

Social Justice Annual Report
2018-2019
Jean N. Bowen, Chairperson

The UUCSC Social Justice Umbrella encompasses many justice and reform efforts by our committed congregants. Approximately 40 individuals are active participants in outreach to the community and education efforts spread over 9 different committees. The collaboration of committees gets together to review accomplishments and keep each other up to date. Please review the following reports and extend warmth and gratitude to the activists and volunteers for their dedication and amazing work.

“The kindest hearts expect no reward and deserve it all the more.” Anonymous

Immigration: Dorie Lawson

Dorie and Tom Lawson, members of the Racial Justice team received training and served as volunteer host for the Sanctuary sponsored by the Side With Love team from First Unitarian Church, Providence. A forum was held with Katherine Ahlquist, Side With Love to inform our congregation about the Sanctuary. Three additional UUCSC members, including John Glasheen, Sue Strakoch and Rev. DL Helfer received host training and are prepared to serve as volunteers.

A fundraiser was conducted by the Racial Justice team over three Sundays to support Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas with their efforts to help refugees arriving from the southern border. The \$600 will purchase food and other necessities to be used by migrants as they travel to their destinations throughout the United States.

Members of Racial Justice teamed with members of Side With Love in sponsoring a talk by noted immigration rights author and activist Aviva Chomsky who spoke about the challenges confronting Latin American asylum seekers.

Green Task Force - Lisa Petrie, Chair

Members include Jan Craemer, John Glasheen, Larry Kelland, Suzanne Marcy and Jean Bowen. The loss of Robert Malin in June, 2018 was a major blow to the Task Force. We miss his friendship, his passion, dedication and his talents as a videographer and photographer. We continue the work, but our capacity has been diminished.

We hosted and organized our 8th annual local foods banquet on 9/21/18. This is a potluck featuring local and sustainable foods with live music and information on how to get involved in environmental action locally. We held a postcard writing action calling on Governor Raimondo and Senator Whitehouse to oppose the Burrillville power plan and the Field Point LNG facility during Coffee hour on 10/28 and again on 12/16.

Two of our members organized the UU Legislative Ministry Annual Meeting at Westminster Unitarian Church on April 7 and nearly all of us attended along with others from the Social Justice Team and the congregation. This is a meeting of Rhode Island UU's to hear about the most pressing issues before the General Assembly and vote on the top 3. This year our priorities are protecting the environment, women's reproductive rights and reforming redistricting.

We partnered with Rhode Islanders for Safe Technology to host a screening of the documentary Generation Zapped, about the health risks associated with wifi and cell phone towers on 4/26. UUCSC Wellness Team cosponsored.

Women's Huddle - Barbara Holzman and Gail Burchard

Activists keep up the pressure on the Rhode Island Legislators to pass the Reproductive Health Care Act to codify Roe v. Wade. Outreach to legislators thru massive postcard writing, phone calls and visits to the Legislature took place on a regular basis in members homes and during coffee hour. The Huddle encourages members to visit their legislators at the State House.

The Womxn Project - Jean Bowen

A Forum "Demystifying the State House" with Rep. Teresa Tanzi and Senator Bridget Valverde was co-sponsored by the Womxn Project, Jordan Hevenor and Jocelyn Foye and the Racial Justice Committee organized with 60 community people attended.

Postcard writing to State Legislators took place over the year on Sundays after services to promote and advocate for the Reproductive Health Care Act.

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense - Jean Bowen

Jean presented a Sunday service in July on Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense, RI Chapter, also featuring Barbara Swanson of Narragansett and a Survivor of gun violence.

Suzanne Marcy, Val Follet, Aline Couture, Jean Burke, Mary Alice Kimball, Sky Kimball all took part in RI chapter meetings, visits to the Capitol to advocate for gun sense legislation, attend legislative hearings and to grow the gun sense movement. Participants also tabled Moms Demand Action materials in other church fairs and events.

