

UUSJ Social Justice Leader's Roundtable
A Social Justice Success Story at My Congregation

Name: Vonna Heaton

Contact info (email/phone): libra@tchatimanwi.net, 301-417-4469 (h)

Congregation: River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation

One successful Social Justice Program at my church, Name of Program: Action-in-Montgomery –
RRUUC Core Team

Why this program is successful at your church:

1. Senior minister vision and focus.
2. Strong, sustained commitment and leadership from core team members
3. Built on one-to-one conversation practice.
4. Congregational support (50+ attending) at formal AIM actions (Child First, gun control, county executive)
5. Relationship with partnering AIM and other Metro IAF organizations
6. Support to Montgomery County public hearings on affordable housing
7. Builds and strengthens bond among task force members

Is there anything you would change about this program?

1. Deeper infrastructure for communication and administration of efforts
2. Intentional dialogue within the larger UU community and the larger area community.

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Mary Bowman-Kruhm
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Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick

Project: Africa Outreach

Components of our Africa Outreach:

- Dug a well for 1000 villagers in Oltorotua, Kenya (partnered with District 9620 Rotary Clubs and Rotary International Foundation)
- Support for young woman from grade 9 through her current clinical work in medicine at Moi University
- Support for school in Democratic Republic of Congo

Success was based on:

- Each project recipient of split-plate for several years.
- Personal, ongoing communication carried on between U.S. and Africa via personal visits, e-mail, blog, newsletter articles, etc.
- Support was not limited to monetary but included personal investment from congregation in addition to members of Social Action Committee.

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One successful Social Justice Program at my church, Name of Program: Public Witness - Weekly Black Lives Matter Vigils

Why this program is successful at your church:

1. Senior minister vision and focus. Strong support from associate minister.
2. Built, in part, on Selma journey, Beloved Conversations class.
3. Congregational engagement; fostered study reads, frame/banner, potlucks.
4. Admin and custodial staff involvement for hanging banner, engaging with media
5. Prompted discussions within and external to the congregation; Board of Trustees, small group discussions.
6. Community awareness as evidenced by car honking (and negative feedback) and questions by passersby.
7. Builds and strengthens bond among attendees
8. Coordinated UU/Montgomery County MLK birthday programs; started at Vigil, included program after vigil and common services across County, and small group discussions.

Is there anything you would change about this program?

1. Increased senior staff engagement
2. Intentional dialogue within the larger UU community and the larger area community.

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Congregation: River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation

One successful Social Justice Program at my church, Name of Program: College Access Fund (Racial Justice Task Force)

Why this program is successful at your church:

1. Former senior minister vision and focus.
2. Strong, sustained commitment from team members
3. (RJTF) Helped start Beacon House.
4. Supports 4 year scholarships for DC youth.
5. Relationship with mentoring organizations (College Board, Mentors, Inc)
6. Congregational and staff engagement via annual fundraiser.
7. Builds and strengthens bond among task force members

Is there anything you would change about this program?

1. Increased senior staff engagement
2. Intentional dialogue within the larger UU community and the larger area community.

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Name: Christiane Graham, Environmental Justice Ministry

Contact Info (email/phone): chraham73@verizon.net 301-949-2624

Congregation: CLUUC

One successful Social Justice Program at my church; Name of Program: Environmental Movie Series

Why this program is successful at your church:

1. Increase attendance, was 8-12 now 30
2. Bring in other people (outside), members
3. Wide range of titles addressing economy (What's the economy about anyways), politics (Merchants of Doubt, CO2 Sequestration, Symphony of the Soil Soil Carbon Cowboy), food (Cowspiracy, Cock Fight), chemical pollution
4. Introduce more members to environmental concerns
- 5.

Is there anything you would change about this program?

Increase publicity

Invite guest speakers on specific topics.

Have petitions to sign at the event.

Shared email list with other members of EJM.

