

**Unitarian Universalist
District of Metropolitan New York**

2008 Annual Reports



2008 Annual Meeting
May 2 – 3, 2008 Stamford CT

2008 Annual Reports

District President.....	Jerry Muntz
District UUA Trustee.....	Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt
District Executive.....	Andrea Lerner
Program Consultant	Douglas Zelinski
Administrator	Laurie Golson
Young Adult and Campus Ministry Consultant.....	Claire Sexton
Youth Ministry Consultant	Beth Dana
Annual Program Fund Committee	Jim Sanders
Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee.....	Rev. Hope Johnson, Carl Heath
Chalice Lighters Coordinators	Bill and Rickey Slezak
Committee on Accessibilities	Rosemarie Newberry
Compensation Consultant	Lynn Dash
Junior Youth Steering Committee	Peter Green, Robin Slaw
Ministerial Settlement Representative ...	Rev. Linda Hansen, Rev. Craig Hirshberg
Women and Religion Committee.....	Reena Kondo
Young Adult Steering Committee	Samantha Garland, Daniel Gregoire
Youth Adult Committee.....	Corinne Hallander, Kyle Reaves
TUUL-Belt Ministry	Rev. Scott Sammler-Michael

District President
Jerry Muntz
2008 Annual Report

As a result of unexpected developments last summer, the Metro NY District Board of Trustees faced significant decisions regarding staffing for the District. For several years the District had operated with an Executive Team sharing authority and responsibility for designing and delivering programs and services to the congregations of the District. This structure predated the District's conversion to the policy governance organizational model and had been retained even though it was not generally recommended by policy governance consultants, due to its tendency to cloud the lines of authority and responsibility that policy governance is meant to clarify.

In December, after much discussion, including consultations with the UUA Director of District Services, the Board decided to abandon the Executive Team structure, to adopt a sole CEO model for the District and to appoint Andrea Lerner, who had been serving as Acting District Executive, to the position of District Executive. In this role, Andrea reports to the Board and is solely responsible for ensuring that the District operates in a manner that furthers the Ends policies identified by the Board. Andrea has since completed our staffing by hiring Doug Zelinski as Program Consultant for Leadership Development. Both Andrea and Doug are co-employed by the District and the UUA.

The Board also adopted an additional Ends policy for the District, stating that District policies, resources, and actions will result in "congregations that welcome all into loving community, offer each person the right to self identify and self describe, and commit to eliminating racism and oppression in our congregations and our communities." The Board has devoted considerable time to discussing its Ends policies with Andrea (who is responsible for interpreting them) in order to clarify the direction we wish to see the District take. The complete Ends policies of the District may be viewed on the District website.

Preparations are underway for an external audit of the District's financial records as a regular part of good governance practices.

We are fortunate in the Metro NY District to have a wonderful and dedicated staff, talented volunteers, and supportive congregations. The programs that Andrea and Doug are developing for the District, which are detailed in her annual report, are truly exciting.

Finally, I want to extend my thanks to our retiring Board members, Doug Ford and Joanne Hammer. Each of them has made valuable contributions to the work of the District, and we will miss them.

District UUA Trustee
The Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt
2008 Annual Report

It's an honor to give my first report as your District trustee for our Unitarian Universalist Association. As I write this report, I am preparing to attend only my third meeting of our UUA Board of Trustees (BOT). Nonetheless, my short tenure on the BOT has been extremely busy, because our Association is hard at work on several complex issues that matter to our free faith. This report includes some of this year's highlights of our work together on the BOT, as well as a brief explanation of my responsibilities.

Each member of the BOT is assigned to at least one committee or task force and one working group. I'm delighted to serve as a member of the Committee on Committees, which acts as a kind of leadership development arm of the BOT. We help to identify great UU leaders throughout our 20 districts and recruit them into service at the Association level on groups ranging from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee to the Fund for Unitarian Universalism and many things in between.

Our five working groups are meant to divide equitably the hands-on work of the BOT among us; I serve as a member of the Congregations Working Group (the others are Association, Governance, Growth, and Living Our Faith). One of the most wonderful parts of service on this working group is hearing about emerging congregations that are ready to be voted into full membership status with our Association. We'll be talking at this next meeting about the growing number of people who consider themselves UU, but don't belong to congregations. What does this mean for our faith, and for the way we govern ourselves? Our working group will start what we hope will be a larger conversation. You can always find out what we're working on by reading our forthcoming agendas, reports and other materials at <http://uua.org/aboutus/governance/boardtrustees/agendasreports/>.

Many issues have come before the BOT this year, but I want to highlight two particular matters: our 2008 General Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale, and the evolving nature of support for our youth and young adult programming.

General Assembly

By now, many of you know that our annual gathering of congregations to be held in Ft. Lauderdale FL will be held within a federal security zone and thus subject to federal regulations. For most of us on the BOT, this raised uncomfortable issues about civil liberties, possible racial profiling, and other matters that can occur whenever the freedom of religious life meets the regulations of the state, which took up many hours of discussion. Ultimately, our BOT voted to reaffirm the Planning Committee's decision to hold General Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale.

I dissented from the decision of our BOT as a matter of conscience. In February, I informed congregations and leadership throughout the District that, though I will be attending BOT meetings in Ft. Lauderdale, I would not be attending any General Assembly events that require

my passage through the security zone. The full text of my dissenting position can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/4z63bm>.

I have been especially gratified by the conversation I've been able to have with so many of you about these issues of religious and civil liberty. We've all agreed that it's important that those of us who don't attend General Assembly, as well as those of us who do attend, continue to be in dialogue about the growing intrusion of government into arenas of faith, even when those intrusions may be unintentional.

YRUU and C*UUYAN

Earlier this year, there were many rumors about the future of youth and young adult ministry within the UUA. Announcements about a shift in our emphasis on youth and young adult ministries became confused with the elimination of funding for both Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) and the Continental Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Network (C*UUYAN). In addition, there were inadvertent miscommunications at the UUA staff level that contributed to the sense that our youth and young adults were being set adrift in some important ways.

Thanks to UUA Board Secretary , those misunderstandings were placed in appropriate perspective, with a letter sent to all concerned parties that underscored the fact that our BOT had yet to meet, and that budget priorities about youth and young adult programming had yet to be set. Considering the commitment of the UUA to the recent Consultations on Youth Ministry in 2007, it was clear that the idea of diminishing youth and young adult ministries within our movement was premature at best. The shape of youth and young adult ministry within the UUA is still very much in formation, and I encourage your comments and activism in this area as the BOT considers the recommendations of the 2007 consultation.

