

Top Ten Tips for Supporting Newly Bridged Young Adults

As a Unitarian Universalist religious community, we all minister to and with youth; this should not end when they graduate or move out of town. It enriches our congregations to remain in touch with former youth congregants and to welcome and include newly bridged young adults into our communities.

These tips are just a few ideas to get you started. They include a variety of activities and can be easily adapted to your community's unique strengths and needs:

- 1) Reach out to bridged young adults to **share in the leadership on social justice issues** or join in events and actions happening during the bridgers' home breaks.
- 2) **Invite youth choir alums to perform** at holiday services. For young adults that move into town, invite them to join your church's choir.
- 3) Ask a bridger to **write a brief article for the congregational bulletin** about their new life experiences and how it impacts their faith.
- 4) **Send a care package!** Everyone loves to get treats in the mail. Fill it with healthy snacks, or have a group at your congregation bake cookies. You can include personal notes, fun small gifts, and information on connecting with UU religious communities where your bridgers live.
- 5) Hold a special party or dinner to **welcome back your bridgers** when they return home for the holidays.
- 6) Anyone in the congregation can **send a note or card** to remind a bridger that they are still thought of and will always have a spiritual home.
- 7) If your congregation includes a number of crafters, **make a community quilt, afghan, or prayer-shawl** for the bridgers to take with them into their new life.
- 8) If you hear of a bridger that has recently moved into your area, **invite them to a Sunday service or community activity**. Offer pick-ups and drop-offs, since transportation can frequently be a challenge for young people.
- 9) Consider partnering with a local college or university to **establish or maintain campus ministry programming**. The UUA's resource *What's Right for our Congregation? Levels of Campus Ministry Engagement* (PDF, 6 pages - http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/yacm/levels_engagement.pdf) is a great place to start, and *Being More Visible, Changing More Lives* (PDF, 71 pages - http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/yacm/bmvcml_handbook.pdf) has detailed ideas to make this feasible for a congregation of any size or energy level.
- 10) Remember that most young adults have busy schedules and competing responsibilities; engagements with shorter time commitments are more likely to be welcome, such as **regular once a month Sunday evening service, a monthly brunch, or a small group ministry program** that meets on a week night.

