



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION OF
CONGREGATIONS

Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth

Summary Report

August 2007

Greetings!

Since October 2004, when the UUA Board of Trustees called for the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth, we have engaged thousands of Unitarian Universalists. Youth have dialogued with their peers and in intergenerational groups about their hopes for youth ministry. Surveys, congregational conversations, district gatherings, and conversations with numerous stakeholders and UU communities have taken place. The key findings gathered in these steps are included in this packet.

As the Task Force on Youth Ministry met, worked closely with districts and stakeholders across the Association, and designed the Summit on Youth Ministry, we consistently revisited our visions for youth ministry and sought to incorporate what we learned from the wisdom of Unitarian Universalists throughout the Association. These visions have continued to shape our thinking and were crucial to the Summit on Youth Ministry. We would like to share them with you here:

Strong and healthy youth self-identity: Communities encourage youth to explore and develop their faith and to grow spiritually.

Love and sharing among youth and adults: Congregations are intergenerational communities that play important roles in the lives of youth.

Sense of belonging, freedom, and responsibility: Youth are welcomed, supported, and given a voice in their congregations and in the Association. Youth are in community with their peers *and* integrated in Unitarian Universalist communities. Adults and youth practice forgiveness and learn from their mistakes as well as from each other.

Purpose and choice: Youth are able to fundamentally transform congregations and the larger world by practicing and living out their faith. Congregational youth ministry is committed to nurturing and supporting ethical development of youth.

Justice, liberation, and cooperation. Youth ministry fosters leaders who confront racism and oppression that divide us and who work to build the beloved community. Youth have a voice in their congregations and in the Association.

Appreciation and stewardship: Youth are recognized as a positive source of leadership and energy in their congregations. Youth ministry has mechanisms for adaptation and change. Youth are fully included in shaping a faith of lifelong value.

The wisdom and action of all involved in the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth will echo in our congregations and the lives of Unitarian Universalist youth for generations. Thank you to everyone who participated!

In Faith,



Megan Dowdell
Co-Conveners of the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth



Rev. William Sinkford

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Where Do We Come From?

Background on the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth

Leading Up to the Consultation:

A Timeline

January 2003:

Long-Range Planning (LRP) Meeting is convened by Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) to look at the future of youth ministry in our movement. At the meeting, recommendations for change and suggestions for implementation are developed.

July 2003:

In response to the LRP Meeting, Youth Council member Jennifer Dunmore introduces a resolution called “Common Ground III: Can we just change the world already?,” which proposes further goal setting and re-imagining of youth ministry and YRUU. The name “Common Ground” comes from two meetings in the early 1980s that dissolved Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) and created Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU).

2003-04:

UUA President Bill Sinkford and the YRUU Steering Committee discuss the Common Ground III proposal. They create a survey (paper and online) and distribute it widely. They receive 461 responses.

June 2004:

Youth Council members Jennifer Dunmore, Megan Dowdell, and Tim Fitzgerald revise the Common Ground III resolution and present it to the UUA Board of Trustees at the General Assembly (GA) in Long Beach, California.

July 2004:

The YRUU Steering Committee brings the Common Ground III resolution back to Youth Council to be reconsidered using the consensus process used by the Youth Council. Consensus on the resolution is blocked and it is sent to committee. The majority of Youth Council’s members support the resolution; the two concerns that block consensus are (1) not enough grassroots support for having a new Common Ground gathering has been cultivated by the previous steering committee and (2) not enough of the work done at the Long-Range Planning Meeting has been implemented.

From the 2004 Resolution: “Specific Problem being addressed: YRUU has not had a serious large re-visioning session in a long, long time. Figuring out what it means to be a sponsored organization of the UUA, to be accountable to all UU youth and to exist as a unique cross-border organization with a relationship with the UUA and the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC). We would also like to clarify the role of UU youth in the UUA and the denomination as a larger body.”

October 2004:

The UUA Board of Trustees discusses the UUA’s youth ministry and resolves to convene the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth in an effort to make the re-visioning of youth ministry an Association-wide effort. The Board decides that UUA President Bill Sinkford and Youth Trustee Megan Dowdell will be the co-conveners of the Consultation process.

From the October 2004 Board Minutes: *“MOVED: To request that the President convene a consultation for the purpose of renewing the Association’s vision of its ministry for and with youth. We request the President to seek a youth co-convenor for the consultation, and to consult with the Moderator, the Board, and staff, including the professional and volunteer staff leaders of YRUU, regarding the invited participants.”*

Winter 2004-05:

Bill and Megan invite people from all groups that have a stake in the process to attend a Convocation on Ministry To and With Youth.

February 2005:

Bill and Megan convene a Convocation on Ministry To and With Youth in Essex, Massachusetts, with YRUU youth, non-YRUU youth, UUA staff, Board of Trustees, Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM) youth, religious educators, ministers, district staff, youth advisors, parents of youth, Canadians, and adults involved in YRUU. (A list of attendees is on page 8.) This group identifies areas that need examining in youth ministry and brainstorms process suggestions.

The Convocation identifies five priorities to be addressed:

- Youth ministry needs to be served at a more robust, flexible, diverse level than YRUU currently offers.
- Denominational youth work needs to serve local congregations.
- YRUU and UUA administration need to define an authority structure that respects the role of institutional youth and adult leadership and at the same time supports the growth and empowerment of all UU youth.
- Anti-racism and anti-oppression work is an important part of youth ministry, although there is not necessarily only one way of doing it, and the “right” way depends on individual identities. We need to move this work ahead.
- More and better communication between continental, district, and local levels and within congregations.

April 2005:

The Consultation Design Team, composed of a smaller group of people from the Convocation, meets in Auburndale, Massachusetts, to design a process and timeline for the Consultation. The Design Team creates a Draft Process Recommendation. (See list of Design Team members on page 7.)

May and June 2005:

UUA staff share the Draft Process Recommendation with the co-conveners, the Board of Trustees, the Convocation attendees, and the YRUU Steering Committee. Timeline revisions are made and the document is finalized.

June 2005:

The plan is shared with Youth Caucus, Congregational and District Presidents, Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA), Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA), and others at the GA in Fort Worth, Texas.

July 2005:

Members of the Task Force on Ministry To and With Youth are selected.

Leaders of the Process

Task Force on Youth Ministry

Rev. William Sinkford	Co-Convener and UUA President
Megan Dowdell	Co-Convener and UUA Board Youth Trustee At Large (2003-2005)
Sean Capaloff-Jones	YRUU Youth Representative (March 2007 – present)
Beth Dana	UUA Youth Ministry Associate
Rachel Davis	DRUUMM Youth Representative
Sara Eskrich	Congregational Youth and 2007-2008 UUA Youth Ministry Associate
Judith Frediani	UUA Director of Lifespan Faith Development
Jesse Jaeger	UUA Youth Programs Director
Homer Karvonides	DRUUMM Youth Representative (September 2005-August 2006)
Tera Little	LREDA and UUA District Staff Representative
Rev. Shana Lynngood	UUMA Representative
Ian Moore	YRUU Youth Representative (September 2004-February 2007)
Tom Rylett	CUC Youth Representative
Julian Sharp	UUA Board Youth Trustee At Large (2005-2007)
Hannah Stampe	GLBPTQQI Youth Representative
Jova Vargas	YRUU Youth Representative

District Gathering Facilitators

Josephine Bibby	Youth Facilitator (Chrysalis Trainer)
Rev. Pat Hoerltoerfer	Adult Facilitator (UUA District Staff)
Tandi Rogers Koerger	Adult Facilitator (UUA District Staff)
Deborah Levering	Adult Facilitator (UUA District Staff)
Rev. Phil Lund	Adult Facilitator (UUA District Staff)
Samaya Oakley	Adult Facilitator (Chrysalis Trainer)
Jodi Slezak	Youth Facilitator (Chrysalis Trainer)

Consultation Design Team

Sean Capaloff-Jones
Hannah Eller-Isaacs
Sara Eskrich
Frank Filz
Judith Frediani
Jesse Jaeger
Mandy Keithan
Julian Sharp

Convocation on Youth Ministry

James Buckner	Parent
Sean Capaloff-Jones	YRUU Youth
Beth Dana	Incoming Youth Ministry Associate
Dori Davenport	District Staff
Megan Dowdell	UUA Board Youth Trustee, Co-Convener
Dana Dwinell-Yardley	Congregational Youth
Hannah Eller-Isaacs	YRUU Youth
Sara Eskrich	Congregational Youth
Frank Filz	Youth Advisor
Sean Fletcher	YRUU Youth
Judith Frediani	UUA Director of Lifespan Faith Development
Lehna Huie	YRUU Youth
Jesse Jaeger	UUA Youth Programs Director
Al Jensen	YRUU Youth
Janice Marie Johnson	DRUUMM President
Mandy Keithan	LREDA/Religious Educator
Brian Kuzma	UUA Youth Programs Specialist
Emily Mitchell	Parent
Rev. Makanah Morriss	Minister
Philip Pike	Youth Advisor
Kelsey Pitcairn	Congregational Youth
Jessica Potts-Mee	Congregational Youth
Paul Richter	UUA Board of Trustees
Rick Roehlk	YRUU Youth Advisor
Michael Salandrea	Congregational Youth
Julian Sharp	UUA Board Youth Observer
Rev. Bill Sinkford	UUA President, Co-Convener
Jova Vargas	YRUU Youth

Consultants

U.T. Saunders	Organization Consultant and Task Force Facilitator
Amy Davidoff	Survey Consultant

Support Staff

Rek Kwawer	Youth Office Assistant, Notes
Ethan Field	Youth Office Assistant, Notes
Zoe Engberg	Youth Office Intern, Video, Congregational Conversation Data Entry

Thanks are also due to all of the leaders in our congregations, districts, and the Association who contributed to this process. Countless others devoted hours to organizing gatherings, doing stakeholder outreach, and actively engaging in transformational youth ministry conversations.

The Process

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth is a process designed to be broad and participatory, engaging youth and adults who have a stake in youth ministry (stakeholders) with the goal of advancing youth ministry as a vital ministry of our Association of congregations.

Desired Outcomes

Several desired outcomes for the process were articulated at the 2005 design meeting:

- More than just a one-size-fits-all youth ministry—a youth ministry that is robust, flexible, and diverse
- Denominational youth work that focuses on serving local congregations
- Mutually respectful and empowering relationships between youth and adults
- Anti-racism and anti-oppression infused in every part of youth ministry, and a recognition that there is not one "right" way of doing the work— providing a forum for youth identity development and institutional change
- A youth ministry that meets the spiritual needs of youth and increases the spiritual depth of our congregations
- Effective communication within, between, and among all areas of the Association

In July 2006, the Task Force on Youth Ministry added the fifth desired outcome about spiritual growth based on what was learned from the process thus far.

Outreach

In the spring of 2005, shortly after the Consultation process was designed, the co-conveners (Megan and Bill) and staff began intensive outreach. At first this outreach focused on raising awareness about the process in general. Once the task force was selected in the summer of 2005, they began reaching out to their constituencies as well. As stakeholder engagement moved forward, outreach was increasingly focused on how *everyone* could be involved in the process and give input to shape the future of Unitarian Universalist youth ministry. Members of the Task Force met with youth and adults at congregations, district meetings, youth cons, chapter meetings of religious professionals, Association-wide events (such as General Assembly), and committee meetings.

For a list of outreach and stakeholder engagement, see Appendix F.

Task Force

The Task Force on Youth Ministry (members are listed on page 7) met in person three times over the course of the Consultation process – October 2005, July 2006, and March 2007. The Task Force was given several charges:

- Implement the process
- Review the process guides created by staff
- Select and work with additional staff and consultants
- Facilitate the process in districts and stakeholder organizations, and act as consultants for congregations

- Prepare and publish the reports created by the congregational, stakeholder, and district gatherings
- Work to create buy-in from all stakeholders

Youth Ministry Survey

The first stage of the process drew directly on the experiences of Unitarian Universalist youth. In January and February 2006, about 1,400 twelve- to twenty-year-olds completed the Youth Ministry Survey. The survey asked about their experience with youth ministry and the ways in which they have been involved in Unitarian Universalism. The survey sought to reach youth with diverse levels and types of involvement, including continental YRUU youth, district YRUU youth, youth involved in youth groups, youth involved in congregational life, and youth who have left congregations.

Congregational Conversations

As of spring 2007, 88 congregations have held conversations on their youth ministry. These congregations brought together youth and adults (over 2,000 of them!) in their congregations to address these questions and more:

- What is our youth ministry like?
- Thinking outside the box, what can our youth ministry be?
- What do we need to achieve this vision?
- What do we need to do more of? Less of? Differently?

UUA staff developed a process guide for congregational conversations on youth ministry, which outlined the force field analysis (a discussion process) in three basic steps:

1. Brainstorm the congregation's "ideal youth ministry"
2. Identify driving forces/successes and restraining forces/challenges
3. Strategize about what the congregation can do differently and what support and resources they need from the UUA and their district leadership

Feedback from congregations indicates that this opportunity – to bring together youth and adults to have a focused conversation on youth ministry – was immensely positive for their communities. Participating congregations made many changes as a result of their conversations – some very minor and some significant. Others decided to continue holding similar conversations annually.

For a list of congregations who submitted reports to the Task Force, see Appendix D.

District Gatherings

Between November 2006 and May 2007, UUA districts held conversations on youth ministry, engaging nearly 1,000 youth and adults. These gatherings brought together diverse groups of people from throughout the district to build on the outcomes of the youth ministry survey and congregational conversations. Participants strategized about how to strengthen district-level programs and services in order to empower and support local youth ministries.

These gatherings were led by youth-adult pairs of trained facilitators – members of the Task Force on Youth Ministry and other trained volunteers. Facilitators and district organizers were provided with a process guide for district gatherings, as well as other presentation materials and data from the youth survey and congregational conversations.

For a list of district gatherings, including location, facilitators, and attendance, see Appendix E.

Stakeholder Conversations

At the 2005 design meeting, team members brainstormed a list of people and groups who have a stake in youth ministry (stakeholders). Some of these were designated “core” stakeholders, which meant that members of the Task Force worked directly with them to facilitate a consultation and gather their input. Others were encouraged to participate by using a process guide developed by UUA staff (similar to the one developed for congregations).

The primary objective of stakeholder conversations was to engage youth ministry stakeholders in visioning and goal-setting to strengthen their support of and ministry with youth. Many of the stakeholder groups’ constituents (the people whom they serve) were also participating in the Consultation process in other ways, so these conversations were an opportunity for their constituents’ input to inform their thinking and strategizing.

For a list of stakeholder conversations, see Appendix F.

Summit on Youth Ministry

The Summit on Youth Ministry in July 2007 was the culminating event of the Consultation process. Almost sixty youth and adults representing a variety of stakeholders came together to create recommendations for the path forward. They considered where we have come from, where we are right now, and where we can go with our ministry with youth. Most of their work was done in six multigenerational working groups focused on themes that emerged from the Consultation process:

- Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Youth
- Welcoming All Youth in a Multicultural World
- Building an Intergenerational Faith
- Organizing Youth Ministry for Success
- Moving Beyond a One-Size-Fits-All Ministry
- Preparing and Supporting Adults for Ministry With Youth

Statements on Youth Ministry and Youth Empowerment

Early in the Consultation process, the Task Force decided that part of re-visioning youth ministry should be developing a common understanding of the *meaning* of youth ministry and youth empowerment. Task Force members began developing statements on youth ministry and the philosophy of youth empowerment in the summer of 2006 and presented them to districts and stakeholders over the course of the next year to solicit their feedback. For the results, see Appendices B and C.

Detailed Reports

The information included in this report is by no means comprehensive. It is a summary of the immense amount of input gathered over the past two years about Unitarian Universalist youth ministry, organized in a format that will be useful (and manageable!) for Summit participants. Complete reports

of all stages of the process are available online on their respective pages (“Youth Ministry Survey,” “Congregational Conversations,” “District Gatherings,” and “Stakeholders”).

To access the website for the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth, follow this path:
Home (**www.uua.org**) > About Us > Governance > Board of Trustees > Youth Consultation.

For a glossary of many terms associated with the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth, see Appendix A.