There are so many other wonderful things happening within our religious community: the ongoing ad campaign in TIME magazine that is drawing seekers to our congregations; the start of the 2009 campaign for the UUA presidency, with the Rev. Laurel Hallman and the Rev. Peter Morales in contention to succeed our current President Sinkford; the concentrated work of our BOT to move to a policy governance model by 2009; and many more issues than this abbreviated report can contain. I hope that any of you who have questions about the work of our Association will feel free to be in touch. I look forward to continuing the conversations that have already begun among so many of us.

**District Executive
Andrea Lerner
2008 Annual Report**

The transition to a system of Policy Governance for the District over the last four years has introduced a number of changes in administration and in practice. The District Board is responsible for establishing and defining the Ends towards which the efforts of the District are to be directed, and the limitations that are to be observed within those efforts. The District Executive (DE) is charged with directing their efforts and the resources of the District towards the accomplishment of those ends. The DE is responsible for the practical interpretation of the ends, and regularly reporting to the Board on the progress towards those ends and their compliance with the limitations that have been set.

The Board has established the following Ends Policies.

GLOBAL ENDS COMMITMENT:

Guided by our living faith, The Unitarian Universalist District of Metropolitan New York exists to be a source of connection and transformation for our congregations and our larger world.

Therefore, the District policies, resources, and actions will result in:

- EN2a. Congregations that are healthy, effective, accessible, and diverse
- EN2b. Congregations that have empowered professional and lay leadership
- EN2c. Congregations that cooperate and act together on areas of common concern
- EN2d. Greater awareness and understanding in our congregations and in our region of how our Unitarian Universalist religion transforms individual lives, our communities, and the greater world.
 - EN2d1. Congregations that welcome all into loving community, offer each person the right to self identify and self describe, and commit to eliminating racism and oppression in our congregations and our communities.

The work of District staff is guided by these policies. That work includes responding to individual requests from lay leaders, ministers, and religious education professionals for advice, consultation, and guidance. Some of that work, of course, includes the shaping and support of the administration of the District: communication, budgets, website, resources. And some of that work involves the creation, implementation, and support of programs that will promote cooperation, support leadership, and empower congregations to grow healthy and strong.

Among the initiatives that the staff has created or supported this year are:

Building and Training Consultant Teams

- Growth and Marketing: currently involved in examination of the Chalice Lighter program and revision of policies.
- Right Relations: proactive congregational covenants and conflict transformation

- Ministerial and Staff Transitions: Startups and exit interviews, covenants, consulting ministry placement
- Leadership Development: Doug Zelinski is Program Consultant for Leadership Development
- Future Teams: Finance and Stewardship, Lifespan Faith Development, Mission/Vision/Strategic Planning Facilitation

New Part-time Consultants

- Claire Sexton, Young Adult and Campus Ministry Consultant. Funded by a grant received from the UUA for the “NRG Co-op,” the new four-district partnership with the UUA.
- Beth Dana, Youth Ministry Consultant, whose focus is on congregational youth programming and also to participate in the partnership to organize within our four districts. Beth has convened a Youth Advisor Task Force to explore the recruitment, training, and support of congregational youth advisors.

Baseline Measurements of Congregational Health to gauge success in relation to the ends of the district. Beth Dana is currently seeking statistics around youth programming. Others measurements are awaiting ends interpretation. Ian Evison will be with us on October 18 for the Fall 2008 Presidents Roundtable to discuss indicators of health.

Leadership Development

- Long Island Leadership Institute (LILI): First year experimental program developed by Long Island congregational leadership with District support. Six Saturdays throughout the year – perhaps a model to explore in other clusters or as a District-based program.
- UU Leadership Team Institute (UULTI): Our first program in July 2007 was successful. A 2008 repeat is planned, again in cooperation with Joseph Priestly, St. Lawrence, and Ohio Meadville Districts.
- Presidents’ Roundtables: Shared Leadership – Exploring Effective Minister/President Partnerships, October 20, 2007; Congregational Health and Abundance, Laurel Amabile presenter, Feb 23, 2008.
- Collegial Conversations for colleagues in new relationship, or wishing a “tune-up,” October 25, 2007.
- Big Ideas for Small Congregations: Jane Dwinell presenter, January 26, 2008. For congregations up to 150 members.
- Beyond Fundraising: Wayne Clark presenter, February 16, 2008. For treasurers, canvass chairs, other leaders.
- Caring Congregations: March 28-30, 2008 at Mt. Manresa Retreat, Staten Island. Two facilitators from each congregation interested in offering a curriculum on caring for persons and families facing mental health challenges.
- Webmasters Day: May 17, 2008, at Community Church of New York UU, Manhattan.
- Partners for Sacred Spaces Workshop: With an architect’s tour of Fourth Universalist Society, Manhattan, June 21, 2008.

Religious Education Training

- New DRE and Ministry with Youth, August 28-31, 2007.
- Youth Advisor Workshops, September 22, 2007, and November 17, 2007.
- Youth Conferences: Leadership Development Con, Feb 1-3, 2007; five “social” cons and two or three other youth leadership events.
- OWL: 4 trainings for 3 levels: Elementary, November 2-4, 2007; Adolescent, August 10-12, 2007, and November 2-4, 2007; Adult/Young Adult, October 19-21, 2007.

Annual Meeting: Every Heart is a Vessel, Every Dream is a Light, May 2-3, 2008, Stamford Marriott (Ministers gather May 1). Based on the third system in Larry Peer's congregational systems model - The Empowering System, which finds ways to help each person discover his or her spiritual gifts and passions; it supports people in using them for the benefit of the entire congregation. The vision of the "priesthood of all believers" becomes more of an observable reality. District Executives and Program Staff from Ohio Meadville, St Lawrence, and Joseph Priestly will all give workshops.

Anti-Racism and Diversity Conclave: May 31, 2008, Community Church of New York UU, Manhattan, with the Rev. Bill Sinkford, UUA President.

Doug Zelinski and I, as co-employed staff (our wages are shared by the District and the UUA), also maintain a relationship with the larger association. We participate in national events and trainings and regional staff meetings. Our new regional staff group, formed with the district staffs of the St Lawrence, Ohio Meadville, and Joseph Priestly districts, is cooperating on the second year of the UU Leadership Team Institute and to coordinate youth and young adult and campus ministries. A new initiative planned for 2008-9 is the shared Growth Director, Pat Infante, currently serving only Joseph Priestley District.

