

# DRAFT---UUSJ Board Meeting

January 12, 2019

Zoom Call

## Attendance:

### Members Present

Martha Ades, at large, Secretary  
Peter Bishop, member, Washington Ethical Society  
Bob Blinn, member, UU Church of Arlington  
Al Carlson, member, Reston UU  
Carmelita Carter-Sykes, alternate, Paint Branch UU  
Bob Denniston, at large, Board Chair  
Terry Grogan, alternate, Reston UU  
  
Lavona Grow, at large, Arlington UU  
John Gubbings, member, Cedar Lane UU  
  
Jana Kirkman, alternate, River Road UU  
Ed Kringer, member, Accotink UU  
Jack Lebowitz, member, River Road UU  
Gary Magnuson, Frederick UU  
Bob McCarthy, member, UU Congregation of Fairfax  
Mike McCord, at large, Treasurer  
Kalman Rupp, member, UU Congregation of Rockville  
Karen Scrivo, member, Goodloe Memorial UU Congregation  
David Strauss, alternate, Rockville UU  
Larry Underwood, member, Bull Run UU

### Members Absent

Bill Cranmer, alternate, Frederick UU  
Jane D'Ambrogi, alternate, Towson UU  
  
Linda Doyle, member, Mt. Vernon UU  
Osk Huneycutt, alternate, Bull Run UU  
Pat Karlsen, at large, Cedar Lane UU  
  
Marti MacKenzie, member, Towson UU  
Roger McIntire, member, UU Congregation of Columbia  
Martha Neuman, alternate, All Souls Church, U  
Betsy Osterman, alternate, UU Congregation of Columbia  
Rachel Perry, member, Davies Memorial  
Armele Vilceus, member, All Souls church, U

### Staff Present

Pablo DeJesús, Executive Director

### Guests Present

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Webmaster, Mt. Vernon UU  
Marsha White, Accotink UU

#### Action Items:

1. Martha to make needed modifications to the minutes and resend to Board members
2. Staff and volunteers to update website, brochure and other materials to list new priority issues
3. Martha to send congregation contact information to each Board member
4. Core Team to provide a timeline on review strategic plan relating to being national and make recommendations to Board
5. Survey Evaluation Team to make recommendations for a plan for implementing four priority issues to the Core Group
6. Core Group to provide a charge to establish a task group to address going national and relationships with other UU groups.
7. Pablo to work on cleaning membership data
8. Mike to provide January end-of-month Donation report
9. Next Board meeting discuss using Board member names for UUSJ communications
10. Program Committee to recommend how or if to focus the Gala more on fundraising
11. Bob McCarthy to gather Virginia congregations to discuss a Virginia political-speaker fundraiser
12. Pablo to provide End-of-Year comparative 2018 and 2017 (after CFC complete)
13. Bob and Pablo to confer on Board Member attendance and participation

Meeting was called to order at 1:30pm. Members alternated reading sections of the Board Covenant. Suggested changes to the September 29, 2018 minutes included changes to who was absent and who was present. Also Martha Ades was asked to review the use of the terminology of “voting” vs “democracy.” Martha will revise minutes. They will be assumed approved after changes reviewed. In the spirit of cleaning up our database, Martha will send to members a report that shows who UUSJ has a contacts for each congregation and additionally will ask for the topics of most interest to that congregation.

#### Priority Issues

Ed Kringer presented the discussion about the priority Issues for 2019-2021. The survey had been held September 11 thru October 5, 2018. There were 66 surveys returned. The Survey Evaluation Team recommends the priority issues be the four top ranked items from the survey –

- Elections/Voting/Defending Democracy,
- Environment and Climate Change,
- Economic Justice/Social Safety Net,
- Immigration Reform

Voting graphs are shown in Attachment (1). Discussion followed. Priority Issues are for advertising our interests and our support for the issues through advocacy, witness and education. Task forces will be established for each Issue but success depends on the participation in the groups. In order to determine participation levels, the survey evaluation team will recommend a plan for getting individual interest information from each UUSJ supporter.

Larry Underwood moved to accept the four issues as voted on as our priority issues we focus on and to attempt to set up task forces for those four issues; we will retain the ability to respond to other issues that have impact. Seconded by Ed Kringer. Discussion followed. Gary Magnuson called the question with Martha Ades seconding. Motion approved.

