

Social Justice – Annual Report, 2009-10

Social Justice at UU Church Bloomington and its activities are an important part of how we live our faith. We are grateful to all the people involved in social justice work and want to recognize them, their commitment of time and energy and whatever it takes to get the job done. For example, about 9,000 pounds for food and over \$25,000 were collected and donated in support of Social Justice projects. There were incredible SJ projects and people dedicated to Changing the World. 25% of our non-pledge Sunday Plate donations are given to a local agency. This year the recipient was Crestmont Boys' and Girls' Club which will receive about \$7500; last year's recipient received \$7000. We know that much more was given and not recorded. Our congregation also donates \$1 per member to the UU Service Committee and makes annual contributions from our operating budget to the Social Justice Funds A and B. Common Ground is published monthly and was edited by Aleisha Kropf. Our SJ Bulletin Board and table are coordinated by Glenda Breeden, and are always filled with Social Justice news and activities. Each month a different task force or group is highlighted both there and in a Social Justice moment one Sunday a month. We are grateful to Diane Gregory, Sandi Clothier, John Woodcock, who served on the SJ Steering Committee during the past year.

Social Justice work is highly integrated in our Chalice Circles and Religious Education programs and each was highlighted for a month on the SJ B-board and SJ Moments. A major component of Chalice Circles is the two service projects each group does, one for the church and one for the larger community. Service to the church included baking cookies for the Bazaar, helping in the kitchen for the Bazaar, gluing a new hymn into the church hymnals, Coffee Crew, and setting up and cleaning up after breakfast for Commitment Sunday. Community service included preparing/serving/cleaning up after a meal at Community Kitchen, serving a meal at a Women's Build event for Habitat for Humanity, working at the Habitat Restore, running a bingo event for guests at Monroe House, and helping deep clean a woman's home, who is legally blind. Members of this year's Chalice Circles Executive Team are Alan Backler, chair; Dave Crane and Patricia Coleman members; Reverend Macklin.

During the year the Rainbow Rights Task Force took a break, but is planning on becoming more active again. The Elder Focus Task Force is the process of joining with the Social Justice Circle and being more visible in its social justice endeavors.

Below are summaries of task force annual reports – for more details see complete SJ Annual Report available at the SJ table – there are remarkable details and testimonies about the work of many of the task forces.

Jackie Hall

Children's Task Force Annual Report, 2009-2010

The Children's Task Force (CTF) has had a busy year. Its goals are to provide assistance to local agencies serving the needs of children and to support children experiencing poverty and other stressors. There are currently thirteen task force members. The task force is mostly a "virtual community" with regular newsletters and discussions via email, supplemented with a face-to-face meeting once in the spring and once in the fall.

Activities:

Sneaker drive provided gently used shoes, sneakers, boots, and coats for children to play in while at Head Start. CTF also delivered the mitten tree mittens, hats and gloves to Head

Start after the Christmas Eve service. Bethany Terry at Head Start told us everything was eagerly snapped up almost as soon as it came in. We hope to be able to provide this service again next year.

In April, we held a **fundraiser for the Templeton Elementary School kindergarten classes' field trip to Peden Farm**. We offered seeds provided to us at a discount by Nature's Crossroads Seeds, in exchange for donations made by congregation members. We made just under \$200, and with money left over from last year's bake sale, we were able to fully fund the \$300 cost of buses.

In May we began holding **regular bake sales on the first Sunday** of each month offering foods that will work as light breakfast and lunch, in addition to usual bake sale fare. Proceeds from our first sale, which earned \$222, went to support Save Bradford Woods for MCCSC.

During the year, we had the pleasure of **working with two other task forces**: Green Sanctuary Task Force on collecting gently used items for Head Start, and fundraising for Bradford Woods as well as the International Outreach Task Force on Haitian earthquake relief.

Jennifer Livesay

Friends of Prisoners Task Force Annual Report, 2009-2010

Friends of Prisoners Task Force (FOP) goes into the jails and prisons and advocates for the basic human rights and dignity of human beings; we hold the first principle of Unitarian Universalism as our guiding light, and are constantly reminded that the human to human connection is invaluable—both ways.