What Are We?
Summary of the Findings of
the Consultation on Ministry
To and With Youth

Working Group Area #1:

Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Youth

Introduction

Youth are part of Unitarian Universalist communities for many reasons – to find a supportive social environment, participate in an intergenerational community, wrestle with religious questions, work for justice – but at the core is a spiritual center. Spiritual formation is a central task of Unitarian Universalist ministry with youth.

Research done by the Task Force on Youth Ministry shows that many youth are not finding their spiritual needs met by their congregations. Many participants in congregational and stakeholder discussions agree.

Meeting the spiritual needs of youth refers to:

- Encouraging their free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- Enabling their spiritual and religious development
- Developing their Unitarian Universalist identities and the ability to articulate their faith
- Providing them with opportunities to practice their faith through worship, ceremonies, personal spiritual practices, and service to their communities

It is important to recognize that the spiritual needs of youth in UU communities are varied, and therefore meeting their needs takes different forms.

Data Summary

Theological Grounding

Numerous groups (including congregations, districts, religious professionals, consultants, and Association leaders) expressed concern that we as an Association do not have a common understanding or articulation of the theological groundings of Unitarian Universalist youth ministry and youth empowerment. There is a widespread desire to shift our community's thinking from youth *programs* to youth *ministry*.

The desire of many Unitarian Universalists (youth and adults) to live out the UU principles contributes positively to ministry with youth.

Unitarian Universalist ministers have expressed in this process the desire to see a statement on how youth ministry meets the spiritual needs of youth. What role do congregations and other UU communities play?

Worship Services

A large majority (91 percent) of youth survey respondents feel welcome at worship services in their congregation. But do they actually go?

Many adults (UUA Board, LREDA) acknowledged that the style of Sunday worship services does not engage young people. Youth in some congregational conversations said that church is not fun. Thirteen congregational conversations mentioned that worship services didn't engage youth.

Some congregations decided to increase worship opportunities for youth (apart from Sunday services), while others talked about incorporating or integrating youth into the already established services. In congregational conversations, 20 percent of congregations made commitments to change worship services to meet the needs of youth, 16 percent said they would encourage youth attendance, and more than 33 percent said they would include youth in the planning of services. Youth at many of the district gatherings talked about developing new and different songs and chants; more varied, meaningful, and uplifting music; and more physical, interactive, and nontraditional worship models.

The idea of intergenerational worship arose quite often. Many congregations and districts emphasized the importance of all ages worshipping together and sharing spiritual practice. Ministers (UUMA), UUA Board members, and others expressed concern about the lack of youth visibility in worship and about the practice of some ministers in excusing youth from worshipping with the rest of the congregation. Some congregations (including one in Prairie Star) are shifting the way they organize worship by restructuring Sundays to include religious education for all ages, followed by a worship service for all ages. This shift is a response to the concern that many raised about making youth choose between the Sunday service and youth groups – restructure it so that youth can do both!

Some congregations talked about the important role youth already play in worship services, including participation in intergenerational performing arts and music, serving as worship associates, and participating in teen choirs. They also talked about youth-led services; while many congregations cited the youth service as a driving force in their youth ministry, some youth at district gatherings said that they're disappointed when adults say that they don't like the youth service. YRUU Youth Council expressed the hope that each district would host an annual Spirituality Development Conference – an opportunity for youth to gain more skills in the areas of worship and spirituality.

Spiritual Fulfillment and Practice

The youth survey asked youth if their spiritual needs were met in different settings:

- 53 percent of respondents said their congregation is their spiritual home.
- 53 percent said their youth group meets their spiritual needs.
- 70 percent said district youth programs meet their spiritual needs.
- 63 percent said continental youth programs meet their spiritual needs.

While many congregational conversations celebrated the strong bonds formed in their youth groups, youth at a few district gatherings felt that their youth groups were more social than spiritual. “All we do is paint our room, watch movies,” said one youth from the Mountain Desert District. Youth in the Metro New York District said we need to recognize that we are all (youth and adults) spiritual people and are seeking spiritual fulfillment in congregations.

When participants in the Prairie Star District gathering saw data from the youth survey, some asked, “If youth aren't getting their spiritual needs met in church, then where?” Several locations were identified:

- District youth cons offer intense spiritual experiences and connection through worship. They need to create some balance between sustained spirituality and weekend events, between small groups and big groups, and between “regular” environments and new environments.
- Camps and retreats are opportunities to appreciate the spiritual dimensions of nature, to create sacred space, and to live UU values and principles. Many districts in which camps are located consider them a valuable source of spiritual fulfillment for youth.
- The UUA International Office discussed the transformative effect of international experiential travel and trips (such as Partner Church trips to Transylvania, Unitarian Universalist Service

Committee Just Journeys, and social justice mission trips). These trips are considered opportunities for identity and faith development, and the travel experience shakes youth free from preconceived notions of what the world is.

- DRUUMM youth (Youth of Color) talked about desire for all youth to be spiritually fulfilled and to have safe space for growth and mentioned DRUUMM communities as one space where they experienced this.

Another way that youth experience spiritual fulfillment is through involvement in their community (UU and non-UU). Leadership, inclusion in the community, social justice work, and youth empowerment all contribute to the faith development of youth. One concern that came up with countless stakeholder groups and congregations, however, is the over-scheduled lives of youth and families. Religious educators in LREDA suggested that congregations have a role in modeling the importance of church and spiritual life to youth and families.

Many youth leaders, districts, and religious professionals talked about making spiritual practice part of the everyday life of youth. There is currently a lack of resources for youth on developing spiritual practices.

Do adults consider youth ministry a spiritual practice? It did not come up very often in conversation, but religious educators and UUA district staff suggested that we should view advising youth as a spiritual discipline that significantly impacts the spiritual lives of all involved. Religious educators in LREDA also emphasized the crucial role of adult and staff support in the spiritual growth of youth.

Pastoral Care

Youth and adults emphasized over and over throughout the Consultation process how vital ministerial support is to youth ministry's success, not only because of the priority placed on youth ministry but also because of the pastoral relationships built between youth and ministers. Leaders of the UUMA say that in their experience, many youth stay with Unitarian Universalism because they have a connection with their minister. Of the congregations who held congregational conversations, some mentioned that their youth and minister interacted often, while others said they had little interaction. As a result of their conversations, several decided to increase interaction between youth and the minister, and a few even decided to hire a youth minister or change the job description of an existing minister.

Many groups discussed the important role of ministers in providing pastoral care and letting youth know that they are there for them. The UUMA said that ministers can be role models for youth, demonstrating how they live out their faith and values and offering help to youth who are exploring spiritual issues.

Some groups, such as the UUA Board, asserted that lack of ministerial involvement with youth in their congregation, which is sometimes explained by the philosophy of youth empowerment, is actually abandonment. The Board was also concerned that many adults and congregations lack a deep understanding of how to nurture, protect, and empower youth in healthy ways. Ministry & Professional Leadership staff at the UUA noted a lack of pastoral care and attention to youth's pain. Similarly, others mentioned the need for UUs to be more sensitive and to listen to the lived experiences and emotional and spiritual suffering of marginalized people, including youth.

Some youth seek pastoral care in community with one another; for example, 72 percent of survey respondents of high school age indicated that their youth group helps them explore options and offers suggestions on how to deal with life situations. Congregations discussed the strong bonds formed among youth and the way they form a peer ministry. Many districts talked about the value of youth

chaplains, both in congregations and on the district level. Staff and consultants working on anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism (AR/AO/MC) talked about the community and spiritual support that DRUUMM provides for Youth of Color. And some talked about the important ways that youth can minister with the rest of the community.

Diverse Spiritualities, Diverse Needs

Unitarian Universalist youth are like all Unitarian Universalists – they embrace a wide variety of spiritualities and worship styles. Participants at the Central Midwest District gathering reminded us that “youth are members of a community and communities work with the different needs of its members.” Other groups pointed out us that UU youth communities do not always welcome this diversity; for example, youth at the Metro New York District and Joseph Priestley District gatherings talked about the strong reactions they receive when they talk about God or Christian beliefs. YRUU leaders envisioned a community where youth feel comfortable naming their higher power. Many groups (youth and adults) identified a gap between lifelong, raised-Unitarian Universalists and those who have found Unitarian Universalism. These groups also discussed the perception in congregations that becoming UU is an adult process, rather than something we should raise our children to be.

Due to our Association’s diverse spiritualities, many groups asked for more diverse opportunities for spiritual growth. Some suggested intergenerational or youth-focused covenant groups or small group ministry. Others (especially religious educators) expressed the desire to see more relevant youth curricula on life issues. Staff and consultants doing AR/AO/MC work said more local support for youth identity development is needed. UUA staff responsible for publications talked about their current system of distinguishing between resources for longtime UUs and resources for seekers and how this system does not acknowledge that many youth (including longtime UUs) are seekers.

Understanding and Celebrating Unitarian Universalism – Beliefs, History, Tradition

Data from the youth survey about meeting the spiritual needs of youth sparked many discussions about the lack of content in youth ministry that focuses on UU history, theology, identity, and spirituality. According to many stakeholders, after the Coming of Age program there are very few structured opportunities for spiritual growth and UU identity formation. Over half of the district gatherings touched on this topic, as did YRUU leaders, religious educators, UUA staff, ministers, and DRUUMM youth and young adults.

The responses to the youth survey question about beliefs and the discussions precipitated by these data suggest that youth have trouble articulating what they do believe. Youth in many settings described the difficulty they have in explaining Unitarian Universalism to their peers. YRUU leaders pointed out that articulating one’s beliefs is important in order to live in a multicultural society. Participants in the Mid-South District gathering talked about the possibility of offering the Articulating Your Faith class for people of all ages in congregations, so that youth and adults could build their UU identity and spirituality together.

Some groups, particularly the CSW, talked about justice work as an important part of our UU history and heritage. They are concerned, however, that knowledge of this legacy is not being passed on from generation to generation and is not being used to develop new leaders.

Youth responded that there seem to be few opportunities for them to participate in celebrations of UU heritage. They suggested two possibilities:

- a UU holiday, which would be an opportunity for worship and celebration; building the UU movement, tradition, membership, and heritage; and fostering tolerance, understanding, and acceptance of diversity

- a national/continental youth Sunday

Religious Education

Most people who grow up in Unitarian Universalist congregations participate in religious education classes. In fact, participation in some religious education (such as Coming of Age) is sometimes a requirement for membership in the congregation (23 percent of congregational conversations required Coming of Age). Some of the curricula that participants in the Consultation found especially valuable in contributing to the strength of youth ministry are Coming of Age (eleven congregations mentioned it as a driving force), Our Whole Lives, and Neighboring Faiths or other interfaith opportunities.

There was some discussion about what religious education does and does not teach children that influences their engagement with youth ministry:

- Several groups of adults mentioned that our religious education programs often do not help children to be and to remain Unitarian Universalists because of the assumption that “becoming” UU is an adult process.
- Some stakeholders, including the UUA Board, are concerned that we teach our kids that they are the center of the world and that this culture of individualism negatively impacts the building of intergenerational communities.
- Many stakeholders, especially youth, appreciated that in religious education they had been exposed to a lot of religions, but they expressed the desire for more in-depth learning about these religions *and* Unitarian Universalism.

How are stakeholders hoping to see religious education for youth grow in the coming years?

- Several stakeholders talked about wanting structured opportunities for spiritual growth and learning, and they saw the Tapestry of Faith Lifespan Curriculum Project as an important opportunity. Words used to describe the ideal youth curricula included: flexible (group size and number of sessions), relevant, engaging, challenging, hands-on, created by youth, and service oriented.
- Some districts talked about the value of the Coming of Age program, and the possibility of adapting it for older youth to continue to explore their spirituality. YRUU leaders want to see more workshops on Unitarian Universalism and spirituality at YRUU events (district and continental conferences). They said, “We feel that if more youth are informed of our spiritual history as UUs, they will feel moved to reach into their own minds and find what they believe in.”
- Many groups talked about the role of religious education in helping youth discover their gifts and how they can best use these gifts to serve their communities.

Family Ministry

Parents play a crucial role in the spiritual development of youth, and ministry with families is one way that congregations can and do contribute to this. One concern that came up over and over again is the over-scheduled family lifestyle that is prevalent in our congregations and in society. Religious educators, in particular, want to see congregations take a more significant role in encouraging and supporting family lifestyles that are less densely scheduled and in modeling the importance of church and spiritual life for family members of all ages.

Spirituality and Worship in a Multicultural World

YRUU leaders and staff/consultants working on AR/AO/MC were very aware of the need to look at spiritual growth and identity development in the context of a multicultural world. They discussed several issues:

- Cultural misappropriation: This includes taking music, readings, and other worship materials and spiritual practices from other cultures and using them out of context or inappropriately. This is also manifested in inappropriate or insensitive themes of district cons, which may feature other cultures in a stereotypical or superficial way. Using a cultural misappropriation lens to review current and new resources and curricula will be necessary.
- Spiritual grounding for the AR/AO/MC work we do as a UU community: The privileges and marginalization each of us experiences in society based on our identities hurts us all spiritually and prevents us from being truly whole. YRUU and staff and consultants working on AR/AO/MC want to increase understanding about the spiritual grounding for this commitment to becoming an anti-racist multicultural and anti-oppression organization.
- Increasing interfaith understanding and right relations: Opportunities to learn about UU faith in conjunction with all other faiths will “help build respect for other belief systems and structures, which is exceedingly important for right relations in today’s multicultural society.”

"Rejoicing in who [youth] are,
where they are, and recognizing
where they will be."

(St. Lawrence District Adult)

Working Group Area #2: Welcoming All Youth in a Multicultural World

Introduction

The Unitarian Universalist Association has a history of struggling against racism and oppression within the Association and beyond it. In an effort to create a strong and whole community, Unitarian Universalists have done important work for racial justice and the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. At the same time, the struggles of People of Color and other historically marginalized people in the Association continue. Unitarian Universalist youth have been an integral part of this history and present. Therefore, it is not surprising that “welcoming all youth” emerged as a major theme in the findings of the UUA’s Consultation on Ministry *to and With Youth*.

Welcoming all youth in a multicultural world in this context refers to:

- Youth feeling a sense of belonging in their congregation, youth group, and UU community
- Youth ministry that attends to the identity development processes and needs of youth of diverse identities
- Youth ministry that listens to the experiences of youth, affirms them in the fullness of their identities, and prepares them to be full members of their communities
- Congregations that actively engage in accountable and intergenerational racial justice and anti-oppression work to create a more welcoming environment and ministry
- Youth ministry that is shaped by anti-racism, multiculturalism, and anti-oppression

Data Summary

Community

Inclusivity

Based on information gathered in the Consultation process, feelings of belonging, connectedness, and purpose are important factors in youth’s commitment to UU communities. According to the youth survey, 77 percent of respondents feel a sense of belonging in their youth group. Participants in congregational conversations mentioned youth group, district youth programs, family, and their congregation as places where youth feel safe, welcome, and included. In some congregations, however, participants said youth didn’t feel like members of the community. Transracially adopted Youth of Color who took the youth survey rated their feeling of belonging significantly lower than their peers. Stakeholders also mentioned the importance of AR/AO and identity-based ministries (including DRUUMM, DRUUMM Youth & Young Adults, and programs for multiracial families) as welcoming settings, particularly for many Youth of Color.

How can congregations help youth feel connected? According to the UUA Family Matters Task Force, congregations need to love and hold their youth, make sure they feel noticed, and foster connections between youth and others in the congregation. The UUMA said that many people stay involved in Unitarian Universalism throughout their lifespan because of connections they built with their minister in their youth.