## **Future of Advocacy**

Lavona Grow reviewed her Advocacy Report included in the Committee and Task Group Reports Attachment (2) and reported that the Advocacy Corps is active and healthy. In the last three months there have been 271 office visits while delivering 1,084 letters. The Advocacy Corps and Write Here! Write Now! (WHWN) letter-writing campaign can not grow any further without considerable more support of resources human and financial. The Advocacy Corps also needs immediate support to logistically manage the growing WHWN letter-writing campaigns. Lavona called for a full staff, volunteer and financial audit before the new Administrative Assistant is hired to assess what resources are needed. The true cost of operating the Advocacy Corps and WHWN needs to be captured and included in the budget. The advocacy work model needs to be reviewed to see if it needs to change to reduce the level of effort, including for the WHWN monthly letter-writing campaign. Lavona asked for the Core Group to provide a timeline for a full Strategic Plan review and in the short term to update the existing plan to reflect our growing advocacy work. Much of the cost of the advocacy corps is absorbed by volunteers and we need to reflect the true cost of doing the work.

## **Relationship with Partners**

Lavona lead discussion of a letter initiated by a member from UULM-Maryland to the UUA and UUSC regarding UUSJ's relationship with UUA, UUSC and the Maryland State Action Network and regional congregations. The letter also mentioned the UULM in Virginia although they were not consulted, according to Lavona. Concern exists for competition for resources with the Maryland SAN and other regional congregations. The letter proposes financial support for UUSJ by the UUA and UUSC.

Lavona moved to form a temporary task group to address the need to address the major issues about going national including reviewing the strategic plan and underlying issues pointed out in the letter. The group should report to the Board at the March meeting. Peter seconded. Motion approved. Gary Magnuson and Peter Bishop agreed to be part of the group.

## **Financial Status**

The Financial report shows that the financial situation through December 31, 2018 is good, Attachment (3). Mike McCord pointed out that we have received all the grant money and have expended a good portion of it. Discussion showed that we need some definitive numbers of members from the database. Mike McCord will provide an End-of-month Donation report at the end of January. Next new budget will include the \$500 give-or-get for each congregation.

Pablo DeJesús reported that the End-of-year campaign netted 44 donors for \$7,165. We need to track year-to-year EOY result taking into consideration the fact that letters go out on different days and this year there was the December fund raising event. Lavona asked that Pablo provide the Board with the data from the same time period in 2018 to the 2019 EOY appeal to evaluate the effectiveness of the EOY campaign messages and overall effort.

## **Development Committee Report**

David Strauss presented the report showing that the December 2nd Rep. Jamie Raskin fund-raiser was a smashing success meeting all its goals with 144 attendees raising \$8,141 for advocacy. The greatest response was from the following congregations: River Road, Rockville, All Souls, Frederick, Cedar Lane and Arlington.

A similar program in Virginia is being discussed but needs Virginia volunteers with timing of the event and speakers being important. Bob McCarthy will gather the Virginia congregations to discuss. Redirecting the fall Gala to focus more on fundraising was suggested. The Program Committee will discuss options for this and report at the next Board meeting. The Give-or-get collections are best done by getting a UUSJ staff/leader to speak with congregants; Pablo deJesus can be contacted.

Planning for any fundraisers should consider church pledge drive timing and being aware of donor fatigue from too many drives.

### **General Assembly**

UUJEC would like to share a table at General Assembly with us. UUSJ will need people to staff the table as well as new materials provided. Board members are asked to help find people. Larry Underwood moved to spend up to \$1,000 for a joint table and expenses at General Assembly. Jack Lebowitz seconded. Motion approved.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Pablo DeJesus provided highlights of the Executive Director's Report, Attachment (4) which showed many activities of the last quarter. Board members should look at their calendars to see when they can invite Pablo to visit their congregation, either with or without a share-the-plate initiative. He asked that we discuss an opt-in or opt-out policy of using Board member names in UUSJ communications. He reminded Board Members that they are asked to go on at least one Advocacy Corps outing each year.