Name: Ed Kringer

Contact Info (email/phone): ekringer@aol.com/703-554-4051

Congregation: Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church

One successful Social Justice Program at my church; Name of Program: Annual Hypothermia Shelter in support of Bailey's Community Shelter where we provide both shelter and excellent food.

Why this program is successful at your church:

1. Strong leadership from the members of the Social Justice Committee
2. Strong support from the Minister. In addition to periodically making pulpit announcements about the upcoming shelter weeks, during the run-up to our first shelter week, he will weave messages concerning our UU values into his sermons and tie them to our providing shelter to the homeless.
3. AUUC first became involved in operating a hypothermia shelter as part of one of our annual social justice study issues, this one on homelessness.
4. We work to involve a large part of our ~180-member congregation. To be successful (defined as helping our homeless guests) required volunteers to 1) set the church up to receive our guests, 2) prepare food, serve food and clean the kitchen, and 3) ensure the church was ready for our renters after our guests left in the mornings. And did we ever get volunteers: 52 individual volunteers for the first shelter week and 47 for the second with some of the volunteers helping with over 5 different activities.
5. We worked closely with our Children's Spiritual Development Committee to involve our youth/children. Our children made welcome posters and flower arrangements. In addition, the first night of each of our shelter weeks was 'Family Night'. This was run by our families (with children) from our religious education programs.

Is there anything you would change about this program: Nothing within our control.

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Name: Charlotte Jones-Carroll

Contact Info: cjonescarroll@aol.com, 301-652-2205

Congregation: River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Name of Program: Support for La Clinica del Pueblo (DC-based community health clinic for immigrants)

Why was this program successful?

1. Strong, sustained commitment from core team of Latin American Task Network – over 25 years
2. Inclusion of LCDP as “designated pledge organization” in RRUUC annual funding pledges
3. Willingness of RRUUC members to serve on board and to volunteer in other ways (translation of documents, collecting donated gifts for holiday parties, helping at health fairs)
4. High-performing Clinic with expanding, holistic, culturally appropriate services and eventual designation as federally-qualified health clinic that strengthened it financially
5. Occasional presentations by LCDP Exec Directors at RRUUC programs

Is there anything you would change about this program?

1. Would like LCDP to identify more hands-on opportunities beyond heavy focus on funding
2. Identify justification for continuing LCDP funding even as LCDP achieves \$1 million budget (since much of that is earmarked for specific programs through contracts with federal and local funders)

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Name: Marti MacKensie

Contact Info (email/phone): martimackz@gmail.com 540-336-1229

Congregation: Towson UUC

One successful Social Justice Program at my church; Name of Program: A Dialogue on Racial Justice

Why this program is successful at your church:

1. Used UUA Black Lives Matter Curriculum
2. Promoted with sermons on racial justice - BLM
3. Testimonies from those who did similar programs at other congregations
4. Got young adults hooked
5. Working toward congregational approval of BLM Banner

Is there anything you would change about this program?

Went off curriculum the last week – lost participants.

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Name: Ursula Scott

Contact Info: librarian@techie.com, (240) 498-5678

Congregation: River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Name of Program: Grant from Chesapeake Bay Trust for installation of rain barrels and education about storm water runoff and water pollution.

This grant of 5000 was awarded in Jan 2016, and will be implemented before nov 1 2016. We will install a demo rain barrel at the church garden, and provide rain barrels to 30 homeowners. We will have a speaker at CC and C to educate the congregation about the issues. Information supplied by Walter Weiss walter.weiss@verizon.net

Why was this program successful:

1. Previous partnering with Chesapeake Bay Trust and the Boy Scouts for a similar grant paved the way for this grant.
2. Partnering of the gardeners and the Environmental Task Force after ETF had previously run a group on water issues, there was interest on bay pollution.
3. Used prior experience with similar project to make this work
4. Will install rain barrel at church
5. Use rain barrels installation to educate youth and adults on value of rain barrels to save the Bay

Is there anything you would change about this program?