The co-employed District staff does not work alone. In fact, the health and vitality of the District grows from the participation and goodwill of many, many individuals. Knowing that the list cannot be exhaustive, still I would like to thank:

Jerry Muntz, District President, and members of the District Board: Tracy Sprowls Jenks, Ted Fetter, Richard Fierberg, Douglas Ford, Joanne Hammer, John Hawkins, Craig Hirshberg, Toby Tyler, and Cheryl Walker.
Rosemary Bray McNatt, UUA Trustee and UU Trauma Ministry Leader
Laurie Golson, District Administrator
Beth Dana, Youth Ministries Consultant
Clarie Sexton, Young Adult and Campus Ministries Consultant
Susan Greenberg, Bookkeeper; Charles Klein, Webmaster; and Andy Denler, Database Manager
Jim Sanders, Annual Program Fund District Chair
Frances Sink, Right Relations Team Chair
Lisa Bredbenner, Nominating Committee Chair
Lynn Dash and Doug Ford, District Compensation Consultants
Linda Hansen and Craig Hirshberg, District Ministerial Settlement Representatives
Hope Johnson and Carl Heath, Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee Co-Chairs
Evan Keely, Growth and Marketing Chair
Bill and Rickey Slezak, District Chalice Lighters Coordinators
Aisha Hauser, Scholarship Committee Chair
Rosemarie Newberry, Accessibilities Committee Chair
Laurie James and Reena Kondo, Women and Religion Co-Chairs
Daniel Gregoire and Samantha Garland, Young Adult Steering Committee Co-Chairs
Kyle Reaves, Corrine Hallander, Carter Smith, and Jen Ford, Youth Adult Committee Co-Chairs
Peter Green, Eric Hallander, and Robin Slaw, Junior Youth Steering Committee Co-Chairs

Thanks to all who have helped to make our Unitarian Universalist faith a vital presence in the life of the individuals, the congregations, and the communities of the District. I look forward to the year ahead.

Program Consultant for Leadership Development
Douglas Zelinski
2008 Annual Report

Because of the District's commitment to empowering professional and lay leadership, the Program Consultant position now focuses on leadership development. Increasingly, congregations understand the value of skilled, inspired leaders and are investing in their training. This year's leadership development opportunities included four one day seminars for lay leaders and the week-long UU Leadership Team Institute (UULTI) for ministers, staff, and lay leaders. The District also provided assistance to the six-session Long Island Leadership Institute.

Healthy congregations have a clear and present mission and a saving message. They also have the "right-sized" governance structure and relational covenants so the business of congregational life doesn't overshadow the mission. Toward these ends, seven congregations have taken advantage of visioning, start-up, and conflict transformation services provided by the Program Consultant.

Committed to the welcoming of all and the elimination of racism and oppression, the District supports the Program Consultant's participation in the work of the Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee, in Allies of Racial Equality, and in the Caring Congregations program for welcoming individuals with mental disorders.

Unitarian Universalism has a larger impact on the world when our congregations, districts, and national association cooperate and act together on areas of common concern. The Chalice Lighters program is the most notable example of congregational cooperation and the Program Consultant assists in this effort. The Program Consultant also contributes to the success of the multi-district Northern Regional Group (NRG) whose primary accomplishment to date is UULTI. The District Staff group of the UUA is also supporting inter-district sharing of staff resources and the Program Consultant has participated in several exchanges with other districts.

Transforming the world one life and one community at a time is the sacred work of our congregations. To succeed, people need to know they exist and the Program Consultant has provided some assistance in promoting the UUA "Nurture the Spirit. Help Heal Our World" national marketing campaign. More directly, congregational leaders will explore UU evangelism and social action when they participate in the 2008 UULTI entitled "Living the Promise – Turning Outward in Faith."

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have welcomed and supported me. It is a privilege to be learning from and working with so many vibrant congregations committed to Unitarian Universalism.

**Administrator
Laurie Golson
2008 Annual Report**

This past year has been another year of significant change for the District: Andrea Lerner was appointed District Executive and named sole executive under policy governance; Doug Zelinski joined the staff as Program Consultant for Leadership Development; Claire Sexton came aboard as Young Adult and Campus Ministry Consultant; and Beth Dana began serving as Youth Ministry Consultant. I have been pleased to work with Doug, Claire, and Beth, all of whom offer District congregations extensive experience in their respective fields.

My responsibilities as Administrator include:

- Prepare and distribute District full share statements, and receive, record, and deposit payments
- Prepare and distribute the monthly e-newsletter, the Metro NY Minute
- Authorize and sign check payments of bills and requests for reimbursement
- Process credit card payments for events of the District and affiliated organizations
- Keep portions of the website up-to-date and help other District leaders to do so
- Maintain the online Contact Information System database and Directory and help District leaders to use the System
- Maintain the District calendar
- Help prepare and distribute materials for a variety of District programs and events, including Chalice Lighters calls
- Prepare and distribute materials for the Annual Meeting and Annual Awards, including online and participant materials, and serve as Registrar
- Support the District Board, committees, and task forces as requested, including the Nominating Committee and the Bylaws Review Task Force
- Maintain files, supplies, and equipment
- Respond to phone and email inquiries covering a wide range of questions, comments, and needs

This year I'll also be actively involved in registration and materials for the UU Leadership Team Institute (UULTI). A cooperative program of the Joseph Priestley, Metro NY, Ohio Meadville, and St. Lawrence districts, this week-long residential learning opportunity takes place at Juniata College in Huntington PA from July 28 to August 3.

In June I'll be attending the 2008 General Assembly in Fort Lauderdale FL. Being surrounded by thousands of UUs is outside the realm of our usual experience, and it buoys the spirit!

From October through April, I'm actively engaged in preparations for the Annual Meeting. I would like to particularly note the contributions of Karen Wright, Volunteer Coordinator; Elaine McMillan, Alternative Housing Coordinator; Shelly Psaris and Linda Hansen, who coordinate and direct the choir; and Susan Greenberg, who helps each year compile the folders for Annual Meeting participants. Thank you, all! Your help is so important and so appreciated.

And to all the participants at the Annual Meeting: If at any time during the coming year I can be of service to you, please call or email me. I'm here to help, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Youth Adult Committee 2008 Annual Report

In light of the recent events on the continental level, youth ministry in the District continues to thrive and grow. The Youth Adult Committee has continued to develop new and creative ways of strengthening the bonds of community at our youth conferences and other events. This year, we have set the precedent that our Energy Covenant will be revised and rewritten every year at Covenant Writing Con, to better meet the needs of an ever-changing community. We have continued, to the delight of many, identity-based groups, ministering toward our queer youth and youth of color, in the hopes of establishing a sense of accountability and responsibility. Furthermore, we have used our All-Cons, a time when the entire youth and adult community meets at youth conferences to participate in some fun, as a forum for discussing issues and concerns that are brought to the attention of the Youth Adult Committee. We look forward to sending several of our youth to Pacific Northwest District's GoldMine Youth Leadership School Training of Trainers, to benefit from having strong youth leaders in our District. Next year, we look forward to continuing anti-racist and anti-oppression work in a variety of settings not limited to youth conferences.

