

# **Unitarian Universalist Association**

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**Annual Report  
June 2008**



**William G. Sinkford-President  
Kathleen Montgomery-Executive Vice President**

## INTRODUCTION

The Association's mission for the staff is to:

1. Support the health and vitality of Unitarian Universalist congregations as they minister in their communities.
2. Open the doors of Unitarian Universalism to people who yearn for liberal religious community.
3. Be a respected voice for liberal religious values.

This report outlines for you, by staff group, the work that has been done on your behalf this year by the staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association. It comes with great appreciation for their extraordinary work in a time of many new initiatives in response to the needs of our faith and our congregations.

If you have questions in response to the information contained here, please feel free to contact Kay Montgomery ([kmontgomery@uua.org](mailto:kmontgomery@uua.org)).

William G. Sinkford, President  
Kathleen Montgomery, Executive Vice President

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## ADVOCACY AND WITNESS STAFF GROUP

The mission of the Advocacy and Witness staff group is to carry Unitarian Universalist values into the wider world by inserting UU perspectives into public debates of the day.

Advocacy and Witness staff members work closely in coalitions with other organizations which share our values, as well as local UU congregations, to be effective in this ministry internationally, nationally, and in state and local efforts. Advocacy and Witness staff practice and promote legislative advocacy, grassroots activism, media advocacy, shareholder advocacy, work in coalitions with other religious and secular groups, community organizing, and other strategies to live our principles of transforming the world to reflect more justice, equity, and compassion through engagement in democratic processes. Our work focuses on local, national, and international spheres.

An International Advisory group was appointed by President Sinkford to think strategically about the UUA's involvement in international concerns. Chaired by Rev. Dr. John Buehrens, its members are Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, Rev. Dr. Fred Muir, Mark McPeak, Kathy Sreedhar, and Barbara Beach.

President Sinkford has also asked for key leaders to serve as ambassadors with key constituencies in the world. To date, the appointees are Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, ambassador to India, Rev. Dr. Fred Muir, ambassador to the Phillipines, and Rev. John Gibbons, ambassador to Transylvania. Other appointments will evolve as needed.

Memoranda of Understanding are being created with international organizations with which the UUA is aligned, to promote clear understanding of roles and boundaries.

### Office of International Resources

Staff is developing several new congregational programs and workshops, which will be ready for General Assembly. These programs seek to foster the integration of faithful global citizenship within Unitarian Universalism, and to promote congregational response to the Sixth Principle: "to affirm and promote the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all." In addition, a bi-weekly international listserve (i-news) is available to keep UUs abreast of current events. Find information about the International Resources office at <http://www.uua.org/international>

### UU Holdeen India Program (UUHIP)

UUHIP puts UU values into action by providing long-term support to organizations serving the poor and disadvantaged in India.

UUHIP is pursuing an institutional partnership with the Humanistic Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries, a Dutch donor agency that shares UU values and currently funds several UUHIP partners. This organization has agreed to match UUHIP funding for India partners, in addition to providing related support. This partnership is an effective strategy to address the decrease in UUHIP's grant budget in the current international economy.

Washington Office: The UUA's Washington Center has moved to 666 11<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington DC, 20007.

The Washington Office staff and Congregational Advocacy and Witness staff work to address the UUA's strategic priorities for public witness:

- 1) Family matters, including BLGT rights, reproductive choice, comprehensive sexuality education.
- 2) Racial and economic justice, including immigration reform, increased wages, Gulf Coast recovery post-Katrina.
- 3) International crises, including global HIV/AIDS, the Iraq War, Darfur.
- 4) Environmental justice, including global climate change and sustainability issues.

Work takes place in two ways: First, UUA staff provide direct national leadership on priority issues, including advocacy on Capitol Hill and through strategic partnerships with compatible coalitions. Second, staff works to support grassroots leadership across the country.

Resources to support congregational activism may be found at [www.uua.org/socialjustice](http://www.uua.org/socialjustice). Activists may choose to join many issue-based listserves, to join the Social Action Chairs network (SAC-News), or to join Advocacy News (ANews) to learn about the work of the Washington Office staff.

Congregations may want to download and use the workshop materials in Inspired Faith, Effective Action which will help them to develop their own strategic priorities. They may also want to sign up to participate in the Social Justice Empowerment Workshop with UUA consultants, or to download materials from that program ([www.uua.org/documents/aw/sje\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.uua.org/documents/aw/sje_handbook.pdf)). Materials about activism in this election year may be found at [www.faithfuldemocracy.org](http://www.faithfuldemocracy.org), a coalition in which UUA staff take a primary role.

Congregations interested in socially responsible investing may download materials on this topic at [www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/responsibleinvesting/60329.shtml](http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/responsibleinvesting/60329.shtml). Finance committee chairs and others can also receive a quarterly SRI cyber-newsletter.

Congregational Study/ Action issue on Peacemaking

Staff has been working closely with volunteers on the Peacemaking Core Team, to develop numerous resources for congregations. See [www.uua.org/socialjustice](http://www.uua.org/socialjustice)

## CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES STAFF GROUP

### **Congregational Services GA Staff Report**

#### **Growth Services**

For the Small Congregation, and for the Smaller Mid-size Congregation, Planning for Growth and Vitality workshops continue to be offered as stand-alone workshops to learning teams from congregations. In church year 2007-2008 one district held this workshop as a stand-alone, offering district support for congregational follow-up by the district's full time growth consultant.

In addition, three three-year Planning for Growth pilot projects are underway with Central Midwest, Clara Barton, and New Hampshire-Vermont and Northeast/New Hampshire Vermont (now Northern New England) Districts. The pilots focus on committed growth teams from each participating congregation who take part in the workshops, and follow-up consulting—through conference calls, visits, email, and a wake—from our trained Planning for Growth consultants teamed in each case with a district liaison committed to the growth of the participant congregations. Each of the Planning for Growth consultants is training multiple district contacts to strategically mentor congregations and to spread within the districts a greater knowledge of congregational growth. Additionally, congregations are able to share with one another what they find most effective in their growth efforts. Central Midwest District's pilot focuses on smaller mid-size congregations (151 – 350 adult members), while Clara Barton and Northern New England Districts are piloting with small congregations (up to 150 adult members).

Congregational Services partnered with the Pacific Central District to produce the online resource "Congregations Count: Evaluating Your Membership Process." Author Linda Laskowski developed this resource as Membership Chair of her congregation and wanted to enable others to use this valuable set of tools. By using basic visitor and member figures, congregational leaders can identify strengths and weaknesses along the membership path; determine if they currently receive enough visitors to increase membership, or if they need to do outreach; determine how effective they are at greeting the first time guest and the repeat newcomer; and to see how well they meet the needs of both new and longer term members. The resource includes a simple, online audio-visual training which discusses best uses of the tools and wise applications of the resulting data. Suggestions of ways to improve the process of welcoming and of conveying belonging are included in the tools and in references to the companion resource "The Membership Journey."

Congregational Services and District Services are working together in partnership to support emerging congregations in their process from organizing to going public to growing and becoming member congregations of the UUA. Support include referrals to experienced staff and volunteers as well as print and web resources, with planned expansions in support including opportunities for web based training and more focused web based resorting.

The UUA also partnered in numerous other growth initiatives including Planning for Growth (see above), regional marketing outreach campaigns and a stewardship demonstration project (see below) as well support for congregational radio ministries (1<sup>st</sup> Unitarian Rochester NY; Davies Memorial Camp Springs MD) and congregational growth through the creation of

additional campuses of existing congregations (First Unitarian, Albuquerque, First UU San Diego.)

### **Young Adult and Campus Ministry**

This has been a year of transition for the UUA's Young Adult and Campus Ministry. While the imagination for a new structure that will embrace both youth and young adult ministries as well as changes being considered by the Continental UU Young Adult Network (C\*UUYAN) are still in process, the Young Adult and Campus Ministry Office continued providing programming and advocating for and with young adults to create/sustain spiritually alive, radically inclusive and justice centered ministry.

Six young adults were recruited and supported to attend the Allies for Racial Equity (ARE) conference. Staff attended and provided logistical and programmatic support for the ARE and Interweave annual conferences; and represented the office on the UUA's Youth Ministry Working Group (in progress) and the Addictions Ministry Task Force. Office staff also collaborated with the Youth and Young Adult General Assembly Caucuses as well as the Office of Youth Ministry to plan a major worship service at General Assembly in Fort Lauderdale. Additionally, office staff provided significant on going administrative support for Groundwork, the youth and young adult anti racism, anti oppression training and for C\*UUYAN . Grant programs, trainings, workshops and congregational consultations continued throughout the year.

### **Large Congregations**

The mission of this office is to identify appropriate resources and develop strategies to deliver them to large congregations in partnership with the Association and its districts. There are presently forty-five large congregations served by this program, as well as a score of congregations that are edging towards 550 members, which receive services aimed at helping them manage the size transition. As the first of only a few denominations known to maintain a distinct office for large congregations, the UUA is a leader in this area of American church life.

During the 2007-2008, on-site consulting was provided to fourteen congregations. In a typical month, the office responds to an average of ninety-four requests for consultation by telephone, email and web conferencing. Specific concerns addressed through on-site and electronic consultations include: leadership development, governance, growth and extension, personnel and staffing issues, ministry, religious education, strategic planning, congregational finances, conflict management and an assortment of localized concerns. A growing number of larger midsize congregations seek support around transitional issues and inquiries from congregations beyond the UUA increase as other denominations become aware of this specialized program.

The office maintains liaison with the Association of Senior Ministers of Large UU Congregations (SMOLUUC) and LREDA-Large, the Liberal Religious Educators' Association group supporting religious educators serving either large congregations or large religious education programs. The office also serves as a resource on large church issues to district and headquarters staff. During the current church year, the office supported two district-sponsored programs – on ministerial leadership, staffing, governance and emotional systems – as well as the main educational presentation for the annual meeting of SMOLUUC, collectively drawing participants from well over 70 congregations.

The office monitors trends among large congregations in other denominations, looking for models and methods that can be applied in a Unitarian Universalist context. In this work, the office maintains contact with The Alban Institute along with a network of connections with large church leaders from a dozen denominations, enhancing the sharing of information and insights on societal trends, governance, staffing and stewardship. The office devoted its research time this year to exploring the interface between governance models and emotional systems theory, a largely unexplored area of American church life. The goal of this research is to identify multiple models for congregational governance, which will be grounded in a deeper understanding of congregations as emotional systems.