The idea of being inclusive, welcoming, and radically hospitable to youth came up in many congregational conversations, though specific factors that made their congregations welcoming were not often mentioned. Congregations and stakeholders did, however, identify some cultural and structural obstacles to forming radically inclusive community:

- Giving youth “scutwork” (such as cleaning, babysitting, wait-staffing) as a way of including them
- Telling youth that they need to act like adults but not treating them like adults (limited expectations)
- One-way “communication” (acting as if communication is either listening only or talking only)
- Age bias and lack of age-inclusive consciousness
- Lack of systems through which youth can be involved in the life of the congregation
- The presence of alcohol at many events (especially GA), which is unwelcoming and unsafe for youth (and for others struggling with addiction or in recovery)
- The idea of church as a “sanctuary,” which can lessen the community’s commitment to providing a place for “others” (such as children, youth, or young adults)
- The culture of individualism, which focuses on creating welcoming and justice-seeking *individuals* rather than creating welcoming, justice-seeking, and anti-racist multicultural *communities*

Adults play an important role in creating welcoming communities for youth. Religious educators mentioned that having adults with diverse identities working with youth provides role models and mentors for youth with diverse identities. Adults can also model welcoming behavior for youth and for other adults. One congregation mentioned that the best way to be welcoming is to provide a variety of programs and ministries for youth (and all people) with different needs and interests. As one participant in the Central Midwest District gathering reminded us, youth are members of our communities and communities support their members and work with members’ needs.

Safe Space

“Safe space” came up often in congregations, districts, and stakeholder conversations as a significant factor in welcoming youth. The concept of safe space took many forms in these conversations:

- Youth-only space
- GLBTQ youth-friendly space, including gender-neutral bathrooms
- Communities where people are allowed to make mistakes, aren’t expected to be perfect, and can talk through issues openly and honestly
- Congregations that have safe-congregations policies related to ministry with children and youth
- Youth communities that are not overly sexual and that are welcoming and safe for people of all ages and genders
- Safe space for youth to grow, identity-affirming projects, and supportive relationships with ministers of color (all discussed among DRUUMM youth)

Youth Community

Many congregations highlighted the strong bonds among youth as positive factors in their youth ministry’s success and hospitality. Some also mentioned that their youth had “common experiences and values”; this could contribute to a sense of belonging for some but, depending on the community, could also exclude other youth who don’t fit in.

Many youth who attend district cons regularly talk about the warm, welcoming, and loving community they provide. Other youth do not find their needs met in con communities, though, and may even be

afraid of them. Some congregations, families, and youth perceive cons as a place for “radical” or “out of place” youth and therefore steer clear of them, but others consider this the biggest strength of cons.

Some youth communities (particularly at the district and continental level) experience tension with the Continental Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Network (C*UUYAN) or young adult community. According to C*UUYAN leaders, this is due in part to inappropriate boundaries of some young adults, generalizations based on age, and no intentional welcoming relationship between the two. The UUA Board called youths’ departure from youth programs a “bridge to nowhere” and called for more welcoming of youth into young adult and camps ministry.

Outreach

Many congregations, districts, and stakeholders discussed outreach – to non-UU youth, to UU youth who are no longer involved, to diverse communities, to older and younger youth, or to youth not aware of opportunities beyond their congregation. YRUU said that in order for our outreach to be truly welcoming, we need to distinguish between secular outreach and faith community outreach. Others connected outreach within and outside of Unitarian Universalism to growth. There is an expectation among some Unitarian Universalists that youth will not stay involved after religious education, Coming of Age, junior high, or high school, which limits the possibilities and prevents a sense of urgency about welcoming all youth into our community. One way that some groups, including congregations and the UUA, work to foster a sense of connectedness to the faith is through learning about Unitarian Universalism (past and present).

Anti-Racist Multiculturalism and Anti-Oppression

The community’s commitment to anti-racist multiculturalism and anti-oppression ministries is an important factor in welcoming youth of *all* identities. Many stakeholders expressed a vision of youth ministry that affirms youth in the fullness of their identities.

What are some positive things happening right now to make UU communities more welcoming?

- Diversity is being promoted as the norm.
- Groundwork Collective provides AR/AO/MC training and resources for youth and young adults, both UU and non-UU. The commitment of collective members goes above and beyond.
- Some congregations and districts have AR/AO Transformation Teams to help congregations confront personal, institutional, and cultural racism.
- AR/AO/MC work helps us imagine new ways of being and working together.
- We are trying to do things with an AR/AO/MC lens.
- One district gathering discussed the idea of forming a group to assess how welcoming its congregations are to Youth of Color and other marginalized youth.
- Many youth and congregations are committed to and active in justice movements.

What do congregations, districts, and stakeholders think we could improve on?

- AR/AO/MC education should be more readily available to youth and adults in congregations, and congregations (whether they’re diverse or not) should be encouraged to engage in the work.
- Awareness must be raised about how to avoid tokenizing youth, especially youth with marginalized identities, when inviting them into community life and leadership.
- Greater understanding of age-based oppression and ageism should be promoted.
- All need to listen and be more sensitive to the lived experiences and emotional and spiritual suffering of marginalized people, UU and non-UU.

- Some congregations *think* they are welcoming, but they really need to do more anti-oppression work.
- Conversations about identity, racism, and oppression should begin at a younger age in the religious education program.

Race

Positives	Growing Edges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-racism training • White people becoming more involved in racial justice work – taking responsibility, striving to be allies and comrades in struggle • Identity work, youth identity caucusing • DRUUMM and Allies for Racial Equity • DRUUMM's relationship-building and spiritual and pastoral work with young People of Color beginning to take root in congregations • Youth of Color involved in leadership at the district and continental levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More accessible anti-racism training • Tokenism • More information and strategy-sharing between congregations • Lack of diversity in congregations • Painful experiences of Youth of Color • Racism and oppression in UU communities • Willingness to justify the departure of People of Color from UU communities without letting them speak for themselves • Reluctance to address racism in the UUA • More models for anti-racist leadership • Lack of involvement in life and leadership of congregations by Youth of Color

Another issue raised in the youth survey and again in district/stakeholder conversations was the need to improve ministry with multiracial families, including families with transracially adopted youth (many of whom are Youth of Color with white parents). The thirty-five transracially adopted youth who took the youth survey rated their youth group experience significantly and consistently lower than other respondents.

Gender/ Sexuality

Positives	Growing Edges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Whole Lives curriculum – trained facilitators in 61 percent of UU congregations (home to 84 percent of adult members) • Welcoming Congregations program – 80 percent of congregational conversations were in Welcoming Congregations • High activity level of GLBTQ youth in congregations and leadership positions (according to youth survey) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated versions of Our Whole Lives, Welcoming Congregations, and Beyond Pink and Blue that include the whole diversity spectrum of gender and sexuality • More resources for and inclusion of transgender youth • More focus on supporting GLBTQ youth at the congregational level, building intergenerational connections with GLBTQ adult role models.

Accessibility

Congregations, districts, and stakeholders encouraged greater awareness of our communities' accessibility (or lack thereof) and action to become more accessible, welcoming, and hospitable. When discussing accessibility, they raised the following issues:

- Physical accessibility: Can people who are not able-bodied participate fully in congregational life and leadership?
- Financial accessibility: Participating in youth programs costs youth and families money.
- Accessibility to youth with special needs: Youth with cognitive disabilities are excluded in many UU communities because of the focus on words and verbal expression.
- Accessible resources and publications: Many resources geared toward youth present a language barrier because of their frequent use of jargon, acronyms, and “insider” language.

Class

Many stakeholders called for more discussion and consciousness-raising in Unitarian Universalism about classism and financial accessibility. Some youth are concerned that they (or their peers) cannot access resources and opportunities at the district and/or continental level because they cost too much money or require traveling away from home for periods of time. Others are concerned about financial inaccessibility in their own congregations’ activities and youth programs. Some stakeholders pointed out the culture and assumptions based on classism that pervade our UU communities: they would like to raise the visibility of this issue.

Religions

Youth identified understanding and welcoming different religious and spiritual identities as a concern in UU communities. One youth at the Metro New York District gathering shared that UU youths’ peers react strongly when they talk about God or a higher power. Other youth identified a “fear” of spirituality and religion, especially of Christianity. They called for more openness and acceptance of religious and spiritual identities and a recognition of the different experiences of lifelong Unitarian Universalists and those who found Unitarian Universalism after leaving another religion.

Youth Development

Part of welcoming *all* youth is attending to their physical, identity, emotional, mental, ethical, and spiritual development. Stakeholders mentioned a few ways that UU communities can and do nurture the development of youth:

- Helping youth identify their gifts and how they can serve the community
- Congregations celebrating the stages, transitions, and milestones in life and providing support for families to celebrate these as well
- Relationship-building and pastoral care between ministers and youth

Programming

Congregations, districts, and stakeholders discussed a variety of forms of programming that create welcoming communities:

- Programs that celebrate youth identities: Sankofa Project (archives of People of Color and Women of Color), Our Whole Lives, Welcoming Congregations program, gay pride marches, activism on political and identity issues, and mentorship programs
- Appropriate cultural sharing, which involves reviewing new and existing resources and curricula through a cultural misappropriation lens and providing consciousness-raising resources for congregations, youth groups, and districts
- Local resources and curricula for all ages on AR/AO/MC and identity development
- YRUU resources that are inclusive of Canadian culture and CUC structures

Working Group Area #3

Building an Intergenerational Faith

Introduction

Congregations are one of the few places in society where people of all ages come together, interact in community, and build relationships. In the healthiest congregations, intergenerational community and relationships are a core part of their focus, mission, and ministry. The need for vital intergenerational relationships came up in almost every conversation and gathering in the Consultation process.

Building an intergenerational faith refers to:

- Intergenerational community life
- Intergenerational worship and spiritual practice
- Intergenerational community that engages youth in ways that build their sense of empowerment and confidence; welcoming community that helps youth identify the gifts they can offer and the ways they can be meaningfully involved
- Covenantal agreements between youth and adults about roles and responsibilities in ministry with youth
- Shared leadership among youth and adults
- Youth as full members of their faith communities

Data Summary

Youth Empowerment and Youth Leadership

The Meaning of Youth Empowerment

“Youth empowerment” is a term that is frequently used to describe Unitarian Universalist youth ministry philosophy and model. There is a lack of clarity, however, about the meaning of youth empowerment, its theological underpinnings, and the role of youth and adults in this model.

When asked what youth empowerment means to them, many stakeholders talked about the delicate balance between self-direction and structure or boundaries and between freedom and responsibility. Others said youth empowerment means that youth have a voice and are full members of the community, which is tied to spiritual health. Some people asked, “Youth empowerment for what purpose? For a more vibrant Unitarian Universalism?” One key word that came up in almost all conversations about youth empowerment was “responsibility.” What are the responsibilities of youth? What are the responsibilities of parents? What are the responsibilities of adults working with youth?

According to reports and data gathered, youth empowerment can take many forms:

- Youth autonomy (completely separate)
- Youth entitlement (youth feeling they deserve or are entitled to certain powers and responsibilities)
- Adult abandonment (adults “leaving it all” to youth and not being present for mentorship, boundaries, and support)
- Adult disempowerment
- Youth feeling like victims of “over-controlling” adults

- Confusion about whether youth groups are youth-led or advisor-led
- Individuals “empowered” to make decisions for a group
- Youth making healthy decisions and taking responsibility, leading and serving in their communities
- Whole group empowerment
- Partnership between youth and adults, shared leadership
- And more...

Stakeholders discussed what they believe causes the youth empowerment model to sometimes go wrong when used with teens. Some said empowerment needs to be a lifelong process supported by congregations, so that when children become teens and adults they are prepared to take responsibility and ownership. Others said that the way youth empowerment or individual empowerment plays out in congregations, when freedom is valued over responsibility, is that children develop a sense of entitlement, which comes back to bite adults when these children become teens. According to the UUA’s Family Matters Task Force, the current model of youth empowerment doesn’t leave space for parents as holders of responsibility in youth’s lives; it sometimes makes parents give up responsibility, which leads to youth entitlement.

How can a balance be established so that youth and adults, through youth ministry, can empower each other to be leaders and full members of their communities?

In the summer of 2006, the Task Force on Youth Ministry articulated a preliminary statement on youth empowerment. Based on all of the valuable feedback from districts and stakeholders throughout the following year, they revised it. The result is the following draft describing the guiding principles of Unitarian Universalist youth empowerment:

Youth empowerment is both a goal and a practice that has intrinsic merit for each of us in our ethical and spiritual lives. The practice of fostering youth empowerment varies by context. In congregations, youth empowerment practice depends on the geography, culture, history, and structure of the congregation. Youth empowerment and youth leadership development reinforce one another – calling for our personal and community commitment to right relationship between youth and adults. Across diverse contexts, the principles of youth empowerment remain the same, but the details of its practice must address the particular needs of each community.

The task of youth empowerment is not to make our congregations safe for youth or to determine authority within Unitarian Universalist institutions. These are the responsibility of our shared faith community. If covenant is the backbone of our faith, youth empowerment is one vertebra among many. In order for individuals, groups, and communities to determine the structural barriers to youth empowerment and enact the practices in which youth empowerment might be fully realized, we must first define a philosophy of youth empowerment grounded in our Unitarian Universalist principles.

Youth empowerment is a covenantal practice in which youth are safe, recognized and affirmed as full and vital participants in the life of our shared Unitarian Universalist faith community. This covenantal practice is based on the following set of guiding principles:

- Love and trust between youth and adults, between youth and youth, and between adults and adults;

- Mentoring relationships among children, youth and adults, which draw from direct experience and wisdom;
- The development of youth confidence and self-identity through building community, learning to use one's voice effectively, and realizing a more robust expression of themselves;
- Encouragement for all to grow together in accountability;
- Youth defining their issues and participating in the decisions that affect their lives and impact their communities;
- Youth and adults having access to information through direct and honest communication expressed with grace, humility and respect;
- Trust in the competence of youth skills and insights;
- Appreciation of the prophetic wisdom and energy of youth to be agents of social change, justice, and service;
- The recognition that youth ministry is an integral Unitarian Universalist ministry and part of our collective past, present, and future.

For additional reading about the theology of youth empowerment, see Tera Little's paper "Looking to Our Past to Find Our Future: Foundations of Unitarian Universalist Youth Ministry." Follow this path on UUA.org to access it: Home Page > About Us > Governance > Board of Trustees > Youth Consultation > Resources.

Youth Leadership in Congregations

A large number of congregations mentioned youth leadership as a positive force in their youth ministry. There was also a resounding call from youth for congregations to allow them more space for leadership and influence.

Youth involvement in committees was a frequent topic of discussion.

- According to the youth survey, 8 percent of respondents serve on or chair a committee; 2 percent serve on the Board; 70 percent of respondents say they have opportunities to develop and practice leadership skills in the congregation; 67 percent say their youth group gives them these same opportunities.
- Reflecting the low number of survey respondents involved in committees, only five congregational conversations said they have a youth on their board, and thirteen said they didn't have any structured leadership opportunities for youth. Over 25 percent of the congregations who held conversations on youth ministry decided to include youth on committees and their boards.
- Some groups acknowledged the difficulty of having youth join committees that are adult-led and adult-oriented. They acknowledged the need to think outside the box and structure the congregation's committee work and ministry to involve youth in a significant way. Others talked about setting up a buddy or mentor system for youth (or adults!) who are new to a committee.

Another significant part of leadership in congregations is membership. Many stakeholders emphasized the importance of formal membership as signifying that the youth is a full voting member of the community who has a say in its decisions and direction.

- Just over half of youth survey respondents said youth their age were allowed to join their congregation as members, though only 44 percent of eligible respondents have joined.

- Membership requirements vary significantly by congregation. According to those congregations who held conversations on youth ministry, 15 percent said members must be fourteen years old; 33 percent said members must be at least sixteen; 18 percent said youth have to be eighteen; some congregations distinguish between junior and full members; 23 percent require completion of the Coming of Age program; one congregation required parental permission.
- The UUA Board acknowledged that the per member cost of joining congregations is often cited as a reason for not extending membership to youth, because of the expectation that youth will not be able to pledge that amount of money.

According to a number of stakeholders, one way that many youth demonstrate leadership in their congregations is through social justice work. Many congregations form local Youth-Adult Committees (YACs) as a way of prioritizing youth ministry in the congregation and providing space for youth leadership (eighteen of the congregations who held youth ministry conversations had a youth ministry). Other congregations, however, said that they have “no institutionalized youth voice” and youth experience “isolation from the rest of the congregation.” As a result of their conversations, some congregations decided to provide more training for youth leadership and offer more opportunities for youth to be in visible leadership positions, with the hope that increased visibility will help erase assumptions about what youth can do and are interested in doing.