Submitted by Corinne Hollander and Kyle Reaves, Youth Co-Chairs

Youth Ministry Consultant
Beth Dana
2008 Annual Report

In November 2007, I began in my newly-created position of Youth Ministry Consultant for the District. The consultant's responsibility is to serve the congregations of the District by providing congregational youth ministries with resources and training available in-District and from the UUA. The consultant supports the creation and sustaining of youth groups, promotes a variety of pathways for youth spiritual growth and development in UU communities, connects youth leaders with additional opportunities for growth, supports adults working with youth (including youth advisors, religious educators, and ministers), and encourages multigenerational work and integrating youth into the life of congregations.

Over the past six months as Youth Ministry Consultant I have:

- **Communicated and consulted with youth and adults in congregations:** Because this is a newly-created position, I've spent time increasing awareness of my role and other resources for youth ministry. In order to get a sense of the scope of youth ministry in the District currently, I conducted an online survey of congregations, which received 24 responses. With this information as well as records from past District events, I compiled a metrics report to submit to the UUA district staff for assessment purposes. I assisted a number of congregations, primarily via email and phone, with issues such as: starting up youth groups, strengthening youth groups, leadership development, youth empowerment, theological diversity in youth programs, and youth advisor support.
- **Supported youth leadership development** through coordinating a Youth Leadership Development Conference; co-leading a Youth Con anti-racism training; coordinating a team to attend the Pacific Northwest District's GoldMine Youth Leadership School Training of Trainers.
- **Convened a Youth Advisor Task Force** to address youth advisor recruitment and support in the District and its congregations, and to promote and strengthen youth-advisor relations.
- **Served as a liaison to the District Youth Adult Committee (YAC)**
- **Provided logistical, registration, and programmatic support for events** including the Youth Leadership Development Conference in February, Building the Bridge (Bridging Planning Con) in March, and the 2008 District Annual Meeting.

I have also had the pleasure of collaborating and exchanging ideas with the Metro NY District staff/consultants and the staff/consultants of the Northeast Regional Group (Ohio-Meadville, Joseph Priestley, St. Lawrence, and Metro NY districts).

Annual Program Fund 2008 Annual Report

The Spiritual Roots of Stewardship

“We have the opportunity to use resources to help care for others and those less fortunate than ourselves as a sign of our gratitude, and the essential question is not how much we can afford to give, but how much we can afford to keep” – Stephen Gray

“While *fundraising* refers specifically to money-raising efforts, *stewardship* is an attitude that is reflected in all of a congregation’s efforts... Stewardship addresses people’s spiritual need to give. Stewardship must precede fundraising.” – Introduction to Chapter 1, *Beyond Fundraising*, by Wayne Clark, 2007

Normally, I would give you statistics of how we, as a District are doing in providing our Association of Congregations our “dues,” our “Fair Share Contribution,” our “Denominational Support.”

I would like to go beyond the sharing of the numbers; I ask myself, what responsibility have you given me as YOUR representative to the Annual Program Fund (APF) Continental Committee? Are we meant to share our excitement and skills to foster our stewardship of each other, or am I merely a “tax collector”?

Over the past year, the APF Committee has taken a lead, along with the Liberal Religious Education Directors Association (LREDA) and the Stewardship and Development Office of the UUA, in seeing that stewardship among us and our congregations needs to have the support of our “stewardship professionals” to develop educational materials and possibly a certification tract for congregational stewardship. The potential for growth from the individual to the denomination can be served in tremendous ways, if we all were able to bring stewardship principles to our relationships.

I have just returned from the annual meeting of the APFund Committee in Boston. We continue our conversation around stewardship, and assisting ourselves and our congregations to use a variety of tools available to grow generosity in our congregations, districts, and the world at large. Know that we are working very hard to help each of us in our journey, filled with abundance of time, talent, and treasure. We learn more about relationships and responsibility to sustain our visions, and, yes, eventually we come down to talking money, but surprisingly little of what we do is about the ask. The APF Quarterly Newsletter, this quarter, features our friends in the Unitarian Church of Montclair. Come to the APF table and pick up a copy of our Quarterly Newsletter (or go online to the Giving section of the UUA website). Share our excitement for their good works AND their support of our denomination.

Now For The Numbers

Support of our Association, through our APF contributions, remains strong. Can we do better? Our generosity is measured by our unfailing commitment to each of our 51 congregations in the District and the over 1,000 congregations that we are in covenantal relationship with.

A total of 46 of our 51 congregations shared their financial gifts with their fair share to the Annual Program Fund for the last full fiscal year ending June 30, 2007. This translates to 90% Fair Share, an increase of 3% from the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006. Our overall generosity continues to lead the denomination, and support of the UU movement did translate into another significant grant for our District for the current fiscal year, for a total of \$58,900.

Want Your Honor Ribbon At General Assembly?

Our support has been strong and this year. I anticipate that 47 of our 51 congregations have projected completing this fiscal year in at fair share. In order to get our paperwork completed in time for the end of the fiscal year (June 30) and to give your delegates and attendees their purple honor ribbons, please try your best to send your final gift payments by the end of May. If your congregation has made final payments at General Assembly, *please, please, please* consider doing so in advance. Of course, if there are circumstances that require any other payment schedule, give me a call. We can always work things out, with proper notice.

Why I Do This Work

I am concluding my fourth year as chair of the APF for our District. And I am honored to accept our District's nomination to remain in this position for another two-year term, starting July 1. My personal goal on the APF Committee is to work with our committee members and UUA staff to continue to be in conversation with you around the topic of personal giving, and to develop curriculum to grow generous hearts.

Next year (2008 – 2009), I will continue to avail myself to have conversations with your boards/ leadership when needed. This year (2007-2008) I have availed myself to you through our Annual Meeting, at General Assembly, at the President's Council, and through personal communications. I have provided periodic updates and connections via our District's Metro NY Minute, and used the electronic technologies to efficiently respond to your questions. I must admit that, when things are going well, you do not need to be in conversation with me and that's OK. However, I know that some of our congregations are hungry for help. Please know that I am here to assist you.

It is my hope that a new curriculum/program will be coming out of the Stewardship and Development Office and the APF Committee that will help the individual to set their financial house in order. This, in turn, will assist congregations to do the same and in all cases, feel good about money and how we each handle finances to support the values that we cherish, including our UU values.

For more information on programs and services available to our congregations, with your APF support, visit <http://www.uua.org/giving/apf.html> on the UUA website, or visit our APF table during this weekend's meeting!

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns or would like to have me visit or have a conversation with your congregation, I can be reached at uujimapf@yahoo.com or call me at 215-321-3343.