The seventh National Conference for Large Congregations within the Unitarian Universalist Association was held in Louisville, Kentucky in March. This triennial conference has become the primary opportunity for the staff and lay leaders of larger UU congregations to participate in a common training event and it has contributed significantly to networking among the leaders of large congregations. Susan Beaumont, senior consultant with the Alban Institute, delivered the keynote presentation: “From Perspiration to Inspiration: Spiritually-Grounded Leadership for Large Congregations.” Thirty-four workshops were offered. For the first time ever, this conference was sold out, with participants from 51 congregations in attendance.

The Large Congregations Team includes UUA staff and representatives from key large church constituencies. It meets on a regular basis to examine the needs of large churches, review the UUA’s efforts to serve them, and establish priorities for ongoing work.

## Marketing Outreach

In Fall 2007 the UUA embarked on its first national advertising campaign in fifty years. The goals of the campaign included: build pride among Unitarian Universalists and energize our congregations and members to confidently share our faith with others; raise awareness and build a favorable opinion of Unitarian Universalism among opinion leaders, individuals seeking a liberal religious home and the general public; and give Unitarian Universalism a voice in the national discourse about religion and significant issues facing our nation and world.

Based on these goals, an integrated marketing campaign was launched with Time Magazine and time.com. TIME, with a weekly circulation of 3.25 million (and 21.4 million weekly readership), is the oldest and most widely-read news magazine in the country. TIME subscribers are “influencers” or thought leaders. It is the #1 news magazine for key audience segments such as adults ages 30 - 44, who listen to, watch, or have contributed to NPR/PBS and adults ages 30 – 44 that have participated in, or contributed to, environmental organizations or causes. (Source: MRI Data)

The UUA ran two full page ads and two “advertorials”, October through December 2007 (see schedule below). An “advertorial” is a two-page spread which includes a 1/3 page ad on the far left and a 2/3 page ad on the right. Between the ads is a TIME magazine story. The 2/3 page ad directed readers to [time.com/religionpages](http://time.com/religionpages), a web page highlighting past TIME articles on religion and prominently featuring UU advertising and content. The page included links to [uua.org](http://uua.org) as well as to articles sharing our unique Unitarian Universalist perspective on many of the topics covered in the archive pages.

Month	Ad	Cover Date	In Homes & Newsstands
October	Full page	10/15/07	10/05/07

November	Advertorial	11/5/07	10/26/07
November	Full page	12/3/07	11/23/07
December	Advertorial	12/31/07**	12/21/07

\*\*TIME Person of the Year Edition

The UUA also tested a pilot Google AdWords internet marketing program. To leverage the TIME ad campaign and target a new audience, the Association bought a four color full page ad in the program book for 13 college bowl games with 2 million attending fans. Because religious advertising in bowl game souvenir books was seen as so unexpected, newswire services and over 20 publications ran the story, including the Chicago Tribune. Graphics created for congregational use include generic ads, outdoor banners, and graphics components from the campaign ads.

This Spring, the UUA continued the ad campaign in TIME Magazine with two full page ads as well as a strong Google AdWords program.

Month	Ad	Cover Date	In Homes & Newsstands
April	Full page	4/14/08	4/4/08
May	Full page	5/12/08*	5/2/08

\* “TIME 100” Issue

Results from the Spring are pending. Some results from Fall 2007 are known.

Brand/Name awareness campaigns are difficult to measure. However, TIME magazine conducted a Starch Readership Survey for the December 31<sup>st</sup> issue which provided some measurements. A total of 371 respondents were surveyed to measure the extent to which the ads were seen and read. Results indicate

- 35% remember seeing our ad (called “noted” readers). Of those, 14% talked to someone about the ad after having read it. This “talking about” score was the third highest score out of a total of 53 measured brands.
- 22% not only noted the ad but read enough of the ad to clearly remember the advertiser
- 8% read most of the ad (most interested respondents). Of those readers, 40% talked to someone about the ad. Again, this was the third highest score.
- TIME readers had a low brand familiarity with Unitarian Universalism. More than 76% were unfamiliar with the brand.

Time.com:

- Over the 9 week period, 1,385 entries to UUA.org came as click-throughs from time.com

Time.com/religionpages: The advertorials directed folks to a unique time.com page. During the campaign, time.com/religionpages received 14,658 key (home) page views and 110,700 total page views (not just unique visits – this number represents all the pages viewed).

UUA Website hits: UUA website statistics (1) a 34% increase in visits October 5- December 31<sup>st</sup> 2007, compared to year earlier and (2) 126% increase in visits to [uua.org/visitors/](http://uua.org/visitors/) - the page served when [UUA.org/welcome](http://UUA.org/welcome) was requested (which was the URL used for this campaign).

The UUA announced the national campaign through:

- Broadcasts over multiple UU list serves
- A video announcement by Bill Sinkford in early October
- A UUA.org home page announcement from Bill Sinkford for both the Fall 2007 and spring 2008 phases
- A campaign specific landing page with detailed information about the campaign and links to supporting marketing and welcoming resources
- Articles in The World and UUWorld.org
- Banner ads for congregations
- Congregational Mailing detailing the campaign and listing resources

As part of the campaign launch, congregations were directed to resources on the UUA website. Resources included:

- Hospitality and belonging resources including The Membership Journey, Congregations Count, Congregational Assessment, Visitor Tracking forms, etc.
- Generic ads

In addition, Bill Sinkford and Gini Courter conducted a “town hall” meeting on hospitality and welcoming. Over 100 UUs participated via a conference call.

The UUA produced a DVD “Voices of a Liberal Faith” in Fall 2007. This 12 minute DVD is an introduction to Unitarian Universalism highlighting our history, theology, worship experience, lifespan religious education, commitment to social justice and inclusiveness. Over 20,000 copies have been distributed and nearly 25,000 more viewings have taken place on YouTube.

Since 2003 the UUA has conducted five regional marketing campaigns. These campaigns are significant not only in the dollars raised in those local markets by the UUA Stewardship & Development staff group (\$100,000- 300,000 per campaign), but also in the focused collaboration between UUA, district staff and congregational leadership, as well as the extensive media mix.

Two regional campaigns were conducted this year. In September- November 2007, the largest regional campaign was launched in the San Francisco Bay Area. Seventeen (17) congregations participated and over 600 donors contributed over \$300,000. February- April 2008, eight congregations in the Tampa Bay area participated in a \$236,000 campaign.

The campaigns had the following goals:

1. Generate brand awareness of Unitarian Universalism
2. Increase visitor attendance at local congregations
3. Increase membership
4. Create excitement and pride among Unitarian Universalists in the area

Each campaign had congregational preparedness as a component. Both campaigns had a rich marketing mix including TV, radio, direct mail, outdoor, print, newspaper inserts and the internet.

A significant accomplishment this year was the creation of consistent advertising materials for the regional campaigns. Expanding on the heartfelt seekers message “Imagine a religion...” all the creative materials use the same graphics, color palette, type style and tagline.

The Congregations are measuring results – including number of hits to their regional website, number of visitors and number of new members. Results are being tracked over time.

### **Antiracism Anti-Oppression Multiculturalism**

Congregational Services continues to provide many paths along the journey to creating congregations that are antiracist, anti-oppressive, and multicultural. Our goal is to meet congregations where they are and to guide and support them in addressing issues of race, racism, white privilege, and other oppressions.

The second of three conferences on the theme, “Leading Congregations into a Multiracial, Multicultural Future – now is the time!” was held in February. The highly successful conference included 130 participants from throughout the continent. Meeting in San José, CA conferees explored the dynamics, challenges, and rewards of creating multiracial, multicultural Unitarian Universalist congregations.

The JUUST Change Consultancy continues to reach out to congregations, districts, UUA staff groups and committees, and other groups to build the framework for systemic transformation through our commitment to antiracism, anti-oppression, and building diverse, multicultural welcoming institutions that are rooted in Unitarian Universalist identity, theology, and values. Through JUUST Change, consultants and staff work closely with congregational, district and Association elected and appointed leaders, supporting the development and deepening of skills to integrate anti-racism, anti-oppression and multicultural competencies into their role and responsibilities.

In addition to the conference and consultation, Creating a Jubilee World, Jubilee 2, the Journey Toward Wholeness path to antiracism, and customized programs are also offered.

Congregational Services is a partner in the Diversity of Ministry Team (DOMT) Initiative. This initiative provides congregations with resources to prepare to welcome a called multicultural minister or minister of color/Latino/a/Hispanic minister. It also provides ministers with support as they prepare for a call or as they continue in settled ministry. A third component is support for congregational leaders and for already settled white ministers who will share or are sharing ministry with a multicultural minister or minister of color/Latino/a/Hispanic minister.

Wilderness Journey: The Struggle for Black Empowerment and Racial Justice within the UUA (1967-1970) is an "oral history" from some participants in the Black Empowerment Controversy within the UUA of the 1960s and 1970s, thus preserving this important witness for future generations. This meaningful resource has been reproduced in DVD format by Congregational Services and offered to constituents as an addition to any collection to use as an inexpensive educational, historical, and, antiracism resource.

Ethics in Congregational Life (Safe Congregations)

Congregational Services continues to develop and deploy resources to educate congregations on issues of ethics and safety. During the year ending in June 2008, a new interactive online resource to educate congregational leaders was launched with the goal of providing easily accessible training for congregational leaders in the basics of safe congregation policy with a focus on the safety of children and youth. The resource also provides on determining whether, and if so how, to include someone who is a sexual offender in the congregational community. The 2½-hour, free course of study is based on Balancing Acts – Keeping Children Safe in Congregations, a resource written for the UUA and available as an online resource since 2005. Feedback from those taking the new online course has been overwhelmingly positive. As of December 31, 2007, 336 people had taken the course, with the vast majority indicating that the self-paced course is well-organized and communicates the essential points of creating safe congregations policies.

In January, fourteen Unitarian Universalists gathered to envision how to develop a successful nationwide Addictions Ministry for UUs. Guided by Drew Brooks of the Rush Center/Johnson Institute, the group explored the question, “What would it be like if Unitarian Universalists adequately and effectively addressed addiction prevention and addiction recovery?” Two representatives from Congregational Services participated in the meeting where this mission was developed: The mission of the UUA Addictions Ministry is to walk together with congregations and religious professionals to educate individuals, families, congregations, and communities about the suffering caused by addiction. Our purpose in doing this ministry is to transform cultures of misuse and abuse into cultures of healing, wholeness, and health.