Activities:

- FOP members are active in **Crafting Bridges** working with men incarcerated in the Monroe County Jail (MCJ) in making gifts to send home and quilt pieces for a giant NewLeaf/NewLife (NL/NL) quilt project
- **NL/NL** provides support for people incarcerated at MCJ as well as parolees. Three of us have been trained as **mentors for parolees**. One does drug and alcohol addictions counseling and support group twice a week with inmates and parolees.
- **Women Writing for (a) Change conducts a writing circle** for women at MCJ twice a month with three of our members as facilitators. They've had to be assertive at times to maintain their presence at the jail and have no doubt that the spiritual/creative program is worthwhile, both for themselves and the inmates.
- FOP joined with Bloomington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty in December to get **signatures on a petition** to the governor asking that he stop the execution of Eric Wrinkles. While the execution went forward, we stood with others to protest this state-sanctioned murder and give witness to the worth and dignity of this man.
- One of our members was the **guest speaker** at the Evansville UU Church in February to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. Another member is spiritual **advisor to Chad Fulks** on federal death row at Terre Haute.
- FOP maintains support for men in the **PLUS Program at Wabash Valley Correctional Facility (WVCF)** by collecting and donating fabric for their **Quilt Project**. They, in turn, give us handmade quilts to give to such organizations as Middle Way, Habitat, and Shalom. Five people from the church visited the Quilt Project in May and plan to go again in the future. We give **special support to Phillip Stroud at WVCF** who is a member of the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship.

- We received a \$600 gift from the **Maryann Orr Arts and Crafts Sale** held at church. Thanks, also, to the Green Sanctuary Task Force for donating the leftover men's clothing to WVCF and women's clothing to the Indiana Women's Prison at the end of their clothing swaps last fall and this spring. Those **clothes will be used by parolees as they move back into the community.**

FOP has fifteen active members and many supportive members.
Glenda Breeden

Green Sanctuary Task Force Annual Report, 2009-2010

The Green Sanctuary Task Force on Global Climate Change (GSTF) promotes mindful, Earth centered living, working to educate and motivate individuals and institutions to take positive steps toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions with the understanding that it is our moral imperative to care for the Earth. To this end the GSTF has been active at various levels in the congregation and the wider community.

Activities

- Weekly fair **trade coffee and chocolate and CFL sales** which provides support for the work of the GSTF. Over 350 CFL's were sold during the fall in support of 350.org's educational campaign and raised nearly \$600 to date in FY 09/10.
- **Fall and spring clothing swaps** held in Fellowship Hall
- **Hosting two vegetarian potlucks**, one in Bryan Parks and one in Fellowship Hall
- **Co-sponsoring the Alternative Gift Giving Campaign** with money raised being donated to ImagiHaitien, a Haitian reforestation project started by a member of the GSTF
- **Co-sponsoring the Conference on the Commons** held in the Meeting Room and Fellowship Hall and attended by over 100 people
- **Co-sponsoring with the Children's Task Force a shoe collection for Head Start**
- Holding **three Legislative Sunday letter writing campaigns during coffee** hour with over 100 letters being sent in support of reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Holding a **weatherization workday at the UU**, following up on Energy Audit recommendations
- Hosting a **benefit concert that raised \$850 for the GSTF** with about 100 people in attendance
- Hosting the **Earth Fair between the Earth Day services**. Based on the desire expressed by the 150 respondents to the GSTF household energy survey, the format of the fair was enhanced to include experts on how to accomplish significant energy savings in a variety of areas
- GSTF members being **active in the Save Bradford Woods campaign the raised over \$40,000** in a few weeks, allowing all MCCSC 5th graders the opportunity to go to Bradford Woods next year. The GSTF donated \$200 to the Foundation for MCCSC in support of Bradford Woods
- **Providing financial and promotional support to the Great Unleashing, Holistic Health Fair, Coal County CD release, UU Ministry for the Earth, and the Bloomington Peace Action Coalition.**
- In total the GSTF donated \$725, reaching over 1,000 people through community based events

- Being an active member of Earth Care, Bloomington's Interfaith Group for the Environment, including promoting four Walbicus to Worship Weekends and GSTF members serving as the treasurer and co-convenor of Earth Care. Additionally GSTF members were active in the MLK Day events hosted by Earth Care.

Marcia Veldman

Habitat for Humanity Task Force Annual Report, 2009-2010

Social justice problem addressed: Lack of decent, affordable housing in Monroe County.

Goal: Support efforts by Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County to provide affordable housing locally and globally.

Objectives: Educate the congregation about housing needs, goals and accomplishments of Habitat for Humanity; raise money for upcoming Habitat builds, including the Women's Build; support Habitat's ReStore with volunteers and funds; support Habitat by providing volunteers and food for builds.

Activities: The task force focused on shorter-term projects and goals during the past year, after previously working on raising money and getting builders for the Interfaith Build, a multi-year project. We worked to raise funds periodically throughout the year for specific needs, such as buying supplies/tools on Habitat's "wish list" and the Women Build. We also got UUs to participate in several builds throughout the year, along with continuing to raise awareness of housing needs in Monroe County.

