

A World Transformed by Justice

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Throughout our 62-year history, the continuity of our work has given us the ability to anticipate and respond to the unique challenges and opportunities that each year brings. This year was no exception. Our work responding to the tragic events of Sept. 11 was just one of the ways in which we upheld our mission to protect and promote human rights and social justice, transforming our world as we do this work.

The Service Committee was founded in 1939 in response to an unprecedented global crisis. The small group of women and men, who began their work in response to Nazi atrocities during WWII, demonstrated exceptional courage in the face of a world transformed forever.

Today, we continue to meet the challenges of our time by remaining committed to our initial focus: to empower women, defend the rights of children and support the struggles of oppressed communities. Maintaining this focus gave us the agility to respond rapidly to new, unprecedented challenges this year.

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TRANSFORMING ONE VOICE INTO MANY

By its very nature, the work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is transformational. We transform the resources of our membership – financial, human and material – into support for program partners working at the local level for

social justice. We transform the work of small, diverse groups working for justice in their home communities into a national and international network of thousands of human rights advocates, sharing information and strategies to effect long-term change. But it does not end there. UUSC is able to transform our partners' information into powerful educational and advocacy tools for our members that bring about policy changes that enhance human rights in the United States and abroad. We transform the voices of our individual members into one powerful voice for human rights. This year, we have witnessed how the actions of a few can affect so many, in both destructive and constructive ways. Our work demonstrates that the positive actions of a few, when joined together, can have a worldwide impact.

We have transformed the generosity of individuals into concrete support for those affected by the devastation of the September 11, 2002 attacks. During the past year, we have faced many extraordinary challenges and special joys, and through it all we have been able to transform the caring and goodwill of many into concrete support for men, women and children who struggle daily for freedom, justice, equality and peace. Through the generosity of our members and supporters, we have been able to redouble our work to protect and promote human rights in the United States and internationally.

UUSC 2002 Highlights of the year

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on the United States, the volcanic eruption in the Congo, the enduring injustices in Afghanistan and the everyday human rights struggles of our partners.

We have extended our reach empowering women; defending the rights of children; and supporting the struggles of oppressed racial, ethnic and indigenous groups around the world and in the United States.

We have dedicated ourselves to strengthening existing programs

with the knowledge that the work we do becomes more crucial in these rapidly changing times.

WOMEN TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

The number of women in the world who still face oppression and restricted freedom was one of the many issues brought into sharper focus this year.

By supporting education and advocacy efforts at the grassroots level, we empower women to transform their own communities.

Transformation through education

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, UUSC partner Promotion and Support for Women's Initiatives (PAIF) prioritizes women's empowerment in this war-torn country through its outreach to grassroots activists on gender issues. Energized by its dedication to women's rights and peace advocacy, UUSC helped PAIF participate in the U.N. World Conference against Racism. In July, PAIF organized a large workshop on advocacy and women's rights in the rural village of Katana.

Our partner in Guatemala, Pro Mujer Association of Villa Nueva began a citizen participation program for women. During the first phase of this project, they trained women leaders in 30 communities. Women's participation in the political process is a key element in the process of implementing lasting peace in Guatemala.

With UUSC support, U.S.-based program partner, the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc., (SPAN) of New Jersey created education and action workbooks for grassroots organizations.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Certainly, this focus informed the support we provided to groups and communities directly affected by the

attacks of September 11 but who might have been overlooked by traditional disaster relief organizations.

It

also directed our work to support partners in the Democratic Republic of Congo struggling to improve the human rights situation made worse by the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo. And our long-term commitment

to justice enabled us to give testimony before Congress on the next steps recommended in welfare reform, among other policy advocacy efforts.

Now more than ever our work in the United States and around the world is undertaken with the keen understanding

that what affects one, affects all. We thank our individual members and supporters, Unitarian Universalist congregations, foundations and corporations for helping us transform UU principles of justice

and equality into tangible human rights victories for thousands of women, children and men each year.

