

Claire Sexton Appointed Young Adult and Campus Ministry Consultant

It is my pleasure to be writing to the District as the new Young Adult and Campus Ministry (YACM) consultant for the District. I'm a lifelong UU, originally from Texas, where I held a number of volunteer leadership positions in the Southwest District young adult community starting in 2002. I came to live in Brooklyn in 2005 to pursue my master's degree at New York University in visual arts administration. Just as I completed that goal and entered the job market in May I heard this position was being created, and I began to think of ways that I might fulfill the role and augment work that is currently being done in UU congregations. Young Adult and Campus Ministry work is a passion of mine, as someone who was raised UU and fell into the gap during my undergraduate years. Youth ministry, in the form of Young Religious UU (YRUU), was a huge part in shaping who I am today, just as young adult conferences and programming have become a big part of my adult life- post college gap. I think that my new position and all the dedicated work that is being done with, among, and for young adults will be a particularly big part of the UUA's new growth campaign, "Now is the Time." If we as a denomination and District can continue to improve lifelong ministry, serving people's needs from elementary school through young adulthood and beyond, Unitarian Universalism will grow without a doubt.

There are specific goals that have been set for me in the creation of the YACM Consultant position, including collaborating with my consultant counterparts in nearby districts of Ohio-Meadville, Joseph Priestly, and St. Lawrence, as well as my own personal goals to get to know this District and its young adult needs better. We, the four-district region, will establish a coordinating and leadership sharing structure, making YACM consulting resources more accessible, visible, and comfortable for congregations and professional groups in the region. Personally I see a few things we can do specifically to help congregations in assisting their younger members and future members, such as creating regional programming to maximize the cost-efficiency of conferences and trainings for young adult leaders, sharing best practices and identified needs of young adult and campus ministry groups within our respective districts. I will start strong, as summer is the season of conferences in the UU world! Following attendance at my first District Young Adult Steering Committee (YASC) meeting, I will meet with and learn from leaders throughout the region at the UU Leadership Team Institute in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. Soon after returning from Pennsylvania, I will fly to Toronto to attend ConCentric, the Continental UU Young Adult Network (C*UUYAN) leadership and business conference to share with and learn from young adult leaders from around the US and Canada.

If your congregation, young adult group, or campus ministry is in need of advice or support, feel free to drop me a line at clairens Sexton@gmail.com, and I will help you however I can, whether that means giving you information or finding the best person to do so if I'm not personally able to do so. Have a wonderful summer Metro New York, and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible