

Our Stories — Kai Migliaccio

As young children Kai Migliaccio and her older brother Teal really loved Pancake Sundays and they protested heartily when Sunday morning religious education classes became the norm instead. Seeking spiritual community for their children, Peter Migliaccio and Erika Steele had joined the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County. Once she got over the pancake disappointment Kai really took to the spiritual community. She continued to attend RE classes, eventually participated in Youth Cons, graduated from the RE program, connected with older UU youths on the URI campus and today, at the age of 22, is finishing up a two year stint on the UUCSC Board of Directors.

Kai (rhymes with pie) just graduated from URI with a degree in Environmental Science and Management. The virtual commencement necessitated by the Covid Pandemic suited Kai's shy tendencies just fine; besides, she was eager to get on with life beyond college. The Pandemic did not thwart her plans to relocate to Los Angeles. As soon as the public health recommendations had stabilized the rise of the virus (and before the inevitable spike in cases as the country reopens) she was able to travel across country on a train, sanitized frequently and filled to half capacity. Traveling by train is more gentle to the environment than air travel—and a great way to see the country!

In recent years Kai has realized that her interests, while still revolving around the environment, had much to do with the possible community aspects of the work. She has moved to LA to be part of an intentional community—living and working with a small group of people dedicated to matching their actions to their values. This includes buying local, using bicycles, buses and carpooling for transportation and growing their own food as much as possible in their urban setting. Currently the community is working on projects like the Monarch Fellowship—teaching people the importance of planting milkweed (essential to the existence of the Monarch butterfly) and even supplying the plants. Another focus, the Urban Gardening Project, involves the propagation and planting of native gardens in LA. Of course everything is different under the cloud of the Covid Pandemic. The educational aspect of the work at the moment consists of online postings and communications. Kai is looking forward to eventually being able to physically work in the community with local families.

Two years ago when she was asked to join the UUCSC Board of Directors Kai was at first hesitant, thinking she was already too busy between working and going to school full time. But as she finishes up her term (extended by a couple of months due to the delayed Annual Meeting) she feels that it was time really well spent. As the liaison between the Board and the Director of Religious Education, she worked to support DRE Bethany Vaccaro in an exciting period as the number of children in our congregation increased. That support was a two-way street and she learned a lot in the process. She says she has developed increased patience and deep listening capacity and learned that melding the practical nitty gritty of work to be done with a spiritual aspect can lighten the load and make the work easier. She has a greater understanding of the operational side of running a community such as ours. Perhaps most importantly as she embarks on the next stage of her life, she has seen first-hand the power of positive energy and intention.

Elizabeth Donovan, June 2020