Valora Washington, Ph.D.

**We empower women to
transform their own communities.**

UUSC 2002 Highlights of the year

SPAN coaches parents to advance their civil and political rights and the rights of their children. UUSC supported researching and producing the advocacy manual for welfare rights organizations.

SUPPORTING THE STRUGGLES OF OPPRESSED GROUPS

UUSC staff and partners attended the United Nations World conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa, beginning in late August. More than 7,000 members representing more than a thousand nongovernmental organizations were in Durban.

We witnessed the powerful effect that a group armed with knowledge about their rights can have in transforming oppression. Our partner, El Taller International, and the Asian Women's Rights Council conducted a daylong World Court of Women against Racism.

Another partner organization, CORE, from India, provided leadership in placing the issue of Dalit rights onto the conference agenda.

Renewing our commitment

We returned from WCAR, as did our partners, with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to

defending the rights of oppressed racial, ethnic and indigenous groups. With UUSC support, our partner, the Karen Human Rights Group of Burma, released in October the report “Flight, Hunger and Survival,” the result of intensive research. The report documents the systematic displacement of tens of thousands of people in the northern Karen districts since 1997.

This year, we have expanded our program work to include the Tibetan community’s struggle against oppression by the occupying Chinese government. In September 2001, UUSC sponsored a one-week human rights training program for the Tibetan community living in exile in India. We also supported the publication and distribution of the first book on human rights written in the Tibetan language.

Our continued support enhances the work of various Mexican human rights groups in their vital monitoring, protection and education work. Wide international visibility for President Vicente Fox – whose election brought to power an opposition party for the first time in decades – presents special challenges to all partners involved in chronicling the enduring pattern of human rights abuses in Mexico. UUSC support helps partners, among them Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Human Rights in Chiapas, get out the word about cases of torture, harassment and the Mexican government’s lack of accountability to its people, especially indigenous people.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As a vital part of our work to defend the rights of children and train the next generation of social justice advocates, UUSC participated in the Young Religious

Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Conference with the Lawrence Teen Coalition and the Seton Asian Center. The conference brought together UU youth

STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S VOICES

The Forum for Women's Rights and Development (FORWARD) is a group of women quarry workers in Tamil Nadu, India. With UUSC support, the women organized themselves and protested the low and irregular pay they were receiving. Eventually, they won their battle and the quarry owners now pay them a living wage.

Shanti, a woman leader, said, "It is empowering to realize that Dalit women, who were oppressed all these centuries, kept voiceless and powerless, became vociferous and powerful.

The myth with which we were kept in silence – Dalits are untouchables – is broken now, when we understand that this myth is a pure play of the upper caste people. We value this knowledge more than anything else."

UUSC 2002 Highlights of the year with urban Latino and Asian youth from Lawrence, Mass., to discuss how youth can work together to advance social justice.

We also conducted two successful workcamps designed primarily for youth, the Youth and Young Adult workcamp in Washington state and the Alternative Spring Break workcamp on the La Jolla reservation in San Diego, Calif. These experiences transformed both communities and participants through a potent combination of action and advocacy.

PROTECTING RIGHTS DURING

DISASTERS

We once again responded to disasters in which human rights were being threatened, working with partners to identify communities that might otherwise be overlooked in the emergencies.

In January, the city of Goma in eastern Congo was devastated by a volcanic eruption. The resulting chaos allowed human rights abuses to continue unchallenged in a region already devastated by civil conflict. With UUSC support, longtime partner Promotion and Support for Feminine Initiatives (PAIF) was able to secure a new office as well as some limited furnishings and supplies, which enables them to continue their human rights work.

We were concerned about the human rights situation in Afghanistan even before the tragic events of Sept. 11 turned international attention there. Years of civil strife, an oppressive regime and an ongoing drought all contributed to the struggles. We have identified local, grassroots organizations in Pakistan and Afghanistan with which we can partner to advance the rights of women and children, hardest hit by the destruction.