Submitted by Jim Sanders, District APF Chair

Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee 2008 Annual Report

“Recognizing that each congregation is on its unique ‘journey toward wholeness’, the Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee (ARDC) works to inspire, nurture, support and promote the broad range of diversity and anti-racism work being done in our District. Through networking and bringing together the multitude of ideas, talents, and resources that we offer each other, ARDC actively assists our congregations in whatever ways they find most useful and empowering” – ARDC Mission

ARDC’s Annual Antiracism Conclave, scheduled for May 28th, will build on the successes of previous years. With UUA President Bill Sinkford delivering the keynote address, we anticipate an even larger attendance emphasizing three themes: Spirit, Vision, and Participation. Multicultural Families will receive special attention and leaders will be given tools that they can take back to their congregations. Our 2007 Conclave introduced open space technology to provide opportunities for creative engagement with anti-racism and diversity. The 2008 Conclave is designed to include structured events to encourage even more interaction between participants of all levels of experience and interests in anti-racism work.

In July the District Board of Trustees adopted a “Global Ends Commitment” that included policies and actions that would result in “Congregations that welcome all into loving community, offer each person the right to self identify and self describe, and commit to eliminating racism and oppression in our congregations and our communities.” To achieve this goal ARDC proposed and the Board has agreed to a joint anti-racism training and strategic planning session this summer.

In a similar manner, ARDC has undertaken, at the request of neighboring districts, to exchange ideas, experiences, approaches, and programs in anti-racism. Both the St. Lawrence and Thomas Jefferson districts are sending representatives to our Conclave. Other joint events are planned.

In response to its mission to nurture and support the diversity and anti-racism work in our District, we have prepared a survey to gather information from each congregation to learn what they are already doing, what they wish they had done on anti-racism and anti-oppression, and how can ARDC help them. This survey will be sent out shortly. One way that is already clear is to sponsor District-wide anti-racism training. This is of particular interest to smaller congregations. One day Jubilee I trainings will be offered in the fall and spring, with Jubilee II in the following year.

Submitted by the Rev. Hope Johnson and Carl Heath, Co-Chairs

Chalice Lighters 2008 Annual Report

Chalice Lighters is a District program to help congregations achieve growth potential. Twice each year, in the fall and the spring, individuals in congregations are asked to contribute at least \$10. Every Chalice Lighters dollar goes to the selected congregation to help that congregation take a significant step: to initiate a congregation, to secure professional religious leadership, secure or improve a building, or forward the development of a growth plan. Chalice Lighters is UU congregations helping other UU congregations to help grow Unitarian Universalism in the District!

Thanks to the tremendous job done by the Chalice Lighters coordinators within each of our congregations, as well as the broad support by the professional and lay leadership, Chalice Lighters continues to grow and prosper!

In the spring of 1999, Carl and Alice Spatt introduced the approach of holding two targeted Chalice Calls per year, each one held for a specific congregation to help them in some growth related project. A key component of that approach has been the active participation of the “called congregation” in which it is encouraged that “ambassadors” from the called congregation be given the opportunity to speak for five minutes at the other District congregations during the Sunday service about who they are as a congregation and what they hope to accomplish with the Chalice Lighter funds raised. Over \$340,000 has been raised in the 17 completed calls, with the 18th call (for the First Unitarian Society of Rockland County (Pomona NY)) currently underway. In addition to raising funds, the visits have also helped to promote fellowship and connection among District congregations.

At last year’s Annual Meeting, we announced that we had raised \$35,000 in the special Chalice Lighter Call for the Gulf Coast congregations that were impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Subsequently, I had the privilege of personally presenting checks to the Gulf Coast UU Fellowship in Gulfport, Mississippi, First UU Church of New Orleans, Community Church UU in New Orleans, and North Shore UU Society of Louisiana in Lacombe, Louisiana. It was a privilege for me to represent the generosity and solidarity that the District felt for our brother and sister UU’s from the Gulf Coast, as they continue to recover and rebuild.

Last Fall we presented to the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield (NJ) a check for \$20,462 that was raised during the Spring 2007 Chalice Lighters call. Those funds are already being used to expand their multi-tiered marketing and publicity campaign that appears already to be yielding dividends. Charles Sweeney of the Plainfield congregation reports that membership is up about 20% since the start of the publicity campaign about two years ago. Plainfield plans to share their experiences and lessons learned with other congregations once they complete the campaign.

At last year’s Annual Meeting, we also announced the Chalice Lighter recipients for the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 Chalice Lighter Calls. The Fall 2007 Call was planned to be for a cooperative training program of the District and Partners for Sacred Spaces for up to 12 congregations. Because not enough congregations ready to commit to this intensive training program, the Fall 2007 Call was not held. Instead congregations were encouraged to support Association Sunday, sponsored by the UUA. The First Unitarian Society of Rockland County

(Pomona NY) was chosen for the Spring 2008 Call, currently underway, to help this congregation hire a permanent part-time Director of Religious Education.

While the Chalice Lighter program has been successful in providing seed funding for many growth initiatives by our congregations, the Chalice Lighters program has the potential to do much more, and there is also the need for greater accountability and transparency. In developing updated Policies and Procedures for the Chalice Lighters program, programs from other districts were reviewed and features that would be beneficial were incorporated.

In February, the proposed Policies and Procedures were circulated to congregational leadership and comments were requested. Of the few comments received, all were favorable and supportive of the overall concept and approach.

The purpose of the new policies and procedures are to:

- Improve transparency, and to clarify and expand the Chalice Lighters program as a means of facilitating the growth of Unitarian Universalism;
- Encourage and promote inter-congregational cooperation in support of growth;
- Improve the quality and quantity of Chalice Lighters applications by assigning a Grant Manager to assist congregations in developing their Chalice Lighters applications, and by requiring applications to be associated with a long-term growth plan.
- Improve accountability of the Chalice Lighters program by requiring periodic reporting on the use of Chalice Lighters funds and on the effectiveness of the project funded by the Chalice Lighters program in achieving growth objectives.

Our intent is to implement the new Policies and Procedures on an interim basis starting with the applications for the Spring 2009 Call. The procedures require that congregations interested in being considered for the Spring 2009 Call submit an "Intent to Apply" by May 15, 2008, with the full application due by October 15, 2008.

The new Policies and Procedures will NOT be in effect for the Fall 2008 Call. The congregation selected for the Fall 2008 Call will be announced at the Annual Meeting

We look forward to your thoughts and ideas as to how to make the Chalice Lighters Program better serve your congregations and in growing Unitarian Universalism in the District.

Thanks again to everyone for your support of Chalice Lighters.

Submitted by Bill and Rickey Slezak, District Chalice Lighters Coordinators

Committee on Accessibilities 2008 Annual Report

The following were goals that were set for 2008 and the status of the attainment of those goals:

- Outreach to congregations: At the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood (NJ), Rosemarie delivered a half day workshop on welcoming special needs children.
- Survey the District board on their desire for and commitment to the committee. This was not accomplished, but still a good idea.
- Partner with UU United Nations Office: This was delayed due to the changes in staff at the UU UNO.

