

CATALYST

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES REGARDING RACIAL AND ETHNIC CONCERNS



Finding Our Way Home 2012:

This year, the Finding Our Way Home retreat—which welcomes religious professionals who identify as people of color, Latina/o, Hispanic, and/or multiracial and multiethnic—took place in New Orleans. This retreat is hosted annually by the Multicultural Ministries staff and is a gift from the Diversity of Ministry Initiative. From March 14-17, this group of more than 60 ministers, religious educators, seminarians, and musicians gathered to share in fellowship, collegial support, service, and deep personal connections.

The reflections below come from a few individuals who participated in the retreat. Although space does not permit us to share the reflections of everyone who attended, nearly everyone who took part in the retreat spoke of the weekend as an antidote to the isolation that they experience in their home contexts. And each of them expressed deep gratitude for their time together.

“Sometimes the most obvious and simple answer is just the right one: attending the ‘Finding Our Way Home’ gathering felt just like home to me.”

—**Jorge Espinel**, Seminarian

“I don’t have many opportunities to interact with colleagues of color, and it has been a tremendous experience to realize the commonalities we have and the struggles we face...this gives us a time to come together [to] unpack them and figure out how we can best serve our congregations. Another appealing thing about this retreat was the service project we did this year. It was the perfect opportunity to...not only learn but get involved in a project that will support the community.”

—**Claudia Jimenez**, Religious Educator

“The religious professionals of color retreat...allows us to re-engage, rejuvenate, re-stimulate, and remind ourselves of the beauty and richness of our tradition of Unitarian Universalism, and what *we* bring as religious professionals of color. It is a wonderful, wonderful way to affirm all of that.”

—**Qiyamah Rahman**, Minister



Photos of service group and Village sign: Qiyamah Rahman;
Close-up photo: Yielbonzie Charles Johnson;
Trio photo: Alicia Forde



Upcoming Event:

Mark your calendars and share the great news! The **Multicultural Leadership School for Youth and Young Adults of Color** will once again take place in Boston this summer. The conference will be held from July 27–31, 2012, and is open to youth and young adults ages 15-30. Applications are due May 15th. To apply and find out more information, visit www.uua.org/re/youth/identity-based/color/158493.shtml.

Hands photo by Lauren Mercier

Finding Our Way Home, continued

“The experience gave me a renewed energy and commitment to serve my congregation where I am one of the very few. The most important thing was to know that others are doing the same work as I am.”

—**Yuri Yamamoto**, Music Director

“This event speaks to many of our deepest-held values as Unitarian Universalists and provides a critical space for religious professionals of color—from ministers to musicians and DREs—but it also really helps us overcome the isolation that so many of us feel as people of color within Unitarian Universalism...And the folks here at the retreat each year are the folks who are at the leading edge of ensuring that our faith is relevant for the next generation.”

—**Joseph Santos-Lyons**, Minister

Exciting Resource Update:

Based on feedback from mosaic makers like you, our team has released a revised edition of our popular resource “**Keep Talking, Start Doing: Ten Ways to Deepen Your Congregation's Multiculturalism Journey.**” This resource is chock-full of ideas and links to help folks at any level of engagement take the work deeper. Check it out here: www.uua.org/multiculturalism/introduction/185106.shtml. We look forward to hearing your feedback!

Road to Justice GA

One of the ways that many of us are preparing for Justice General Assembly in Phoenix is by holding Spanish-language discussion groups.

These informal gatherings are an informal way for congregations and leaders to socialize while brushing up on their Spanish skills. One such group was recently revived at the UUA's Boston offices. **Almorzando Juntos/Lunching Together** meets regularly and invites all comers, regardless of experience level. Many of the lunches have focused on teaching basic phrases and vocabulary; our next gathering will focus on selections from “**Las Voces del Camino,**” the UUA's Spanish-language hymnal. And congregations are holding similar discussion groups and salons: **Community Church of New York, NY, UU Congregation of Central Nassau, NJ, and First Parish in Cambridge, MA** are all offering Spanish discussion groups! Email catalyst@uua.org for tips on how to start a group in your community.

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



Janice Marie Johnson

Multicultural Growth Director



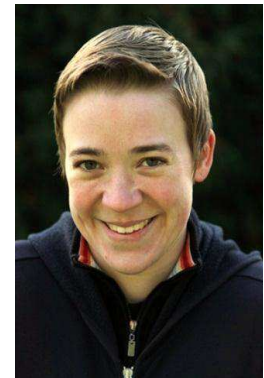
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