A program offered by the Joseph Priestley District that recognizes youth-empowering congregations is the “Youth Empowering & Supportive Congregation (YES) Award.” Other districts thought that this would be a valuable way of recognizing congregations that are especially welcoming of youth and lifting them up as examples for others.

Youth Leadership in Districts

As in the landscape of youth leadership in congregations, there are some opportunities for youth leadership at the district level, but youth would like to see more.

About one-third of the UUA districts have youth on their boards. Youth also serve on committees, such as Religious Education, Committee on Youth Advisors, Summer Institute Planning, Chalice Lighter, and District Assembly Planning. Some youth are involved in their district’s leadership school, but other district leadership schools are geared almost exclusively to adults.

One question that came up frequently during district gatherings was how youth leadership and involvement in committees fit into the policy governance model. Some districts that are run with policy governance are moving away from a committee structure. How does this affect the ways youth can be represented and have a voice in the district?

Many districts have both conferences and committees specifically for youth and youth ministry. A couple of districts mentioned working cons (or cons with specific themes) as important leadership and skill-building opportunities for youth, and others mentioned their district youth committees. In many districts, however, district youth committees do not exist, have dissolved over the past few years, or have evolved into “youth ministry consultancies” with youth and adult consultants. Some districts with youth committees face challenges in building trusting relationships between this committee and other leaders in the district. The Ohio-Meadville District, in order to support cooperation and best practices, holds an annual summit for youth leaders, Lifespan Faith Development Committee leaders, and Summer Institute youth leaders.

Districts talked about the need to have more trainings geared toward specific aspects of leadership and leadership roles (for example, youth empowerment, district leadership, how to plan cons, camp staff, and life issues).

Youth Voice in the Association

Association leaders were particularly interested in discussing the voice that youth have in the larger Association structure. The UUA Board expressed that including youth in the decision making structures of the Association is very positive. Multiple stakeholders expressed appreciation for youths' willingness to speak out candidly about their experiences in, perceptions of, and hopes for the community. They also acknowledged that youth often are not taken seriously, which means that adults often end up speaking for youth in order to make people listen.

YRUU leaders discussed several ideas and concerns:

- Having full youth members on the GA Planning Committee and UUA Nominating Committee (the GA Planning Committee and Youth Caucus Staff agreed that there should be a youth on this important GA planning body)
- The power to select Youth Ministry Associates (Youth Office staff)
- Increasing transparency around the UUA's youth ministry budget and the YRUU budget, so they can have a say in how money is used
- The unrealistic and unclear expectations placed on staff and volunteers working with youth

Many other groups, including Interweave Continental, the General Assembly Planning Committee and staff, and the UUA Communications staff, are very interested in helping increase youth leadership and voice in their structures and helping youth communicate with the larger UU community.

Structural Challenges

Tension between the youth-led youth empowerment organization (YRUU) and the adult-led UUA is due, in part, to differing organizational cultures and expectations. This tension also manifests itself in the sometimes difficult transition from adult-led religious education to youth-led youth groups. Some youth appreciate this transition, and others are turned off by it.

High turnover of youth leaders and lack of continuity and institutional knowledge create another challenge. Because youth are only "youth" for a defined period of time, the UUA is constantly trying to respond to and manage this turnover. It has been a consistent part of the UU youth movement. Some districts and congregations discussed setting up systems in which older youth leaders mentor younger youth leaders. Others emphasized the important role of advisors and adults who, when well supported, are able to provide this continuity for generations of youth.

Leadership Development

Many stakeholders said that we currently have expectations of youth empowerment but do not give youth the tools to meet these expectations. These stakeholders are calling for more leadership development and skill-building. The UUA's Family Matters Task Force emphasized that coddling is not leadership development; youth need to learn from their mistakes and be accountable.

One way of developing leadership, according to some congregations, is through intentional outreach and invitations to youth (not just to the youth group but to *individual* youth). Adults should help youth identify their skills and gifts and let them know about available opportunities to put them to use.

Many youth develop leadership through attending trainings at the district level. Congregations and districts are calling for trainings on more varied topics and for more formats to access training (shorter than a weekend, offered in clusters, and online or in person). Some would also like to see training that better uses the knowledge in the room and is tailored to the particular group.

One skill mentioned many times, as something that both youth and adults could improve, is mediation and conflict resolution.

Empowered Youth Serving the Community and Working for Change

One way that many youth are empowered as leaders is by serving their communities (UU and non-UU) and working for social change. Stakeholders talked about how they can best support youth to become positive agents of change, helping them identify their gifts and what they can offer. There was particular interest in the encouragement and development of young leaders who can help advance the analysis of personal, institutional, and cultural racism and oppression, which is a priority of our UU communities.

According to the youth survey, 73 percent of respondents say their youth group gives them opportunities to make a difference in their community. Many congregations mentioned that youth social justice leadership is a driving force in their congregation, inspiring people of all ages to become more involved. The Commission on Social Witness (CSW), the group responsible for working with congregations to carry out the UUA's social justice priorities, would like to see passion for social justice and understanding of our history and heritage of justice work passed on from generation to generation, developing new leaders. The CSW also sees the adoption of new bylaws extending Study Action Issue sponsorship to groups like YRUU as a positive development; youth need to be more connected to this process. In the past, youth have introduced Study Action Issues (social justice issues that congregations will study and take action on) through congregations and have helped them pass.

Another way that youth serve their communities is through stewardship (taking responsibility and caring for their congregations, the environment, etc.). The UUA's Stewardship & Development Staff discussed the important role of parents and families in promoting stewardship and generosity (financial and otherwise) with their children.

Intergenerational Community

What Does Intergenerational Look Like?

As with youth empowerment, there is some lack of clarity about what an intergenerational faith community looks like. Many stakeholders are calling for a new model that goes beyond assimilation, tokenization, and tolerance to an authentically intergenerational community. According to some, this shift will require significant restructuring of minds and culture around issues of age and intergenerational community.

Many of our current structures in congregations and the Association were not designed intergenerationally and therefore don't function intergenerationally. Many congregations expressed concern about the lack of systems through which youth can be full members of the UU community; resources for congregations are needed to help them explore why it doesn't always work to bring youth into structures that exclude them and how they might do things differently.

The most common intergenerational activities mentioned by congregations are social justice, music, and performing arts.

Youth Support and Inclusion

The youth survey asked several questions about youth perceptions of and relationships with adults in their congregation. The good news is that almost 90 percent of respondents believe they are respected and that their opinions are valued in the congregation. When asked about the support they receive from congregational adults, however, there are some drastic disparities. Not only are many congregational adults rated significantly lower than 90 percent, but respondents involved in the youth group rate congregational support lower than youth involved in other areas of the congregation do. Ratings of excellent/very good support varied for different groups of adults:

- Youth advisors received 80 percent ratings of excellent/very good support
- Religious education directors received 77 percent ratings of excellent/very good support
- Ministers received 76 percent ratings of excellent/very good support
- Religious education teachers received 71 percent ratings of excellent/very good support
- Other adults received 56 percent ratings of excellent/very good support
- Board members received 50 percent ratings of excellent/very good support

The UUMA said that ministers can help bridge the disconnect between youth and the rest of the congregation by being present as important people in youths' lives and modeling this for other adults in the congregation.

Congregations discussed the different settings where youth feel included: youth groups, district youth programs, families, and congregations. Many congregations also mentioned that their community was "inclusive," "accepting," and "caring" but didn't mention specific factors in their success in being welcoming to youth. Other congregations, however, discussed their concern that youth don't feel they are members of the congregational community, attributing this to adults' resistance to change. The UUA Board attributed this to larger cultural segregations by age that hold us back from intergenerational community. Many congregations struggle with scheduling and communication between youth and adults and resolved to include both in decision-making processes about programming. Religious educators in LREDA suggested that one way of bridging the divide between youth and adults is connecting youth interests with church needs. Inviting youth to participate in specific roles or activities can be effective and powerful.

Visibility and Value

Many congregations discussed the lack of visibility of youth, particularly in worship, as an obstacle to intergenerational community. Youth involved in youth groups are often upstairs, downstairs, or out of sight during times when the congregation gathers, which prevents them from building relationships with congregants who are older or younger. Congregations and districts also discussed the blessings and the challenges of having youth space. Youth conversations mentioned over and over again the value of having youth-only space where they can gather in community, but these same groups also said that separate meeting time and space can cause youth to become isolated from the rest of the congregation.

Congregations emphasized the importance of youth ministry as a valued part of the congregation's mission; when the congregation embraces youth as a priority, there is a better chance for success. Some congregational conversations resulted in a commitment to examine the mission of their youth ministry as it relates to the mission of the congregation and to better align the two. Stakeholders expressed other concerns about youth ministry:

- Currently, youth ministry is perceived as a program rather than a ministry. Youth ministry should be valued as a ministry of the congregation for building community and leadership.
- Youth ministry should be recognized as something of value by itself. Lifespan Faith Development should be respected as a vital ministry from cradle to grave, and professional staff should be accountable for the health and well-being of youth ministry.

- Congregations should hold mission workshops to articulate a focus and specific objectives for the youth group that relate to the mission and strategic plan of the congregation. The congregation needs to take ownership of youth ministry's success.

Worship

Worship services are one of the primary opportunities for intergenerational connection in congregations. Some congregations are structured so that religious education and youth ministry occur at the same time as, but separate from, the “adult” worship service. Many congregations, districts, and stakeholders (including ministers) are concerned that the typical worship style does not engage young people, and so youth would not be involved even if scheduling conflicts were resolved. Other congregations, in order to build a worship community of all ages, have restructured Sundays to include religious education for all ages followed by a worship service for all ages.

Conflict and Mistrust

Conflict and mistrust, which were mentioned throughout the Consultation process, exist in many settings between youth and adults, adults and adults, and congregations and districts. All of these are obstacles to intergenerational community and understanding.

Conflict and mistrust seem to arise when a strict boundary is drawn between youth programs and religious education; this leads to separation and misunderstanding between groups and people who should be working together to embrace youth and youth ministry. It sometimes also leads to misinformation or mistrust between the youth group and adults or youth. Some congregations mistrust district YRUU, which leads to a lack of collaboration and weaker district youth programs.

On an interpersonal level, ministers expressed the difficulty of building relationships with youth, especially when youth make generalizations about them (such as all ministers give boring sermons or all ministers are powerful authority figures). The most common strategy offered by congregations, districts, and stakeholders to build harmony was to create relationships between all of these groups and put an end to isolation and lack of communication.

Ageism and Bias

One issue that came up in many congregational, district, and stakeholder conversations was age bias or ageism – youth biases about adults *and* adult biases about youth.

What forms does this take?

- Participants at the Metro New York District gathering said youth aren't taken seriously, which means that adults often end up speaking on behalf of youth in order to make other adults listen.
- Participants at the Mountain Desert District gathering talked about their experiences of ageism, including:
 - The idea that giving youth “scutwork” is a way of “including” them in the community
 - Telling youth that they need to act like adults but not treating them as adults
 - One-way “communication” (acting as if communication is either listening only or talking only)
 - Limited expectations of youth on the part of adults
- Ministers discussed how adults often fear working with youth, because of experiences in which youth have been particularly harsh or hostile. This fear can go in both directions, says the Family Matters Task Force, resulting in youth and adults not knowing how to start conversations with one another.
- In some congregations, higher priority is given to adults and ministry with adults.

- The UUA Board says prejudices and stereotypes about youth by adults and about adults by youth hold us back from intergenerational community.
- Mythology about youth and youth culture can promote misunderstanding.

Congregational Culture and Relationship-Building

Many congregations, districts, and stakeholders acknowledged that becoming a truly intergenerational community will require significant culture shifts in our congregations in order to respond to the structures and forces (such as ageism) at work in many aspects of life.

Congregations and stakeholders described their perceptions and experiences of the current culture of some congregations:

- A lack of consciousness about inclusiveness (age) in the culture of the congregation
- Structural barriers to intergenerational community
- Few opportunities for youth to connect and interact with all members of the congregation and with non-parent adults
- Youth “stuck” in programs instead of valuing relationships with the whole community

The UUMA described their experiences of youth calling on ministers to be involved with them in meaningful ways – seeing, hugging, nurturing. These congregations and stakeholders mentioned that one key way of shifting the congregational culture is building relationships, which will break down stereotypes, assumptions, bias, and isolation.

What ideas do stakeholders have for building intergenerational relationships?

- Mentorship – between youth and adults, older youth and younger youth – that goes beyond cheerleading and placating to challenging and inspiring
- Opportunities for FUN!
- Intergenerational Chalice or Covenant Groups, based on shared interests
- Creating time for relationship-building
- Oral history projects in which youth interview older members of the congregation
- Larger role for ministers in building relationships with youth
- Family ministry that serves diverse families
- “Articulating Your Faith” curriculum for youth and adults together

Safety

Congregations are paying increasing attention to protecting and nurturing children and youth in a safe environment. This often takes the form of safety policies, which some congregations decided to develop after holding their conversations on youth ministry. According to many stakeholders, these policies must be well communicated to the congregation so that everyone is clear about expectations.

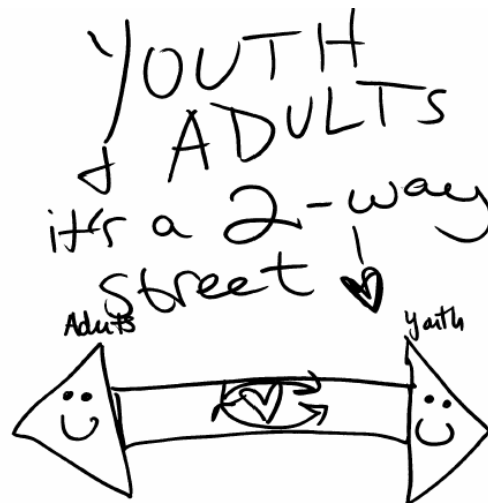
Stakeholders feel that some safety issues still affect the success of intergenerational community and youth ministry. YRUU is concerned that having alcohol at events, particularly at General Assembly, is unwelcoming and unsafe for youth (and for some adults who struggle with addiction issues or are in recovery). At camps and conference centers, there is a common fear of legal, safety, and sexual issues and disagreements on limits, boundaries, rules, and philosophy. Camp and conference center leaders talked about needing more resources on this topic that are relevant to a camp or retreat setting.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership was seen as one way of building intergenerational community. The motto used in the UUA's Youth Leadership Development Conferences is: "Power Shared=Power Multiplied."

What forms of shared leadership did congregations, districts, and stakeholders suggest?

- Youth involvement in the district leadership school
- An expectation of youth presence on committees and planning groups and an adult presence (other than youth advisors) on youth committees and planning groups
- Partnership on stewardship projects
- Social justice work that challenges youth and adults to go beyond one-time service projects to focus on social change and social justice
- UUA social justice initiatives that include youth in congregational projects and commitments
- Shared responsibility for and leadership of the UUA's training programs and consultancies for AR/AO/MC work: Jubilee World Training Program, JUUST Change Consultancy, Building the World We Dream About (congregational curriculum), and Groundwork Collective



Working Group Area #4:

Organizing Youth Ministry for Success

Introduction

The effectiveness of youth ministry depends on the effectiveness of our structures. Clarity in defining the functions of different structures (congregations, districts, the Association, YRUU) helps services and resources for youth ministry reach youth and adults. The issues of structures, services, and communication came up frequently in the Consultation process, often in terms of the lack of clarity about and definition of what is available to support youth ministry at all levels of the Association.

Organizing youth ministry for success refers to:

- Structures as the framework to form and maintain relationships and deliver resources and services (includes both staff and resources at each level of our religious life)
- Relationships:
 - within congregations (youth-adult, youth group-congregation, etc.)
 - between and among congregations
 - between congregations and districts
 - between congregations and the Association (how services and support are delivered to congregations)
 - between YRUU and the UUA
 - between YRUU and “Unitarian Universalist youth ministry”
- The structure and roles of the Unitarian Universalist Association’s Youth Office as it relates to all of these other structures

Data Summary

Thinking Outside the Box

Many stakeholders emphasized the need for Unitarian Universalists to think outside the box about how we imagine and organize youth ministry. According to some, our structures, institutional habits, and lack of sense of urgency about serving youth in more profound and different ways is holding us back from positive cultural change. In order to get outside the box, the UUA’s Ministry & Professional Leadership staff says that we need to imagine the future: What is the legacy of our current ways of doing things, and what are we passing on?