Other Accomplishments:

- Caring Congregations: The Caring Congregations workshop was sponsored by the district. Supporting people with mental disabilities is important work. The Rev. Barbara Myers has developed this workshop for congregations of the UUA.
- I have been monitoring the UU accessibilities email list. There is concern about the sunset of the UUA Board Committee on Accessibilities and the move of the support for people with disabilities to Identity Based Ministries. The email list has a committee that has prepared a draft for bylaws for a new affinity group.

Thank you for taking time to read and consider my report. I hope that all is well with you and your families.

En fe y paz . . .

Submitted by the Rosemarie Newberry, Chair

**Compensation Consultant
Lynn Dash
2008 Annual Report**

This was my last year as our District's Compensation Consultant, as my family obligations have changed. Our District Executive, Andrea Lerner, was very helpful in finding our new Compensation Consultant, Doug Ford, in such a way that we could work together for a transition period. Welcome, Doug!

On the national level, Spring 2007 was marked by the adoption of the UUA health plan because more than the required number of congregations across the US had signed up. Working toward this goal had been the major thrust of Compensation Consultants' work.

Winter and Spring 2008 focus for Compensation Consultants is a new compensation survey. The results will be used as part of new recommendations for salaries and benefits.

In our District, my activity was mainly answering questions by email and telephone, with five congregations. Doug and I went on a site visit to a congregation beginning the interim period and then a search process.

I went to the mid-winter update meeting in Boston in January 2008 and conferred with our new Compensation Consultant. Doug and I were able to meet so that I could give him materials and information I hope will be helpful as he continues this work. We continue to confer as needed.

In the nearly five years I've been Compensation Consultant, I've noted that congregations are getting increasingly serious in their roles as employers and have been sincerely trying to meet Fair Compensation standards. We are trying to be the kind of employers we would like to see in the world! I've greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet with fellow UUs across the District. Thank you for your welcome and all your work at the local level to advance the cause of Unitarian Universalism. And best wishes to our new Compensation Consultant in the ongoing work.

Junior Youth Steering Committee 2008 Annual Report

The Committee organizes and operates two programs annually, a fall retreat and a spring conference. At these events, we introduce middle school aged youth to a wider community as they come together with peers from other congregations in the District. We create a safe space and offer a one-night model of Young Religious UU's intentional communities. Our mission is "To save the world, one middle schooler at a time."

Over the past two years, we have changed our registration procedures. Historically, directors of religious education or other or religious education contacts have been required to handle all paperwork for their congregations and send our registrar one check. This past year, we finalized the transition to an individual on-line procedure hosted by formdesk. At last year's events we saw a lowered attendance from previous years, and we think it may have been due to the transition. We also changed our procedures for selecting high school staffers. The traditional method had been to identify potential leaders and invite them to join the staff. Our new process is more transparent. Any youth may apply to staff; the form is available on the District Youth Adult Committee website: metroyac.org.

At our 2007 events, our Spring Con and Fall Retreat had roughly 60 middle school attendees each, led by a high school staff that numbered approximately 15. The Con was at the Community Unitarian Church in White Plains; the retreat continues to take place at Camp Ma-Kee-Ya in Harriman State Park. We cannot adequately express our gratitude to the senior youth whose love and attention breathe life into the events, or to the adult advisors who drive and witness, or to the congregations whose members feed and care for us.

In previous years, we had begun offering junior advisor training sessions, taught by Vera Knapp, Robin Slaw, and Peter Green. Vera has moved to the midwest to be nearer to her family, and no trainings took place in 2007. We hope to offer them again in the fall.

Our Committee has changed yet again. Robin Slaw returned as co-chair and Jimmy Buckley stepped down. We note that in last year's report, we referred to Eric Hallander as the galaxy's finest registrar, but we suspect that his equal would not be found outside the galaxy either.

This year's junior advisor training is not scheduled yet. Anyone who is interested in attending such an event is encouraged to contact Andrea Lerner at alerner@uua.org or 914-373-0193. For information about the Con or Retreat, feel free to contact Peter Green at drpg@aol.com or 914-414-1226, or Robin Slaw at robinslaw@verizon.net or (973) 903-4989.

As this report is being written, we have just finished our Spring Junior Youth Con in Lincroft NJ, guests of the UU Congregation of Monmouth County. The power of these events to change lives and confirm young people in our faith community is evident and incalculable. We wish we could host them for every middle schooler, everywhere.

Submitted by Peter Green, Co-Chair

**Ministerial Settlement Representative
Rev. Linda Hansen and Rev. Craig Hirshberg
2008 Annual Report**

Rev. Linda Hansen

Each UUA District has a Ministerial Settlement Representative, nominated by the District Executive and the UU Ministers Association District Chapter President and appointed by the UUA Transitions Director. This person, who may be lay or ordained, has the good fortune of working with some of the most dedicated volunteers among us, those who search for settled ministers for their congregations. As you know, the process of searching for and calling a new minister is a long and complicated one, but it is smoothed by the extraordinary help provided by the UUA Transitions Office. Part of that help is a well-trained Ministerial Settlement Representative.

Soon after a congregation knows it will be in search (and well before the Search Committee is elected!), the MSR is invited to speak separately with both the congregation and the Board. The visit with the congregation may be done via a Sunday Service or a Congregational Meeting. The MSR will provide an overview of the search process, and the attributes of good candidates for a Search Committee. For the Board, s/he will explain their particular responsibilities for the search, including financial ones.

Once the Search Committee is elected, the MSR visits again to work specifically with the Committee – clarifying their responsibilities, the timeline, etc. The MSR's final conversation with the Search Committee will take place via conference call as the Committee receives the list of names of ministers interested in their congregation, and the MSR and Committee review the interview procedures. But the MSR is available via phone and email to the Search Committee Chair and the Board President throughout the search process.

I've had the privilege of serving as the District Ministerial Settlement Representative for just over a year, following – but never able to replace – the amazing Doug Rhodes. I will be leaving my parish ministry with the UU Congregation of Danbury (CT) this July to join my family in Wisconsin, and thus have resigned this MSR position. I'm delighted that the Rev. Craig Hirshberg took up this position last January, and is now working with all congregations searching for a settled minister (including Danbury!) except for two. Because the Unitarian Church of Staten Island (NY) and the UU Fellowship at Stony Brook (NY) hoped to call new ministers this spring, I have continued working with their Search Committees.

Last spring (2007), three District congregations completed successful searches and called new ministers: the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn (NY) called the Rev. Dr. Patrick O'Neill; the UU Congregation of Somerset Hills (North Branch NJ) called the Rev. Julie S. Newhall; and the UU Fellowship of Northern Westchester (Mount Kisco NY) called the Rev. Dr. Michael Tino.

