

the communicator

THE NEWSLETTER OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION

Nov/Dec, 2009 | Vol 27, Issue 2

Presenting UUWF's 2009 Equity & Justice and Margaret Fuller Grant Recipients



Equity and Justice Grants
Funding bold, innovative projects that effect positive social change

Friends of Kunya, Friday Harbor, WA: \$3,000 for "Clean Water for Kunya"

Our grant will help install a pump and tank-treat system to bring water from Lake Victoria to Kunya Village, Kenya, where it will be treated and distributed. Girls who now spend an average of six hours a day fetching water will have more time for school and will lead safer lives, avoiding both illness from polluted water and the danger of attack on the route to and from the lake.

Rock Women Group, Nairobi, Kenya: \$4,000 for "Kenya Child Labour Project"

A coalition of school teachers from Nairobi's poorest areas, members of Rock Women work to strengthen the rights of their city's child laborers. Our grant will help them broaden a skills training program for child workers – particularly girls – in safe, sustainable income-generating work. It will also help provide leadership training to teachers preparing to expand their participation in the group.

Southwest UU Women: \$2,500 for "ICU*UW Global Sisters Groups in Action"

The action plan of the International Convocation of U*U Women seeks to improve

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Honoring the Guidance and Love Of Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley

Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley, who died in December 2006, served UUWF as a member of our board of trustees and of our first Equity and Justice Grants Panel. Her many other accomplishments included her work as a mentor to women preparing for the UU ministry, especially those who identify as women of color, Latina or Hispanic. To honor her memory, UUWF has created a grants program bearing her name which benefits this same population.

We gratefully acknowledge the help of Marjorie's husband, Rev. Clyde Grubbs, with this effort. When the UUA asked him for suggestions for using donations made to the Association in Marjorie's memory, Clyde recommended our new grants program. The first grants – of \$1,500 each for four recipients – were awarded in June.

We recently asked those recipients to share reflections on their paths to the UU ministry.

Natalie Fenimore Making More Space for Diversity

As a UU religious educator for more than a decade, I increasingly felt that my interaction with children, youth and families was ministry. I moved into the UUA Religious Education Credentialing Program and became a Credentialed Religious Educator, Master's Level – and during the process



found myself challenged to learn and grow. I enrolled in Wesley Theological Seminary and am now a candidate for UU ordained ministry.

On this journey, I have also had the experience of being the only person of color – or one of less than a handful – in the UU congregation where I am a member and in the three UU congregations that I have served. And I have raised my children as the only children of color in their RE classes.

There has been the struggle to "just" be the person that I am while other congregants see me as a representative of my "race" and a depository for their feelings about race and racism. I hope that my ministry both as a religious educator and an ordained minister will be a part of our congregations making more space for diversity.

There is so much learning and growth and transformation available to a UU that lives into the fullness of its theology of inclusiveness, celebration, wholeness, and love. Receiving the Wheatley Grant from the UU Women's Federation is an affirmation of this hope.

Natalie Fenimore, Gaithersburg, VA, is Director of Religious Education at the UU Congregation of Fairfax, Oakton, VA.

Dr. Denise Hall An Ennobling of My Journey

The Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Scholarship is an honor to receive. I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity afforded by the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation in the name of a woman who embodied the highest aspirations of Unitarian Universalism. Her-story has provided an ennobling of my journey within this faith tradition.



With the financial support given, I have been able to continue with my matriculation at the Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colorado. For me, this support has eased the economic challenges and reality of being a candidate minister. I intend to continue with my theological studies toward a master's of divinity, with an emphasis on peace, justice, and reconciliation from an eco-womynist perspective. Further, I am humbled by the legacy and example of Reverend Bowens-Wheatley as the path unfolds in my spiritual journey.