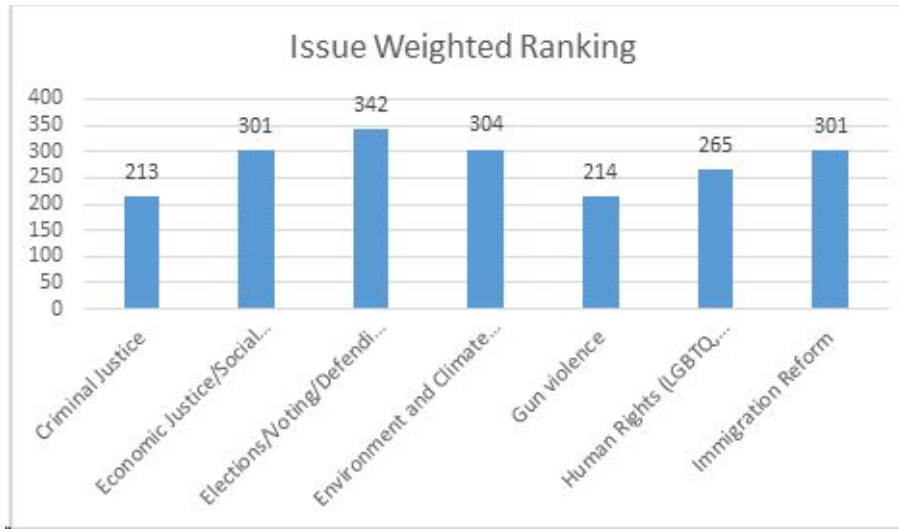
Bob Blinn provided a closing reading and the meeting was adjourned at 5:02pm.

Submitted by Martha Ades, Board Secretary

Attachments:

- 1) Priority Issue Graphs
- 2) Committee and Task Force Reports
- 3) Treasurer's Report
- 4) Executive Director's Report

# ATTACHMENT 1



## Importance of Sub Issues (Democracy, Environment, Economic, Immigration, Other)



## **ATTACHMENT 2**

### **UUSJ Committee and Task Group Reports for January 08, 2019 UUSJ Board Meeting**

#### **Reports Submitted as of January 12, 2019**

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#### **Committees that did not submit a report or had no new information to report since the last Board meeting:**

- Audit Committee (not a standing committee)
- Communication & Outreach Committee
- Escalating Economic Inequity Task Group
- Green Activists - Environmental and Climate Justice Task Group
- Gala Planning Committee (not a standing committee)
- Governance Task Force (not a standing committee)
- Issue Selection Process Task Force (not a standing committee)
- Nominating Committee

#### **Advocacy Oversight Committee Report – January 12, 2019** (Includes the Advocacy Corps and related advocacy efforts)

**Members:** Lavona Grow, chair, Bob Denniston, Ed Kringer, Anna Rhee (consultant), Sean McCarthy, and Loretta Garcia.

The purpose of this group is to coordinate UUSJ's advocacy activities, materials, and infrastructure; and to help identify, guide and provide feedback regarding UUSJ's advocacy program and opportunities.

**Question for the Board:** How does the Board plan to sustain the work of our advocacy and future GOTV efforts? **NEED:** a new strategic plan; in the interim a refresh to the 2013 Strategic Plan which would include transition planning plus a possible separate plan to address going national, which we failed to address before voting to go national on February 4, 2017. See the Board Chair's draft thoughts "["Going National"](#)" [here](#). Provide comments to [bob@uusj.org](mailto:bob@uusj.org).

### **Grants to support Advocacy, Outreach and GOTV plans:**

#### **- 2018-19 Grant: Building a National UU Rapid Response Advocacy Network**

We have a current grant for \$15,000 from the UU Funding Program that went into effect September 1, 2018. Plus a Technical Assistance grant of \$2,000 towards our Salsa database. **NEEDED: Hold an advisory group meeting. Identify a consultant on fund raising** to advise the two other UU partner organizations, UUMFE and UUJEC, regarding potential for joint fundraising efforts.

**- GOTV:** We completed our GOTV Mobilizing UUs for the 2018 Midterm Elections. See link to the [Final Report here](#). See link [here](#) to project webpage. Our biggest success was the development of a unique UU tool called [UUSJ Guide to Questions for Candidates](#). Overall our GOTV effort only met with moderate success. Our outreach beyond DC-MD-VA was limited to Iowa and phone banking to Florida. **TO DO:** We still need to conduct a post-election advisory group meeting and evaluate our capacity to move beyond our region in our GOTV efforts. **NEEDED:** Volunteers to give some deep thought to what we can realistically do for 2020.

#### **- 2017-18 Grant: Expanding Capacity for UU Advocacy in the Nation's Capital**

See narrative for the Final Report [here](#).

### **Advocacy Data Pilot Project:**

**Completed:** We have completed Phase 2 of a three-phase pilot. We contracted with Coccozza Organizing and Design on a phase-by-phase contract. In Phase 1 we analyzed our software requirements, in Phase 2 designed, developed and tested the concept entering actual WHWN information into GoogleForms. In Phase 3 Coccozza will provide training and 90 days support to a system administrator. **NEEDED:** A system administrator and to enter data from the WHWN congregational hard copy logs into the new system.