Last October I conducted the first MSR visit with the congregation and Board of the UU Congregation of Monmouth County (Lincroft NJ), and in early January did the same with the

First Unitarian Society of Plainfield (NJ). Rev. Craig Hirshberg will continue working with these congregations.

In November I conducted the third MSR conversations with the Search Committees of both the Staten Island and Stony Brook congregations. As of this writing, the Unitarian Church of Staten Island is excitedly planning to meet later this spring the candidate nominated by their Search Committee. The Search Committee of the UU Fellowship at Stony Brook did not find a candidate, and their congregation is currently considering hiring a Consulting Minister.

Getting to know these Search Committees, Boards and congregations, especially the deeply caring and hard-working Search Committee chairs, has been a wonderful experience for me. Had I known when I was asked to take this position that I would be leaving the District so soon, I would not of course have accepted it. Selfishly I'm glad I didn't know. I wouldn't have missed being inspired by the dedication of so many of you. Thank you, and my best wishes to you all!

Rev. Craig Hirshberg

The Metro New York MSR position became vacant as of January because the Rev. Hansen is leaving the area. After a recommendation of the District Board, the UU Ministers Association District Chapter, and an interview with the Rev. John Weston, UUA Transitions Director, I began serving as the Metro MSR after completing UUA Transitions training in Phoenix in January.

March 15, the date when many ministers announce their departure from their current congregation, marks the beginning of what I affectionately call "the Transitions season." Soon after a minister's announcement, calls from panicked board chairs begin to come. The MSR role is to help alleviate the fear and walk the congregation through the search process with a series of three MSR meetings. As Linda indicated above they are MSR I (with board and congregation), MSRII (with search committee when elected), and MSR III (with the search committee after they have received names of potential candidates).

To date, we have six congregations in search: Lincroft NJ, Stony Brook NY, Paramus NJ, Plainfield NJ, Danbury CT, and Englewood NJ. As of April 15, their MSR status is as follows:

- Lincroft NJ: MSR I and II completed
- Stony Brook NY: MSR I, II, and III completed. At this time, hoping to hire a Consulting Minister
- Plainfield NY: MSR I and II completed
- Paramus NJ: MSR I and II scheduled for late Spring
- Danbury CT: MSR I completed
- Englewood NJ: consulting ministry

The Unitarian Church in Staten Island (NY) has chosen a candidate and is awaiting the conclusion of the candidating process.

**Women and Religion Committee and the
Unitarian Universalist Women's Association
2008 Annual Report**

In accordance with our Mission:

We provide a support network beyond our congregations for the promotion of feminist values as well as the organizing of opportunities for interconnection within our District.

We have organized and enjoyed the following events during this past year.

Our annual women's weekend retreat/renewal in November had the theme "Women Making Peace: Celebrating the Long History of Women's Involvement in Peace Movements Through Poetry, Prose, Drama." Our theme guide was Daniela Gioseffi, a recognized poet, anthologist, and activist. We read poetry together and were encouraged to write and share our own prose or poem on Peace.

We also included a play reading of *Lysistrata* led by Laurie James.

In January we hosted our annual luncheon/lecture with a very special guest lecturer, Majora Carter. Majora has taken on the challenge of creating a showplace of sustainability and environmental stewardship in a poor, polluted urban area, the South Bronx. She is a young, award-winning African American who lit up the room. Everyone was very impressed.

In the coming year we will have another weekend together on November 7-9, 2008, at the beautiful, large, waterside estate in Glen Cove, Long Island. Our arrangements for a theme and presenter are not yet completed.

We will also complete plans for another luncheon/lecture to be held sometime in January or February 2009.

Submitted by Reena Kondo, Co-Chair

**Young Adult and Campus Ministry Consultant
Claire Sexton
2008 Annual Report**

In July 2007, I began work as the District's Young Adult and Campus Ministry Consultant, a newly created three-hour per week position made possible in part by a grant from the Young Adult and Campus Ministry Office of the UUA.

The main responsibility of the consultant is to serve the congregations of the District by providing support, resources, and training for young adult and campus ministry activities in congregations. As the consultant I support the creation and sustaining of young adult groups, promote the growth of multiple pathways for young adult spiritual growth and development in UU communities, connect young adult leaders with additional opportunities for growth, and encourage multigenerational work and fully integrating young adults into the life of congregations. The ways that these objectives are achieved include checking in annually with each congregation in the District that is involved in young adult and/or campus ministry, liaise with the District Young Adult Steering Committee, identify District-wide needs for young adult ministry, and encourage cooperative efforts between congregations who collectively wish to increase their appeal and offerings to people in the 18-35 age range.

Specific examples of my activities are:

- Regularly attended meetings of the Young Adult Steering Committee (YASC).
- Attended the UU Leadership Team Institute in July-August 2007 as a member of the staff.
- Assisted in the facilitation of an October Vision Conference, hosted by the YASC, to determine the direction of their efforts and to re-write the YASC Mission and Vision statements to reflect that direction.
- Presented to two Liberal Religious Educators Association regional cluster meetings, getting the opportunity to meet a significant number of District religious education professionals.
- Attended a Peer Chaplain Training in the Ohio-Meadville District.
- Attended a Regional Campus Ministry Center brainstorming session, with members of several Long Island-area congregations, facilitated by Doug Jones of the Channing-Murray Foundation.
- Provided logistical support of the annual Bridging Planning Conference.

Additionally I have spent time in phone conferences and meetings collaborating and exchanging ideas with the District Youth Ministry Consultant, Beth Dana, as well as the staff and consultants of the other districts of the Northeast Regional Group.

In the upcoming summer, I will be attending General Assembly and will continue to be a part of the UU Leadership Team Institute staff.

Young Adult Steering Committee 2008 Annual Report

The Young Adult Steering Committee is a voluntary, coordinating body that works to support the spiritual, social, and recreational needs of UU age 18 to 35 in the District. The Young Adult Steering Committee (YASC) endeavors to reflect the needs of a vibrant and growing segment of the Unitarian Universalist population in the metropolitan area.

The current leadership of YASC is as follows.

Daniel Gregoire, Co-Chair
Samantha Garland, Co-Chair
Ryan Novosielski, Treasurer and Webmaster
[Vacant] - Secretary
David Menendez, Outreach
Gregory Axel-Lute, Member-at-Large
Claire Sexton, Ex-Officio

As an organization, the YASC has set out to give voice, meaning, and direction to the young adult community. We are working toward fostering a greater bond between young adults and establishing stronger ties to local congregations. At the same time, the YASC promotes a deeper understanding of Unitarian Universalism.

Goals

We the Unitarian Universalist Metro New York Young Adults Covenant to Promote a Safe, Welcoming and Radically Inclusive Spiritual Community By:

- Promoting our Seven Principles through collaborative social justice efforts.
- Creating opportunities for young adults to explore spiritual development and personal growth.
- Encouraging the development of sustainable young adult communities through district-wide and local events.
- Enhancing young adult participation in local congregations through outreach and support.

