

## Identity-Based Ministries

Report to Board of Trustees, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

December 19, 2006

### Director's Report

**Sabbatical Report:** Taquiena Boston has returned from a month-long sabbatical in New York where she was studying Middle Collegiate Church, an intentionally multiracial and LGBTQ “welcoming and affirming” congregation in the East Village. As a result of her sabbatical study, she is developing workshops on creating multiracial/multicultural congregations for the UUA’s February conference “Now Is the Time: Leading Congregations Into a Multiracial/Multicultural Future” and for the 2007 General Assembly.

**Building the World We Dream About** – A call for field test congregations for this welcoming congregation curriculum focusing on race and ethnicity will be issued in March 2007. The notice will be publicized through Lifespan Faith Development’s “Tapestry of Faith” URL as well as the congregational mailing and UUA list serves.

### Office of Accessibility Concerns

**ALS “Demo Kit”:** The Office of Accessibility Concerns has purchased an assistive listening system (ALS) demonstration kit with an array of equipment for church sanctuaries, meeting rooms, religious education classes, and pastoral situations. The ALS system assists congregations in selecting assistive listening equipment that is appropriate to their needs. Four congregations have tested the ALS demo kit with positive response.

### Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns

**Beyond Categorical Thinking (Workshop for Congregations in Search):** Forty congregations have requested Beyond Categorical Thinking Trainings this year, an all-time high. The increase is due to improved marketing efforts to raise awareness of this resource, and the recruitment of more volunteer facilitators available to fulfill requests. In addition, there is greater coordination among staff and experienced BCT facilitators to revise and update the workshop design and hand-outs. Goals for further improvement include training to update facilitators on the revised workshop and hand-outs, and recruitment of more facilitators who identify as people of color and/or Latina/o and Hispanic, and people with disabilities. The goals are dependent on the availability of funding.

**Equal Marriage:** Despite unsuccessful attempts to defeat state ballot initiatives against same-sex marriage in November elections in all but one state, the marriage equality work looks brighter. Arizona defeated a discriminatory ballot amendment against same sex marriage, and votes in other states were closer than anticipated. In New Jersey, the statewide equal marriage advocacy group is moving towards locating at the UU

Congregation of Montclair, which also held a statewide rally after the NJ Supreme Court decision. UU efforts in Virginia, where the vote was closer than many non-Southern states and where UU ministers and congregations were particularly active, are especially noteworthy. Strong efforts also came from congregations in Colorado, Tennessee and South Carolina which received Freedom to Marry grants to do public witness and education. First Unitarian Church in Denver conducted Sunday worship on the steps of the state capitol to support equal marriage.

**Welcoming Congregation/Living the Welcoming Congregation:** UU “welcoming congregations” now number 530. In addition, 97 congregations have applied for the “Living the Welcoming Congregation” materials, which are available solely through the [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org). More than sixty (60) people attended the Living the Welcoming Congregation Conference held by the Northeast District (including New Hampshire-Vermont) at Ferry Beach.

#### Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns:

**Support for Religious Professionals and Seminarians:** The Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns is collaborating with Ministry and Professional Leadership to host a conference, Finding Our Way Home, for ministers and seminarians who identify as African, Caribbean, Native/American Indian, Latina/o and Hispanic, Middle Eastern/Arab, Multiracial, and Multiethnic Unitarian Universalists in April 2007 in Washington, DC. Another gathering for “Diverse Religious Professionals” will be hosted at General Assembly in Portland, OR. The LREDA Fall Conference in Orlando, FL provided a wonderful opportunity to sit in with the first gathering of Religious Educators of Color and Latina/o Hispanic Directors of religious education in LREDA’s history.

**Support for Families:** Sofia Betancourt is working with Rev. Leslie Takahashi-Morris and James Coombs to organize family camps for multiracial families and families of color. This year’s plans include incorporating family tracks into district conferences and events to find the best ways to encourage the building of local and regional communities of support.

**Spanish Language Hymnal Supplement:** The Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns is supporting communication efforts to move forward the publication of a Spanish Language Hymnal Supplement.

#### **Upcoming Travel:**

January: Chicago, IL; Boston, MA; Plantation, FL

February: Savannah, GA; Washington, D.C.

March: Chicago, IL; San Diego, CA

Identity-Based Ministries Staff Travel Schedules January 1 – March 31, 2007

**Sofia Betancourt, Program Coordinator, Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns**

- January: Chicago, IL; Boston, MA; Plantation, FL
- February: Savannah, GA; Washington, D.C.
- March: Chicago, IL; San Diego, CA

**Taquiena Boston, Director, Identity-Based Ministries**

- January 3 – 5/**Boston, MA**: Leadership Council and Public Witness meetings
- January 21/**Boston, MA**: Committee on Committees
- February 5 – 7/**Boston, MA**: Public Witness Strategic Planning Retreat and Leadership Council
- February 8 – 10/**Savannah, GA**: Georgia Southern University Conference on Cross-Cultural Counseling and Education
- March 5 – 7/**Boston, MA**: Leadership Council, Identity-Based Ministries staff meeting
- March 15 – 18/**Boston, MA**: Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Cmte. Spring Meeting

**Devorah Greenstein, Program Associate, Office of Accessibility Concerns**

- January: **Boston, MA; Detroit, MI; Oakland, CA**
- February: **Savannah, GA; Arlington, VA; San Diego, CA**
- March: **Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Milwaukee, WI**

**Keith Kron, Director, Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Concerns**

- January: 6 – 8: **Cheyenne, WY** (Beyond Categorical Thinking/BCT); 9: **Boston, MA** (Diversity of Ministry Team/DOMT); 13 – 15: **Salem, MA** (BCT); 20 – 21: **Deerfield, IL** (preaching, workshop and Welcoming Congregation/WC); 27 – 29: **River of Grass, FL** (BCT)
- February: 3- 4: **Sunnyvale, CA** (preaching, workshop, 5 – 7: Living the Welcoming Congregation/LWC); 2/7: **Gardner, MA** (WC); **Boston, MA** (Public Witness retreat); 8 – 10: **Savannah, GA** (Georgia Southern Cross Cultural Counseling and Education conference presenter and attendee); 2/10: **Atlanta, GA** (Interweave Convocation); 2/11: **Statesboro, GA** (preaching, workshop, LWC); 14 – 15: **Boise, ID** (PNWD UUMA meeting); 16-17: **Arlington, VA** (“Now Is the Time” Conference); 2/18: **Venice, FL** (preaching); 22- 24: **San Diego, CA** (Contemporary Worship Conference, workshop presenter); 2/25: **Canoga Park, CA** (preaching)
- March: 3-4: **Huntsville, AL** (preaching, workshop); 5 - 10 **Boston, MA** (DOMT; Family Matters Task Force); 3/11: **Meridien, CT** (preaching)