#### Congregational Stewardship Services

***The Office of Congregational Stewardship Services partners with congregations to help each religious community transform its unique vision into bold action. The program has provided consulting services to hundreds of Unitarian Universalist congregations since 1985. The past fiscal year was the busiest ever and the program grew by 16% from the previous year. To help meet the increased demand, two more stewardship consultants were hired, bringing the total to 10. These consultants made a total of 180 visits to 62 different congregations. There were four components to their consulting services:***

- 25 initial assessment visits
- 16 successful capital campaigns
- 9 long-range strategic plans
- 22 successful annual budget drives.

In addition, two congregations received building loans to help finance large construction projects, two congregations received grants to help finance their first spiritual home, and one congregation received a Green Construction Award for having earned a LEED certificate.

Many congregations have begun using *Beyond Fundraising: A Complete Guide to Congregational Stewardship*, written by Wayne Clark. The book introduces a new comprehensive stewardship development program, titled forward through the Ages (FORTH). Seven congregations were selected to participate in a three-year demonstration project to determine best practices for creating a successful stewardship development program... The demonstration project began in the fall of 2007 and the first annual report will be written in September 2008.

## DISTRICT SERVICES STAFF GROUP

### **District Services Report to the 2007 General Assembly April 14, 2008**

The UUAs district staff share the same mission as the entire UUA staff. It is to:

1. Support the health and vitality of Unitarian Universalist congregations as they minister in their communities.
2. Open the doors of Unitarian Universalism to people who yearn for liberal religious community.
3. Be a respected voice for liberal religious values.

District staff members contribute to this mission in a myriad of ways, and almost always in partnership with others. Primarily they do it by serving as leaders, consultants, advocates, and educators in our association of congregations, often being the “first call for help” by congregations needing UUA resources.

With the consolidation of the New Hampshire-Vermont and Northeast Districts into the Northern New England District effective July 1, 2008, the UUA will have nineteen districts. All have a *District Executive* who serves as the Association’s local presence and is often the first person to be contacted about UUA services. Many districts also have *Program Consultants* who serve the District in particular program areas based on local priorities, most often in the area of lifespan faith development or growth.

District Executives and Program Consultants work in close alignment with the district board and the director for district services at the UUA to ensure the greatest needs of congregations are met. Areas of competency in district staff include leading mission/vision work with congregational leadership, providing lay leadership development training in such areas as healthy congregations, growth, lifespan faith development, worship, stewardship, navigating size transitions, board governance, and building strong congregational staff relationships. District staff are also fully engaged in assisting congregations through changes in ministerial leadership, the settlement of part-time ministers, organizing and leading district assemblies, long-range planning with the district board, and perhaps most importantly, mission and vision work with the congregations they serve.

This past year district staff members created, organized, or led over 300 workshops throughout the continent. Topics included such things as:

- *Church Growth* which focused on the unique challenges to growth in each congregational size category and how to overcome them;
- *Healthy Congregations* which were designed to help congregations identify patterns of behavior that might be preventing them from achieving their potential;
- *Lay Leadership* that explored the various ways congregations can organize their programming to ensure skilled leadership exists and encourage continuity of leadership over time;

- *Membership* which focused on attracting, engaging, and retaining members and exhibiting “radical hospitality” to the seeker;
- *Social Justice* designed to assist congregations in effectively doing social justice and outreach work with the greatest impact;
- Creative Worship that seeks to explore and expand the different ways of leading meaningful worship in different size congregations.

Additionally, in this past year district staff members have contributed to:

- the planning, organizing, and leadership of UU University, the leadership development opportunity that occurs each year in the days immediately before GA, *and* the DVD of the event that follows;
- the planning of the next CD resource for lay leaders entitled *Drive Time Essays Volume 3 – Resources for Small Congregation*;
- the creation of the *Ministry Matters* DVD featuring UUA Moderator Gini Courter and the UU Ministers Association president Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs as they discuss how lay leaders and professional leaders can work effectively together;
- helped identify congregations that might be considered “Breakthrough Congregations” and be given the opportunity to share at General Assembly *how* they’ve grown in depth and numbers.

In an effort to further support the growth and vitality of UU congregations and reduce the carbon footprint left by while doing so, new technologies are being used in district staff work. Specifically, the expanded use of telephone conference calls, “video chats” and video conferences, and the use of technology for “webinars” are being used. Most recently, a webinar on the topic of governance received this praise from a lay leader:

*I just watched the webcast on policy governance. It is the most powerful/meaningful/insightful video I have seen. It gives such clarity of vision and ideas that it takes my breath away. I feel that this video should be required viewing by the board and committees before your visit.*

## **IDENTITY-BASED MINISTRIES**

Identity-Based Ministries supports the mission of making Unitarian Universalism welcoming and inclusive for all people who yearn for liberal religious community. This 2008 annual report highlights those specific programmatic initiatives and accomplishments that have advanced this mission area.

The **Office of Accessibility Concerns**, under the direction of Rev. Dr. Devorah Greenstein, has focused significant energy to the development and distribution of resources that enable congregations to welcome and include persons with diverse disabilities. This includes providing Assistive Listening System Demo Kits to congregations to test equipment that enables people who are hard of hearing to fully participate in congregational life; undertaking a project to scan progressive and liberal religious books and other progressive printed resources with Bookshare, a national library that serves people with reading and visual disabilities, and creating a comprehensive interfaith accessibility manual for congregations in collaboration with the National Council of Churches Committee on Disability. Of the fourteen congregations that have borrowed the Assistive Listening System Demo Kits, the majority reported purchases or plans to purchase their own assistive listening systems. Finally, the Office of Accessibility Concerns has provided leadership development support to Equal Access, a grassroots and national organization of Unitarian Universalists with disabilities and their families, friends, and allies. Equal Access' goal is full participation for Unitarian Universalists with disabilities in every aspect of congregational life.

The **Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Concerns** has provided direct face-to-face services to over 50 congregations in FY 2008. These include 36 Beyond Categorical Thinking workshops for congregations conducting ministerial searches. A significant development in the BCT program has been meeting with Ministerial Settlement representatives and Interim Ministers to discuss anti-oppression work and the role that BCT plays in preparing congregations to welcome ministers who identify as people of color, Latina/o/Hispanic and/or multiracial; bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender; and people with disabilities.

OBGLTC has provided electronic consultative services (phone and/or email) to an average of 10 to 15 congregations weekly. The number of recognized "Welcoming Congregations" grew to 579 as of April 2008, and it is expected that there will be 10 to 15 more by General Assembly 2008. In addition, Rev. Keith Kron, Director of the office, has supported the Committee on Social Responsible Investing in its decision to file a resolution with Wal-Mart to include gender identity in the company's nondiscrimination policies.

The **Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns**, led by Rev. Sofia Betancourt, has experienced significant programmatic progress, including the of hiring Rev. Alicia Forde as Program Coordinator of Multicultural Congregations and Laura Spencer as Program Coordinator for the Assessment of Ministry for Youth and Young Adults of Color. Alicia Forde is working in conjunction with the Diversity of Ministry Team (DOMT) in its initiative to support healthy, sustainable multicultural ministries in Unitarian Universalist congregations. Laura Spencer, who served for 14 years as Director of Religious Education in Ann Arbor, MI, has titled her ministry assessment process the Mosaic Project.

The **DOMT Initiative** is currently working with six congregations and is in conversation with three additional congregations with the goal of developing successful multicultural ministries. In addition, staff members have served additional congregations through consultation and resource support.

The **Mosaic Project** is assessing ministry to youth and young adults who identify as people of color, Latina/o/Hispanic, and/or multiracial/multiethnic descent. To date respondents from 95 congregations have participated in appreciative inquiry interviews with youth and young adults to identify highpoint experiences and their vision for Unitarian Universalism. More congregations are expected to participate. Congregational leaders also have provided responses about current conditions for ministry to these young Unitarian Universalists. In addition, Laura Spencer has built relationships with constituent organizations that involve and/or serve youth and young adults from the above identity groups, and has advocated for their interests as part of the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth and in the conversations on restructuring the Youth Office and Young Adult and Campus Ministry Office.

Other accomplishments of the Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns include expansion of the **Leaders Guide for Multiracial Family Ministries** to include district events, covenant groups, family camps, and regional multi-church gatherings; and a **Unitarian Universalist Leaders Guide** for the documentary **Traces of the Trade: A Story From the Deep North**.

The field test for **Building the World We Dream About**, a welcoming congregation curriculum focusing on race and ethnicity, commenced in September 2007. With 43 of the 45 accepted congregations still enrolled in the field test, initial evaluations have been generally positive, and substantive recommendations have been made for improvements. One of the results of the curriculum is helping Unitarian Universalists normalize substantive conversations about race and racism as a first step in transforming individuals, congregations, and communities, and building the beloved community. Taquiena Boston, Director of Identity-Based Ministries, serves as the curriculum editor.

## LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT STAFF GROUP

*Guided by Unitarian Universalist Principles and the UUA's goal of becoming an anti-racist, anti-oppression, multicultural organization, we provide lifespan resources for education, worship, advocacy, and social action that nurture UU identity, spiritual growth, a transforming faith, and vital communities of justice and love.*

This has been an exceptionally dynamic year with major progress on two important services for our congregations: the consultation on youth ministry and the development of Tapestry of Faith lifespan curricula. In addition, we have also continued to provide consultation, training, and web and print resources.

### **The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth:**

*Goal: To re-vision and increase support for Unitarian Universalist ministry to and with youth by involving youth and adults throughout the Association in dialogues about youth ministry.*

- This two-year process, which culminates in July 2007, has been successful beyond our expectations. The levels of enthusiasm and participation on the part of Unitarian Universalist religious professionals and lay persons, adults and youth, have been both significant and encouraging. As of General Assembly 2007, over 4000 Unitarian Universalist youth and adults have taken part in this consultation process, over 160 separate events have been held covering every district in the Association as well as Canada. Hundreds of youth returned surveys as did hundreds of youth advisors. At all these forums, participants offered their visions of what Unitarian Universalist youth ministry should look like. This has been a massive exercise in listening that should bear fruit for Unitarian Universalism for decades to come.

Desired outcomes of the consultation include: 1) youth ministry that goes beyond a one-size-fits-all model, 2) youth ministry resources that better serve local congregations, 3) mutually respectful and empowering partnership of youth and adult leaders, 4) forums for youth identity development and institutional change through anti-racism and anti-oppression work, 5) meeting the spiritual needs of youth, and 6) effective communication and networking within and between all areas of the Association.

Work this year on the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth included:

- **New Desired Outcome:** The Task Force on Youth Ministry decided to add an additional desired outcome for the work of the consultation. It became very clear from the data of both the youth survey and the congregational conversations that many youths' spiritual needs are not being met and that congregations are struggling to support the spiritual formation of youth. To make spiritual development a priority, the Task Force decided to add "meeting the spiritual needs of youth" to its list of desired outcomes.
- **Task Force on Youth Ministry:** The Task Force on Youth Ministry held two meetings this year. In July, 2006, the taskforce studied and interpreted data from the congregational conversations and the youth ministry survey. They also trained to lead the District Gatherings and Stakeholder Conversations scheduled throughout the year. At their second meeting in March, they prepared for the Summit on Youth Ministry to be held in July 2007. They planned the process for the Summit and prepared the data collected throughout the

Consultation process for Summit participants. They also began to think about how the recommendations of the Summit on Youth Ministry will be implemented.

- District Gatherings: A major goal of the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth is to engage every district in the Unitarian Universalist Association in a conversation on Youth Ministry and this was a success! All 20 UUA districts participated in conversations, with nearly 1000 Unitarian Universalist youth and adults taking part. At these gatherings, participants reflected on the data collected from congregational conversations and the youth survey, discussed how both their district and the Association as a whole could better support youth ministry.
- Stakeholder Conversations: Another major goal of the Consultation to and with Youth is to engage with as many stakeholder groups as possible. This effort was also a great success. The Consultation developed resources for stakeholder conversations and worked with the following stakeholder groups (in rough chronological order):
  - YRUU Leadership: The YRUU Leadership held the first stakeholder conversation at their Youth Council meeting in July 2006. All 70 participants were in small working groups for much of their week-long event to discuss their perspectives on youth ministry.
  - Canadian Unitarian Council: YRUU remains a bi-national organization. The Canadian Unitarian Council has committed to do its own re-visioning work around youth ministry in partnership with the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth. They held their “Terre Commune” (French for Common Ground) Winds of Change gathering over Labor Day weekend. It brought together 40 youth and adults to talk about youth ministry in Canadian congregations and how it can be related to the work that is being done in the United States.
  - Religious Educators/Liberal Religious Educators Association: Religious educators are a key stakeholder and they have participated in a number of venues. At the LREDA fall conference, religious educators participated in the consultation, holding two conversations. About 40 religious educators participated in a focused conversation before the start of the conference. Later, the entire 200-person conference engaged in a discussion of youth ministry. The Religious Education Credentialing Committee also engaged in a conversation later in the year. Religious educators also participated widely in congregational and district conversations.
  - UU Camps and Conferences: CU2C2 held a self facilitated conversation at their annual meeting, which prepared their member groups to have similar conversations at their respective camps and conferences.
  - District Staff: All members of the UUA’s district staff took part in a conversation at their Big Complex Meeting in New Orleans. They studied the data that had been collected so far, reflected on changes they would like to see and gave advice on how to further the objectives of the consultation.
  - UUA Boston Based Staff: Many Staff Groups have engaged in conversations about their roles in youth ministry, including Stewardship and Development, Ministry and Professional Leadership, International Programs, Congregational Services, Identity-Based Ministries, and Communications, and staff who work on Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression and Anti-racist Multiculturalism. Nearly 100 UUA staff members have taken part in these conversations.
  - Commission on Social Witness: The Commission on Social Witness discussed the role of youth in the social justice work of the Association, how this work can be

- intergenerational and how the new congregational Study Action Issue process can involve youth.
- Interweave: This group of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Unitarian Universalists held a conversation at their annual convocation, this year with the theme, “Interweaving Generations.”
  - Ministers and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association: the Consultation Task Force members produced resources for ministers to have conversations about youth ministry in UUMA chapter meetings. Both the UUMA Executive Committee and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee engaged in conversations about the roles of ministers in ministering with youth.
  - Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries: DRUUMM held two conversations, one at each of their two Youth and Young Adult Summits in the spring. Both youth and adults of color attended these events to discuss ministry with youth, specifically youth of color.
  - Youth Advisors: Because there is no organized body of youth advisors, it was decided to engage their experiences and input through an online survey. 380 adults who work with youth responded. The survey addressed both how supported they were in their work and what they think is needed in youth ministry.
  - Young Adults and the Continental Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Network: The CUUYAN leadership held a conversation about their role in ministry with youth at one of their regular meetings.
- Details from these gatherings and conversations: A tremendous amount of information has been gathered through all of these surveys and conversations. Data is available on the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth website at [uua.org](http://uua.org). The Task Force is sharing more about what has been learned at General Assembly 2007, including a workshop, a booth in the exhibition hall, and a report during plenary.

### **Tapestry of Faith:**

Goal: To develop and publish programs and resources for all ages that nurture Unitarian Universalist identity, spiritual growth, a transforming faith, and vital communities of justice and love.

We are very pleased with the quality and pace of curriculum development this year. We have remained on target with our Tapestry roadmap and are very excited about the depth and creativity in these new programs for all ages. Some highlights:

- Twelve curricula and two supplemental resources have been written to date; 13 curricula and two resources are writings in progress as you read this.
- 37 authors have been engaged in writing for Tapestry to date, and these authors are a diverse, talented, and experienced group of professionals.
- Seven consultants have been engaged to enrich the curricula in specialties such as music, art, story-writing, drama, and accessibility.
- A new staff person to direct the development of youth programs joined LFD on June 4<sup>th</sup>. We are very pleased to welcome religious educator Jessica York as the Youth Programs Director in the Curriculum Office. Her leadership will accelerate the production of youth curricula for grades 6 through 12.
- LFD has worked closely and with great enthusiasm with staff members of IT and OEC to prepare for online publication of these programs. The technicalities of publishing

curricula on the UUA's new content management system have exceeded original assessments, and we really regret the delay in electronic publishing. A special set of software, tailored specifically for our needs was created and tested successfully in April. We are now pouring programs developed or field tested in the last two years into the new system. This is a labor-intensive process. Fortunately the new curricula are being written specifically to the new format and will not have to be transferred. When the process is completed, our programs will be available online, searchable and printable by program or session in a user friendly downloadable Word format. Look for new Tapestry curricula to be online for field test this fall, available to all congregations to try. And from then forward, new curricula will be posted regularly.

### Tapestry of Faith Children's Programs

The first set of children's curricula, *Living Faith* Grades K-1, 2-3, and 4-5 have been written and are being edited and prepared for on-line field tests to begin January 2008. A call for field testers has been launched. Since this is the first of the Tapestry children's programs, we are very eager to see wide congregational participation in the online field test (formal evaluation) and beta test (informal evaluation) available to all congregations.

#### **Living Faith** Programs include:

*We'll Build a Land: Creating Home* (K-1)

Authors: Jessica York and Christy Olsen, 16 Sessions.

*We Give Thanks: Lived and Living Faith* (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades)

Authors: Dr. Jenice View and Gabrielle Farrell, 16 Sessions.

*For the Journey: Building a Toolbox of Faith* (4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grades)

Authors: Katie Erslev with Rev. Paul S. Sawyer, consulting, 16 Sessions.

Inter-Session/Intergenerational/Wide age span Programs:

*Miracles*: Authors: Dr. Miriam W. Smith and Rev. Chris Craethnenn, 8 Sessions.

*Gather the Spirit*: Authors: Richard S. Kimball and Dr. Christine Rafal, 8 Sessions.

#### **Seeking Truth** Programs:

Writing began in May for this second series of Tapestry curricula for children in Grades K-6.

The authors gathered in Boston in to launch the development of this series. Draft manuscripts are due in the fall of 2007 for field test and beta test during the 2008-2009 congregational year.

*Seeking Truth* programs include:

*The Welcome Table: Friendship and Fairness* (K – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade)

Authors: Gaia Brown and Aisha Khadr Hauser, 16 Sessions.

*Moral Tales: Justice and Goodness* (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades)

Authors: Rev. Alice Anacheka-Nasemann & Elisa Davey Pearmain, 16 Sessions.

*Through the Open Window: Self and Others* (4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grades)

Authors: Dr. Jenice View, Natalie Fenimore, and Gabrielle Farrell, 16 Sessions.

*Amazing Grace: Virtue and Sin* (6<sup>th</sup> Grade)

Author: Richard S. Kimball, 16 Sessions.

*Tree of Life*: Intersession/Intergenerational/wide age span Program:

Author: Katie Erslev. 8 Sessions.

Tapestry Children's Programs Resources:

These resources will be available online to help teachers enrich their curricula with music and art no matter what their personal skill levels are in these areas. Both authors focus on the spiritual dimension of artistic experience and expression.

*Spirituality and the Arts*. Author: Dr. Nita Penfold.

*Music with Children*. Author: Nick Page.

### Tapestry for Youth

Two programs previously written and field-tested are being prepared for the publication in the new CMS: *Families* (junior high/ high school) and *Exploring Our Identities through Poetry* (high school). A resource manual, *Coming of Age*, is being prepared for print publication. The recommendations of the Summit on Youth Ministry will influence future youth program development.

### Toolkit Series Book

A Toolkit Book (the third in this series of resources to support faith development programming in our congregations) is in the Publication Office scheduled for an October 2007 printing: *Stories in Faith: Exploring Our UU Principles and Sources through Wisdom Tales* by Gail Forsyth-Vail contains 21 stories drawn from our Principles and Sources for use by teachers, worship leaders, and families.

### Adult Programs

Three programs heading into the testing phase, with congregations already signing up:

- *Spirit of Life: Spirituality for Unitarian Universalists* by Rev. Barbara Hamilton-Holway
- *Spirit in Practice: Practices for Unitarian Universalist Spiritual Life* by Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom
- *Building the World We Dream About* by Dr. Mark Hicks is an anti-Racism/anti-oppression program for congregations.

### Programs field tested this year and being revised for online publication in the coming church year

- *Principled Commitment: A Program for Unitarian Universalist Couples* by Melanie Davis, Stephanie Haymaker, Rev. Craig Hirshberg, and Rick Bellingham
- *Our Whole Lives: Sexuality Education for Young Adults (18-35)* by Rev. Dr. Michael J. Tino, Laura Stuart, MPH, Rev. Sarah Gibb Millsbaugh, and Ethan Field
- *Sexuality and Our Faith: a Companion to Our Whole Lives for Young Adults (18-35)* by Mandy J. Keithan (UU) and Lynn Young and Rev. T. Michael Rock (UCC).

### Published online

- *Owning Your Religious Past: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Web Edition* by Bonnie (Stauffer) Withers
- An updated, comprehensive guide to adult programs by the UUA, Skinner House, Beacon Press, and independent publishers.

### Authors selected for forthcoming adult programs

- Leadership and Faith, Rev. Margaret L. Beard
- Unitarian Universalist Theology, Rev. Dr. Thandeka
- Unitarian Universalist Morality and Ethics, Rev. Dr. William Murry and Rev. Ginger Luke.

## Web Resources

Web resources play an increasingly central role in supporting faith development for children, youth and adults. The following are some new resources developed and posted this year.

- *Synapse*: Synapse is a print and online magazine by and for Unitarian Universalist youth. The 2006 print edition combined two previous issues on Spirituality and Leadership. The theme of the Fall 2006 web-only issue was Community Building and the Spring 2007 web issue was titled Healing the Fractures In Our Communities, addressing sexual violence and healing from violence within and outside our communities.
- “Darfur: What can I do?”: An online resource with information about the genocide in Darfur, and what youth can do to take action. Written by Zoe Engberg.
- “Pronouns and Gender”: An online resource to help people understand the different pronouns used by people with various gender identities.
- Families on [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org). Family ministry materials were reorganized and transferred to the new UUA website. As material is generated from Tapestry of Faith, it will be added to the Family resources.
- **New and Recommended Resources** for Fall/Winter: From the Lifespan Faith Development staff group. This is a comprehensive, compilation of resources with hyperlinks for religious educators. Topics from this edition include resources about: Racism & Classism; Social Action & Service Learning; Curricular Resources; and Family Resources.
- “**Taking time for the stories of our lives**” explores time, families, wisdom stories, and the value of taking time.
- Resources for UUA Board Responsive Resolution: Congregations can learn more about racism and classism. Provided on-line **resources for children, families and religious educators**, including **resources on cultural (mis)appropriation**.

## Pamphlets

Three new pamphlets are in the new UUA Bookstore catalog: *UU Views of Evil* and *UU Views of the Sacred* (both with Paul Rasor, editor, and contributors, James Ford, Abhi Janamanchi, Liz Lerner, Judith Meyer, Patrick O’Neill, and Victoria Safford,) and *Family Prayers: a Sampler* (Irene Praeger, editor).

## Worship Web

We are very proud of the continual development of this much appreciated resource. This year we have had two part-time worship web coordinators working with LFD staff to add new material and help move the website to the newly designed [uua.org](http://uua.org). Development of a UU liturgical calendar and expansion of the depth and breadth of online worship resources are ongoing. We are building a network of links to related worship materials, publicizing Worship Web to a larger audience of ministers, religious educators, and lay leader, and continually seeking contributions for a variety of worship settings.

## Trainings

- Our Whole Lives: Sexuality Education for Adults: 7 teacher trainings held.
- We are preparing for an OWL Training of Trainers for OWL Young Adults which will take place in July 2007.
- The Chrysalis Training Program is an excellent source of training for both youth and adults engaged in youth ministry in our congregations. This year there were 19 trainings: six Basic

Advisor Trainings, one Advanced Advisor Training, two Leadership Development Conferences for youth, three peer Chaplain Trainings for youth, four Groundwork Youth Anti-Racism / Anti-Oppression Trainings and three Spirituality Development Conferences for youth.

- Training of Trainers for two Chrysalis leadership training programs were held outside of San Antonio, TX: Leadership Development Conference (LDC) and Groundwork: Anti-Racism / Anti-Oppression. Sixteen new LDC trainers and 15 new Groundwork trainers were trained to facilitate trainings in our districts. A new Groundwork Training Manual was also developed.
- Youth Social Justice Training conference: Nearly forty youth and adults gathered in New Orleans in February for the Youth Social Justice Training (YSJT), organized in partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, which provided financial, logistical and programmatic support. Programming focused on education reform, including how the education system in New Orleans was affected by Katrina. Participants left with tools to advocate for education reform in New Orleans and in their own communities.
- Our Whole Lives: This was a busy year for Our Whole Lives teacher trainings, with 26% more teacher trainings than last year. There were 10 child level trainings, 31 youth level trainings, and 7 adult level trainings for a total of 48 trainings. This represents over 700 teachers trained this year.

Note: *Our Whole Lives* continues to be identified as the premier comprehensive sexuality education program in the United States, and continues to generate media and community interest.

### Workshops

- "Teaching as the Creation of Stories," North Dallas Religious Educators, Dallas, Texas, August 12, 2006. LFD
- "Children, Youth, and Unitarian Universalist Faith," Dallas, Texas, August 11, 2006. LFD
- "Faith Development of Children and Youth", a workshop for the Northeast Liberal Religious Educator's Association, Littleton, MA, September 15, 2006. LFD
- "Growing in Faith", a presentation at the inaugural Clara Barton Excellence in Religious Education Conference, Marlborough, MA, November 21, 2006. LFD
- "Worship as Transformational Learning," First Annual UU Contemporary Worship Conference, San Diego, CA, February 2007.
- *Our Whole Lives* Teacher Training, Perkins School for the Blind, February, 2007.
- "Teach it, Preacher," UUMA Ministry Days, Portland, OR, June 2007
- "Teach Your Grown Ups Well," UUA General Assembly, Portland, OR, June 2007
- Pacific Central District Age Range Discussion: Members of the Youth Office helped facilitate a discussion about the district's age range for youth programming. Youth Office helped them craft a plan to narrow that range to 14 to 20 years (from 12 to 22).

### Groups We Support

- The Family Matters Task Force (FMTF) met by phone this year due to scheduling conflicts. The FMTF is working from its March 2006 plan and is sponsoring and leading two workshops at General Assembly: "Time as a Family Value" and "Stirring the Oatmeal: Serving all Families."
- Children's' Defense Fund. Unitarian Universalist Children's Sabbaths materials were revised and included in the fall 2006 Children's Sabbath Guidebook.
- YRUU Steering Committee: The YRUU Steering Committee has worked to prepare Youth Council to receive the recommendations of the Summit on Youth Ministry, They also

continued to expand YRUU's focus on anti-racism and anti-oppression work, selected an interim Working Action Manager (a youth social justice position to forward YRUU social justice positions at General Assembly and in the wider community), and appointed representatives to the Youth Ministry Associate and Assistant Youth Ministries Director hiring committees.

- General Assembly Youth Caucus: Youth will again be a major presence at GA. Their programming is focusing on anti-racism / anti-oppression, identity development and community building. They are participating in the Open Space Technology sessions to help establish goals for the Association.
- Youth Council: Youth Council's major focus was the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth, Anti-Racism / Anti-Oppression, Youth Adult Relations, Social Justice, Governance / Structure, Outreach, Communication and US / Canadian Connections.
- Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM) Youth and Young Adults: The Youth Office provided both financial and some logistical support for the activities of DRUUMM YaYA. They held two spring summits this year, one on each coast, and the DRUUMM YaYA Steering Committee met throughout the year.
- Youth & Young Adult White Anti-Racist Allies: White anti-racist youth and young adults held one summit this year. It focused on creating the structures needed to sustain white anti-racist work.
- The UU Religious Education History Group is hosted and supported in spirit by LFD. The group met in May to review works submitted and evaluate their future plans.

#### E-mail lists and online communities

LFD manages and participates in the following list-serves: UU-Parenting, REACH-L, Adult RE, OWL-L, OWL Trainers, OWL-adult, OWL-child, Advisor-L, Bgltqq-youth, UU-Scouting, Youth Consultation, YRUU-Announce, YRUU-L, YRUUsacs, and YRUUsj.

## **MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP**

*Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group members are committed to serving Unitarian Universalism through care for the competence, strength, health and well-being of our religious professionals. To that end, MPL continues to interact with other staff groups, professional organization leaders, UUA committees, congregational leaders, and individual ministers, religious educators, musician, and administrators to assess and address needs.*

Association-wide attention to excellence in ministry, ministry to and with youth, the diversity of our ministry, and anti-racism, anti-oppression and multi-culturalism have become integral to all the work of the MPL staff as we discharge our regular duties and engage in new initiatives. We have formed targeted partnerships with other staff groups and professional organizations, and serve on inter-departmental teams, the Panel on Theological Education and the youth ministry working group. Our direct participation keeps us fully informed, brings our specific knowledge and expertise to the work of these collaborative groups, and contributes to good communication and coordinated efforts.

We have made significant progress in assessing the situation with our community ministers and addressing the needs of our small but growing cadre of military chaplains. We have included two new groups in the Professional Leaders Coordinating Council – the Accredited Interim Ministers (AIMs) group and the Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association (UURMaPA). Our Director of Church Staff Finance (the Reverend Ralph Mero) has retired and we are in search for a new Director. With much gratitude to the generosity of a donor, we are also in search for a Worship and Music Resources Director, a position funded for three years with the hope of permanence, pending positive evaluation of its usefulness to the worship life of our congregations.

### **Religious Education Credentialing:**

There are currently 42 participants in the Religious Education Credentialing program and a total of 46 credentialed religious educators at various levels. More than ever the potential for the Religious Education Credentialing program to transform faith development in Unitarian Universalist congregations through the personal and professional transformation religious education leaders is clear. In addition to supporting the Religious Education Credentialing Committee in its awarding of religious education credentials (this year seven religious educators were granted credentials), the office of Religious Education Credentialing began an effort to provide extensive support, as well as challenge, to candidates as they prepare to integrate knowledge and skill in a demonstration of their religious education leadership abilities in their portfolios. As part of the awareness of the UUA's need to responsibly credential individuals, criminal offense disclosure and background checks are required of all candidates. Reimbursement of the fee associated with the background check is available. The UUA and the Canadian Unitarian Council have reached an agreement on how religious educators serving Canadian congregations may participate in the RE Credentialing program.

Professional development opportunities administered by this office included two trainings for interim directors of religious education and the Renaissance Module program of training for religious educators. Seventeen Renaissance module trainings were conducted this year in 16

UUA districts and Canada. An apprenticeship process for new leaders of Renaissance modules has been put into place.

### **Transitions:**

The Transitions Office is working with the Information Technology Services staff group on a major upgrade of the online Ministerial Settlement System. Overarching goals include improved security, flexibility, reliability, independence, and access to information for all users. Specific goals include improved service to ministers in search of opportunities in community ministry and to District staff, smaller congregations, and ministers in publicizing and facilitating placement in consulting ministry positions. The great leaps forward in the quality and sophistication of the UUA's IT resources in the nine years since the inauguration of the first online Settlement System are something to behold!

Fifty-five congregations are currently in search of a minister to serve full-time, all but one in senior or sole positions. Most of the search committees will recommend a candidate to their congregation by late March.

AIMs (Accredited Interim Ministers) and AIMITs (AIMs in Training) will gather in Houston in mid-April for training and preparation for deployment. Ministers who will conduct their first interim ministry in 2008-9 will attend the Orientation to Transitional Ministry in Boston in July. There having been a shortage of interim ministers in the past couple of years, we are greeting the coming year with some anxiety.

### **Ministerial Credentialing:**

The Ministerial Credentialing Office continues to hold as its highest priority the availability of a credentialing process that at its core is anti-racist, anti-oppressive and multicultural. The office strongly supports the Diversity of Ministry Ministers of Color plan by offering funds and support to specific congregations with training and experience in ministerial formation of interns of color and those from historically underserved communities. At this time, one intern has been successfully recruited as part of this campaign to begin an internship in the fall.

The Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy have now met with 639 aspirants in eight years. Observing a troubling trend that some aspirants seemed to be putting off their meeting with an RSCC, the Ministerial Credentialing Office and the Internship Clearinghouse proposed a new policy that was accepted by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee that will require all interns to have met with an RSCC before the internship commences. All RSCC Administrators have now become part-time UUA employees which has significantly strengthened accountability.

The Internship Clearinghouse is again offering a workshop specifically focused on helping ministers become more effective supervisors. An email list for supervisors to support development of community, collegial support and guidance, discussion, and exchange of ideas related to supervising interns has been well received. A new workshop, "Ministerial Internships and the Role of the Intern Committee" will be offered at GA this year. The Internship Stipend Grant Program continues to successfully support new internship sites.

### **Ministerial Development:**

This office provides training programs that assist clergy, congregations, and agencies to make plans for ongoing ministerial development, awards funds for continuing education, oversees ministers through their preliminary fellowship requirements, and supports ministers in crisis.

Major programs of the 2007-08 year include:

At the First Year Ministers' Seminar in March, 32 ministers beginning their first year in parish, religious education and community ministries gathered in Boston for three days of orientation, spiritual renewal and enrichment. First Year Ministers are also providing support to each other through participation in an online listserv.

The Addictions Ministry Task Force brought together stakeholders from the UUA Board of Trustees, UUMA Executive Committee, YRUU Youth, Young Adult Office, Religious Educators, and District Executives to create a mission and vision for our Association's engagement with Addictions Ministry.

Following the CENTER Summit held in 2007 in Chicago, the CENTER Committee is re-envisioning how it provides continuing education programs to ministers. Beginning in 2010, the committee hopes to offer an annual five day retreat for all UUMA members, providing intensive training in specific areas of professional development. This spring, all ministers in fellowship are being surveyed to better assess professional development needs.

Staff members worked with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee to rewrite and implement new rules and policies that govern the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and ministers in Fellowship with the UUA.

As of April 15<sup>th</sup> of this fiscal year, 135 continuing education grants were awarded to ministers and religious educators totaling more than \$52,000.

### **Church Staff Finances:**

During the fiscal year 2007-2008, the Office of Church Staff Finances directed significant efforts toward the launch of the new UUA Health Insurance Plan, taking the plan through its first renewal and open enrollment cycle and establishing a solid working relationship with the newly formed Health Plan Trustees. The UUA Health Plan now covers 232 congregations and is showing solid financial performance. The Life, Long Term Disability and Dental plans were renewed on favorable terms with MetLife, offering a good prospect for stability for at least the next two years.

The UUA's retirement plan managed by Fidelity Investments had a net increase of 59 participants, moving from 2,650 participants as of March 2007 to 2,709 participants as of March 2008. The total plan assets increased during the same period from \$170,418,311 to \$173,681,056.

The Office worked with the Compensation, Benefits and Pensions Committee to assess the impact of the Health Plan on the pool of underinsured congregational staff, including the Plan's efforts to broaden eligibility and expand participation.

College scholarships totaling \$8,300 were provided to 22 children of UU ministers, and debt reduction grants of \$99,000 were awarded to 75 ministers. This year the average outstanding seminary loan balance was \$49,655 up from \$48,570 in 2007. There were 35 ministers carrying loan balances in excess of \$50,000, up from 26 an year ago, and 15 of those had loan balances in excess of \$70,000, up from 13 in 2007. The Office continues to be very concerned about the constant increase in the seminary loan balances of our newest ministers.

## COMMUNICATIONS STAFF GROUP

The Communications Staff Group serves the Association of Congregations by publishing and distributing books and periodicals that inform, inspire, and educate their readers; by developing and maintaining a UUA presence in cyberspace via the World Wide Web and email; by raising the visibility of Unitarian Universalism in the public arena; and by counseling and supporting our congregations in their various communications efforts.

### Office of Information and Public Witness

The mission of the Office of Information and Public Witness (IPW) is to increase awareness of Unitarian Universalism as a force for good in the world; to raise the visibility of UUism in the public arena; to preserve the legacy of the past and demonstrate its relevance for the present.

The staff's media outreach efforts were richly rewarded this year. Two General Assembly stories that received wide coverage in the national and BGLT press were the responsive resolution supporting transgender people and the call to repeal the Department of Defense's "Don't Ask/Don't Tell" policy.

The IPW office was very successful in helping promote the UUA's 2007 national marketing efforts, securing coverage in the last quarter in several publications. Stories about college bowl game program ads were carried by more than two dozen regional papers, adding hundreds of thousands of impressions to those reached by paid advertisements.

In its most extensive publicity effort, the IPW staff worked with staff in the UUA's Congregational Services Department and partners at the New England Adolescent Research Institute (NEARI) to debut a new online safety training program. The team provided an AP reporter with an exclusive story about how UU communities are using safe congregation policies to respond to news that a former sex offender wishes to join their congregation. The article was picked up approximately 200 outlets around the country, and it placed UUism at the forefront of this important work.

Throughout FY 2008 the IPW office has been working to develop more public relations resources for congregations to teach congregations specific media skills— writing press releases,

drafting op-eds and letters to the editor, and using congregational blogs and websites as primary outreach tools.

The IPW staff created new materials for the annual Coming of Age “Heritage Trips” to Boston. The office is working very hard to provide our youth with additional support and hospitality in the wake of recent changes in the Association’s youth programming. . In the past fiscal year, tours and visitors increased significantly. Specifically:

- 51 tours (a 24% increase over last year)
- 909 people (a 23% increase)
- 69 congregations (a 17% increase)

The office has been promoting Bill Sinkford’s visits and working with congregations to advance this work. These partnerships are coordinated to meet three main goals: 1) to promote the President’s visit and shine a spotlight on the work of the congregation, 2) to build a relationship of trust and service with the congregation, and 3) to use the opportunity to provide one-on-one training in public relations work for the minister and lay leaders. This last goal is especially important, because well-trained and confident local spokespeople will continue to put their media skills to work long after the initial visit is over.

Other significant projects this year include: Supporting the Bay Area and Tampa Area regional marketing campaigns; publicizing World AIDS Day and March for Peace actions in Washington, DC; highlighting the UUA’s renewed socially responsible investing efforts; showcasing Earth Day and related environmental justice events; and providing intensive media training for UU ministers in the Ft. Lauderdale region in advance of General Assembly.

#### Office of Electronic Communication

The Office of Electronic Communication (OEC) strives to support the health of Unitarian Universalism and the Association by offering news, information, resources, and connections between and among congregations, districts, and individuals.

The new UUA.org, which debuted with its first content management system (CMS) on April 2, 2007, has been undergoing fine tuning and has seen many additions in content and functionality

over the last year. With more than 18,000 pages of information, content migration from the old website is nearly complete. Special pages of information to serve leaders in congregations have been developed, and work continues to make search functions more user-friendly and responsive to queries. Even as this work is carried forward, the initial stages of imagining what the next content management system for the UUA might be like has begun, focusing on how “CMS2” might improve both the content contributors’ experience in providing information to constituents, as well as the public’s experience of the Association on the web.

Many parts of the website are now operating out of databases, allowing users to have up-to-the-minute, customized information at their fingertips. The Congregational Life and Spiritual Life sections of the website offer stories sent from congregations to make the connection to one another deeper and more meaningful; the Spiritual Life information includes inspirational readings and sermons, changed regularly, and an expanding WorshipWeb collection of materials to serve both lay and professional worship leaders. The popular UUA hymnbook, *Singing the Journey*, is now supplemented with material on the web concerning contributors and the music itself, all designed to deepen appreciation of the role of music in the worshipping lives of UUs.

The OEC was deeply engaged in developing the first UUA test of Google Adwords, late in 2007, with impressive initial results which led us, in April, 2008, to recommit to this form of online promotion through the end of the fiscal year. UUA ads designed to connect to those in conversation about the intersect of race, politics, and faith; those who are seekers of faith communities; and those from bisexual, gay, lesbian, or transgender communities, appear on the results page of Google searches. Clicking on these ads brings visitors to customized landing pages on the UUA website. The OEC also provided support for the UUA’s national marketing campaign in *Time* Magazine and on Time.com, where a new Religion archive (called *The Religion Pages*) was developed.

The OEC is also beginning to make RSS feeds, (RSS = “Really Simple Syndication”) available to content providers, allowing them to deliver their content, automatically, to constituents interested in it. UUA.org already offers RSS for news stories (see [www.UUA.org/rss](http://www.UUA.org/rss)), and UUWorld.org offers several RSS feeds as well (see <http://www.uuworld.org/about/rssfeedsfromuuworld.shtml>). The UUA election website is now live. This site has been established to provide accurate, up-to-date information regarding

upcoming UUA elections for President, Moderator, and Financial Advisor (June 2009), as well as rules, policies of the UUA Board of Trustees regarding the election, and links to the websites of announced candidates for President, Moderator, and Financial Advisor. See [www.UUA.org/elections](http://www.UUA.org/elections) for more information.

## Periodicals

The Periodicals office produces the quarterly *UU World* magazine, the quarterly *InterConnections* newsletter, and *uuworld.org: liberal religion and life*, the weekly online magazine. Each periodical serves a distinct mission: *UU World* enriches the religious life of individual UUs and helps connect them to the larger Association; the magazine is the only service the UUA provides directly to all members. *InterConnections* shares successful tips from congregational leaders with the volunteers and staff who run UU congregations. And *uuworld.org* offers Unitarian Universalist voices to the broader public online while also providing expanded news coverage of UU events, organizations, and people for UU readers.

Publishing remains an expensive business. Dramatic changes in the U.S. Postal Service's periodicals rate significantly increased postage costs for *UU World* and *InterConnections* at the beginning of FY2008. *UU World*'s postage jumped 25 percent; postage for *InterConnections* increased by 54%. After implementing several cost-cutting measures, the Periodicals office was able to limit the overall postage increase to just over 22 percent FY2008. Because the new rates hit smaller, less commercial magazines with steeper increases than large commercial magazines, *UU World* joined a coalition of independent magazines to protest the unfairness of the new rates, and the magazine submitted testimony to a Congressional hearing in October about the rate increase. (Read *UU World* editor Chris Walton's Fall 2007 column, "Independent Magazines Take a Hit," for more information.)