Activities

In fiscal year 2007-08, the YASC has engaged the young adult community in activities to serve to promote and enhance Unitarian Universalism in the District. These activities include the following.

- Summer Social Justice Conference, August 3-5, 2007. The purpose of this conference was to raise awareness about local and global social justice issues and to provide a springboard for further action in local congregations. The conference included discussions, presentations and worship services.

- Young Adult Vision Conference, October 13, 2007. The purpose of this conference was to engage the young adult community in developing a vision and mission for the organization. Participants fleshed out their needs and wishes and examined ways that the YASC could facilitate programming to meet those needs. The conclusion of this conference was that young adults desire an inclusive, social justice making organization that celebrates spiritual growth and social connections.
- Frost Valley Annual Retreat, February 15-18, 2008. The purpose of this annual and popular event is to foster greater bonds between young adults from around the district and to promote linkages to local congregations. Frost Valley 2008 had the largest attendance of any previous year – 30 participants – many of whom attended for the first time. Additionally, the retreat encourages participation in local congregations and on the district level.

Additionally, members of the YASC were available throughout the year to assist congregations with young adult outreach and programming. The YASC maintains a web-based database and networking webpage that reaches over 200 young adult UUs throughout the District. Through the network, the YASC promotes both young adult specific and district wide events and programming.

Submitted by Daniel Gregoire, Co-Chair

TUUL Belt Ministry 2008 Annual Report

Hello. My name is Scott Sammler-Michael. I am a UU Minister serving the Accotink UU Church in Northern Virginia. What, you may ask, is TUUL-Belt Ministry? Here is a brief history:

Immediately after Hurricane Katrina, I, like many of us, felt helpless. I had training as a chaplain, as an electrician, as well as in Red Cross first aid. Yet I did not possess the credentials to gain access to the disaster sites. I assumed that there was a UU practical ministry whose function was to provide direct relief to disaster victims with construction trade sweat and know-how. I found that there wasn't.

Beginning in September 2006, I served my Ministerial Internship at the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood (NJ). As part of my internship I organized a relief trip to the Gulf Coast. I was appalled at the lack of reconstruction progress in the region. I noticed how my skills as an electrician were in short supply. I was frustrated by how much of my time was spent fixing the mistakes of other volunteers' relief work. I saw an opportunity to unite my electrical acumen with my ministerial call and provide a needed service.

Upon returning to Ridgewood, I wrote a newsletter article where I revealed my dream of a practical construction ministry led by trained and credentialed UUs to provide relief in times of crisis. One week after the newsletter came out I received a message. "Call Bob – he wants to talk about TUUL-Belt." Bob (not his real name, he prefers to remain anonymous) said he loved my idea and could I use some money to get it off the ground. I said, "Sure." "How's 15,000?" "Dollars?" I dumbly asked. "Of Course. Just tell me where to send the check." Bob has since promised another \$15,000.

I called my colleague, the Rev Rosemary Bray McNatt, for advice. I knew she started the UU Trauma Response Ministries out of similar frustration following the 9/11 attacks. When I told her about TUUL-Belt, she cried, "This is a great idea!" I said, "So how do I make it happen?" After a few conversations with her I realized this was a great opportunity to create something many UUs would be proud of and would love to serve.

So I have begun recruiting for UUs with construction expertise – especially electricians, plumbers, HVAC, inspectors, project managers, and structural engineers. This group will comprise the leadership circle of TUUL-Belt. We will be the rapid response team trained and certified to deploy to disasters. We will be the face of Unitarian Universalism on the ground when duty calls. Our presence will remind everyone that this kind of practical ministry is a denominational priority.

This requires the help of congregations. Remember how impotent many of us felt because we could not go down and help? If your minister has the skills needed, your congregation can help by embracing and encouraging him or her to become a TUUL-Belt leader. This will include understanding if your minister has to leave on a phone call's notice. This may also include budgeting for airfare, tools, lodging, rental vehicles, etc. when your TUUL-Belt minister has to

pick up and go. Thereby the congregation affirms that practical construction ministry is an important and holy component of our call to serve.

We are planning a training next fall in New Orleans where Paul Eisenmann – our lay leader on the ground – and I will do skills assessment of the volunteers and obtain Red Cross disaster site credentialing. We will provide training in how to lead work crews and how to plan relief trips. Our vision is to have a leadership team that can rapidly deploy in time of disasters. The leadership team – our goal is to have 30 in this circle – will then rotate around the calendar year so in places like the Gulf Coast where long-term rebuilding efforts are needed, we can have a continuous presence throughout the year. We will work with local authorities and other relief agencies to discern where we are most needed. We will produce reports for code compliance, so the work is done right the first time. And we will be resources in our home districts as to how to plan and operate an effective relief group.

TUUL-Belt Ministries vision:

- Organize relief trips from our home areas.
- Lead relief trips and train work crews.
- Train facilitators for relief work, educating them on how to lead work crews, how to organize and fund trips, how to help people process the destruction they experience in disaster zones.
- Provide spiritual/psychological care to relief workers during the trip and upon return.
- Establish practical tools necessary for the work: notation and record keeping, building code compliance info sheets (electrical, plumbing, structural, etc.), a network of tool and materials suppliers/donors, regular training regimens and workshops for organizing work teams, network with other relief groups for relief worker housing, etc.
- Recruit ministers and lay leaders to dedicate themselves to this work, including a Rapid-Response Team for when crises hit, and train the team in outreach and media representation.
- Encourage congregations to support their TUUL-Belt ministers with dollars and time off so those ministers can respond quickly when needed.
- Promote the TUUL-Belt Ministry by canvassing potential donors and congregations, within and without UU circles, using flyers, articles, the internet, guest speaking engagements/ worship services by facilitators, etc.
- Rebuild ravaged areas in ways that are efficient and intelligent and inspire others to join.
- Create a web page where folks can find info, promotional materials, speakers, and donate.
- Orient TUUL-Belt leaders to the work with trips to the Gulf Coast wherever they are needed.

TUUL-Belt has nearly \$15,000 in funds at present, and it soon will have \$15,000 more. I am excited by the prospect of getting this off the ground. There is an ad running in the next two issues of the *UU World*, in the district newsletters, and in upcoming UU Ministers Association newsletters. We will be recruiting at General Assembly this summer. Please help us spread the word! Thank you to the Metro NY District for letting us base this out of your office.

The TUUL-Belt Board: Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, Rev. Chere Coen, Paul Eisenmann, Rev. Jim Vanderweele, and Rev. Scott Sammler-Michael, Director.

Submitted by the Rev. Scott Sammler-Michael, Director