



# JPD Newsletter

Connecting all Unitarian Universalists in the Joseph Priestley District:  
Southern New Jersey, Delaware, Eastern and Central Pennsylvania, Maryland,

September-October, 2007

District of Columbia, Northern Virginia Vol. 13 No. 1

## **Fund Campaign, Open Space, Sanctuary Among New Ideas Presented at GA**

Presented in speeches, booklets and fliers at GA was a description of the UUA's five-year, comprehensive fund-raising campaign to generate \$20 million in immediate resources and \$30 million in legacy covenants.

The campaign is the result of three years of extensive research. Through surveys, focus groups, discussions, the UUA asked how the association could most help congregations. The answer was: "Help us grow!"

It was pointed out that there are the same number of members that the denomination had at consolidation in 1961 and, although the U.S. population has grown, UUs have become a smaller percentage of the church-going public.

It was felt that this is a moment of opportunity, with many Americans tired of public discourse dominated by conservative religious voices.

One of the new features at GA was Open Space Technology, created to discuss democratically issues of "strategic importance to the UUA Board of Trustees."

An overriding question was: "In today's complex world, what is our mission as a faith community?"

Major themes emerging from these many opinions were: the need to invest resources in youth ministry; commitment toward becoming an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural institution; raise awareness of U.S. immigration issues.

Then, at a workshop titled, "Welcoming the Stranger: A Just Immigration Policy," UU churches were called on to support a new-old idea—actually, an ancient one—of Sanctuary to be provided to immigrant families who were in danger of being deported as a result of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) activities and raids.

Since the 1980's, UU congregations have been actively involved in the Sanctuary movement. In May of this year, the UUA became the first national, religious denomination to endorse this movement.

It was recognized that congregations could offer Sanctuary to a limited number of families and that a review of their background and needs was required.

## **UU Congregation of York Initiates "Cool Ties" Project for Troops in Iraq**

A member of the UU Congregation of York, PA, who has a son serving in Iraq, has initiated a project to provide "cool ties" for U.S. troops in that country.

The "cool tie" is a long, thin, cotton tube that contains polymer crystals, which, when soaked in water for 15 minutes and tied around the neck, provide a cooling comfort for the soldiers serving in a country with 100-degree plus summer temperatures. A similar technique is used for helmet coolers. Sewers are already at work on 50 kits.

## **Germantown UUs Sponsor "Drums Not Guns" for Philadelphia Anti-Violence Efforts**

Unitarian Society of Germantown, Philadelphia, PA sponsored a "Drums Not Guns" project, in partnership with non-profit Musicopia, the Philadelphia police, and public schools in response to the city's rising gun violence.

Following a concert provided by an elementary school drum line and a Salvation Army jazz band, one musical instrument was donated to a public school with a music program for each gun collected. A second event is planned, including an opportunity for the donation of used musical instruments to be given to children at risk of violence.

## **Harford County Fellowship Knits Shawls for Victims of Domestic Violence**

Members of the UU Fellowship of Harford County, Churchville, MD are knitting, crocheting, and weaving shawls for women, victims of domestic abuse, who are under the protection of the Harford County Family Justice Center, which also serves as a distribution point for the shawls.

The Fellowship's project is part of a national effort called "Sheila's Shawls and Paul's Scarves," honoring Wisconsin Sen. Paul and Sheila Wellstone, who contributed greatly to domestic violence awareness and prevention. Along with one of their daughters, both were killed in a plane crash in 2002.

So far, all but two of the eleven shawls knitted by Fellowship members last spring have been distributed.

## Summer's the Time for Partner Church Visits

A contingent of a dozen adults and youth from the UU Church in Cherry Hill, NJ was among a number of summer "up close and personal" visits to Partner UU churches in Eastern Europe and India.

The group visited its partner church in Transylvania and helped to refurbish this walled church and undertook other repairs and chores.

Two members of Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, Alexandria, VA visited its Transylvanian Partner church. Earlier in the year, a member also visited Mount Vernon's second Partner Church in the Khasi Hills, India. The Church was also host to Transylvanian Bishop Szabo in June.

Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda, MD also planned a Youth Pilgrimage to its Partner Church community in Transylvania this summer.

