

UUSJ Newsletter - Winter 2010

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

An affiliate of the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council

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Chair's Corner:

This past fall, UU Social Justice leaders from throughout the Chicagoland area contributed brief descriptions of their churches' projects to a database. This resource is now online and can be found at

http://www.uusforsocialjustice.org/database_of_social_justice_practices.htm .

There is a wealth of information represented in it. Here are just some of the gems included:

Do you want to find out how to conduct a food drive? Contact folks at 2nd Unitarian of Chicago.

How about a church rummage sale? Northshore Unitarian raised \$19,000 last year at one.

Would you like to organize a 1-week trip for high school students to construct Habitat for Humanity? Ask people at Geneva how to do it.

Are you looking for a good curriculum to help teach about racism? Call 1st Unitarian of Chicago.

Searching for ways to reach out to the community to assist people who are struggling with the recession? Contact Countryside Church.

Would you like to provide a free charger for electronic cars? Ask Beverly Unitarian how they do it.

Are you wondering how to create a successful "green" festival with presentations and workshops? Call Elgin.

How could your congregation prepare for and conduct a vote regarding a Statement of Conscience? Contact Evanston.

Need help in finding whom to contact at each of those churches? That database can be found at
http://www.uusforsocialjustice.org/database_of_local_social_justice_leaders.htm

If your church isn't one of the eight listed above, please contact me at jeanpierce@aol.com to add your church's Social Justice activities to the database. Leading our churches' social justice programs has just gotten easier. Let's get connected in 2010.

UUSJ Board Meeting

Sunday, February 21, 2010

2:00 to 4:00 PM

People's Church of Chicago

941 W. Lawrence Ave.

Chicago, IL 60640

Report of the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness

At our January meeting we initiated an Action Alert in support of Illinois H.B. 174, which would increase the Illinois state income tax, to provide the revenue to allow for a responsible state budget. That legislation passed the Illinois Senate last year. It is thought that it will be considered in the Illinois House once the February primary elections are passed.

In our last newsletter we reported that the last Home and Hope Booster grant had been awarded to the Hyde Park Transitional Housing Project, and explained why. At that time we did not know how much would be collected to fund that grant. It can now be reported that \$490 was collected and paid out in that grant. The deadline for nominations for the next Home and Hope Booster grant is April 12.

As the program during the spring or summer UUSJ meeting, this task force will be presenting a look at the issues around reform of the banking and other financial institutions.

The next meeting of this task force will be held on Saturday, April 17, from 12:30 to 2 p.m., at Third Unitarian Church, 301 N. Mayfield, Chicago, IL 60644. All are welcome.

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UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report

Action Alert: We sent one out in November to US Senate members encouraging them to support the legislation to help control global warming with the pending bill S1773.

Educational Insert: We've completed and mailed an update of our Toxic Waste Disposal insert with totally updated and additional waste sites, hours, and contacts – both phone and email. We have information for Kane, DuPage, Cook, Lake, Will, and McHenry Counties

Individual Congregations:
North Shore Unitarian Church –
Their congregation is on a 2 year time-table to complete its Action Plan to become a certified Green Sanctuary (GS). They hosted the McCullough family of Massachusetts, which has been traveling the USA and creating a documentary on all things sustainable. Two rain barrels were acquired and installed, as were two stainless steel compost buckets for the kitchen. They performed a burn of their prairie, plus weeded, re-seeded and removed trash along their road. Certificates were received from Community Energy for the wind energy they helped provide in 2007 and 2008. They have begun

a course called Menu for the Future, with 10 participants.

Second Unitarian Church – Gene reported that 2U also hosted the McCullough family. 2U helped the Lakeview Action Coalition organize a community forum on Bring Home the Green – retrofitting affordable housing for energy efficiency. Their congregation has shifted to reusable silverware, ending its use of disposable silverware. The outside cover of their Order of Service, which presents information that is shown each week, is now recycled.

Beverly Unitarian Church – Allan reported that, in its most recent collection of household hazardous waste and computer and other electronics for recycling, that roughly 100 households brought items, usually several items per household. Two van loads of household hazardous waste were taken to the city's household hazardous waste center on Goose Island, while computer recycler COM2 came and picked up and removed two truck loads of computer equipment and other electronics, such as old televisions. The BUC Green Sanctuary Group received about \$700 in contributions in connection with this collection, well exceeding its costs of about \$300. For calendar year 2009, these quarterly collections generated about a \$1,000 "net profit" for the Green Sanctuary Group, which it then invests in other environmental projects. BUC is continuing to operate its facility to recharge batteries in electric cars.

Evanston – Andy F. reported that the GS Committee met and they are discussing using natural landscaping in the parking lot where changes

were made in the storm sewer drainage as well as a rain garden. The sanctuary is being cooled by exhaust fans.

Elgin – Mary Alice reported that Monthly Green Corner columns continue to be written for the church newsletter. A winter farmers market was held 11/15. GS committee continues to collect used batteries, inkjet cartridges and CFL bulbs for recycling/safe disposal. Prairie Fest was held on 9/26. It was an educational conference focused on "Ethical Choices for Sustainable Living". Elgin formed a sustainability task force this year, made up of nine committees, including energy, transportation, green infrastructure/parks, recycling, and others.

Next meeting is Sunday, 2/7/10 from 3 to 5PM at the Unity Temple, 875 Lake Street, Oak Park. All are welcome.

With any questions, contact:

Andrew T. Fisher – Chair
847-492-1055 or
fisher.a@sbcglobal.net

UUSJ Peace Task Force Report

The Peace Task Force meets on a quarterly basis with a goal of supporting and encouraging interest in the peace issue among CAUUC area churches. We discuss the peace activities of the congregations represented at the meeting, exchanging ideas and information. Task Force responsibilities include producing at least one program per

year to be presented at a UUSJ quarterly meeting and suggesting Action Alerts when suitable legislation or administrative issues are developed.

All CAUUC area church members and friends are invited to participate in the Task Force by joining the Task Force. Our next scheduled meeting is Saturday, 4-17-10, 2 to 3:30 PM at Third Unitarian Church, 301 N. Mayfield, Chicago. You can also participate in the meeting by Conference Call. Just dial 1-800-704-9804, then enter the code 892781, followed by #, at the time of the meeting.

A number of CAUUC area churches are actively involved in the UUA Peacemaking Study/Action

issue. To find this issue status see: <http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issu esprocess/currentissues/peacemaking/121606.shtml> . Deadlines for voting to include this issue in the 2010 General Assembly will have passed by the time you receive this Newsletter.

The Task Force approved an Action Alert for S.1524 which deals with US Foreign Assistance programs, an important issue in view of the recent Haiti earthquake. If you are not on the Action Alert list, you can join by contacting UUSJ and a registration form will be sent to you.

If you have questions or comments, contact Gene Horcher at 773-561-5296 or by e-mail horcher@att.net .

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