- **Prepared lunch** together at church for a Habitat build in July, using about \$100 in funds in our account and donating food.
- **Parked cars** during six IU football games at the UU parking lot, with members of the International Outreach Task Force. Total income was about \$2,200, so each task force got about \$1,100.
- Task force co-chair Barb Berggoetz recruited seven UUs to attend Habitat's **More Than Houses breakfast**.
- Joined with the International Outreach Task Force to develop an **Holiday Alternative Giving Campaign** giving an option to donate to our causes, in return for a small gift (card made by partner families or Christmas ornament), in the name of a friend or relative, rather than buying them gifts. \$425 was used to buy **tools and supplies** on Habitat's "wish list." Fund-raiser was conducted between services and at the Holiday Bazaar.
- Task force members and UUs worked on **builds in February and March** and are planning to **build on May 29, 2010**.
- 25 women, all but two from UU, will work May 18 on the **2010 Women Build**. The team raised or donated about \$9,200, more than the required \$6,250 to participate in one day of the build.
- Conducted a **bake sale** between services on Easter to support our team of 25 women working on the Women Build on May 18. UU women on the team contributed baked goods and helped sell, along with task force members. We raised \$517, of which \$285 was used to help support women who couldn't raise the entire \$250 required to participate in the build. The remaining \$232 will be sent to **Habitat's Haiti** rebuilding efforts.

- Task force requested and received \$250 from the Women's Alliance to support the Women Build. Money is being used to provide food for the team. A Chalice Circle is preparing the food for us.

Barb Berggoetz & Connie Nelson Laird

Help Feed Our Hungry Neighbors Task Force, Annual Report 2009-2010

The Helping Feed Our Hungry Neighbors (HFOHN) Task Force had a busy and productive year. 28 people are on the email list for our task force. Of those 28, 8 are core members of the group who attend monthly task force meetings and participate actively year round. Out of the other 20 members, probably half of those people are involved in our BountyFull Sunday food drive or in the holiday basket project.

Our main activities are holding the **BountyFull food drive the first Sunday** of each month to benefit the emergency food pantry at Monroe County United Ministries. HFOHN members advertise the food drive, set up in the church and deliver the food to MCUM.

Our other big project is coordinating the **Holiday Basket Food Drive for MCUM** in November and December, where UU's can shop for groceries for a holiday meal for a local needy family. Last year and the year before, we provided close to 90% of the food baskets for this project.

We held several **fund raisers** in the past year: a **piano concert performed by Sally Todd** to benefit the MCUM food pantry, and the **Fiber Arts Booth** at the church's Holiday Bazaar, where we sell knitted items to benefit MCUM.

We also had a successful year with the **Plant-A-Row project**: collecting garden produce between Sunday services and delivering it to Mother Hubbard's Cupboard for distribution to local families.

Total numbers for fundraising and pounds of food donated:

***Fundraising:**

October: Sally Todd Concert to benefit MCUM emergency food pantry: \$1072; October: CROP Walk (benefitting local agencies, including MCUM, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, etc): \$1016.50; December: Fiber Arts Booth at Holiday Bazaar (all proceeds to MCUM emergency food pantry): \$1400

Total money raised: \$3488.50

***Pounds of Food Delivered to MCUM Emergency Food Pantry:**

BountyFull Sunday food drive total: 1595 pounds; Sally Todd Benefit Concert: 217 pounds; Holiday Baskets: 6080 pounds

Total pounds of food donated to MCUM: 7,892 pounds of food

Anne Graham

International Outreach Task Force Annual Report 2009-2010

Current Active Membership - 16

2009 Total fundraising: \$5,218.00

Groups supported:

- Ndethya wa Ngutethya Kenyan Women's Cooperative
- Unitarian Church of Burundi Micro Lending Project
- Adopt a Kid Costa Rica, Education Assistance Program
- Singers of United Lands

Events:

- IOTF Monthly Bake Sales
- Singers of United Lands Welcome Dinner
- July Trip by IOTF Members to Kenya
- Unitarian Church of Burundi Micro Lending Breakfast
- Ndethya wa Ngutethya - Kenya Lunch Forum
- Kenya Presentation for Children's Religious Education Program
- IU Football Parking
- IOTF 4th of July BBQ (rained out but we worked hard prepping for that)
- Presentation of IOTF Kenya Film, "You Help Me and I Help You," to UU Women's Alliance
- African Jewelry, Cloth, and etc Sales at Church Bazaar (Claire Robertson)
- Holiday Alternative Giving Campaign