LEADING THROUGH

EDUCATION, ACTION AND ADVOCACY

We create educational opportunities that enable us to share with our members and supporters what we have learned through our work with partners.

We also increased significantly the number of policy and legislative action alerts we have shared with our members this year. These alerts enable activists to hold their elected officials accountable, strengthen our collective voice on policy priorities, and participate in important ongoing efforts to redirect U.S. policies in ways that better support

human rights.

Engaging members through action

UUSC workcamps are short-term action projects which bring UUSC volunteers together with communities in need. This year's workcamp season started off with the third Youth and Young Adult workcamp in the farm worker town of Crewport, Wash.

UUSC RESPONDS TO A DEVASTATED NATION AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

Immediately following the September 11 attacks, UUSC issued a joint appeal with the Unitarian Universalist Association for funds to aid the victims and their families. Bolstered by an unprecedented outpouring of support, we were able to move quickly to identify 24 organizations that best enabled us to help those who might otherwise have been overlooked. Among them are Project Renewal, which helps the "invisible" homeless population that lived in the vicinity of the World Trade Center. It is also providing job placement to area residents. The Children's Aid Society provides medical services to address the rise in respiratory ailments. The Stonewall Foundation is supporting the gay and lesbian partners of victims. More than \$1 million in aid was raised, and we have passed 100 percent of the funds to organizations serving poor or neglected communities affected. We received very generous donations from the Dover Corporation and the Ohrstrom Foundation. These, coupled with smaller grants from 3Com Corporation, CNA and the American Express Foundation, can only be seen as votes of confidence in our programmatic work.

UUSC 2002 Highlights of the year

Working together with the Washington Education Association, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima and Crewport residents, UUSC volunteers built a playground so children would have a safe place to play.

We also completed a successful Alternative Spring Break workcamp on the La Jolla Indian Reservation in San Diego, Calif.

In March, 13 volunteers, including students from the University of Wisconsin and Colby College in Maine, tutored Native American children and refurbished the community's education center.

Strategies to battle persistent poverty

UUSC offered congregations hands-on opportunities to collectively

work for justice through activities such as UU's United for Social Justice, a six-session action learning curricula which helps congregations and community groups address persistent poverty in the United States.

Through the UUSC Coffee Project, 118 UU congregations have supported fair trade with coffee farmers and provided funds for local human rights projects in the coffee growing regions.

A VOICE FOR JUSTICE

In concert with our partner, education and advocacy programs, UUSC prioritizes select public policy issues for concentrated attention each year. Well-targeted use of agency resources enhances our efficacy, increases our political impact and can stimulate activism.

In the United States

A key public policy priority this year has included addressing domestic poverty and in particular renewed funding and better guidelines for welfare programs. Our work in this area was highlighted by the testimony in April of our executive director, Dr. Valora Washington, before a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee on proposals for the next round of welfare reform.

Earlier in the year, more than 100 advocates from 24 states and the District of Columbia gathered for the five-part audio conferences entitled "Up from Poverty." UUSC teamed up with the National Council of Churches to host the series, designed to help grassroots groups and individuals influence the national public policy debate leading up the reauthorization of assistance for welfare-to-work families.

In the international arena

UUSC staff and members also helped to bring about victories on key international public policy issues, including encouraging the

United States to take steps to end its economic embargo against Cuba and reaching out to the congressional women's caucus on rights issues in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mexico and human trafficking.

In follow up to our support throughout 2000 for their pioneering legislation to combat trafficking in persons, UUSC worked closely with the offices of Sens. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn., and Sam Brownback, R-Kan., and helped secure five million dollars in increased funding to implement the new law. UUSC and its coalition colleagues worked closely with bipartisan legislators who led successful votes in the full House to permit the sale of food and medicine to Cuba. This effort built on our prior years' success in the Senate on the same issue. A successful Republican-led House vote on the right to travel to Cuba offered another opportunity for UUSC collaboration.