Participation

In what ways are youth involved in the Association? Results of the UU youth survey demonstrate that the vast majority of youth are based in their local congregations and youth groups:

- 87 percent of respondents participate in religious education or worship in their congregation.
- 92 percent of respondents’ congregations have a youth group; of those who participate, 28 percent are leaders in the youth group.
- 45 percent of respondents are involved in district or regional youth programs; of these, 28 percent hold leadership positions.
- 9 percent of respondents are involved in continental or national youth programs; of these, 23 percent hold leadership positions.

Clarifying Roles

Congregations and stakeholders expressed a lack of clarity about the unique, interconnected, and sometimes duplicated roles of different structures within Unitarian Universalist youth ministry. Unitarian Universalists (youth and adults) are calling for a widely understood, publicized, and accountable youth ministry structure that serves all youth who identify as Unitarian Universalists.

Throughout all levels of the Association, there is confusion over the difference between YRUU, the Youth Office, youth ministry, and religious education, including Lifespan Faith Development. What is their relationship to each other and to the UUA? Does YRUU refer only to the district and continental structures, does it extend to youth groups, or does it refer to *all* UU youth? This confusion has led to tension and mistrust throughout many levels of the Association.

Additionally, leaders of the UU camps and conference centers identified a lack of support from districts, congregations, religious education directors, and ministers based on old stories and misconceptions about the role of camps in youth ministry. They discussed wanting support from the UUA to clarify what camps are and how they serve youth.

YRUU leaders suggested creating a simple resource for youth and adults that describes what is happening at different levels of the Association and how each serves youth.

A participant in the Thomas Jefferson District youth ministry gathering offered some conclusions: there are different needs in different contexts; congregations shouldn't try to be all things to all people; local youth groups offer something; district events offer something; cluster events offer something; continental events offer something; we should acknowledge and appreciate all of the gifts; identify what each level offers and celebrate them.; use the difference better.

People

Congregational Leaders

Data from the youth survey show that youth do not feel significant support from lay leaders in their congregations (about 50 percent say they feel supported). Youth advisors rate this support even lower (around 30 percent). The Task Force on Youth Ministry talked a lot, particularly with UUA staff, about how the staff can incorporate youth ministry and youth into their area of work in order to increase ownership for youth ministry across the board. This included, in many cases, a discussion of how to work with congregational leaders and consultants to increase their awareness and understanding of youth and youth ministry. Many stakeholders discussed the importance of leaders and families within congregations; when they embrace youth ministry as an important and valuable ministry of their congregation, it is more likely to be healthy and vibrant.

Volunteers

More than 40 percent of congregational conversations focused on the importance of adults who volunteer to work with youth. Many of these congregations must struggle each year to recruit and train such volunteers, but when committed adults are present it makes a big difference. Some congregations and stakeholders, however, are concerned that the expectations placed on volunteers are often unrealistic and unclear and their work is underappreciated. They are interested in finding better ways to recruit and support volunteers, who are so crucial to our Association's maintenance and growth.

Youth Ministry Staff

Numerous stakeholders, including the UUA Board, district staff, and DRUUMM youth and young adults, would like to see paid youth ministry staff in every district and congregation. They also called for more job descriptions and compensation guidelines for youth ministry professionals.

UUA Staff

Perceptions of the support and effectiveness of UUA (district and headquarters) staff are mixed. Some stakeholders pointed out that, on the district level, so much depends on how committed district staff are to youth ministry. Both the youth survey and the youth advisor survey included questions about support from district and headquarters staff, and both groups of survey respondents rated the support very low. On the other hand, some stakeholders celebrated staff as positive forces in our Association's youth ministry. This indicates a need to bridge some gaps and figure out how to most effectively serve constituents.

Funding

Considering the number of congregations, districts, and stakeholders who discussed funding, it is safe to conclude that funding is a major factor in the success of youth ministry! Some discussed a lack of funding, others discussed the positive effect of consistent budgets, and still others discussed the allocation of funding.

More than 40 percent of congregations who held conversations on youth ministry decided to fund-raise or allocate more money for youth ministry (most of these were midsize or large congregations). The UUA Stewardship & Development staff discussed regular budgets for youth programs as a growing edge in our Association and were concerned that youth are often consumed with fund-raising just to maintain their own programs. Some congregations charge parents a fee for their children's participation in the youth group or expect parents to partially or completely subsidize youth social events. While some youth promoted this as a way of raising money for their programs, others are concerned about it as an economic justice issue.

When it comes to staff for youth ministry, stakeholders identified current inequities in funding for those who work with youth compared with those who work with adults. They suggested fair compensation guidelines from the UUA as a solution to this inequity.

Communication

Communication structures were another very common topic in congregation, district, and stakeholder conversations. Problems with communication have many sources, including different group cultures and norms, different communication methods or vehicles, and lack of leader accountability.

A common communication disconnect was between the district or continental level and congregations. Another common disconnect occurs between youth and adults in congregations. Most of the communication concerns mentioned within congregations have to do with opportunities, events, and schedules; concerns mentioned between different levels of the Association structure have to do with skill-sharing, resources, and opportunities. YRUU and district youth leaders were particularly interested in having more structures for interdistrict communication and resource-sharing throughout the year and between their in-person meetings. Other stakeholders said we need to have a small number of shared and commonly known communication methods, so that everyone is aware of them and can access information. Stakeholders involved on the continental level or with the UUA are interested in finding ways for opportunities and resources to better reach youth in congregations, so that youth are more aware of what is available to them.

Congregation Size

Congregations structure youth ministry in a variety of ways, often depending on the size of their membership (congregational and youth group). Because of their greater capacity, resources, and staffing, some large congregations have developed innovative models of youth ministry. UUA staff working with large congregations identified this as a gift to the UU community but cautioned that when sharing their innovations, large congregations need to be sensitive to the capacities of smaller congregations.

Some large congregations feel that current district and UUA youth ministry resources and models are not always relevant or adaptable to communities of their size. These are often the congregations that have developed their own models for their own needs, rather than looking to the district or UUA for support.

Youth Programs and the Larger UU Community

Congregations, districts, and stakeholders discussed several ways that youth programs currently connect or could better connect to other ministries and the larger UU community:

- Youth survey respondents who are involved in youth programs at the congregational, district, and continental levels rate the support they receive from congregational adults lower than do youth respondents who are involved in the UU community in other ways.
- Only three congregational conversations reported district youth participation as a positive force in their youth ministry.
- Almost one-quarter of the congregational conversations reported a lack of systems through which youth could be integrated and better involved in congregational life.
- UUA district staff encouraged congregations to acknowledge and understand that ministry with youth is ministry to the congregation and should therefore be an integral part of the structure.
- The leadership of C*UUYAN is concerned about the lack of institutional relationships between young adult ministry and youth ministry. They would like to see a stronger relationship between the two, in order to better facilitate the transition from youth to young adulthood.

Clusters and Congregational Collaboration

Many congregations and districts talked about the value of cluster programming for youth, particularly when there is not a critical mass locally. DRUUMM mentioned clusters as one way for Youth of Color to be in community with other Youth of Color when no peers of color exist in their own congregation. Cluster programming is also seen as an opportunity to learn from one another, share successes, build connections with the surrounding community, and grow each congregation's youth ministry. One issue that many local congregations and youth groups are struggling with is AR/AO/MC work and becoming truly welcoming communities, and they are eager to learn what other congregations are doing.

Districts also discussed how they can support this collaboration. They talked about offering day-long trainings or half-day workshops at a cluster level in order to offer skill-building opportunities that are more accessible to youth and adults in congregations. A few districts currently organize youth "caravans" or "traveling shows," in which youth and advisors travel to other congregations to talk about youth ministry and share models, practices, and resources.

The Role of Districts

What roles can and do districts play in youth ministry? According to congregations, districts, and stakeholders, districts fill several needs:

- They offer skill-building and leadership development opportunities.
- They provide an intense spiritual community.

- They support start-up or struggling youth groups.
- They build relationships of trust and collaboration between youth and adult leaders.
- They encourage youth to step forward into leadership in their congregations, and they work with adults in congregations in which youth are less visible.
- They offer a safe space for youth who do not have shared identities or experiences with youth in their congregations.

Some groups, however, are concerned about whether district youth programming welcomes and serves *all* youth. Frequently raised issues include financial accessibility, the oversexualization of some district youth communities, and the focus on “district level youth groups” rather than vibrant local youth ministry. Some questioned whether district participation should be dependent on congregational membership or participation, in order to encourage connection between the district and local levels.

The size, health, and financial resources of a district affect the strength of services for youth and youth ministry throughout the district. A lot of inequity exists among services and funding for youth and youth ministry. Large and wealthy districts like Pacific Northwest and Joseph Priestly have large and dynamic ministry with youth, while districts like Ballou Channing and Thomas Jefferson have more limited financial resources and capacity to support youth in the district and its congregations.

The Role of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)

In a paper written for a course at the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Berkeley, Betty Jeanne Rueters-Ward (a Starr King School for the Ministry student) says, “Historical accounts of UU youth history...return again and again to similar topics: the role of adult involvement in youth programs; the issues of autonomy, affiliation, and resource dependency between UU youth organizations and the larger denomination (UUA); and responses to the high turnover rate in adolescent leadership and involvement. Most of the recorded history of UU youth *is*, in fact, the history of large-scale significant organizational change.” All of these topics come up frequently in the YRUU structure. This historical reality requires constant evaluation and evolution of the structures of youth ministry. For the current structure of YRUU, visit

www.uua.org/YRUU/governance/pdfs/yruuflowchart.pdf

Confusion about the definition, membership, and role of YRUU as an organization has led to calls from stakeholders and from YRUU leaders themselves for a clear mission statement from YRUU and the Youth Office about how each of them carries out youth ministry and whom they serve, as well as their commitment to youth empowerment and AR/AO/MC. From the perspective of some youth at the local and district levels, youth who become involved in YRUU leadership at the continental level (Youth Council and Steering Committee) form a continental clique that is unwelcoming and unaccountable to the larger youth community. These youth, as well as youth who are part of that continental structure, are interested in finding ways to break the clique down.

Over the past couple of years, the relationship between continental YRUU and the Youth Office has changed in some significant ways. The Youth Office no longer supports YRUU’s Continental Conference (Con Con). For a letter explaining the decision, visit www.uua.org/YRUU/events/concondedecision.html. Until recently, Youth Office staff (YRUU Programs Specialists) were selected by the Steering Committee and recommended to the UUA administration for hiring. Now YRUU selects a representative to serve on a hiring committee for Youth Ministry Associates. At their stakeholder gathering, YRUU leaders expressed the desire to have more of a say in Youth Office staff hiring, similar to the level of responsibility they held earlier. Since these

changes were made, YRUU Steering Committee, the UUA administration, and the Board have all made efforts to build stronger relationships with one another.

One significant change to the YRUU structure over the past several years was the addition of a People of Color Caucus (PoCC) to Youth Council; PoCC selects three of its members to serve as the People of Color Advisory Council (PoCAC) on the YRUU Steering Committee. These positions were originally created to guarantee representation of Youth of Color in YRUU leadership, but they have become controversial as some believe this current structure is tokenizing. PoCAC has been working for the past few years to build more accountability relationships to DRUUMM youth and young adults. At their stakeholder conversation, YRUU leaders discussed the need to evaluate these structures and gain institutional support for clarifying the roles and accountability of members of PoCC and PoCAC.

Other structural needs were identified within YRUU:

- More infrastructure to support and connect youth doing social justice work
- More district and national connection with Association leaders and Board members
- A standardized election process for Youth Council Representatives, requiring youth involvement in a local congregation
- Clearer job descriptions for youth and adult volunteer leaders
- A position on YRUU Steering Committee that is specifically accountable to Canadian youth in YRUU
- Updated bylaws, policies, and procedures to reflect the current organization

Structures for Advancing Our AR/AO/MC Work

In the past several years, the Association has made an increasing commitment to anti-racist multiculturalism and anti-oppression as essential goals for us as a faith community. According to many stakeholders, however, the structural support for this work in youth communities has not kept up with the commitment.

The Groundwork Collective, created in 2004 as the Youth & Young Adult Anti-Racism Trainer-Organizer Program, is growing in effectiveness and credibility. AR/AO training for youth and young adults is more available than ever; Unitarian Universalists of all ages are working to create a welcoming and anti-racist multicultural community. As this program grows, however, those involved with it are concerned that there are limited UUA resources to sustain it. AR/AO/MC and Groundwork are not included as a priority in any staff member's job description, though YRUU and others are calling for staff devoted to this important ministry. Additionally, stakeholders are interested in seeing the many AR/AO programs and resources of the UUA come together in collaborative relationships in order to work more effectively to transform our Association.

The Role of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Who does the UUA Serve?

Many stakeholders questioned why the UUA does not collect data from congregations about the number of youth (members and non-members), whether they have a youth group, and whether they have paid or volunteer adults working with youth. They pointed out that this information might help the UUA better serve its youth ministry constituents.

Youth Office

The Youth Office structure currently consists of a Director, Assistant Director, Office Assistant, and two one-year staff (who are between the ages of 16 and 22 when they apply). Many stakeholders,

including current and former Youth Office staff, debated the pros and cons of the temporary staff positions. Groups that work with and are served by the Youth Office commented that the ever-changing Youth Office staff presents barriers to effective collaboration with other parts of the Association and that the people in those staff positions inevitably have insufficient institutional knowledge, effectiveness, and support.

Mission and Vision

Districts and stakeholders discussed the need for congregations, youth groups, YRUU, and the UUA to develop clear mission statements about how each of them carries out youth ministry and whom they serve.

Increased Ownership

The Task Force on Youth Ministry has had conversations with many UUA staff groups about how youth ministry relates to their work (stewardship, large congregations, justice work, ministry and professional leadership, etc.). These conversations have focused on how to increase commitment and ownership for youth ministry within the UUA and among the leaders and consultants who work with each group and with congregations.



***The one test of a good program is
member enthusiasm***

(From “Young People in the Liberal Church” by Stephen H. Fritchman – Beacon Press, 1941)

Working Group Area #5: Moving Beyond a One-Size-Fits-All Ministry

Introduction

Historically, Unitarian Universalist congregations have focused on the youth group as the primary model for ministry with youth. There has also been a growing conversation in our movement about the reality that while some youth are fulfilled by participation in a youth group, for many others the youth group is not enough or is simply not for them. The needs and interests of youth are as diverse as the needs and interests of the rest of our members. “Robust, flexible, and diverse” youth ministry is one of the desired outcomes of the Consultation process. Congregations and stakeholders confirmed that the Association must better support congregations in offering a diversity of ministry models for youth.

Moving beyond a one-size-fits-all ministry may lead to some or all of the following:

- Youth ministry that takes a broad view and includes all aspects of religious community, not just age-specific programming
- Congregational, district, and Association models of youth ministry that are flexible, adaptable, and accessible to youth with diverse needs and interests
- Youth ministry that is truly integrated into congregational life and the Association at large

Data Summary

Local Youth Groups

Youth groups establish strong bonds, friendship, and community for many youth. Congregational conversations pointed out many activities that are opportunities for peer ministry, including trips, lock-ins (sleepovers), music, movies, dance, youth cons, social justice and advocacy, AR/AO work, and worship. Some youth groups are very focused on the local level, while others are more connected to the district and Association.

Youth groups don’t work for all youth, though. Youth at some district gatherings said that their youth groups needed more spirituality to balance the social aspects. According to the youth survey, there are three main reasons for youth leaving youth groups: I got too busy (50 percent of those who had left); I don’t like the other youth (25 percent of those who had left); and I attend worship instead (24 percent of those who had left).

Some district gatherings suggested that if there are enough youth, congregations should offer covenant-group-style youth groups, breaking them up by age (freshmen/sophomores and juniors/seniors) or by interest.

