

CATALYST

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MULTICULTURAL GROWTH REGARDING RACIAL AND ETHNIC CONCERNS

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

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Central Nassau:

Photo by Janet Lombardi



**By Patsy Kaplan,
Vice-President, UUCCN**

We are delighted to share a little bit about our fair trade pumpkin patch, which started out as a fundraiser but has turned into a wonderful outreach to our local Garden City community, the larger Long Island community, and the Navajo community in New Mexico.

Seven years ago, we thought we were just ordering pumpkins on consignment. And then one day in mid-October, a truck arrived with over 3000 of them! We were overwhelmed by their sheer number and wondered how we

could ever sell them. But we put up a sign, and the local community came, thrilled to have a pumpkin patch so close to home. Then word got out to communities beyond our local area. We had opportunities to tell visitors what was going on in our congregation, and we sold out of pumpkins!

Seven years later, this project has become our biggest fundraiser—we had three full trucks' worth of pumpkins in our patch this year. As we work in the pumpkin patch together we have found new ways of meeting and relating to one another. Our office manager, along with a Girl Scout troop, set up a tent and gave out pamphlets on breast cancer awareness; nursery schools visited and we read *The Bumpy Pumpkin*; folk singers performed in the pumpkin patch; and on Indigenous People's Day (which we celebrate in lieu of Columbus Day), we hosted culturally appropriate drumming in the patch, led by UU drummer Matt Meyer.

Our pumpkins are grown on land that is leased from a Navajo community in New Mexico, and Navajo people from that community are the first hired to plant and harvest the pumpkin crop. All the pumpkin farm workers are paid a fair wage and the pumpkins are fair-traded; they come to us with the prices set according to size.

And what happened to the leftover or slightly damaged pumpkins this year? We cooked them and made pumpkin bread, pumpkin pie and pumpkin muffins and sold them in the pumpkin patch. The small pumpkins were cooked and served at our Harvest Fair in November, and the remaining pumpkins were donated to Long Island Harvest, a local hunger relief organization.



Patsy and Rev. Hope Johnson, Minister UUCCN

News from the Diversity of Ministry Initiative:

By Rev. John Crestwell, Associate Minister at the UU Church of Annapolis, MD

Friends, last year was the most successful year of my ministerial career. It was a great year because I witnessed an outpouring of the spirit of love at UUCA and in the community at large. Rev. Fred Muir has given me a nickname. I am the M.O.L.E., UUCA's minister of outreach, leadership and evangelism. I spend much of my time seeking out opportunities to engage and build relationships with the local community as a witness to our UU values so that we can build stronger bonds between us and our neighbors. I am a liaison between the church and all of the many constituencies we serve including the city, county, state, and UU world. My goal is to not just share the good news of Unitarian Universalism and the UU Church of Annapolis but to also hold us all accountable to our responsibility to the larger world outside our doors.

As a result of this social ministry, I have developed strong connections with many political, community and denominational leaders affording us several rewarding opportunities for external engagement, including mentoring programs at Annapolis High and Eastport Community Center, along with advocacy work through our legislative ministry, and more. At the denominational level, I am a member of the UUA President's Council and sit on a number of committees focused on anti-oppression, anti-racism, and multiculturalism work, including the national UUA Standing on the Side of Love campaign. Additionally, I have expanded our congregation's voice with a recent appearance on the local news and as a member of the White House Office of Community Engagement.

Recent Events:

The **Metro New York District Committee on AntiRacism and Diversity** recently hosted its 14th annual conclave, with the theme "Solidarity as a Spiritual Practice." The compelling joint keynote was delivered by **Taquiena Boston**, Director of Multicultural Growth and Witness at the UUA and **Rev. Josh Pawelek**, Minister of the **UU Society: East** in Manchester, CT.

The conclave also featured the work of performance artist Unique Robinson, an African-American queer young adult whose spoken word poems and Q&A demonstrated a poignantly fierce and honest engagement in the work of anti-racism and multiculturalism from the point of view of one living authentically across boundaries of race, gender, sexual orientation, and class divides.

New District Jubilee Model:

A big shout-out goes to the Joseph Priestly District for initiating an exciting new model for Jubilee Anti-Racism Trainings—this new model means they are now offering workshops that are open to congregational teams and individuals from across the district. JPD Director for Racial and Social Justice **Paula Cole Jones** hopes to bring at least two Jubilee workshops to JPD every year. The first such workshop was held in October at the **Unitarian Society of Germantown** in Philadelphia, PA, and was facilitated by **Dr. Leon Spencer** and **Jyaphia Christos-Rodgers**. It was attended by a district-level team and two congregational teams, which complemented each other well.

To learn more about the Jubilee Anti-Racism Training, go to www.uua.org/multiculturalism/curricula or email **Alex Kapitan** at akapitan@uua.org.

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

Living our faith,



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