

CATALYST

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MULTICULTURAL GROWTH REGARDING RACIAL AND ETHNIC CONCERNS

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

Update from Our Office:



Photo courtesy of Alicia Forde

On November 20, 2011, we hosted our second annual **Multicultural Gratitude Dinner Gathering** for staff who work at the UUA who identify as a person of African Descent, as an Asian/Pacific Islander, Indigenous, Latina/o Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and/or a multiracial, multiethnic person. We are profoundly grateful to the UUA leadership for fully supporting our gathering and for making possible this time of camaraderie, community-building, breaking bread, and thanksgiving.

Following our ingathering and opening prayer, we received words of welcome from **Taquiena Boston**, the Director of Multicultural Growth and Witness. We then shared a bountiful, joyful meal and nourishing conversations late into the evening.

Jessica York, Youth Programs Director, shared the following reflections: “One of the things I enjoy the most about the Thanksgiving dinner is hearing from everyone about their different family holiday traditions. Influenced by ethnicity, but still unique to every family, it is a lovely reminder that we can celebrate being both different and the same. This should and could be true of any group of people. UU’s of color are experienced ‘border crossers’ and thus generally are more intentional in living in the paradigm of the ‘both/and.’” **Celestine Cox**, the UUUNO Office Coordinator, felt that “Being able to gather with such committed and dedicated people at the Multicultural Gathering hosted by Janice Marie Johnson was both inspiring and motivating. Although many of us were meeting for the first time, the warmth I felt that evening, created an atmosphere ripe for open and honest discussions.” For **Carey Mc Donald**, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Director, “It was such a treat to be with the wider community of my UUA colleagues of color, including those beyond Beacon Hill, and to share with one another about our work in supporting our faith.”

First Unitarian Church of Oakland, CA:

By Rev. Kathy Huff, Senior Minister

More than 60 members of the **Oakland** and **San Jose** congregations recently joined together for an exciting weekend of visioning and learning with the **Rev. Eric Law** from the Kaleidoscope Institute. Rev. Law's leadership workshop included time for personal reflection along with skill building exercises for developing "competent leadership in a diverse, changing world." Participants were invited to reflect on what their congregations' vision statements using both personal and practical application lenses.

During the training, Rev. Law stressed the importance of healthy interpersonal relationships as the key to nurturing a healthy, diverse church community. Much of the workshop emphasized how simple, effective communications can cultivate authentic relationships between congregants—which in turn decrease conflicts and increase mutual visions. These relationships also increase a sense of ownership in the congregation and strengthen commitment to the purpose of the community. People who love, trust and support each other will often take greater risks in service of creating a dynamic and growing community.

Jill Miller, a board member from Oakland, had this to say about the experience: "I came to better know...[that] it matters to me a great deal the intentionality with which we, First Unitarian Church of Oakland attempt to grow beloved community, work to overcome barriers that divide the human family, and move forward with the goal of being more just and compassionate. I left this exercise...eager to experience how we all will contribute to the realization of our Vision and Ends."

Sad News:

We are sad to note that Bill Norris passed away recently from liver cancer. Bill was a member of **Arlington Street Church** in Boston and was sexton there for a number of years. He was very active in Journey to Wholeness efforts and was the co-producer of *Wilderness Journey*; he was well-known throughout the UUA for his anti-racism efforts. Bill grew up in Montgomery, AL at the height of the civil rights movement, and served in the US military as a gay man of color—both of which made him especially well suited to confront issues of discrimination. Bill served on many committees, spoke at numerous functions, and used every opportunity to promote welcome and inclusion across identities. He will be missed, even by those who are unaware of the extraordinary contributions he made to Unitarian Universalism. For more about Bill's life, visit <http://malden.patch.com/announcements/norris-william-bill-of-malden>.

Video Loan Library:

As we noted above, one of Bill Norris' major contributions to the UUA was the film *Wilderness Journey*. We invite you to engage with this and many other videos available for loan through our Video Loan Library: <http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/discuss/158973.shtml>. We have a brand-new DVD available in that library, titled *For the Next Seven Generations*. This compelling film tells the story of thirteen Indigenous grandmothers from around the globe who gather to share their visions of healing and an urgent call for change. Their invaluable perspectives teach the importance of grounding ourselves in the wisdom of our elders. To borrow this or other resources, contact **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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