### **Write Here! Write Now! Letter-Writing Campaign:**

1. The WHWN Toolkit: Since the September Board meeting we have 28 additional download requests for the Toolkit for a total of 148 downloads. **TO DO: Conduct the user survey and update the Toolkit.**



1. We now have five congregational partners outside of DC-MD-VA: Three in Iowa, Springfield, Missouri, and the newest in Rock Tavern, NY. We also have congregations in Miami that periodically write. And more that write based on the issue. **UPCOMING OUTREACH:** Two outreach opportunities: Bob Denniston and I are giving a sermon at the **UU Church of Miami on February 3** and will co-host a WHWN following service to showcase it. **North Carolina on February 9** Bob and I will make a short presentation to a gathering of statewide UUs in North Carolina following an NAAC-sponsored annual march and rally.

**Citizen Engagement Advocacy Training:**

None to report since June 2018. Due to limited bandwidth and difficulty to travel outside the DC-MD-VA area, we are considering an online training curriculum. Central Eastern Regional has expertise in developing the platform. We would need to provide the content.

**NEEDED:** grant support or other funds to develop the content.

**UUSJ Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps Day Visits since September:**

Offices visited - 271; June-August 233

Letters delivered - 1,084; from June-August 954

Number of AC members and team members: 49 (43 and 6 support and outreach members). See handout with names and contact information sent as an attachment in a message from the chair.

**NEEDED:** A new WHWN model to handle all the incoming letters. And a laser printer.

- New Congress! New Opportunity to address Climate Change! in the anticipated infrastructure reform legislation. (Advocacy Day January 8, 2019 – Senate)
- Criminal Justice Reform – Senate 2.0 version of the First Step Act – affirm positives, raise concerns and urge work towards more comprehensive reform. (Advocacy Day December 12, 2018)
- Farm Bill Conference Committee: Protect SNAP, anti-hunger program, from cuts and harmful changes (November 13, 2018 House)
- Immigration – Humane treatment of immigrants and refugees (two special days on September 26 Senate, September 27 House, and Advocacy Day October 9, 2018 – Senate)
- [Defend UU Values: Oppose Kavanaugh Nomination to the Supreme Court](#) Information Page (Advocacy Day September 11 – Senate)

Submitted by: Lavona Grow, Advocacy Oversight Committee Chair

**Development Group Report – January 5, 2019**

**Members:** David Strauss of UUC of Rockville, Gary Magnuson of UUC Frederick, Peter Bishop of Washington Ethical Society. Participants from Virginia are requested.

**Ex Officio members:** Pablo DeJesús, Executive Director and Bob Denniston, Board Chair, and Martha Ades, Board Secretary and Program Committee Chair -- participate as appropriate and as invited.

**Charge:** The group was formed [in May 2018] to help stabilize and grow UUSJ's financial base as we advance our commitment to advocate for the issues arising from the principles and values of our UU faith.

**Objective One: To replace the funds that in the past UUSJ has been dependent upon through grants.** Nearly all foundations and grant making organizations are prohibited from giving money for lobbying. Therefore, grant funding for advocacy is unlikely and needs to be replaced with other funds in the UUSJ budget. In addition, past grantors of funds to UUSJ have indicated that such funding is not renewable. We will still be able to seek grant funds for activities that qualify, such as voter registration, and other episodic activities. However, the Development Group sees its primary purpose as generating ideas and activities to grow UUSJ programs by building on our foundation of congregational memberships, individual memberships, and periodic fund appeals.

**Objective Two: To raise \$3,000 to support UUSJ advocacy.** To fulfill this objective the DG proposed that UUSJ sponsor a fundraising reception on December 2, 2018 at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation (RRUUC). For planning this event, we added two people from the Program Committee: Martha Ades, Board Secretary from Fairfax, Marsha White of Fairfax, and event representative Jack Lebowitz of RRUUC. In short, this event was wildly successful! We had set a goal of raising \$3,000 hoping for attendance of about 80 people. Instead, we sold 144 tickets @ \$75 each and after expenses netted \$8,141.00. There were several factors that contributed to this dramatic success, including the timing (a few weeks after the mid-term Federal elections), a keynote speaker with good credentials and a progressive reputation (Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-MD), an excellent venue, a large amount of in-kind contributions, and aggressive and passionate salespeople (Board members as well as the DG). To us, this event demonstrated that we can use some of the same methods that other progressive groups do to help sustain and support UUSJ's mission.