Paper costs continue to rise as well. The Periodicals office changed printers in April 2008 and expects to recoup a few thousand dollars in production and mailing-related costs in FY2009 as a result of the move. Paper costs are projected to rise 20 to 30 percent next year, however.

Happily, *UU World* advertising revenues climbed more than \$20,000 in FY2008 as the number of commercial advertisers, color advertisements, and classified ads went up. *UU World* also

introduced new discounted rates for UU organizations in 2008, which will allow nonprofit UU membership organizations that do not qualify for the UUA's "independent affiliate organization" status to advertise at less than half the magazine's commercial rates. Meanwhile, the magazine introduced "Congregational Announcements," a section of low-cost classified ads for congregations, but cancelled the section due to lack of interest.

The weekly web magazine *uuworld.org* expanded its readership and its services in FY2008, adding two regular columnists (the Rev. Meg Barnhouse and Doug Muder), a new blog ("The Interdependent Web," which tracks UU-related blogs and websites), and a fan page on the popular social-networking site Facebook. More than 2,100 people receive the magazine's weekly email newsletter, and the number of unique readers on the website is up 16 percent over this time last year. The websites of *Utne Reader*, the *Detroit News*, and the Sierra Club called attention to *uuworld.org* stories this year, among other media outlets. But many more people came from links passed along to friends or shared with social-networking sites like Reddit, Stumble Upon, Newsvine, and Facebook. One Reddit recommendation brought over 10,000 visitors to an essay by the Rev. Barbara Merritt. The Periodicals staff continues to explore ways to reach a larger audience with our online publications.

#### Publications Office

The Publications Office provides editorial, design, production and marketing services for all UUA books, pamphlets, curricula and the annual UUA Directory. The office convenes the Skinner House Board, which provides editorial direction for Skinner House Books. The office works hand-in-hand with the UUA Bookstore, which warehouses and sells UUA-published titles as well as books from other publishers.

Skinner House Books published 11 new titles this year. Aimed primarily at Unitarian Universalists, Skinner House books are nonetheless read by a broad audience. The Skinner House backlist includes some 100 active titles. Since 2002, Skinner House has distributed selected titles to the trade-independent and chain bookstores, libraries, and other non-UU markets. Currently more than 50 Skinner titles are distributed to the trade. Revenue from trade sales has remained steady.

#### **2007-2008 Skinner House Titles**

*How to Bury a Goldfish and Other Ceremonies and Celebrations for Everyday Life*, Virginia

Lang and Louise Nayer

*A Wind Swept Over the Waters: Reflections on 60 Favorite Bible Passages*, John Nichols

*Worship That Works: Theory and Practice for Unitarian Universalists*, Wayne Arnason and

Kathleen Rolenz

*The Fellowship Movement: A Growth Strategy and Its Legacy*, Holly Ulbrich

*Come Into the Circle: Worshiping with Children*, Michelle Richards

*Wrestling with Adulthood: UU Men Talk about Growing Up*, edited by Ken Beldon

*A Child's Book of Blessings and Prayers*, edited by Eliza Blanchard

*The Cambridge Platform: Contemporary Reader's Edition*, edited by Peter Hughes

*Uncommon Community: One Congregation's Work with Prisoners*, John Speer

*Sonata for Voice and Silence: 2008 UUA Meditation Manual*, Mark Belletini

*Going Out Dancing: Poems* by Ric Masten

### **Lifespan Faith Development Titles**

*Stories in Faith: Exploring Our UU Principles and Sources Through Wisdom Tales*, Gail

Forsyth-Vail

*Our Whole Lives: Sexuality Education for Young Adults, Ages 18-35*, Michael Tino, Laura Anne

Stuart, Sarah Gibb Millspaugh

*Sexuality and Our Faith: A Companion to Our Whole Lives, Young Adults*, Mandy Keithan, T.

Michael Rock, Lynn Young

### **UUA Publishing**

*2007 UUA Directory*

*Chalice Stickers*

### **Out of Print Titles**

At [googlebooks.com](http://googlebooks.com) more than 60 out-of-print Skinner House titles are now accessible, and most of these are 100% searchable. In addition, there are 59 out-of-print RE and UUA titles that are also totally searchable. A visitor to Googlebooks can not only view the text but can locate the nearest libraries where a given title is located.

### **Copyrighted Music**

**To make it easier for UU congregations to use copyrighted music in worship, the publications office developed a relationship with LicenSing Online, which offers annual licenses to more than 100,000 copyrighted songs commonly used in worship. We are currently reaching out to copyright holders to get most of the music from *Singing the Living Tradition* and *Singing the Journey* added to the LicenSing catalog.**

#### UUA Bookstore

The UUA Bookstore carries books and resources from Skinner House, Beacon Press, and many outside publishers, including a number of self-published Unitarian Universalists. In addition to selling directly to customers by phone, mail, fax, the Internet, and email, the Bookstore welcomes customers to its store located on the first floor of UUA headquarters in Boston. The Bookstore's email newsletter features new books, excerpts from titles of interest, discounts and announcements. The Bookstore's website, [ww.uua.org/bookstore](http://ww.uua.org/bookstore) was updated and improved this year, with easy-to-find announcements, new titles and catalog request features. Customers can reach the Bookstore by email at [bookstore@uua.org](mailto:bookstore@uua.org) or by calling toll free 1-800-215-9076.

## **BEACON PRESS**

Beacon Press is the independent publishing company of the Unitarian Universalist Association, founded in 1854 to promote issues of social justice in the wider world. Ever since, the press has fulfilled its role as the denomination's respected public voice for expressing its liberal religious values to the wider world. Beacon books illuminate UU values to people everywhere, and help motivate UUs and others to work toward social change by engaging them in the issues that the books address. These urgent issues include anti-racism and anti-oppression; environmental justice; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights; religious diversity and the separation of church and state; economic justice; and human rights and civil liberties.

This year, Beacon Press has been more successful than ever before in its goal to build its web presence and outreach. In November, the press launched a blog: **Beacon Broadside** ([www.beaconbroadside.com](http://www.beaconbroadside.com)), after receiving a generous grant from the Fund for Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility. Originally conceived of as primarily being a tool to draw potential readers to Beacon's website, the blog became an achievement in and of itself, furthering the press's mission to advance progressive ideas and stimulate conversation. New material has been posted four or five times a week, and the quality, depth, and variety of the posts truly highlight the strength of Beacon's list.

The posts on Beacon Broadside include discussions by **Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy** of the role of religion as a political tactic by presidential candidates, as well as eye-opening pieces about intelligent design by **Glenn Branch** such as "The Email That Ended a Career: Intelligent Design and Texas Education," which was viewed over 3,000 times in two days. **Patricia A. Gozemba** provided an argument for why "anti-gay marriage" state constitutional amendments are detrimental to all people in committed relationships; **Sherrilyn A. Ifill** has contributed posts about political aspects of the reality of white supremacy in the U.S.; **Stacy Mitchell** urged readers to support independent retailers; and **Aviva Chomsky** has discussed U.S. immigration law.

The blog has also succeeded in connecting Beacon Press to other progressive sites and blogs. More than 300 other blogs have linked to Beacon Broadside so far. A reviewer at popular publishing website Galleycat praised Beacon Broadside as "a site which uses the imprint's passion for social justice as a starting point for its own engagement with readers . . . it's more than just an advertisement; it's an entirely new conversation," and Lean Left wrote that the blog "should be a template for how publishers do blogs." Beacon Broadside has also warranted favorable mention on the popular progressive DailyKos site, as well as on The Huffington Post.

Continuing in the trend of taking back paperback rights to backlist Beacon titles, the press reclaimed paperback rights to **Michael Patrick MacDonald**'s classic memoir *All Souls: A Family Story from Southie*, and released a beautiful new edition of the book, as well as a new readers' guide that is available on the Beacon website. MacDonald has been especially well-received in the school market and *All Souls* has been chosen for several freshman reading programs.

In last year's report, Beacon announced the acquisition of **Thomas DeWolf**'s *Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family Confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave Trading Dynasty in U.S. History*, which stemmed from a documentary produced and directed by DeWolf's relative, Katrina Browne, "Traces of the Trade." The documentary, screened at GA 2007, was chosen by the Sundance Film Festival and has been selected for a national broadcast premiere by PBS in

June. DeWolf's GA program this year is titled "**A Family of Slave Traders**" and will take place on **Saturday, June 28, from 1:30–2:45 p.m.**

One of Beacon's most notable titles of 2007 is **Dr. Eboo Patel's *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation***. The book chronicles the author's struggle to forge an identity as Muslim, Indian, and American; calls for outreach to interfaith youth; and argues for religious pluralism. As one example of the outpouring of media attention in response to the book, Patel was interviewed on ABC-TV's nationally broadcast *Good Morning America* in a two-part segment that aired over two days. On **Saturday, June 28, from 5:00–6:15 p.m.**, Patel will be part of a panel discussion with Rev. Bill Sinkford, Rev. Rebecca Ann Parker, and three youth activists—"**Starr King School's President's Lecture: Dr. Eboo Patel**"—to discuss the need for interfaith youth outreach by liberal religious movements and how youth can be motivated to work for positive change in society.

**Rev. Rebecca Ann Parker** also has a new book with Beacon, written with **Rita Nakashima Brock**. *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire* will be published just in time for GA. The book offers a new lens on the history of Christianity, asking how its early vision of beauty evolved into a vision of torture, and what changes in society and theology marked that evolution. The two authors will host the GA program "**Saving Paradise**" on **Saturday, June 28, from 3:15–4:30 p.m.**

Poet **Mary Oliver** has had a very strong year. Her Seattle reading in early February sold out 2,500 tickets in record time and fans resorted to paying up to \$100 for tickets being sold on Craigslist. As John Marshall of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* put it, "poet as rock star may be a strange notion outside of places like Russia, but Oliver has become a poetry phenomenon." Shortly thereafter, Beacon released Oliver's newest volume of poems, *Red Bird*, which proceeded to claim a spot on the Book Sense Hardcover Fiction bestseller list, representing independent booksellers.