Congregations

Some youth, especially those who don’t find their home in the youth group, choose to become active in congregational life. Religious educators in LREDA pointed out that many people’s narrow view of youth participation in congregations limits how youth are involved and can be involved, so youth who choose to be involved in congregational life sometimes find it challenging to do so.

According to the youth survey, the congregational activities that youth are most likely to be involved in are social action, worship service leadership, helping with religious education, and social- and community-building events. Another idea raised at district gatherings was offering intergenerational covenant groups. Youth expressed their desire to feel included in the greater community and intergenerational activities.

Differing Needs by Age Group

The different developmental needs and interests of junior high youth, high school youth, and bridgers (eighteen- to twenty-year-olds) was a frequent topic of discussion in congregations, districts, and stakeholder groups. Programs such as Our Whole Lives and Coming of Age are driving forces for junior high youth but similar programs are often lacking for high school youth. However, congregations felt that middle school youth programs were not very strong in transitioning participants into high school youth programs.

According to the youth survey, bridgers feel less supported by congregations than younger youth do. Some ideas mentioned to further support and involve bridgers were to invite their participation in creating young adult programs, create more transitional ceremonies and celebrations, create graduate packages and alumni newsletters, reach out to college students, and invite bridgers to participate in church and attend board meetings. Some youth noted that the young adult community needs to do more AR/AO work. On a more positive note, campus ministries are steadily increasing and becoming more connected to congregations.

Mentorship relationships and joint social action projects between the various age groups (junior high, senior high, and bridgers) may help bridge the gaps.

Curriculum

Many agreed that youth input is important to curricula. Some new ideas include sharing facilitation (youth and adults), incorporating a relational component into the development of UU identity, and collaborating with other faith communities. Many youth also expressed interest in continuing a spiritual and religious development curriculum similar to Coming of Age throughout their high school years. Others said they would like curricula that better reflect their life situations (divorce, suicide, dating, finding your place in the world, etc.). Religious educators noted the importance of making sure that curricula are friendlier to youth with special needs, especially youth with cognitive disabilities.

Worship Services

While approximately 90 percent of youth survey respondents feel welcome to attend worship services, many said that the Sunday worship is not particularly fulfilling or interesting. Some congregations are making changes (in worship style, music, etc.) in order to adapt. A shift that some congregations are making is restructuring Sundays to include all ages in religious education *and* in worship.

A topic that came up often was the differences between lifelong or “cradle” Unitarian Universalists and “converts” who have found Unitarian Universalism. Of the respondents to the youth survey, only 39 percent have been UU for more than ten years, and 21 percent have been UU for less than four years. Congregations acknowledged the challenge of ministering and offering worship to people whose UU identities and interests are diverse.

Family Ministry

Many groups discussed the connections between youth ministry and family ministry. They emphasized the need to recognize that youth and parents are both in developmental stages, and they called for a more family-based youth ministry that will help all family members grow.

An important distinction addressed was that needs of various groups should be met in different contexts. Congregations shouldn't try to be all things to all people: local youth groups offer something; congregations offer something; district events offer something; cluster events offer something; continental events offer something.

Youth of Color

DRUUMM youth and young adults discussed the importance of district and continental DRUUMM and UU events as settings where they and their families can grow as part of communities of color and multiracial communities. Sometimes these settings provide support and ministry that are not found elsewhere in Unitarian Universalism. DRUUMM was interested in finding ways for more Youth of Color to be part of the DRUUMM community.

Camps and Trips

Congregations, districts, and stakeholders mentioned the important role of camps as a form of youth ministry. They provide youth ministry in various forms: leadership opportunities, safe space, break from daily life, appreciation of the spiritual depths of nature, community with kindred youth, intergenerational community, home outside home, overcoming challenges, sacred space, living Unitarian Universalism, time for reflection, and FUN!

Trips were mentioned as another valuable growth opportunity for youth. This includes international trips (Partner Church trips, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Just Journeys), trips to Boston or other UU sites, and trips to learn about and act on social justice issues.

Based on the information gathered, it is clear that we must think beyond a one-size-fits-all model in order to grow and sustain strong youth ministry. Congregations, districts, and stakeholders envisioned a Unitarian Universalist community that offers a variety of entry points into youth ministry in order to meet the needs of *all* youth who want to be a part of Unitarian Universalism. Participants at the Thomas Jefferson District encouraged us to “acknowledge and appreciate” what each of these entry points or forms of youth ministry contributes and to provide more training and support to religious professionals on how to offer diverse models of youth ministry.

Working Group Area #6: Preparing and Supporting Adults for Ministry with Youth

Introduction

Ministry is fundamentally relational, and relationships between youth and adults are a core part of youth ministry. Relationships with both peers and adults are important to youth's development. While youth are only "youth" for four to eight years, adults provide the supportive continuity necessary to make diverse ministry with youth possible. In order to sustain their ministry, however, adults need youth ministry education and ongoing support from their peers and the larger Unitarian Universalist community.

What is involved in preparing and supporting adults for ministry with youth?

- Preparing and supporting youth advisors, religious educators, ministers, parents, mentors, congregational leaders, and other adults in the UU community who are engaged in youth ministry
- Helping adults overcome fear of working with youth
- Nurturing transformational leaders who understand that part of transformational leadership is being in relationship with people of all ages
- Providing opportunities for youth ministry education and continuing education for religious professionals
- Affirming youth ministry as an important ministry

Data Summary

Youth Advisors and Youth Ministry Professionals

Relationship with Youth

Throughout the history of UU youth movements, considerable attention has been paid to the role of adults in youth programs (especially in a youth-led organization like YRUU). Youth respondents to the youth survey rate youth advisors the highest of all adult staff, leaders, and congregation members in their support of youth and youth ministry (80 percent of respondents rate support from youth advisors excellent/very good). YRUU leaders suggested that when conflict does arise between youth and advisors, there should be processes or models for congregations to resolve these issues.

Youth also seem to understand how challenging the role of youth advisor is. YRUU leaders expressed concern about the often unrealistic and unclear expectations placed on staff and volunteers involved in youth ministry (both youth and adults). They called for more recognition and appreciation of the hard work of youth advisors.

Relationship with the Congregation

The youth advisor survey and the youth survey included similar questions about respondents' perceived support from members of the congregation. Compared to the youth respondents, youth advisors rated congregational support lower across the board (especially support from board members and other

adults); they experience the most support for youth ministry and their work with youth from religious educators, other youth advisors, and youth. Paid youth advisors, advisors who are members of the congregation they work in, and advisors in large congregations feel more support than their peers who are unpaid, in midsize and small congregations, or non-members.

Youth advisors often serve as important connecting points between the youth group and the rest of the congregation. Religious educators in LREDA expressed the hope that youth advising would be seen as a spiritual discipline that is well supported by the congregation, rather than as work that leads to burnout.

The youth advisor survey showed some differences in youth advisors' involvement in the congregation. While two-thirds of respondents say they are very involved in their congregation outside of youth work, paid youth advisors are more likely to be involved in worship and advisors in large congregations are less likely to be involved in worship.

The results of the youth advisor survey and stakeholder conversations indicate that more support is needed for youth advisors with marginalized identities (including People of Color and LGBTQ). Some LGBTQ adults working with youth said that they need more support in countering assumptions that they might be "preying" on youth.

Compensation and Evaluation

Among respondents to the youth advisor survey, 50 percent work with youth as volunteers six to fifteen hours per month. Only 25 percent of respondents are paid for their work, and more than half of these are paid for less than ten hours per week. Of all paid respondents, 40 percent make less than \$10,000 yearly, 25 percent make \$15,000-\$25,000 and 15 percent make more than \$35,000. Paid youth advisor respondents were more likely to have received training for their work.

Most youth advisors are supervised by religious educators, though paid youth advisors are more likely than volunteer advisors to be supervised by a minister.

Many stakeholder groups voiced concern about the inequitable compensation of youth advisors and called for more formal job descriptions, compensation guidelines, and evaluation processes for adults working with youth.

Training

In the youth advisor survey, 60 percent of respondents have worked with youth for over four years, which does not confirm the commonly discussed problem of high youth advisor turnover (this could mean that the survey reached more long-term advisors who are plugged into UUA communication channels). Though 50 percent of survey respondents had taken the Basic Advisor Training and/or OWL Teacher Training, only 35 percent had attended youth-oriented Leadership Development and Spirituality Development Conferences (LDCs, SDCs) or Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Trainings. Respondents working in large congregations found LDCs and SDCs less helpful than their peers in midsize and small congregations did.

Respondents to the survey indicated that they need more frequent, diverse, and accessible trainings for youth and adults that address a wider array of topics. They felt the weekend-long structure did not fit well with their schedules.

Challenges

A few common challenges came up concerning support for youth advisors:

- Lack of clarity about the structure of the youth group – is it youth-led or advisor-led?
- The challenge of finding dedicated youth advisors, especially without sufficient funding, who will provide consistency for youth ministry in the congregation
- The importance of giving necessary recognition to valuable advisors.
- Peer support and the need for more connections between congregations

What's Needed

Participants in the CUC stakeholder gathering discussed a plan for professionalizing youth ministry workers, in order “to recognize the absolute requirement for a professionally led youth ministry within our congregations and faith tradition...to outline a credentialing system for youth ministry professionals...to recommend a continuing education component for all youth ministry professionals...to provide youth ministry professionals with the institutional power to provide youth programming for our youth that is vital, healthy and engaging for that population...to ensure that there is advocacy for youth ministry at local, regional and national levels.”

Other stakeholders noted that the UUA should provide tools to help congregations carry out selection processes for youth advisors. These tools and resources should address job descriptions, compensation, training, support and supervision, accountability, and youth involvement in the selection.

Religious Educators

Role

Many stakeholders discussed the vital contributions of religious educators in youth ministry:

- Having an understanding of youth faith development that informs their work with youth and with the congregation
- Offering a consistent structure for youth ministry (policies and practices tend to vary depending on the educators' stature, compensation, and congregational culture)
- Serving as bridges in their congregation, including supporting youth and adults who work with youth and advocating for youth in the congregational structure

Credentialing and Education

One important training resource for religious educators is the Renaissance Program (a series of training modules), one of which addresses ministry with youth. Religious educators also participate in the UUA's Chrysalis Training Program (geared toward youth and adults who work with youth); however, many youth wanted *more* religious educators to participate in these trainings. Religious educators also receive important training and support from LREDA, the professional organization of religious educators.

A growing number of religious educators are completing the Religious Education Credentialing process by fulfilling training and competency requirements. Members of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee consider youth ministry experience and competency when reviewing candidates, and they discussed opportunities for increasing youth ministry competency requirements (such as including more youth ministry resources on the reading list, asking for greater youth ministry experience in candidates' portfolios, etc.).

Challenges

Many religious educators find it challenging to set priorities for themselves so that they can provide necessary support for all areas of lifespan faith development, including youth ministry. Some

stakeholders said that religious education directors need more support and training in how to diversify youth ministry models they offer and how to collaborate with youth in developing these programs.

Ministers

Congregations, districts, stakeholders, and ministers themselves agreed that ministerial support is vital to youth ministry's success. Ministers can be important players in bridging the disconnect between youth and the rest of the congregation, but they need to actively make time for and build relationships with youth in order to do this. More than ten of the congregational conversations resulted in a commitment to increase ministerial interaction with youth, and four decided to hire a youth minister or include youth ministry in the job description for their minister.

Many stakeholders, including the UUMA, discussed their vision of the ideal minister:

- Recognizes that spiritual growth is a lifelong process and commits to ministry with people of all ages
- Connects with youth outside of Sunday services
- Offers worship opportunities that inspire people of all ages and is open to exploring a variety of liturgy options
- Has a sense of humor
- Deeply respects youth
- Is able to gain or earn youth's trust
- Listens to youth
- Understands the developmental needs of youth, especially when it comes to racial/sexual/gender identity development
- Has a strong understanding of racism and oppression and how they operate in our Association and the larger world
- Understands his/her/per power in the congregation and is able to step back when necessary in order to allow space for youth to claim their power (and models this process of stepping back for other adults)
- Values his/her/per relationships with youth
- Is creative in his/her/per ministry
- Is present with youth and is a source of pastoral support
- Is skilled in conflict management (and does not resort to conflict avoidance)

Education, Formation, and Requirements

Stakeholders expressed frustration about the lack of youth ministry education and requirements for ministers. Many agreed that a significant culture shift is needed regarding the role of ministers in youth ministry, and that this will require development of youth ministry education, training, and resources and the collaboration of many different groups and people.

Theological Schools – UU theological schools currently offer little to no youth ministry course work, and stakeholders are calling for significant development in this area. Stakeholders identified the role theological schools could play in validating youth ministry as an important ministry, doing intentional recruitment of people interested in working with youth, and contributing to a deeper theological understanding of our ministry with youth. We may be able to learn from other denominations that include youth ministry as a focus in theological education. Many see the current reshaping of theological education as a valuable opportunity to put youth ministry on the table.

Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) – Members discussed ways to increase requirements for ministerial candidates, including adding more youth ministry content to the reading list and requiring an essay of reflection on a hands-on experience working with youth.

Continuing Education – The UUA’s Ministry & Professional Leadership staff pointed out that when in seminary, students often don’t have enough experience working with youth and congregations to apply their knowledge. Continuing education, however, provides ministers with opportunities to live and learn ministry with youth in the context of their congregations. Many stakeholders mentioned CENTER Days (training and professional development days for ministers prior to General Assembly) and UUMA chapter presenters as untapped resources for youth ministry education.

According to some ministers, one of the things holding their colleagues back from engaging more fully with youth is the feeling that they are continually adding things to their “plate” of responsibilities in the congregation. Being asked to “do” youth ministry feels like an add-on. Therefore, one suggestion was training for ministers on how to be more comfortable ministering with youth as part of their overall ministry.

UUA – Many stakeholders, including ministers, said that the UUA can be a strong resource by modeling and setting the tone for congregations to value youth ministry as an important skill for ministers.

Parents

The role of parents in youth ministry, and the role of congregations in ministry with families, came up often. Parents were most often mentioned as important models for their children and youth. If parents model the importance of church for their children, and if parents make the spiritual growth of their children a priority, then youth will be more likely to view their congregation as an important part of their lives – as important as other areas of their lives such as school, extracurricular activities, and socializing. YRUU leaders said that when parents are involved in youth ministry and have a connection with the youth advisor and other adults working with youth in the congregation, this encourages youth participation. They did suggest, however, the importance of setting boundaries, such as not having parents as youth group advisors. The UUA’s Family Matters Task Force said it’s important to acknowledge that youth and their parents are both at developmental stages in their lives; congregations must minister to the needs of both and provide opportunities for families to grow together.

All Adults Have a Role

Two of the most commonly cited obstacles to greater adult involvement in youth ministry are adults’ fear of youth and ageism. Some adults said they had had negative experiences with youth in the past, or they simply didn’t know how to start up a conversation with youth. Trust is often missing in these relationships. This is confirmed by the responses to the youth and youth advisor surveys; less than 50 percent of both youth and youth advisor respondents said they received excellent support from board members and other adults in the congregation.

Many stakeholders agreed that all adults (not just those who are “responsible” for working with youth because of their staff or volunteer roles) need to have an understanding of how to nurture, protect, and empower youth in healthy ways. Adult abandonment, as it is often described, is not healthy. The UUA district staff suggested that adults should see working with or being in relationship with youth as a part of their spiritual development – there is a lot that youth and adults can learn from one another.

Some concrete suggestions were made on how to encourage greater attention to and ownership of youth ministry by congregations and their leaders; these include youth ministry content at UU

University (training days for congregational leaders prior to GA), promoting transformational leadership, and developing more resources specifically for congregational leaders and boards about working with youth.

Other Areas for Improvement

Congregations, districts, and stakeholders mentioned several areas for improvement:

- Safety policies and resources on limits, boundaries, and rules
- Mentorship models that promote empowerment, mutual learning, and community consciousness
- More interaction and collaboration between youth leaders and adult leaders to develop shared priorities and mission
- “Best practices” manual for district youth ministry on how to foster right relations between youth and adults (could include adult and sponsor orientation for cons; sponsorship requirements; trainings for advisors, directors of religious education, and ministers; emphasis on AR/AO/MC; background checks)


Where Are We Going?