Jonnycake Center, Peace Dale - Mary and David Fulton

Congregants regularly donate food goods to the Jonnycake Center. In January and February, 2019 there was a food scarcity that we responded to. Mary and David pick up our goods and deliver to the donation center on a regular basis.

Disability Justice Team - Betsy Dalton

The Disability Justice Team reports the following accomplishments:

- Submitted and received the successful award of an access grant from the Paul V. Sherlock Center at Rhode Island College of \$2,500 to assist UUCSC with the installation of an accessible door opening system at the top of our ramp entrance.
- Overseeing completion of the door opening system, completed 4/30/19.
- Set up registration system for door pin codes for UUCSC entry via ramp
- Expanded access for individuals with visual impairments through acquisition of sets of large print hymnals for use by the congregation.
- Wrote “A Commitment to accessibility” statement published in the January, 2019 UUCSC newsletter and submitted to the UUA to consider for publication in their journal.
- Met with Rev. DL to review and revise the accessibility statement of the OOS each week to make it broader and more inclusive.
- Began to explore possibility of installing an elevator or lift for access between floors of our building. Most quotes are extremely expensive.

Points of focus for 2019-2010:

- Work with others to help finalize an accessible seating plan for the sanctuary and post seating chart in sanctuary for future reference.
- Expand our understanding and outreach to persons with intellectual challenges.
- Work with facilities to have safety banisters installed on ramp to choir area and middle of main outside entrance steps.
- Continue to explore ways to reduce anxiety during crowding in Oneto Room functions.
- Explore acquisition of accessible van for UUCSC transport.
- Review and consider proposal for improvement of UUCSC sound system to increase audio access for all.

Dining for Women - Gail Burchard

Dining for Women, a non-profit, has 480 chapters in the U.S and over 8000 participants sharing meals together and donating what they would have spent dining out. Through the continued grant program, advocacy, member education, engagement and partnerships, DFW is the largest educational giving circle dedicated to transforming lives and eradicating poverty in the developing world.

This year our Oneto Room is host to Dining for Women Potlucks. Although it is a separate non-profit we agreed that this program be included in our cooperative work together to be included in the Social Justice Team. The monthly potlucks are well attended with 20-25 individuals coming on the first Tuesday of each month. The group has volunteer members presenting an organization each month. In the summer we move from the Oneto Room to members homes. Since its first successful year total donations to Dining for Women grantees total **\$10,829**.

Domestic Violence Resource Center, Faith Alliance - Donna Caldwell

Representing our Congregation, Donna attends meetings of the Faith Alliance, a n advisory group of clergy and lay leaders from community congregations. This is an opportunity to hear about new policy initiatives, local resources and to support the role of the faith community in healing victims and holding perpetrators accountable. Members share upcoming events and other news from their congregations. Meetings are held bi-monthly or as scheduled.

Guest at Your Table - Mary Fulton

The Guest at Your Table fundraising effort the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee raised **\$1870.79**. Approximately \$1425. Of that amount will be matched by the Shelter Rock Congregation. Also, \$554.50 which was half of the donations made at the Christmas Eve service, has been sent to the UUSC. Due to the generosity of our congregation UUSC will have \$3830.29 to spend in support of immigrants. Thank you so very much for your warm hearts and open hands.

UUCSC Equal Exchange Product Sales - Nessa Richman

The Equal Exchange sales table has been open most Sundays since regular services began after Labor Day. The set up is condensed utilizing less space in the Oneto Room without a reduction in sales. Products most popular are Ginger Tea, African Roots, Midnight Sun and Mind-Body-Soul coffee. The Extreme Dark, Panama and Lemon-Ginger-Pepper bars top the chocolate favorites. Almonds, Cashews and dried mango all sell well. As of April 23 \$749.25. Is in their account.

Social Justice is at the heart of Equal Exchange. The growth of these crops allow us to show the world that ethical supply chains are viable. They support the producer partners abroad and have stood alongside them in their struggles to build a more sustainable trade system to strengthen an internal democracy as a worker co-op.