Among the 28 other original books published by Beacon this year are such notable titles as **Kai Wright's *Drifting Toward Love: Black, Brown, Gay, and Coming of Age on the Streets of New York***, which addresses intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality, and speaks to the fact that kids and teens living with these intersecting oppressions need role models and safe places to live; *Saviors or Sellouts: The Promise and Peril of Black Conservatism, from Booker T. Washington to Condoleezza Rice* by **Christopher Alan Bracey**, about black conservatism and its growing appeal among African Americans today; **Claire Hope Cummings's *Uncertain Peril: Genetic Engineering and the Future of Seeds***, which exposes the stories behind the rise of industrial agriculture and plant biotechnology, the fall of public interest science, and the folly of patenting seeds; and *The Missing Class: Portraits of the Near Poor in America*, by **Katherine Newman and Victor Tan Chen**, an examination of the situation of millions of people in the U.S. who live in the gray area between "poor" and "middle class," featuring a foreword by John Edwards, who names the book "a call to action to change America."

Finally, Beacon is proud and saddened to announce the acquisition of **Rev. Forrest Church's *Love & Death: My Journey through the Valley of the Shadow***. The beloved senior minister of the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York recently learned that he has terminal cancer, and decided that his final book would be dedicated to his thoughts on topics that have been so pervasive in his work. Beacon rushed production in order to publish the book in time for GA., and to have an audio version of the book read by the author. Rev. Church will speak

personally and theologically about his life and draw from his book during the GA program  
**“Love and Death” on Friday, June 27, from 11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.**

## STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

### STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT STAFF GROUP

The goals of the Stewardship & Development staff group are:

- To promote a Unitarian Universalist culture of abundance
- To help UUs make their dreams for Unitarian Universalism come true through the Association
- To continually increase the prosperity of the Association in order to financially support its operations and programs
- To be effective agents of abundance and transformation.
- To be good stewards of the relationships with our donors, honoring their intent and their trust, and advocating for them

Stewardship & Development staff has had the privilege of working with more than 22,400 individual donors and 1,047 donor congregations this year, each of whom has a shared commitment to Unitarian Universalism, unique reasons for giving and dreams for our future. The staff group also works in collaboration with member congregations and UU entities to provide “umbrella giving,” which enables the Association to offer “one-stop giving” to donors who wish to give to any UU organization. Donors contact the UUA Stewardship & Development office to arrange gifts of all kinds, including stock gifts, bequests, trusts, and other gifts to congregations, UU theological schools, the UU Service Committee, and other UU entities.

#### **Major and Special Gifts:**

The *Now is the Time!* comprehensive campaign to grow Unitarian Universalism launched its public phase at General Assembly in 2007. As of this writing, the campaign is at 75% of its goal of raising \$50 million for projects relating to Growth in Numbers, Diversity, Witness, Leadership and Spirit. Among the many major and special gifts received this year, three in particular emphasize the creativity and generous spirit of our donors.

**The Chuck and Nancy Thomas Scholarship Fund:** In late 2007 two generous donors gave their final contribution to fully endow The Chuck and Nancy Thomas Scholarship. This scholarship honors the Rev. Chuck Thomas’ career in Unitarian Universalist ministry and his family’s long-standing commitment to lay leadership. This scholarship is awarded to an incoming first year student who has shown an outstanding commitment to Unitarian Universalism as a lay leader before preparing for ministry.

**Umbrella Giving Inspires Generosity:** Late last year, a generous donor approached the campaign team in Stewardship and Development with an offer to help a member congregation meet its financial goal. Emerson UU Chapel, a small congregation in Missouri, was facing a budget shortfall that would force the church to cut staff time. Through the UUA’s Umbrella Giving program, this donor anonymously made a matching challenge gift: if the congregation could raise \$10,000 in new gifts before the end of March, 2008, then each of those dollars would be matched 50% up to \$5,000. As of February, members and friends of Emerson UU Chapel had raised over \$18,000 in new contributions! Emerson’s treasurer reports that the congregation’s generosity fully funded its Board’s budget for the fiscal year and exceeded all expectations. The anonymous donor was delighted at Emerson’s generosity, and grateful for the opportunity to make this gift anonymously through the *Now is the Time!* comprehensive campaign.

Two regions have completed successful fundraising campaigns for marketing projects designed to strengthen Unitarian Universalism in their areas. The San Francisco Bay Area Roundtable

raised over \$300,000 and enjoyed a successful marketing campaign in the fall of 2007. Numerical results are still being analyzed, but anecdotal results have been strong. One congregation welcomed 30 new members in a single weekend as a result of the campaign. The Tampa Bay area successfully raised over \$236,000 for their regional marketing campaign which began in February 2008. Results from this campaign are still being collected. Plans to select an area for the next regional marketing campaign are in progress.

The UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund raised \$3,659,513 for long-term relief projects in the Gulf Coast region before that fund closed on March 31, 2007. It was replaced by the UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Volunteer Fund to support UUs and others who wish to volunteer in the Gulf Coast region and the Gulf Coast Congregations in Need fund to assist local congregations affected by the flooding. Those funds have received \$216,500 in donations, \$34,000 in this fiscal year.

**Association Sunday 2007** was a success! Over 640 congregations celebrated Association Sunday to help strengthen the bonds of common purpose among our congregations, and to combine our resources to help make Unitarian Universalism a voice of liberal religious values in the world. As of this writing, nearly \$1.4 million was raised to support projects under the theme of "Growth in Numbers." Association Sunday 2008 is scheduled for October 12, 2008 and will focus on the theme of "Growing in Spirit." An online survey is underway to ask Unitarian Universalists what projects to support lay theological education and excellence in our shared ministry they would like to fund through Association Sunday 2008. As of this writing, 68 congregations have already signed up for the 2008 service, including 23 of the 50 largest congregations. Every congregation will be contacted to invite their participation.

### **Annual Program Fund**

The Annual Program Fund Committee is made up of a General Chair and Vice Chair, nineteen UUA district representatives, and liaisons appointed by the UUA Board, District Presidents' Association, the Liberal Religious Educators' Association, and the UU Ministers' Association. The committee works year round to promote generous congregational stewardship toward the fulfillment of their covenant of support to one another as an association of member congregations. The Stewardship and Development staff supports the committee in meeting the annual goals set by the Board through active encouragement, provision of information regarding Fair Share giving, and ongoing communication with congregation and district leaders. The APF Committee met twice in Boston, in August and in April, for community-building, training, and the exchange of ideas in support of each other and their mission.

Congregational giving kept a steady pace through the year, reaching the half-way mark by the end of January, over a week earlier than in previous years. Through the collective efforts and diligence on the part of all concerned, income projections indicate that we are on track for slightly exceeding the goal for this fiscal year. As of April 11, 2008, contributions totaled \$5,079,726, or 72.4% of the \$7,019,739 goal for fiscal year 2007-2008. This compares to contributions of \$4,712,157 at this time last year.

### **Friends of the UUA**

Stewardship and Development is grateful to the many thousand Friends of the UUA. The generosity of all Friends of the UUA enables our Association to fulfill its stewardship obligation to secure the future of our faith for the next generation of Unitarian Universalists and to welcome those who are seeking a progressive religious home. As of April 15, 2008, donations to Friends

totaled \$1,179,327, from 13,343 donors towards the goal of \$1.625 million goal for this fiscal year.

**Legacy Gifts (formerly Charitable Gift and Estate Planning)**

The 2007 fiscal year has been exceptional for realized bequest income; as of April 15 the Association has received over 30 realized gifts totaling \$657,000, of which 28% is directed to specific Unitarian Universalist congregations and other Unitarian Universalist entities.

In addition the UUA has received 25 new life income gifts totaling \$974,000, of which 73% will ultimately benefit Unitarian Universalist congregations and other Unitarian Universalist entities. The Legacy Office has also been notified of 20 new bequest intentions which are estimated to exceed \$2.8 million when realized. More than \$823,000 of that amount is designated to benefit congregations and UU entities. These wonderfully generous individuals who are making the ultimate gift are joining countless others who have helped secure the future financial resources for Unitarian Universalism.

Additional information about all Stewardship & Development programs is available online at [www.uua.org/giving](http://www.uua.org/giving).

## **FINANCIAL SERVICES STAFF GROUP**

In serving and interacting with all Association staff groups and districts, Financial Services is responsible for developing and maintaining the UUA's financial records and reporting; issuing timely payments to staff, volunteers and vendors; accounting, administration and reporting for the General Investment Fund; billing, collecting and reporting to the Congregational Properties and Loan Commission on the financial status and results of the building loan program; and the administering of the financial aspects of the UU Organizations Retirement Plan. The Board of Trustees appointed Timothy Brennan as the Association's new Treasurer and Vice President of Finance in June of 2006.

## **OPERATIONS / FACILITIES STAFF GROUP**

The role of the Operations / Facilities staff group is to support the UUA staff, as well as the Association's members, by providing services for the daily operation and overall maintenance of the UUA's properties in Boston. These properties include the Association's offices at 25 Beacon St. and 41 Mt. Vernon St. as well as the guest accommodations and meeting spaces at the Eliot and Pickett House at 6 and 7 Mt. Vernon Place.

**Eliot & Pickett House:** The Eliot and Pickett House offer comfortable and affordable bed and breakfast accommodations to Unitarian Universalists who wish to tour historic Boston and New England or will be attending to official business at the Association's offices. Ongoing improvements and maintenance to the facility continue, including a handicap access ramp and an additional accessible bedroom, with rooms being regularly re-carpeted and painted on a planned schedule. Boston meeting rooms and lodging are especially available during the mid-summer months and also throughout the year at reasonable prices. The Eliot and Pickett House also welcomes youth and young adult groups from UU congregation who travel to Boston to explore our Unitarian Universalist roots. The daily room rate for a single is \$70 and for a double is \$100, with an opportunity for seasonal discounts. Room rates will be increased moderately during the 2008 fiscal year.

Please contact Morgan Ryan for information at (617) 948-4679 or by email at [e&p@uua.org](mailto:e&p@uua.org).

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

Information Technology Services (ITS) provides technical tools and support to the UUA and several closely related groups, and manages and safeguards the constituent data of the Association. This involves developing and maintaining the Association's computers, networks, and databases; furnishing software services such as email, website applications, content and document management, GA registration, ministerial settlement, and secure remote access; and providing world-class consulting and help desk service to over 200 users of UUA systems. During the 2008 fiscal year, ITS built the web publishing tools for the new UU curriculum (Tapestry of Faith); produced a conference call between the UUA President, Moderator, and 150 congregational representatives from across the country; added the Commission on Social Witness CSAI parish poll to the congregational Certification process; added advanced search capabilities to the new [uua.org](http://uua.org) website; completed the move of sensitive youth data from online storage into the secure primary database; introduced software for running online meetings, trainings, and presentations; and created a system for congregational administrators to update UU World subscription information for their members online.