

**REPORT TO THE UUA BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
FROM THE  
DISTRICT SERVICES STAFF GROUP  
January, 2009**

Just some of the many exciting programs and activities occurring in varying districts:

**Mid-South District**

**'Unlimited Potential' Program -- the "UP!" Program--**"UP!" is the acronym for the unique enrichment program for very small congregations in Mid-South - those whose adult memberships are under seventy and who have no full-time staff. The name of the program - "UP!" - represents the notion of the 'unlimited potential' of these congregations. 18 of Mid-South's congregations are participating.

The "UP!" program launched in the spring of 2008 and will run through 2009. During the eighteen-month duration of the program, participating congregations will be offered:

- resources tailored for UP!-size congregations
- focused tracks at district conferences
- an electronic newsletter (*WHAT'S UP!*)
- periodic conference calls and a list-serve (Google group) for sharing information and ideas
- a few unique gatherings just for the "UP!" congregations.

UP! Teams from each congregation are the direct interface between the program and the individual congregations. Each participating congregation's board of trustees has designated three or more members to be the congregation's "UP! Team." The UP! Teams will communicate the information and resources they are receiving to their boards and congregations.

Program costs are underwritten by funds generated by contributions of UU congregations in the district on Association Sunday in 2007.

## **Pacific Central District (PCD)**

The Pacific Central District has been working hard in response to the Youth and Young Adult Empowerment resolutions passed at GA 2008. We've been taking surveys, researching the Best Practices of our congregations, looking into beginning a Leadership School for Youth, and participating in on-going relationship-building with our YRUU and UUYAN groups. Most recently the PCD welcomed Nancy DiGiovanni, who presented a highly interactive and useful workshop on Young Adult Ministry. Our targeted groups were ministers, religious educators, board members, and members of committees such as membership, worship, and the Committee on Ministry. We were pleased to have twelve congregations represented among our participants, and especially gratified to have seen some of the blogging and other post-workshop action steps being taken.

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## **Thomas Jefferson District (TJD)**

The tragic shooting at Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (TVUUC) in Knoxville, Tennessee has been a focal point of district staff work this fall. The two congregations (TVUUC and Westside UU Church) have begun their recovery and are starting to heal. The UUA/TJD Knoxville Relief Fund has been a significant help in providing direct assistance to those most impacted by the tragedy, including help for medical bills, medical equipment, lost income, child care, and counseling, funding a pastoral care minister to support the congregation and build a pastoral care team, hiring additional staff to support the RE program and the front office, and making necessary improvements to the security system to provide a sense of safety to the congregants. These congregations will be in recovery for a long time to come but the outpouring of love from UUs around the globe has certainly helped them to heal. It's important to remember them throughout this year as TVUUC celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in February and certainly on the first anniversary of the tragedy, July 27, 2009.

TJD is focusing this year on building intergeneration community in our congregations and across the district. In the Spring, TJD is offering a

weekend of intergenerational worship workshops including Worship for All Ages, Spirit Play and Worship, and Contemplative Youth Ministry. The TJD Annual Meeting is also stepping outside tradition by holding it at former Episcopal Retreat Center, now a North Carolina State Park, and focusing the entire weekend on UU Family Values. The weekend will be filled with music, worship, workshops, and fun for the entire family.

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### **Central Midwest District (CMwD)**

Stefan Jonasson spoke about leadership for disaster prevention and response to a gathering of professional staff of the largest congregations in the Central Midwest District. Ministers, religious educators, administrators, membership directors and musicians participate in these daylong events held two-three times a year in the CMwD.

According to Rev. Jonasson, this is the only regularly recurring event of its kind for staff of large congregations. A podcast of Stefan's presentation is available on the Central Midwest District website.

Dori Davenport Thexton and Ian Evison have been organizing these gatherings for five years. 30-40 staff members from 11 congregations come together to learn about and discuss various leadership issues. In November, in addition to the informative and lively presentation from Rev. Jonasson, participants were treated to a tour of the brand new facility of First Unitarian Society in Madison, WI. Learning about the many features of their beautiful, totally green, LEED-certified addition was a fascinating experience.