1. Too early as RRUUC is in the middle of the project.

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Name: Barbara Bacon

Contact Info (email/phone): babacon46@gmail.com 703-795-4131

Congregation: Mount Vernon UC

One successful Social Justice Program at my church; Name of Program: Repair Café Event

Why this program is successful at your church:

1. Creates community networks
2. Helps teach skills that are being lost
3. Keeps stuff out of landfills
4. Members and community love getting things fixed for free
5. Cost free, basically; donations to cover expenses

Is there anything you would change about this program?

Have them more often....we've had 3 so far.

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Name: Charlotte Jones-Carroll

Contact Info: cjonescarroll@aol.com, 301-652-2205

Congregation: River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Name of Program: Participation in Interfaith Works Shelter Week

Why was this program successful?

1. Good partner organization (Interfaith Works)
2. Strong and competent congregational leaders (Jenny Sour) with good leadership development for co-chairs (Cynthia Green)
3. Varied opportunities for congregation-wide participation (bring in prepared food, serve food at shelter, supply basic goods) and focused time-period (one week) to participate
4. Options for whole family or parents-youth to join
5. Participation of RE staff in informing youth about opportunity
6. Appreciation by women in the women's shelter that benefits
7. Online sign-up as well as after-services sign up; good instructional materials on how-to

Is there anything you would change about this program?

1. Not really – working quite well.

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Name: Marsha White

Contact Info (email/phone): mf. white@verizon.net/703-690-4384

Congregation: Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church (Burke, VA)

Name of Successful Program: Annual Social Justice Focus Topic

Why this program is successful at your church:

1. Targeting one social justice topic per year helps focus our efforts. This doesn't mean we exclude other action areas. The Social Justice Committee brings topics forward, we ask for our minister's input, and the committee selects the topic by vote. Examples are: Climate Change, Immigration, and Economic Justice.
2. Our minister supports this program. The chair for the topic meets with the minister as the church year is closing and planning for the new church year begins.
3. There are common elements of the yearlong focus. These elements can include: 3-4 sermons; 1 or more monthly Friday night films and discussions; an adult education class; a book discussion; a public forum or speaker; targeted actions in collaboration with the children's religious education program; intergenerational projects; a congregational statement of conscience; adult daytime discussion group; one of our monthly outreach collections; and advocacy actions.
4. We market the focus topic in newsletter, bulletin board, announcements and press releases.

Is there anything you would change about this program? We would love to exchange ideas with other churches that do this, so we can incorporate best practices.

UUSJ Social Justice Leaders' Roundtable, March 12, 2016

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Monica Greene

Monica.Greene@Yahoo.com

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick

Project: Promotion of the work of the United Nations to advance a peaceful, just, sustainable and pluralistic world community

Components of our project:

- I volunteered as Envoy to the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) and attended the annual 3-day seminars in New York City.
- At congregational Friendly Forums on Sunday, I spoke about the issue of global importance from the seminar. I encouraged our minister to consider speaking on this issue.
- Several times a year, I provided written materials about the UN and what our UU-UNO was doing, with human rights initiatives, on climate change, a program in West Africa to help school children, promotion of LGBT/SOGI rights, security & peacebuilding, and promotion of the US Faith & Ethics Network for the International Criminal Court.

Success was based on:

- ✓ Previous UN advocacy work had been done by an older, beloved member of the congregation, who helped me begin.
- ✓ With support from our minister and our Social Action committee, I began attending the seminars, and established a celebration of UN Sunday every

October (the anniversary of the founding of the UN). Financial support for the UU-UNO was gathered through our split-plate collection, and I was able to say a few words at each Sunday service. Sometimes I was able to have the choir sing special songs and for the RE program to participate in the theme.