It is often difficult to make it clear why we needed to raise these funds; sometimes, the temptation is to say that simply, "this closes a budget gap." We believe it is better to help UUs feel that the funds they've contributed will make a difference in our impact. We recommend that the Board and staff of UUSJ publicize how we will get "value added" from this event's financial outcome. Example: **this money should help us expand and**

**manage our efforts to “go national” by adding the vacant administrative assistant position.**

### **Future Event Fundraising:**

- **Virginia Congressional Fundraiser:** While we don't want to rely solely on event fundraising, it is an important brick in the financial foundation we are trying to construct. There is some interest in having a mirror image of the December 2 event at a Virginia site. This would include asking an elected official (Rep. Beyers, or Senator Kaine) to keynote the fundraiser. There is a significant barrier: most congregations will be holding their stewardship campaigns beginning in mid-winter and lasting through the spring. It will be difficult if not impossible for UUSJ to actively compete with this function that is critical to the survival of our member congregations. Therefore, it is recommended that such an event should not be scheduled before June 2019.
- **Fall Gala Awards Dinner.** We believe this event has the potential to net at least as much as the December 2 event, if planned and themed appropriately. It is suggested that the Gala Awards Dinner be conducted as before. However, the event would be priced to meet a significant fundraising goal. For example, a price of \$95 per person (modest by DC standards) with 160 attendees would gross over \$15,000. After expenses, that should result in a net somewhat higher than the \$7,800 from December 2. This would require more work and more volunteers from the Board and congregations than the reception, but we have momentum in our favor, having achieved success at this kind of activity. We need a robust discussion of this proposal and we must make a decision on this soon so that planning can begin.

### **Individual Fundraising:**

Another initiative that will begin in earnest following the spring stewardship campaigns is individual fundraising. Peter Bishop will lead this effort to meet one to one with UU members in our region, who are large individual contributors. Working through the ministers, a list will be developed of those persons believed capable of making substantial individual donations to UUSJ's critical advocacy work. We believe this will be a key part of our sustainability.

### **Board Member Contributions:**

Finally, a couple of meetings ago the UUSJ Board approved a personal responsibility amount of \$500 for each UUSJ congregation. As you may remember this does not necessarily require your writing a check to UUSJ. It does mean you are responsible for that amount, whether it comes through fundraising events at your congregation (such as a film

showing open to the public), or in other ways. We would welcome a brief discussion of this item.

### **SUMMARY OF DECISIONS NEEDED**

1. How best to publicize the use of the money raised at the Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> event
2. Whether or not to sponsor a Congressional fundraising event in Virginia in late spring.
3. Whether or not to make the fall 2019 Gala Awards Dinner a significant fundraiser.

### **DISCUSSION NEEDED**

Discuss UUSJ Board member responsibility to raise a \$500 contribution from the member's UUSJ congregation. Related matters to also be discussed include timeframe, assistance needed, and suggested activities to raise funding

### **CLOSING AND GENERAL APPEAL:**

There are many other potential ways of raising the funds UUSJ needs to continue to advance its advocacy activities in the region and nationwide. We welcome all ideas and suggestions you may have and we also welcome anyone on the Board and in Congregations who would like to join the UUSJ Development Group. Thank you.

Submitted by: David Strauss

### **Immigration Task Group Report – December 28, 2018**

Immigration committee meets every other Thursday online at 4 pm ET

**Active Members:** Charlotte Jones-Carroll, convener, Gayle Boyd, Don Chery, Lavona Grow, Serena Lowe, Sean McCarthy, Kalman Rupp, and Dean Wanderer.

**Ex Officio members:** Pablo DeJesús, Executive Director and Bob Denniston, Board Chair, and Anna Rhee, advocacy consultant -- participate as appropriate and as invited.

### **Activity and Status:**

**Public Comments on Rule Changes:** The Immigration team focused on opposing two public rule changes deemed harmful to immigrants: overturning the Flores settlement (which requires that children be released from detention in 20 days or less, which if

overturned would allow DHS to detain children indefinitely) and public charge (in which USCIS proposed adding use of public benefits like Medicaid, food stamps and housing subsidies to the current definition of a person likely to become a “public charge” or primarily dependent on government for daily living.).

We organized extensive tabling and reached out through UUSJ communications so that individual UUs could make public comments opposing these two rule changes by the deadlines. UUSJ also sent comments. US agencies are required by law to consider all such public comments before effecting the proposed changes. Final action by immigration agencies has not been announced.