Nessa Richman, Pam Brightman, Rosemary Gullianni and Essjay Foulkrod have all had the significant job of inventory, set up and ordering product. Finances are managed by Rosemary. They have requested additional volunteers to participate this fall. Please speak to Nessa!

Rev. DL Helfer

Our minister has been his usual active self working on social justice issues, working with RI Interfaith Power and Light to renew their activities. He has agreed to serve on their soon to be reestablished board. DL serves on the RI Council of Churches. DL has continued to be supportive on the fights for reproductive justice, affordable housing and fair pay, the rights of those seeking asylum and climate change. With our support, DL spent two weeks at Annunciation House in January serving those arriving at our borders. Since his return he has renewed energy to work with AMOR and other groups collaboratively.

Overall, this has been a year where DL has studied and learned more about movement building, about the need for collective liberation rather than solely activism on singular issues and more effective ways to act in solidarity. It is work he will continue next year and continue to bring to UUCSC.

Share The Plate - Mary Alice Kimball

This committee with members Essjay Foulkrod, Jean Bowen and Mary Alice Kimball meet regularly to review requests for donations from the community and congregation members. Our priority is Justice over Charity. Share the Plate schedule has been revised this year to roll the summer months into Spring and Fall months. We continue to see an increase in the Congregation's half of the plate as well as the donations raised for the non-profits, all of which have the tax exempt IRS status of 501 © 3.

2018		
July / August	Youth Pride	\$341.00
September / October	Gaits of Harmony	\$481.50
November /December	UUCSC Electronic Door	\$508.50
2019		
January / February	Nature's Trust RI	\$592.50
March / April	AMOR	\$483.50
May / June / July	Habitat for Humanity	
August / September /October	South Kingstown Land Trust Accessible Trails	
November / December	Black and Pink <i>Black & Pink is an open family of LGBT prisoners and "free world" allies who support each other</i>	

Collaboration Many of our committees work with other organizations to impact the outcome of the social justice issues we care about. These include: Witness for Peace, Taylor Ellis; The Collective, Sarah Markey; 1st Unitarian Church, Providence; Nature's Trust RI, AMOR, Alliance to Mobilize our Resistance; Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry, Rhode Island for Safe Technology, Domestic Violence Resource Center, Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty, South County Housing Authority

RACIAL JUSTICE

Members of Committee—Jean Bowen, Val Follett, John Glasheen, Penny Hall
Carolyn Hurdis, Dori Lawson, Carol Layne, Susan Strakosch, Russell Stokes

The Racial Justice Committee has met monthly this year with three focuses—education, outreach, and legislation.

EDUCATION---

In October Rev DL led a book discussion on *Kindred* by Octavia Butler.

In February we cosponsored with the Women's Project a Legislative Forum "Demystifying the Statehouse" for our congregation and members of the community to better understand the process for bills to become laws. Rep Teresa Tanzi and Sen Bridget Valverde were our guest legislators. About 60 people attended.

In May we sponsored with First Unitarian a lecture by Aviva Chomsky, a professor at Salem State in MA and an authority on immigration and labor rights.

OUTREACH—

A member of the committee has attended Champagne Heights monthly Board meetings to reinforce our interest in residents in low income housing. Susan Jacobsen, a member of our congregation, is now a member of the Champagne Heights Board.

Members of the committee organized a drive for donations to help with needs of immigrants entering the US in El Paso, TX.

Five members from our congregation were trained to provide sanctuary support at the First Unitarian. Five others have been trained to be court advocates on immigration cases.

Racial Justice has also been represented at the RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty and helped with their legislative efforts to end discriminatory housing practices and to expand access to early childhood education.

LEGISLATION—

Some members attended legislative sessions at the RI General Assembly supporting various issues. We had congregants send post cards to legislators encouraging them to vote for Reproductive Rights, more restrictive gun legislation., an end to discriminatory housing practices, and an expansion of preschool education.