River Road UU Congregation, Bethesda, MD has established a partnership with the Unitarian Church of Kyrden in India's Khasi Hills. River Road has invited its Partner Church contact to visit the U.S. next year.

If that Northeastern area of India seems a far-off place for Unitarians, here are some statistics: 10,000 Unitarians, 37 churches and several Unitarian-operated schools.

## Vegetables Everywhere at UU of Silver Spring

If you visit the grounds of UU Church of Silver Spring, MD you may find trees, shrubbery, and flowers, but you'll also find lots and lots of vegetables.

Thirteen members of UU Church of Silver Spring, MD established a CSA, or a group drop-off site, for local Community-Supported Agriculture.

Each of the thirteen bought eight full shares of fresh, organic vegetables from a local farm family, thus committing themselves to being responsible stewards of the environment and living one of the church's Visions.

## UUs Put Hands to Saws for Building Projects

Members of Towson UU Church, Lutherville, MD had the joy of seeing two families enter the homes they now own. The houses were restored by Towson volunteers, working weekends and some weekdays from March to the end of June.

Volunteers from thirteen area churches cooperated in this rehabilitation in partnership with Chesapeake Habitat.

Other UUs that put their hands to saw and hammer were nearly a dozen members of the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg. They volunteered for the church-sponsored Rebuilding Together Greater Harrisburg, that makes home improvements and repairs on homes of low-income elderly and disabled citizens.

For one home, volunteers repaired doors, cleaned and repaired gutters, painted porches, rebuilt steps and railings, and completed other needed repairs.

## News About Our Ministers

In August, Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster began serving as interim minister at Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church, Alexandria, VA and Rev. Paul Langston-Daley joined UU Fellowship of Pottstown, PA as acting minister.

**What We Care About....**Through its Split Plate collections, **Towson UU Church, Lutherville, MD** collected, from January 1 through June 30, 2007, \$5,334 for a variety of area, non-profit agencies. The total represented a 96 percent increase for the same period in 2006. ...Members of the **UU Congregation of the Susquehanna Valley, Northumberland, PA** turned out for the summer's Selinsgrove Relay for Life, and helped raise more than \$210,000 for the American Cancer Society.

**The Legislative Front...** UU Legislative Ministry of Maryland was active in helping to pass or defeat several bills: Clean Cars Act, passed, to be signed by governor; two bills adding a section to the Maryland constitution, making valid only a marriage between a man and a woman, defeated; Darfur Protection Act, calling for divestiture from the Republic of Sudan, passed both houses, signed by governor.

**JPD Women and Religion — Fall Retreat  
October 12-14, 2007  
at Saint Raphaela Mary Retreat Center, Haverford, PA**

### "A Weekend to Change Your Life"

(based on the book of this title by Joan Anderson)

**Leaders: Barbara Vaughn, Heather Gehron-Rice**

The retreat will offer a time apart, with space to ponder, a place to share, to connect with other like-minded women, and to enjoy free time.

"We shall take the heritage from the women in our lives, natural or adopted, look at where we are and where we want to go from here. Learn what to let go of and what to cling to."

The weekend begins Friday evening and continues through Sunday lunch. For more information: <http://www.jpduua.org>

### Joseph Priestley District of the UUA

100 W. 10th St., Suite 1008, Wilmington, DE 19801  
302-778-4564; Fax: 302-778-4590; [office@jpduua.org](mailto:office@jpduua.org)

**District President: Elyse Reznick**

**District Executive: Rev. Dr. Richard G. Speck**

**District Administrator: Cristina Sanchis**

**Administrative Assistant: Jillian Conway**

**Director for Growth and Extension: Pat Infante**

**Acting Dir. for Lifespan Faith Dev.: Rev. Lyn Cox**

**Director for YA & Campus Ministry: Christopher Sims**

**Development, Director: Joan Priest**

**Coordinator of Youth Activities: Kathy Smith**

**District UUA Trustee: Chuck Woodridge**

**JPD web: [www.jpduua.org](http://www.jpduua.org)**

**Editor: Bette Austin, E-mail: [office@jpduua.org](mailto:office@jpduua.org)**

**JPD Newsletter is published six times a year.**

**Deadline, Nov.-Dec. Issue: Oct. 10, 2007.**