Read the Summit on Youth Ministry
Report at UUA.org.

Where Do We Come From? 1003


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①



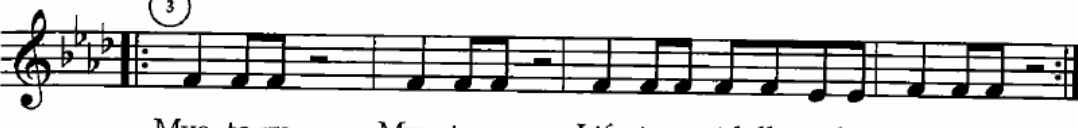
Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we go-ing?

②



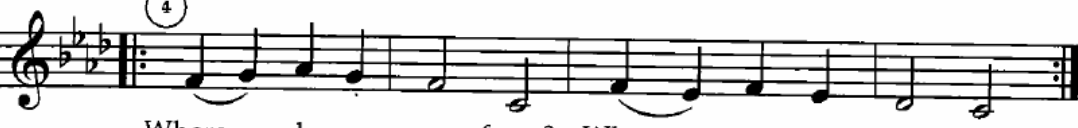
Where do we come from?

③



Mys-te-ry. Mys-te-ry. Life is a rid-dle and a mys-te-ry.

④



Where_ do we come from? Where_ are we go - ing?

Words: Paul Gauguin, 1848 - 1903 and Brian Tate, 1954 - , © 1999 Brian Tate
Music: Brian Tate, 1954 - , © 1999 Brian Tate

From *Singing the Journey Hymnal*, Unitarian Universalist Association

ABCs of the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth

B

Board of Trustees (of the UUA): This is made up of elected representatives from each of the twenty UUA districts, three at-large trustees, one youth trustee, one youth observer, the UUA President, the UUA Moderator, the Financial Advisor and Vice President of Finance, and the Board secretary. The Mission Statement for the Unitarian Universalist Association Board of Trustees is "Guided by the vision embodied in the Purposes and Principles of the UUA and in anti-racist imperatives approved by previous Boards, the mission of the Board of Trustees of the UUA includes but is not limited to:



- Creation of goals for the Association, in cooperation with the General Assembly, administration, and our constituents;
- Establishment of policies for the Association, guided by those goals;
- Empowerment of our member congregations through Board leadership in cooperation with the UUA administration, staff, and volunteers;
- Modeling of UU values in our lives and in our roles as Trustees;
- Stewardship in developing and managing the resources of the UUA."

C

The process involves a lot of words that start with "C"!! What do they all mean?

Co-Conveners: Megan Dowdell (former Youth Trustee on the Board) and Rev. Bill Sinkford (President of the Unitarian Universalist Association). Megan and Bill were directed by the Board of Trustees to initiate the Consultation and recruit youth and adults to design and carry out the process.

Common Ground: Common Ground I and II were large representative gatherings of youth and adults held in the early 1980s. They symbolize the transition from Liberal Religious Youth (the previous organization for UU youth) to Young Religious Unitarian Universalist (YRUU, the current organization for UU youth). Common Ground III refers to the gathering proposed to the YRUU governing body in 2004, which did not pass using the consensus process.



Congregational Conversation: Congregations, a.k.a. churches, bring together youth and adults, key leaders, people involved in youth ministry, and people not involved in youth ministry, to talk and strategize about what's going well and what they could do to better meet the needs of all youth.

Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth: This two-year process is designed to gather information about UU youth ministry as it exists now, as well as about people's visions and the ways they'd like to improve it. People of all ages and involvements have been encouraged to contribute their wisdom to shape both the process itself and the future of youth ministry. Why? To make sure we're providing opportunities for all youth and truly meeting their needs today, so that they can remain UU as they become adults.

Conversation: Congregations, districts, and other UU groups held conversations about youth ministry. Conversations brought together a representative group of people so that all voices were at the table. They were usually facilitated by a youth and adult pair and had some process laid out with discussion questions, activities, etc.

Convocation: At the beginning of the Consultation process, the word "convocation" was thrown around a lot and often confused with "consultation" (they are very similar!). Now, "convocation" refers to a meeting in

February 2005 of thirty youth and adults representing a variety of voices in Unitarian Universalism who laid the foundation for what the Consultation process looks like today. (See Design Team.)

Core Stakeholders: These are eight UU groups that the Task Force on Ministry To and With Youth has identified as absolutely essential to the Consultation process. The Task Force worked with them closely to tailor the conversation to their needs. The core stakeholders are: Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU), Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA), UU Ministers Association (UUMA), Youth Advisors, Diverse and Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM), Interweave, Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC), and District Staff.

CUC: The Canadian Unitarian Council is the national organization that serves Canadian congregations. In some ways it is equivalent to the Unitarian Universalist Association and United States congregations. Their mission statement says: "The Canadian Unitarian Council is an organization of Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist member congregations and individual members acting to enhance, nurture and promote Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist religion in Canada. The CUC provides tangible support for religious exploration, spiritual growth and social responsibility. It represents our faith in the larger social and religious environments." The CUC is one of the core stakeholders in the Consultation process. Youth programs in the CUC are organized and supported primarily by Sylvia Bass-West (Director for Lifespan Learning), the Youth Advisory Group (YAG), and the regional youth-adult committees.



D

Design Team: This group of seven youth and adults designed the Consultation process that is now being carried out, using the ideas of the Convocation as their basis. They laid out a timeline and determined the membership and responsibilities of the Task Force.

District: The Unitarian Universalist Association is divided into twenty districts or groupings of congregations. The purpose of the districts is to provide services to the people and congregations in their geographic areas. Districts have UUA paid staff as well as many volunteer leadership positions, including a committee of youth (and adult advisors).

District Gathering: During the 2006-2007 "church year," every district held a conversation on youth ministry, bringing together youth and adults from throughout the district. These gatherings were facilitated by a youth and adult from the Task Force.

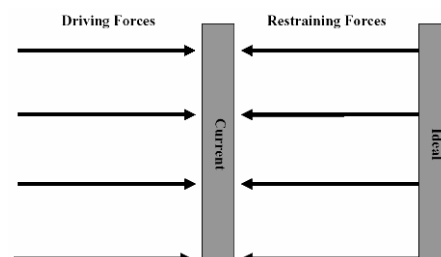
District Staff: Every UUA district has at least one paid staff person responsible for serving the congregations in its area. Positions include: District Executives/Congregational Services Directors, Program Consultants/Lifespan Religious Education Consultants, Small Congregations Consultants, Growth Consultants, Youth Ministry Consultants, and Young Adult Coordinators.

Driving Forces: See Force Field Analysis. Driving forces are things that are currently going well with youth ministry.

DRUUMM: Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries is the UU organization for People of Color. "As People of Color mobilized in an anti-racist collective, we unite to: Work for self-determination, justice and equal opportunity; empower our various ministries; celebrate our diverse heritages; overcome racism through resistance; transform and enrich Unitarian Universalism through our multicultural experiences." (DRUUMM Mission)

F

Force Field Analysis: This is a creative group process for thinking about change. The force field diagram is a visual representation of how successes (driving forces) and challenges or obstacles (restraining forces) can contradict each other. If we can figure out how to overcome the forces



that hold us back and how to meet our challenges with creative strategies, we will move forward toward our ideal (the best youth ministry ever!).

G

GLBPTQQI: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex. Often grouped under the identity of “Queer,” meaning people whose sexual orientation or gender identity doesn’t conform to hetero-normative (heterosexual or male/female) norms.

Grassroots: In a grassroots process or movement, the constituents (in this case, Unitarian Universalist individuals, congregations, and groups) voice their ideas and opinions. The process goes from the bottom up, building on input from individuals on the local level.

I



Interweave: Interweave Continental (Unitarian Universalists for Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT) Concerns) is the community and organization of LGBT UUs. “Interweave Continental is a membership organization actively working to end oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity, recognizing that we will not be free until all oppression is a thing of the past.” (Interweave Mission)

L

Lay Leadership: Lay leaders are not in a paid, professional, or staff position. They do their work on a purely volunteer basis. And for this reason we love them!

Long-Range Planning Meeting (LRP): In January 2003, a gathering of youth and adults, initiated by YRUU and the UUA, came together to make recommendations in six areas: Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression, Curriculum/Resources/Transitional Age Range Programs, Geography and Canadian Concerns, Governance/Structure, Communication/Outreach, and Spirituality/UU Identity. Many of the recommendations have since been carried out. Others will inform the Consultation process.

LREDA: The Liberal Religious Educators Association is the professional organization for religious educators (Directors of Religious Education or DREs and Ministers of Religious Education or MREs). It provides support, resources, and professional and religious development.

M

Mission: We often confuse the words “mission” (or mission statement) and “vision.” A mission is a purpose, a broader goal, a reason for being -- something that a group plans to do or follow through on. (See Vision.)

P

Process Guide: There are three process guides for the Consultation – one for congregational conversations, one for district gatherings, and one for stakeholder conversations. Each of them includes three main sections: logistical advice for planning, an outline for facilitators, and report forms that will be sent to the Task Force on Ministry To and With Youth. They are all available online at www.uua.org/TRUS/youth/processguides.html.

Professional Leadership: Professional leaders are in a paid, professional, or staff position. They are not just volunteers. They have certain credentials (training or degrees) and have applied for the position.

R

Restraining Forces: In the Force Field Analysis, restraining forces are the same thing as challenges, barriers, or obstacles -- things that are holding a group back from reaching their ideal.

Robust: The first desired outcome of the Consultation is a “youth ministry that is robust, flexible, and diverse.” Basically, robust means strong or full of life. This desired outcome means that we need a youth ministry that is more than one-size-fits-all, because UU youth are a very diverse community with diverse needs and interests.

S

Stakeholder: Stakeholders are people or groups who should have a voice in the Consultation process for three reasons: They are or will be affected by the outcome; they should be committed and invested in the outcome; and their support is necessary for it to be effective and successful.

Stakeholder Conversation: These meetings are a chance for any group, committee, or organization within Unitarian Universalism to look at its role in youth ministry and offer input into the Consultation process.

Survey (Youth Survey): In January/February 2006 a survey of UU youth ages twelve to twenty was carried out. It asked about their involvement at the local, district/regional, and continental level; perceived support from adults, their congregation, and the UUA; spirituality and faith; and what they believe a strong youth ministry would be like.

T

Task Force on Ministry To and With Youth: This group of seven youth, three young adults, and five adults was formed to carry out the Consultation process and provide resources for all stakeholders to contribute



Transparency: Transparency, which means openness, communication, and accountability, is one of the process goals of the Consultation. Task Force members must be accountable to the groups they represent, and all information should be communicated and widely available. Some of the ways the Consultation does this are the monthly newsletter, the website, frequent updates and reports, inviting the input and feedback of all stakeholders, and allowing this feedback to shape the process. The Task Force is always willing to listen to your suggestions for ways to maintain this transparency!

U

UUA: Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Two of the UUA's goals are helping congregations grow and thrive and giving public voice to our values and principles (from www.uua.org/aboutus). The Youth Office is part of the UUA's Lifespan Faith Development staff group.

UUMA: The Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association is the professional organization for ministers. It provides support, resources, and professional and religious development.

V

Vision: We often confuse the words “mission” (or mission statement) and “vision.” A vision describes where you want to see yourself in the future. It describes how things would happen if everything went exactly as hoped, including the outcome and the timeline.

Y

Youth: In Young Religious Unitarian Universalists, youth are defined as people ages fourteen to twenty. Some congregations or districts define the age range differently (fourteen to eighteen, high school, fourteen to twenty-two, etc.).

Youth Advisors: These are adults over the age of twenty-five who serve in an advising, ministering, and mentoring role with youth. The Youth Advisor Handbook says, “Youth advising has been likened to providing the chalice for the fire of youth. As advisors, we hold the group in our protection and allow the individual flames of its members to ignite and dance within that protected space.”

Youth Empowerment: This is the foundational principle of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists and one of the process goals of the Consultation. Youth empowerment means freedom with responsibility, leadership development, and the free and responsible search for truth and meaning. A youth empowerment philosophy acknowledges that youth are inherently powerful and creative. The Consultation seeks to build a more commonly held and understood definition of youth empowerment (there is no official statement of what youth empowerment means in UU communities).

YRUU: Young Religious Unitarian Universalists is the organization for Unitarian Universalist youth ages fourteen to twenty, which is supported by the Unitarian Universalist Association's Youth Office. It exists on the local, district/regional, and continental levels. The purposes and goals of YRUU include supporting its members with resources, communication networks, and love.



Youth Ministry Statement (Draft)

Unitarian Universalist youth ministry is a collaboration between youth, their families, and adults to create authentic, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and multicultural communities that empower and support:

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

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

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

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

Youth Empowerment: Unitarian Universalist Guiding Principles (Draft)

Youth empowerment is both a goal and a practice that has intrinsic merit for each of us in our ethical and spiritual lives. The practice of fostering youth empowerment varies by context. In congregations, youth empowerment practice depends on the geography, culture, history, and structure of the congregation. Youth empowerment and youth leadership development reinforce one another – calling for our personal and community commitment to right relationship between youth and adults. Across diverse contexts, the principles of youth empowerment remain the same, but the details of its practice must address the particular needs of each community.

The task of youth empowerment is not to make our congregations safe for youth or to determine authority within Unitarian Universalist institutions. These are the responsibility of our shared faith community. If covenant is the backbone of our faith, youth empowerment is one vertebra among many. In order for individuals, groups, and communities to determine the structural barriers to youth empowerment and enact the practices in which youth empowerment might be fully realized, we must first define a philosophy of youth empowerment grounded in our Unitarian Universalist principles.

Youth empowerment is a covenantal practice in which youth are safe, recognized, and affirmed as full and vital participants in the life of our shared Unitarian Universalist faith community. This covenantal practice is based on the following set of guiding principles:

- Love and trust between youth and adults, between youth and youth, and between adults and adults
- Mentoring relationships among children, youth, and adults, which draw from direct experience and wisdom
- The development of youth confidence and self-identity through building community, learning to use their voices effectively, and realizing a more robust expression of themselves
- Encouragement for all to grow together in accountability
- Youth defining their issues and participating in the decisions that affect their lives and impact their communities
- Youth and adults having access to information through direct and honest communication expressed with grace, humility, and respect
- Trust in the competence of youth skills and insights
- Appreciation of the prophetic wisdom and energy of youth to be agents of social change, justice, and service
- The recognition that youth ministry is an integral Unitarian Universalist ministry and part of our collective past, present, and future

Congregational Conversations

The following congregations submitted reports from their congregational conversations on youth ministry.

