

CATALYST

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OFFICE OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC CONCERNS

Engaged in recognizing and “re-storying” ourselves for a multicultural Unitarian Universalist future

Headline News:

Esther Rosado has accepted the position of Director of Lifespan Religious Education at the Community Church of New York. She is currently completing her 5-year tenure at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Medford in Massachusetts. She is a Nuyorican! In case you’re unfamiliar with the term, read on. “Nuyorican”...refers to the members or culture of the Puerto Rican diaspora located in or around New York State, especially the New York City metropolitan area.” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuyorican>)

First Parish in Cambridge has been engaged with the Diversity of Ministry Initiative (DOMI) to search for a new Associate Minister—specifically, a minister who is a person of color, Latino/a, Hispanic or multiracial—to support them in their shared vision of First Parish as a multiracial, multicultural, justice-making congregation. Now, it’s time for us to share the good news. The **Rev. Lilia Cuervo** has been invited to be their candidate for the Associate Minister position! Lilia brings a wealth of multicultural and multiethnic experiences to her ministry. She was the first Latin American woman ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister, as well as the pioneer who provided full time ministry in Spanish, at the First Unitarian Church of San Jose, CA. We wish them well for their candidating week, which ends with the congregational vote on Sunday, March 28.

The **Rev. Keith Kron** has been chosen as the next Transitions Director, beginning June 1, 2010. Keith received his M.Div. from Starr King School for the Ministry and has been Director of the UUA Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Concerns since 1996. He has been a member of the Diversity of Ministry Team for a number of years; the Identity-Based Ministries staff team will miss him, but we look forward to working with him in his new role as “matchmaker” for ministers and congregations!

Finding Our Way Home, 2010:

Photo by Rev. Clyde Grubbs



The third annual Professionals of Color Retreat was a great success! We welcomed our largest group ever. It was held at the idyllic Mercy Center, just outside of San Francisco in Burlingame, CA. It was there that we saw the largest calla lilies ever, experienced a moving Taizé service, and truly connected with each other. The following snippets of feedback will give you a taste of the richness of the event:

“This retreat not only supports a population that’s always on-the-edge; it is saving lives. People working at 100 miles per hour rarely have time to reflect, much less time to process the struggle that is inherent of being a voice on the margin. Attention to the healing work of this retreat makes it possible for religious professionals of color to remain engaged, and to keep steady on their own path of faith development.”

“What activities moved you deeply? Hearing ‘Spirit of Life’ sung in Hawaiian. The statements of commitment to our faith and our calling as ministers and religious leaders, despite the many hardships and disillusionment. The deep spiritual connections made with soul-like colleagues.”

“For a seminarian, as I am, this experience helped me to see a broader, continental context in which I will be practicing ministry. As I prepare to enter into full ministry, I feel connections made here will help me and my future congregations.”

“By sponsoring these retreats our denomination exemplifies the practice of our principles: affirming the inherent worth and dignity of all, acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth, and respect for the interdependent web.”

“It is my heartfelt hope that in spite of many budget cutbacks, this annual retreat of homecoming which has become for me and many others to be a sacred journey, a pilgrimage and an annual renewal through mutual sharing and caring should not be curtailed or stopped. [It is] an important source of spiritual, mental, emotional oxygen in my life and ministry and in that of our colleagues.”

“Institutionally it is important to continue these gatherings because they nurture esprit de corps among people that can feel isolated and less valued; there we have opportunities to express our deep feelings stemming from experiences of oppression and discounting within our denomination and in society in general, and this without judgment.”

“It was so helpful for me to connect in person with my colleagues of color. It helped remind me that I am not alone, and that I have a grand network of support across this the country and in Canada. For three days, I was with people who understood. Words could be spoken without fear of misinterpretation, and things could be left unsaid, because no words were needed.”

“The theology of Unitarian Universalism holds great potential to heal the wounds of separation that people of color experience in the world. This retreat is a place where the gift of UU can work its magic. Here, we remember what sustains us. In this retreat, we re-connect ourselves to the web that reminds us who we are, what matters, and why it is we should keep going on.”

Updates from Constituent Organizations:

DRUUMM

Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries has a new website! Please visit and pass the word on the new www.druumm.org, where you will find information about DRUUMM, chat rooms, event registrations and the means to connect to DRUUMM members across the continent.

Dream with us. Strategize with us. Build community with us. Support us...Join us in this holy work.

Living our faith,



Janice Marie Johnson
Director,
Racial and Ethnic Concerns
Identity-Based Ministries
jmjohnson@uua.org



Rev. Alicia Forde
Program Coordinator,
Multicultural Congregations
Identity-Based Ministries
aforde@uua.org