

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth

Report to the UUA Board of Trustees

January 2007 (written December 4, 2006)

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth is progressing quite well. Members of the task force are spending considerable time facilitating district conversations and consulting with stakeholders, which is producing a large amount of input and ideas for strengthening Unitarian Universalist youth ministry.

Congregational Conversations

The deadline for congregational conversation report forms to be returned to the Task Force was September 30, 2006. At that time, we had received forms from 74 congregations. A report on these results is included as a supplement to this report. Eight more congregations have submitted forms since then. While the number of participating congregations was lower than expected, those who did participate in this part of the process found it very beneficial and began making some exciting changes to their youth ministry. The Task Force gathered some valuable information from these congregations.

District Gatherings on Youth Ministry

By the time the Board meets in January, district gatherings on youth ministry will have taken place in five districts (Thomas Jefferson, Mountain Desert, Ballou Channing, Clara Barton, and St. Lawrence). These gatherings have succeeded at energizing districts where no formal district youth structure exists, and have come up with ideas for how the district can better support congregations in their ministry with youth. The most fruitful discussions have centered on the ideas that emerged in the youth survey and congregational conversations.

The facilitators of these gatherings have provided valuable feedback to the task force, which will enable us to improve on the discussion process laid out in the process guide for future gatherings. District survey and congregational conversation reports are available on the Consultation website (<http://www.uua.org/TRUS/youth>), and reports from each gathering will be posted throughout the next several months.

Stakeholder Conversations

This fall, a few key stakeholders held conversations on youth ministry.

LREDA – Approximately 30 religious educators participated in an in-depth three-hour gathering before the LREDA Fall Conference, and all conference attendees participated in a conversation during the conference. These religious educators contributed their thoughts on the themes emerging from the youth survey and congregational conversations, and discussed the role of LREDA and the UUA in supporting their ministry with youth.

UU Camps and Conferences – At the annual conference of UU camp and conference leaders, participants learned about the Consultation and how their camps/conferences can participate. Many committed to bringing the process home. A smaller group of interested leaders also gathered to have a discussion about CU2C2's role in youth ministry.

District Staff – Three task force members met with the District Staff at their annual meeting that happened in New Orleans this year. This was a great opportunity for the task force to get the insight of a group of people who are most often on the ground supporting youth ministry. We heard their insight into what needs to change with youth ministry in the areas of resources, infrastructure, communication, programming, training and systems. We also got some important feedback on how the process is going so far from their perspective.

Youth Advisor Survey

Youth advisors and other adults working with youth are key stakeholders in the Consultation process. In order to better understand the diversity of adult involvement in the lives of youth across the Association, we are inviting these adults to participate in an online survey. The survey will be open from December 1, 2006 through February 28, 2007. Questions address topics such as support, training, vision for youth ministry, youth empowerment, as well as demographic information. An introductory letter and link to the survey are available at the Consultation website (<http://www.uua.org/TRUS/youth/advisors.html>) and linked from the UUA.org home page.

UUA Staff

Beginning in December 2006, almost all UUA staff will participate in conversations on youth ministry. These will occur primarily within staff groups, with a couple cross-staff group conversations on specific topics such as “anti-racism/anti-oppression and youth ministry.” The objectives of these conversations, as presented to the UUA Leadership Council, are to:

- Engage UUA staff groups in visioning and goal-setting for the delivery and support of youth ministry. The input of UUA staff will help shape the outcomes and recommendations of the consultation.
- Share with staff groups what the consultation process entails, how it impacts their constituents, and how their constituents have been involved so far.
- Many of the constituencies of the staff groups are also stakeholders in the consultation process, so we want to learn what the staff groups think their role and their constituents’ role could be in youth ministry.

Summit on Youth Ministry

The Summit on Youth Ministry will take place on July 16-20, 2007 at Simmons College in Boston. At last summer’s task force meeting, a subgroup was formed to plan the details of the event. Since then, this group has developed a list of attendees – 30 youth and 30 adults. The Summit will include representatives of: YRUU, the UUA Board of Trustees, the Task Force on Youth Ministry, DRUUMM, the Canadian Unitarian Council, district youth-adult committees, congregationally-based youth, UUA staff and administration, the UU seminaries, UUMA, LREDA, Interweave, District Presidents Association, ministers, religious educators and youth advisors. These attendees will bring many roles, identities, and experiences to the table. Over the next couple months we will begin inviting individuals to represent a variety of stakeholders and will seek out others to fill particular roles.

Supplemental Materials:

1. Participating Congregations

2. Congregational Conversations Report – A report similar to this one will be presented at district gatherings on youth ministry. After each section, there are reflection questions, which participants will be asked to discuss in small groups.

Participating Congregations (as of 12-1-06)

The Task Force has received report forms from the following congregations. If a U.S. district or Canadian region is not listed, we have not received report forms from any of these congregations.

Ballou Channing District

First Universalist Society, Franklin, MA
Channing UU Church, Rockland, MA

British Columbia Region

North Shore Unitarian Church, West Vancouver, BC

Central Midwest District

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

Clara Barton District

First Parish Church of Groton, 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 Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, OH
Heritage UU Church, Cincinnati, OH
St. John's UU Church, Cincinnati, OH
Miami Valley UU Fellowship, Dayton, OH
Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church, Louisville, KY

Joseph Priestley District

UU Church of Annapolis, MD
UU Church of Arlington, VA
Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda, MD
River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda, MD
Accotink UU Church, Burke, VA
Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA
Cedarhurst UUs, Finksburg, MD
UU Congregation of Fairfax, Oakton, VA

UU Congregation of Wyoming Valley, PA
UU Church of Rockville, MD
UU Church of Silver Spring, MD
BuxMont UU Fellowship, Warrington, PA
Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester, PA

Massachusetts Bay District

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

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 Universalist Church of Rockland, ME

Ohio Meadville District

West Shore UU Church, Cleveland, OH
First UU Church, Columbus, OH
Lyons First Unitarian Church, Lyons, OH
UU Church of Meadville, PA
First Unitarian of Pittsburgh, PA
First Unitarian 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

Live Oak UU Congregation, Goleta, CA

UU Church of Long Beach, CA
UU Congregation of Phoenix, AZ, Paradise Valley, 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

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 Unitarian of Ithaca, NY
First Unitarian Church of Rochester, NY
May Memorial UU Society, Syracuse, NY
UU Church of Amherst, Williamsville, NY

Southwest District

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 Unitarian Church, Memphis, TN
First UU Church of San Antonio, TX
All Souls UU Church, Shreveport, LA

Thomas Jefferson District

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