2010 Total Fundraising Through April: \$1,749.00

Groups Supported:

- UUSC/UUA Joint Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund
- Partners in Health – Haiti
- Ndethya wa Ngutethya Kenyan Women's Cooperative

Events:

- IOTF Monthly Bake Sales
- Haiti Relief Breakfast
- Hymnal Donation to UU Church in Philippines
- Presentation of IOTF Kenya Film, "You Help Me and I Help You," to UU IU Student Group

Jason Blankenship

Just Peace Task Force – Annual Report 2009-2010

The Just Peace Task Force has been active in urging the Unitarian Universalist Association to adopt a strong Statement of Conscience on Just Peacemaking. Such a document could serve as an important basis for peace work throughout the association. Unfortunately, both the 2009 and 2010 drafts proposed by the Commission on Social Witness are weak, in the view of our task force. Last year's draft was rejected by the 2009 General Assembly. This winter, our task force led intensive discussions of the new draft, which is, in fact, little changed from the rejected

version. It still equivocates on almost all controversial questions regarding the use of force and military intervention. With support of the Ministers, we brought our position to a congregational meeting and received the congregation's support for a comment and vote not to bring the current draft to General Assembly. Nationally, perhaps with less discussion, the draft was approved. We remain hopeful that there will be a discussion at 2010 GA.

Our task force continues to cooperate with other peace groups in the community – notably Bloomington Peace Action Coalition. Some task force members, as well as other members of the congregation, have been (and continue to be) among those taking part in vigils on Courthouse Square, 5-6 PM on the first and third Wednesdays of the month.

Our task force is active in lobbying Congress and the administration on behalf of peace. Specifically, we have supported negotiations with Iran, supported a just peace in the Middle East, supported nuclear weapons abolition and in the first instance START ratification as well as that of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and opposed the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The task force has organized several letter writing campaigns between the services. A major focus of these has been opposing escalation in Afghanistan. They have been directed to President Obama, Senators Lugar and Bayh, and Congressman Baron Hill.

Members of the task force have twice met personally during the past year with Senator Lugar on foreign policy, and on numerous occasions with Congressman Hill. Members have also been published in *The New York Times*, *The Bloomington Herald Times*, and aired on WFIU's "Speak Your Mind."

We look forward to wide congregational participation this fall when Barry Sanders comes to speak about his book, *The Green Zone: The Environmental Consequences of Militarism*.
David Keppel

Katrina Relief Task Force--Annual Report 2009-2010

During the 2009–2010 year, our task force took two trips to New Orleans to help restore homes damaged by the hurricane and subsequent flooding in 2005.

The fall group left Bloomington on Saturday, October 3, spent the night in motels, arrived midday on Sunday and started work on Monday morning. During the week, we slept in converted Sunday School rooms containing bunk beds that had been built some years ago by volunteers from Ohio, and cooked our breakfasts and fixed sack lunches in the church kitchen. We also cooked and ate dinners there on some evenings.

On Monday morning we had an orientation and then headed for the Central Congregational United Church of Christ in Jefferson Parish which used to serve a largely black population, but has been unusable since damaged by Katrina. . The plan is to turn it into a community center. On Monday we removed the plastered rock lath from the sanctuary of the church. That evening 20 members of the Little Farms church provided us with a potluck meal of southern foods, along with enjoyable friendship. They do this for every volunteer group that comes in to their church week after week.

For the rest of the week, we divided into two groups, one continuing to work at the Central Congregational Church, and the second, smaller group went to the home of a Ms. Diane on Pauline Street in the Chantilly Woods area to finish hanging new drywall.

Generous contributions were used for gasoline, mileage reimbursements, groceries for breakfasts, lunches, and evening meals as well as \$50 per person to the Little Farms United Church of Christ for their expenses in putting us up.

In the spring , we divided into three crews, each going to a different home.

One crew painted the outside of Doris' house, "eye popping" colors: a vivid yellow with burgundy and white trim.

A second crew dealt with a "punch list," i.e., a list of finishing-up, of painting the ceilings and walls, installing, staining and painting cabinets and shelves for the kitchen and tiles in bathrooms.

A third crew dealt with a punch list at another house including repainting walls, painting the baseboards, sanding and varnishing the stairway, grouting tiles and caulking fixtures in two bathrooms, varnishing bathroom cabinets, and other such tasks.

For our October 2009 trip, we received contributions of \$1263 from among the nine volunteers, and contributions of \$1415 from others. Cost per person was approximately \$231.

For our March 2010 trip, 14 volunteers contributed \$3450, and others contributed \$1255. Cost per person was \$219.

David Parkhurst