**Budget restraint for DHS/ICE/CBP:** Meanwhile, we continued to monitor websites and partner communications to identify where we could join with other multi-faith initiatives to oppose these and other actions detrimental to immigrants. In particular, the committee urged restricting the DHS/ICE/CBP budgets, which have remained funded by a Continuing Resolution, because of the Administration’s insistence on major allocations for a border wall. We consider a border wall to be unnecessary and ineffective compared to alternative expenditures for border monitoring.

**Comprehensive Statement on Immigration Issues:** The committee undertook a Hill visit during partner “action week” in late September, carrying our summary of past and current positions on a variety of immigration and refugee topics. A letter from the UUSC CEO was also delivered with this package. We supported the Advocacy team’s visit on the immigration topic in early October by providing content for talking points.

**Immigration Film Fest:** UUSJ Immigration and Advocacy representatives joined the Action Tent of the 2018 Immigration Film Fest on October 27 to encourage public comment on the public charge rule change and to spread the word about the advocacy corps.

**Immigration Priorities to 2020:** The committee developed a set of high, medium and low priority actions for the next 24 months, to sharpen our focus on what is most feasible given our resources and most impactful based on our objectives. While comprehensive immigration reform remains one goal, we do not detect likely bipartisan support for that in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. We will be inviting a broader group of UUs with interest in immigration to discuss these proposed priority actions in early February. At this time, the highest priorities would be:

- (i) to undertake advocacy for pathways to legal status for Temporary Protected Status holders and DACA holders, while fighting impediments to such legalization,

- (ii) to support rights of asylum-seekers to request asylum,
- (iii) to support family unity through alternatives to detention and faster reunification of minors with family or guardians, and
- (iv) to continue opposing significant budget increases for DHS/ICE/CBP, especially for a border wall.

We are looking into ways to organize hosting of asylum-seekers and other persons released from detention so they have better access to legal aid. We will be promoting humane treatment of detainees and opposing harassment of law-abiding immigrant residents, as well.

Submitted by: Charlotte Jones Carroll, convener, UUSJ Immigration Committee

### **Program Committee Report – January 5, 2019**

The Program Committee holds monthly meetings

**Members:** Martha Ades, Chair, John Gubbings, Marsha White

**Ex Officio members:** Pablo DeJesus, Executive Director, Bob Denniston, Chair. Lavona Grow, AOC chair as needed and asked.

#### **Looking Backward:**

The Program Committee dedicated the last quarter of 2018 to supporting the December 2nd Fundraiser with Rep. Jamie Raskin speaking.

Working closely with the development Committee, the program committee provided best-practice advice and experienced volunteers to make the event a totally successful afternoon. Over 140 people attended the event which was catered with light hors d'ouvres. Registration worked well and we are thankful to the volunteers who provided music, tended bar, sold tickets at their congregations and helped with setup and clean up.

The Program Committee has best-practice checklists to assist any UUSJ group planning an event, whether it is a webinar, working group meeting, educational presentation or full fundraising event. We provide advice on communication methods, venue reservations and setup needs, agenda planning, food offerings, last-minute planning needs and post-event follow-up.

The Program Committee needs more volunteers who can help plan events. Being on the committee involves a once-a-month conference call meeting, conference call meetings as events get close to happening and support at weekend events with program logistics. If

this sounds like something you would enjoy doing, please contact Martha Ades at [marthalades@aol.com](mailto:marthalades@aol.com).

**Looking Forward:**

For 2019 there will be additional events for UUSJ participation for capacity building and fundraising.

Events being planned are:

- January 19, Women's March, Washington, DC – no program involved
- Relationship building at General Assembly – will need UUSJ volunteers
- September-October presentations of award-winning SWEAT play
- October 5 or 6 Gala Awards Event
- UUSJ Board meetings in March, June, September and December

Other potential events being discussed for the year are;

- Joint conference with UUJEC
- Virginia advocacy fund raiser, similar to Rep. Raskin event

Submitted by: Martha Ades, Program Chair

### **ATTACHMENT 3 - Treasurer's Report**

<http://uusj.net/wp1/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/UUSJ-Treasurer-Report-and-statements-12-31-2018.pdf>

### **ATTACHMENT 4 - Executive Director's Report**

<http://uusj.net/wp1/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2019-01-10-Exec-Dir-Report-%E2%80%93-Final.pdf>