- ✓ At the most recent UN Sunday service, our minister, who is a brilliant speaker, devoted his sermon to a recent UU-UNO seminar topic, the rights of indigenous peoples.
- ✓ The UU-UNO provided support for my work, sending brochures and much other written material and videos, as well as buttons and pins, and by providing regular email updates from the Director and from our Envoy Coordinator—who has also supported us with the opportunity to join in conference telephone calls. Suggestions for planning UN Sundays have been especially helpful, and the first year another volunteer with UU-UNO came from Columbia, Maryland to give the sermon at our church.
- ✓ Other members of the congregation have traveled to New York City with me, including a high school student who went on to become the youth leader at the seminar for 2 or 3 years, and a former UUCF board president who helped me develop a slide program to accompany our presentation of the seminar that year. My husband has also helped me by hanging the beautiful blue flag each year in our church for UN Sunday, and driving me to New York City the first time.

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Name: Wini Atlas

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Congregation: UU Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF)

One successful Social Justice Program at my church; Name of Program:
Martin Luther King (MLK) Weekend of Service Sat/Sun/Mon

Why this program is successful at your church:

1. It serves several community organizations working to alleviate hunger, aid those recently released from prison, bring cheer and comfort to the ailing, aid to Syrian refugees and comfort for premature babies and hospitalized children among other projects. (See addendum below)
2. Provides opportunities for families to work together on a social justice project or several.
3. Involves a large group of congregants over the 3 days (almost 300 congregants participated)
4. Contributes to our interfaith outreach.
5. It provides opportunities for advocacy, community outreach, education, service and witness.

Is there anything you would change about this program?

We are considering including more projects next year as the response was so good. We need to expect more people will come than signed up so more supplies than we think we need should be on hand.

Addendum: This has been a successful program over the last 3 years. It was more challenging this year because the Social Justice Minister was a big part of the effort in the first 2 years and this year, for financial reasons, we do not have a SJM. The senior minister has been acting in that capacity. Next year, we will have a 1/4 time SJM. The team of 4 people who organized the event this year did an amazing job. They were able to increase the number of projects, and the number of participants. They did all the scheduling, secured all the supplies needed, coordinated volunteers to lead projects, and recruited participants using SignUp Genius even allowing them to request certain

supplies that participants brought. They ensured that there were people to clean up and supervised the whole weekend.

The program involves packing potatoes, oatmeal, onions and oranges for an Arlington, VA food bank, packing lunches for backpacks for school aged children living in a local shelter, creating hygiene kits for an organization serving prisoners and the recently released, the chorale singing at the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute for patients and staff, making cards and bookmarks for our caring committee's us, making blankets for our caring committee, for premature infants, and Syrian refugees, and 2 busload of advocates who traveled to Richmond for a lobby day on ending gun violence. The Muslim Liaison group at UUCF sponsored a blanket making group for members of several mosques in the area which was followed by a dinner provided by the MLG and attendees.

This program also was part of this year's Standing on the Side of Love (SSL) 30 Days of Love (30 DOL) campaign that kicked off on MLK's birthday and ended on Valentine's Day. The theme this year was racial justice and the WOS fit nicely into that campaign. It provided a focal point for the great start to the 30 DOL program

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Name of Program: Youth service learning trips to El Salvador

Why was this program successful:

1. Good partner organizations to help organize trips (CoCoDA/ADES)
2. Strong, sustained commitment from core team of Latin American Task Network
3. Transformative experience for some of youth who participated – changed their careers
4. Willingness of adults to chaperone (and learn)
5. Participation of RE staff in identifying and informing youth about opportunity
6. Acceptance and appreciation from Salvadoran communities visited
7. Maintenance of relationships over time including GWA Santa Marta Hometown Assoc.

Is there anything you would change about this program?

1. Program currently on hold for second year owing to severe violence in El Salvador
2. Opening up willingness of families, LATN and RE staff to consider alternatives proposed by CoCoDA in other countries (Nicaragua) or seeking alternative partner