, Northeast and New Hampshire/Vermont Districts
- There are fewer than six trainers from the Thomas Jefferson, Mountain Desert, Prairie Star, Mid South, Ballou Channing, Clara Barton, Florida, Southwest, Pacific Central and Central Midwest Districts and in Canada.
- The best trainer representation (defined as having six or more trainers from the region) is in Massachusetts Bay, Pacific Northwest, Heartland, Metro NY, St.

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Lawrence, Pacific Southwest and Ohio Meadville Districts.

Training Distribution

There were 122 trainings scheduled from January 2004 to April 2008. Twelve were cancelled, and four were rescheduled.

- The Southwest, Metro NY and Ohio Meadville Districts requested 9%–15% of the trainings held.
- The Northeast, New Hampshire/ Vermont, Florida, Prairie Star and Joseph Priestly Districts each had less than 1%–2% of the trainings held.

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Appendix 3 – Proposed Youth Ministry Training Program Flowchart

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Appendix 4 – Proposed Budget

Total Cost for Each Level		
	Congregations	Set by districts
Each district (assuming full six-person teams)		\$2,400.00
	UUA	\$50,000.00

UUA Funds	Budget
Youth Ministry Mentoring Team Annual Meeting	
Travel	\$7,000.00
Housing	\$3,000.00
Food	\$2,500.00
Supplies	\$1,000.00
Onsite transportation	\$500.00
Total	\$14,000.00

UUA and Districts Share Funding		
Youth Ministry Team Regional Retreats		
Income		
UUA Subsidy		\$36,000.00
Total district equalization		\$45,600.00
Income total		\$81,600.00
Expenses		
Travel		\$25,450.00
Site		\$18,760.00
Food		\$16,750.00
Supplies		\$2,500.00
Manuals		\$1,140.00
Onsite transportation		\$2,500.00
Mentor Team travel		\$4,500.00
Mentor Team and other trainer stipends		\$10,000.00
Expenses total		\$81,600.00