

Update from Claire Sexton, District Young Adult and Campus Ministry Consultant

It has been a quietly strong year for me as the Young Adult and Campus Ministry Consultant for the Metro NY District.

Last February I attended my second Frost Valley Young Adult Winter retreat, the largest conference gathering of young adults from around the District, now approaching its sixth year. On the momentum of that event the Young Adult Steering Committee (YASC) identified campus ministry and reaching out to people of college/bridging age as an area of particular interest and held a special meeting in the spring to discuss a model of a rotating young adult ministry, using new pilot programs put on by District young adults. As such they now support a new monthly book group, convened by several young adult members of the Unitarian Church of All Souls in Manhattan and open to all young adults in the District. Because this is a District-wide event, I assist when I can with publicity and emails. The second new program is the young adult level of Our Whole Lives (OWL), the comprehensive sexuality education curriculum. I happily volunteered to be one of the facilitators for the class, so I needed to be trained for it! With the work of the Rev. Jude Geiger, trainer Kirsten DeFur (now two of my three co-facilitators), trainer the Rev. Michael Tino, and of course our District Executive, Andrea Lerner (and possibly even more), a facilitator training session was planned and held last August at Community Church of New York UU in Manhattan. Because this was a Distinct focus for me at the time, Rev. Geiger and I led an informational workshop about the Young Adult OWL curriculum at the District annual meeting in Jersey City last May.

Around the same time I was in touch with a student at New York University (NYU) who was active in her Youth Adult Committee in the Central Midwest District that was interested in starting a group for NYU, and possibly opening it up to students of other schools in the area. With support from several ministers in the area, the group was recently classified as an official group of NYU. This means that it's only open to NYU students, but with the other pilot programs running, I feel we are off to a strong start for future endeavors in rotating campus ministry meetings. I'm currently facilitating the young adult OWL class as a volunteer, but I really appreciate the insight I have gotten about Metro NY young adults as a result, and how it will be of great help in advising young adults and congregational leaders about the many ways to welcome and engage young adults in Unitarian Universalism.

Last, but certainly not least, I've spent time over the year talking with and providing resources for representatives of congregations looking to start or improve young adult ministry. Among those communications, I received a call from the Rev. Gordon Bailey, a UU community minister and chaplain in north Manhattan and spoke with him about his passion for campus ministry and about the ways he can help the District. As a result, he attended the Campus Ministry conference in Madison WI last September. I've also been in touch with several directors of religious education for Long Island congregations about their congregations' potential to be a spiritual home for young adults who are in school in the area.

In the coming year I am looking forward to presenting at the Presidents Roundtable on February 20 with my colleague Andrew Mertz, the Director for Youth and Young Adult Programs for the Joseph Priestley District, part of the Northeast Regional Group, as well as collaborating more

often and more effectively with my counterpart, Kierstin Homblette, District Youth Ministry Consultant. If you're interested you can read a few more details in her article, also in this month's Metro NY Minute.

Thanks so much for the opportunity to work with and serve with you. Please do not hesitate to get in contact with me (email clairensexton@gmail.com or call 214-868-6054) if you have any questions, big or small, about how you can help sustain Unitarian Universalism's message in ministering to young adults.