Building on similar work in prior years, UUSC policy staff arranged meetings with U.S. policy-makers for Mexican partners visiting Washington to testify before the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights. Persistent human rights problems under the new administration of President Vicente Fox, including the killing of Mexican human rights lawyer and colleague, Digna Ochoa, figured prominently in these meetings.

WORKING TOGETHER WITH OUR MEMBERS

We have strengthened our ability to communicate with our members and supporters in a variety of ways. In addition to the twice-monthly e-mail bulletin which now reaches more than 3,500 individuals and groups, we maintain an electronic bulletin board.

These bulletin boards help our members and other Web surfers share ideas and information easily and quickly with our staff and each other.

UUSC 2002 Highlights of the year
You may join the e-mail bulletin or share ideas on the bulletin board by visiting www.uusc.org.

We have also increased member involvement through the new UUSC Ambassadors Council. Established in August 2001, the council has already attracted more than 100 individuals who have committed to serving as honorary or active ambassadors in five regions. Active ambassadors raise awareness in their congregations about UUSC's work in an effort to expand and strengthen the numbers of members and supporters.

SHARE YOUR GIFTS, JOIN THE LEGACY

One of the most powerful partnerships that UUSC maintains is with our members and supporters. As an independent organization, UUSC relies on individual members, congregations and foundations for most of the support needed to develop and sustain programs. We transform these gifts into support for partner organizations around the world, and action and advocacy opportunities for members and others committed to social justice. Members of the UUSC board and our network of volunteers provided essential leadership in our fundraising efforts last year.

The Service Committee is grateful to the **Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in New York**, which contributed \$675,000 through its matching gift program for unrestricted contributions from individuals of \$60 or more. Also, the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock

made a \$70,000 project grant to UUSC.

Guest at Your Table 2002 has been successful, with more than 475 congregations participating by the end of March, with a quarter of the year remaining. This year's total of \$327,508 exceeded last year's total for the same time period.

Public employee campaign donors have contributed more than \$130,000 to UUSC thus far through the International Service Agencies, a federation of international development organizations.

To date in this fiscal year, six new planned gifts were received totaling more than \$100,000, both as charitable gift annuities and gifts to the pooled income fund.

The following foundations made grants to UUSC this past year:

Next Culture Initiative; The Susan and Donald Babson Charitable Foundation; Tides Foundation; and the Peierls Foundation, Inc. In addition, the Benton Foundation named UUSC as one of the advocacy organizations to receive donated time and consultation resources to help shape effective messages during the final six months of the national debate over the reauthorization of TANF.

An unprecedented flood of support for the UUA/UUSC September 11 Humanitarian Relief Fund resulted in more than \$1 million for victims and families of Sept. 11. We passed 100 percent of the amount raised to recipient organizations.

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH JUSTICE

We invite you to become a force for social change. Join us to promote women's rights in the Congo, and work to bring peace to that war-torn nation. Support our work with partners around the world in their struggles to bring justice to poor and oppressed communities. Be a leader in building on the

lessons of the World Conference
against Racism; speak out for racial
understanding and reconciliation
in distant corners of the world *and*
in your own neighborhood.

For more than 60 years, we have
worked with our membership to
help transform the world in which
we live. From the impoverished
areas in India to embattled regions
of Africa to indigenous communities
in Latin America and on the
front lines of the civil rights movement
in the United States, we
combine the resources of our program
partners and our members
and other supporters to transform
the world through justice.

UUSC Mission Statement

Grounded in Unitarian Universalist
principles that affirm the worth,
dignity and human rights of every
person, and the interdependence
of all life, the Unitarian

Universalist Service Committee is a
voluntary, nonsectarian organization
working to advance justice
throughout the world.

For more information about the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee contact us at:

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Visit our Web site at www.uusc.org; sign up for twice monthly e-mail updates on social justice issues from around the world.