Ballou-Channing District

- UU Society of Fairhaven, MA
- First Univ. Society, Franklin, MA

British Columbia Region

- North Shore Unit. Church, West Vancouver, BC

Central Midwest District

- First Unit. Society of Chicago, IL
- Olympia Brown UU Church, Racine, WI
- UU Church of Rockford, IL
- First Unit. Church, St Louis, MO

Clara Barton District

- First Parish Church of Groton, MA
- All Souls UU Congregation, New London, CT
- UU Society of Greater Springfield, MA

Florida District

- Manatee UU Fellowship, Bradenton, FL
- Spirit of Life UU, Odessa, FL
- UU Church of Sarasota, FL

Heartland District

- UU Church of Bloomington, IN
- First Unit. Church, Cincinnati, OH
- Heritage UU Church, Cincinnati, OH
- St. John's UU Church, Cincinnati, OH
- Miami Valley UU Fellowship, Dayton, OH
- Thomas Jefferson Church, Louisville, KY

Joseph Priestley District

- UU Church of Annapolis, MD
- UU Church of Arlington, VA
- Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda, MD
- River Road Unit. Church, Bethesda, MD
- Accotink UU Church, Burke, VA
- Main Line Unit. Church, Devon, PA
- Cedarhurst UUs, Finksburg, MD
- UU Congregation of Fairfax, Oakton, VA
- UU Congregation of Wyoming Valley, Kingston, PA
- UU Church of Rockville, MD
- UU Church of Silver Spring, MD
- BuxMont UU Fellowship, Warrington, PA
- Unit. Fellowship of West Chester, PA

Massachusetts Bay District

- First Church in Boston, MA
- First Parish in Brookline, MA
- First Parish in Framingham, MA
- Melrose UU Church, Melrose, MA
- First Religious Society, Newburyport, MA
- North Parish of North Andover, MA
- First Parish of Watertown, MA
- UU Society of Wellesley Hills, MA

Mid-South District

- UU Church of Birmingham, AL
- First UU Church of Nashville, TN

Mountain Desert District

- UU Church of Cheyenne, WY

New Hampshire/Vermont District

- UU Church of Nashua, NH

Northeast District

- The UU Society of Bangor, ME
- First Univ. Church of Rockland, ME

Ohio Meadville District

- West Shore UU Church, Cleveland, OH
- First UU Church, Columbus, OH
- Lyons First Unit. Church, Lyons, OH
- UU Church of Meadville, PA
- First Unit. of Pittsburgh, PA
- First Unit. Church, Toledo, OH
- UU Fellowship of Wayne County, Wooster, OH

Pacific Central District

- UU Fellowship of Northern Nevada, Reno, NV

Pacific Northwest District

- Anchorage UU Fellowship, AK
- Boise UU Fellowship, Boise, ID
- Edmonds UU Church, Edmonds, WA
- UU Community Church of Washington County, Hillsboro, OR
- Evergreen UU Fellowship, Marysville, WA
- Shoreline UU Church, Shoreline, WA

Pacific Southwest District

- UU Community Church of Santa Monica, CA
- UU Church of Long Beach, CA
- Live Oak UU Congregation, Goleta, CA
- UU Congregation of Phoenix, AZ
- Granite Peak UU Congregation, Prescott, AZ
- First UU Church of San Diego, CA
- Conejo Valley UU Fellowship, Thousand Oaks, CA
- UU Congregation of NW Tucson, AZ

Prairie Star District

- UU Fellowship of Ames, IA
- White Bear UU Church, Mahtomedi, MN
- UU Church of Minnetonka, Wayzata, MN

St. Lawrence District

- First UU Society of Albany, NY
- UU Congregation of Binghamton, NY
- First Unit. of Ithaca, NY
- First Unit. Church of Rochester, NY
- May Memorial UU Society, Syracuse, NY
- UU Church of Amherst, Williamsville, NY

Southwest Conference

- UU Church of Corpus Christi, TX
- UU Fellowship of Fayetteville, AR
- First Jefferson UU, Fort Worth, TX
- First UU Church, Houston, TX
- Northwest Community UU Church, Houston, TX
- First Unit. Church, Memphis, TN
- First Unit. of Oklahoma City, OK
- First UU Church of San Antonio, TX
- All Souls, Shreveport, LA

Thomas Jefferson District

- Tennessee Valley UU Church, Knoxville, TN
- Oak Ridge UU Church, Oak Ridge, TN
- UU Church of Spartanburg, SC

District Gatherings

DISTRICT	DATE	LOCATION	FACILITATORS	ATTENDANCE
Thomas Jefferson (S)	11/4/06	Charlotte, NC	Sara Eskrich Tandi Rogers Koerger	21 youth 20 adults
Mountain Desert (C)	11/11/06	Denver, CO	Sara Eskrich Tera Little	77 youth 30 adults
Ballou-Channing (S)	11/18/06	Fairhaven, MA	Josephine Bibby Jesse Jaeger	9 youth 16 adults
Clara Barton (C)	1/6/07	Worcester, MA	Rachel Davis Samaya Oakley	9 youth 14 adults
St. Lawrence (C)	1/13/07	Syracuse, NY	Pat Hoertdoerfer	25 youth 20 adults
Metro New York (S)	2/3/07	New York, NY	Beth Dana Phil Lund	20 youth 30 adults
Southwest (S)	2/3/07	Dallas, TX	Jodi Slezak Jesse Jaeger	19 youth 41 adults
Pacific Central (S)	2/10/07	Oakland, CA	Tom Rylett Tera Little	12 youth 18 adults
Florida (S)	2/9-2/10/07	Tampa, FL	Megan Dowdell Jesse Jaeger	19 youth 24 adults
Ohio Meadville (S)	2/24/07	Columbus, OH	Julian Sharp Phil Lund	8 youth 20 adults
Pacific Northwest (C)	3/24/07	Stanwood, WA	Hannah Stampe Tera Little	77 youth 24 adults
Central Midwest (D)	4/14/07	Oak Brook, IL	Sara Eskrich Shana Lynngood	4 youth 31 adults
Prairie Star (D)	4/14/07	Minneapolis, MN	Tom Rylett Tandi Rogers Koerger	17 youth 24 adults
Joseph Priestley (D)	4/28/07	Harrisburg, PA	Tom Rylett Jesse Jaeger	15 youth 47 adults
Pacific Southwest (D)	4/28/07	Riverside, CA	Jodi Slezak Samaya Oakley	30 youth 35 adults
Mid-South (D)	5/5/07	Montgomery, AL	Hannah Stampe Megan Dowdell	20 youth 123 adults
Heartland (C)	5/12/07	Bloomfield Hills, MI	Tom Rylett Pat Hoertdoerfer	43 youth 20 adults
NH/VT and Northeast (S)	5/19/07	Ferry Beach, ME	Sara Eskrich Deb Levering	6 youth 5 adults

S = Stand-alone event

C = Part of a youth con

D = Part of annual district meeting

A Broad and Participatory Process

The following are gatherings, workshops, and meetings conducted by the Task Force on Youth Ministry to engage a broad and diverse group of Unitarian Universalists in the process. Other gatherings or presentations that happened more informally are not included in this list.

District	Date	Type of Event	Audience
2005			
Mountain Desert	Oct. 7-9	District Meeting	Youth and Adults
Continental	Oct. 21	LREDA Board Meeting	Religious Educators
Multiple	Oct. 21	Meeting of District Prog. Consultants	District Staff
Continental	Oct. 23-24	LREDA Fall Conference	Religious Educators
Ohio Meadville	Oct. 28-30	Youth Chaplain Training	Youth
Pacific Central	Nov. 5	Leadership Development Day	Congregational leaders
All	Nov. 4	District Presidents Association	District Leaders
Continental	Nov. 4-6	DRUUMM Fall Conference	Youth
Ballou Channing	Nov. 12	District Youth Adult Committee	Youth, District Leaders
Continental	Nov. 10-14	YRUU Social Justice Training	Youth
Ballou Channing	Dec. 1	LREDA Chapter Meeting	Religious Educators
Continental	Dec. 3	Big Complex Meeting	District Staff
CUC	Dec. 9-11	CUC Youth Advisory Group Meeting	CUC youth leaders
NH/VT	Dec. 17	District Youth SC Meeting	Youth, District Leaders
Central Midwest	Dec. 17	District Youth SC Meeting	Youth, District Leaders
Thomas			
Jefferson	Dec. 17	Youth Ministry Visioning	Youth and Adults, District Leaders
2006			
Mid-South	Jan. 7	District Youth Adult Committee	Youth and Adults, District Leaders
Clara Barton	Jan. 7	Youth Con	Youth
Mass Bay	Jan. 12	RE Team Meeting	Religious Educators
Continental	Jan. 12-15	YRUU Steering Committee Meeting	YRUU leaders
Northeast	Jan. 14	District YAC Meeting	Youth and Adults
Metro NY	Jan. 20-22	Advanced Advisor Training	Youth Advisors, Youth
St. Lawrence	Jan. 20-22	Youth Con	Youth and Adults
Pacific	Jan. 30-		
Southwest	Feb. 2	UUMA and LREDA Chapters	Religious Professionals
Ohio Meadville	Jan. 30	UUMA Chapter Meeting	Ministers
Heartland	Jan. 31	UUMA Chapter Meeting	Ministers
Southwest	Feb. 1	UUMA Chapter Meeting	Ministers
Southwest	Feb. 4	RE Conference	Religious Educators
CUC	Feb. 5	CUC Board Meeting	CUC leaders
Pacific			
Northwest	Feb. 16	LREDA Meeting	Religious Educators
Pacific			
Northwest	Feb. 17-19	District Meeting	Youth and Adults
Continental	Feb. 24-26	Interweave Convocation	Interweave Members

Joseph Priestley	Feb. 25-26	Facilitator Training for Cong. Convos	Youth and Adults, District Leaders
Joseph Priestley	Feb. 26	All Souls Church D.C. Youth Group	Youth, Youth Advisors
Continental	Feb. 27	Interweave Board Meeting	Interweave Leaders
Continental	Mar. 4	Mid-Size Church Conference	Congregational leaders
Continental	March	Large Church Gathering	Congregational leaders
Continental	Mar. 10	Family Matters Task Force Meeting	Denominational Leaders
Ballou Channing NH/VT & Northeast	Mar. 18	Facilitator Training for Cong. Convos	Youth and Adults, District Leaders
Clara Barton	Mar. 25	Facilitator Training for Cong. Convos	Youth and Adults, District Leaders
Heartland	Apr. 1	District Meeting	Congregational leaders
Central Midwest	Apr. 7-9	District Meeting	Youth, Congregational leaders
Central Midwest	Apr. 21	UUMA and LREDA Chapters	Religious Professionals
Metro NY	Apr. 22	District Meeting	Youth and Adults
CUC	Apr. 29	District Meeting	Youth and Adults
Continental	May. 20	CUC Annual Conference & Meeting	Youth and Adults
Continental	June. 20	CENTER Days	Religious Professionals
Continental	June. 23	General Assembly - Workshop	Youth and Adults
Continental	June. 25	General Assembly - Sermon Award	Youth and Adults
Continental	July. 30-		Youth, Adults, Young Adult
Continental	Aug. 5	YRUU Stakeholder Conversation	Facilitators
Continental	Aug. 19	C*UUYAN Concentric	Young Adults
CUC	Sept. 1-4	CUC Stakeholder Conversation	Youth, CUC Adult Leaders
Continental	Oct. 20-23	LREDA Stakeholder Conversation	Religious Educators
Continental	Oct. 24-29	CU2C2 Stakeholder Conversation	Camp/Conference Leaders
Thomas			
Jefferson	Nov. 3-4	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Mountain Desert	Nov. 10-12	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Ballou Channing	Nov. 18	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Continental	Nov. 29	Big Complex Meeting	District Staff
UUA	Dec. 7	Stewardship & Development Meeting	UUA Staff
UUA	Dec. 19	Congregational Services Meeting	UUA Staff
2007			
Clara Barton	Jan. 6	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
St. Lawrence	Jan. 13	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
		Board of Trustees Stakeholder	
UUA	Jan. 18	Conversation	Denominational Leaders
UUA	Jan. 23	International Programs Meeting	UUA Staff
UUA	Jan. 26	Commission on Social Witness Meeting	Denominational Leaders
Southwest	Feb. 2-4	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Metro NY	Feb. 3	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Continental	Feb. 10	Interweave Convocation	Youth, Young Adults, Adults
Pacific Central	Feb. 10	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Florida	Feb. 9-10	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Ohio Meadville	Feb. 24	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Continental	Mar. 12	RE Credentialing Committee Meeting	Denominational Leaders
		Ministerial Fellowship Committee	
Continental	Mar. 22	Meeting	Denominational Leaders
Pacific			
Northwest	Mar. 23-25	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
UUA	Mar. 26	Communications Meeting	UUA Staff
Continental	Mar. 30	DRUUMM YaYA Spring Summit	Youth
UUA	Apr. 5	Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Meeting	UUA Staff and Consultants
Continental	Apr. 10	UU Ministers Association Exec Meeting	Denominational Leaders
Continental	Apr. 13	GA Youth Caucus Staff Meeting	Youth and Adults

Prairie Star	Apr. 13-15	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Central Midwest	Apr. 13-15	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Joseph Priestley	Apr. 27-29	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Pacific			
Southwest	Apr. 27-29	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
		Ministry & Professional Leadership	
UUA	May. 4	Meeting	UUA Staff
Mid-South	May. 4-6	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
Continental	May. 10	DRUUMM YaYA Spring Summit	Youth
Heartland	May. 11-13	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
NH/VT & ME	May. 19	District Gathering	Youth and Adults
CUC	May. 18-20	CUC Annual Conference & Meeting	Youth and Adults
Continental	Jun. 20-24	General Assembly	Youth and Adults

Resources

The following is a partial list of the many resources that exist on youth ministry. These are ones that members of the Task Force on Youth Ministry have found particularly helpful for their own personal learning as well as for deepening their analysis of the Consultation's findings.

Books – Unitarian Universalist

- Arnason, Wayne, and Rebecca Scott. *We Would Be One: A History of Unitarian Universalist Youth Movements*. Boston: Skinner House Books, 2005.
- Bossen, Colin, and Dawn Star Borchelt. *The Bridging Program*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004.
- Essex Conversations Coordinating Committee. *Essex Conversations: Visions for Lifespan Religious Education*. Boston: Skinner House Books, 2001.
- Hurd, Tracey. *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005.
- Schwendeman, Jill. *When Youth Lead: A Guide to Intergenerational Social Justice Ministry*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2007.
- Tain, Shell. *Youth Advisors' Handbook: A Resource for YRUU Advisors*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2003.
- Unitarian Universalist Association Youth Office. *Youth Group Handbook*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2006.

Books – General

- Barna, George. *Real Teens: A Contemporary Snapshot of Youth Culture*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001.
- Bridges, William. *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Book Group, 2003.
- Clapp, Steve, Kristen Leverton Helbert, and Angela Zizak. *Faith Matters*. Fort Wayne, IN: Lifequest, 2003.
- Lytch, Carol. *Choosing Church: What Makes a Difference for Teens*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.
- Roehlkepartain, Eugene, Elanah Dalyah Naftali, and Laura Musegades. *Growing Up Generous: Engaging Youth in Giving and Serving*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 2000.
- Roehlkepartain, Eugene, Pamela Ebstynne King, Linda Wagener, and Peter Benson. *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence*. Sage Publications, 2005.
- Shelton, Michael. *Secret Encounters: Addressing Sexual Behaviors in Group Settings*. American Camp Association, 2003.
- Smith, Christian, and Melinda Lundquist Denton. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Essays

- Little, Tera. “Looking to Our Past to Find Our Future: Foundations of Unitarian Universalist Youth Ministry” (www.uua.org/YRUU/synapse/2006-1/theme11.htm)
- Muckenhaupt, Meg, and Dan Harper. “How to Kill a Religion...or Help it Grow” (www.archive.uua.org/re/reach/fall00/leadership/how_to_kill_a_religion.html)
- Rueters-Ward, Betty Jeanne. “The Unitarian Universalist Association’s Consultation on Youth Ministry: Lessons from the Theory and Practice of Policy Implementation.” (www.uua.org/yruu/youthoffice/pdfs/ConsultationPolicyImplementation.pdf)

Research Studies

- Faith Communities Today Religion Research Project (www.fact.hartsem.edu/)
- National Study of Youth and Religion (www.youthandreligion.org)
- The Princeton Theological Seminary Lectures on Youth, Church, and Culture (www.ptsem.edu/iym/lectures/index.php)
- The Study of Exemplary Congregations in Youth Ministry (www.exemplarym.com)

Organizations and Web Resources

- The Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence (www.spiritualdevelopmentcenter.org)
- Youth Ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America: Help Sheets (www.elca.org/youth/helpsheets/index.html)
- Represent 2 Witness: A program of PANA Institute for Leadership Development and Study of Pacific and Asian North American Religion at Pacific School of Religion (www.represent2witness.org/)
- The Search Institute (www.search-institute.org)
- Unitarian Universalist Faith Works (www.archive.uua.org/re/reach/)
- Young Religious Unitarian Universalists – YRUU (www.uua.org/yruu)
- Youth Ministry & Spirituality Project (www.ymsp.org)
- Youth Worker Journal (www.youthworkerjournal.com)

UU Blogs

- Lund, Rev. Phillip (Prairie Star District). Phil’s Little Blog on the Prairie: A blog on Unitarian Universalist lifespan RE, family ministry, and youth ministry. <http://home.earthlink.net/~psdlund/>
- Rubenstein, Jessica (Winchester, MA). Notes from the Director: For Other Folks Working with UU Youth Groups. wusygdirector.blogspot.com/