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International Convocation, Bowens-Wheatley Grants Make 2009 a Memorable Year for UUWF

*Following are remarks delivered by President
Linda Lu Burciaga at a UUWF breakfast at this
year's General Assembly.*

We could not be more pleased than to have Rev. Clyde Grubbs with us this morning. Clyde is the beloved husband of our own Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley, whom we honor today and throughout this General Assembly.

When Marjorie died, the UUWF Board looked for a way to honor her memory. Her friend and colleague, Rev. Danielle Di Bona, reminded us of Marjorie's support of women seminarians, adding that many women owe their successful ministries to the guidance and love that Marjorie provided.

So our new Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Grants Program supports aspirants to our ministry who identify as women of color, Latins or Hispanic.

Also this year UUWF was privileged to play a modest part in a hugely successful undertaking: the first International Convocation of UU Women, represented here by Laura Nagel and Barbara Beach, two of the many women who made this important event happen. In February I was honored to represent UUWF at this meeting of over 600 women from 17 countries and 38 states.

Working in small Global Sisters Groups, we reviewed the many critical issues facing women world-wide and set three priorities: education, health care (including reproductive rights), and ending violence against women and children. Implementing action plans around these issues will go on at a congregational level, and we have given one of our workshop slots to the convocation organizers to bring information about their action plan to you. We thank past UUWF President Arlene Johnson, our representative to the Convocation Advisory Committee, and the groups that worked in coalition to plan it, in particular Southwest UU Women, UU Women and Religion and UU Partner Church Council.

Our Vice President of Communications, Rev. Marti Keller, also attended the Convocation,

and the two of us participated in a meeting about next steps with Convocation organizers before the gathering adjourned. And since then we have been in conversation with other UU women's groups about other ways we can collaborate together, conversations the board and I look forward to continuing.

At the Convocation, I had the great pleasure of a first, in-person meeting with another of our bright lights: Orelia Busch, the UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues. UUWF founded the permanent endowment for this internship in the UUA's Washington Office with our \$200,000 donation and our help to the UUA in raising a matching sum.

Orelia began her work in January – excited, she said, to arrive in Washington in time to witness President Obama's inauguration. Since then she has worked with interfaith coalition partners and UUs nationwide to advocate for comprehensive sex education, increased access to abortion and contraception, and full and equal right to fair employment, military service, and marriage equality for Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender persons.

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In Memoriam: Jerry Davidoff



The UUWF joins the UU community in celebrating the life of Jerry Davidoff, who died on November 9th of complications of encephalitis. An attorney

by profession, Mr. Davidoff was a nationally active lay leader in our UU movement who served on a number of association committees, including the Commission on Appraisal and, for eight years, on the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. With his wife, Denny Davidoff – a past UUWF president and UUA moderator – Mr. Davidoff received in 2006 the UUA's Distinguished Service to the Cause of Unitarian Universalism Award.

Supporting Women of Color in Our UU Ministry

By Rev. Danielle Di Bona
Chair, Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Grants Panel

For many of us women of color who are in the UU ministry, the late Rev Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley was a friend, mentor and inspiration. Many of us were encouraged by her, challenged by her and befriended by her. Her example of ministry formed us as we watched her love the people while always speaking truth to power. Her influence is both wide and deep, and continues to affect both those of us who are in ministry and so many UUs who sit in the pews every Sunday.

Marjorie was my good friend and my mentor. We were colleagues at the Unitarian Universalist Association and I had the opportunity to learn from her almost daily. I was truly blessed by the opportunity.

Now I am honored and privileged to be the chair of the Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Grants Panel, supporting women of color preparing for our UU ministry. I encourage all members and friends of the UU Women's Federation to support this important work that, in turn, supports women of color in our ministry.

Rev. Danielle Di Bona currently serves as Chaplain and Bereavement Coordinator at AseraCare Hospice in Wellesley, MA and is a long-time member and current president of



Bowens-Wheatley Grants Panel members Rev. Danielle Di Bona, Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt and Rev. Leslie Takahashi Morris.

Diverse and Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRU-UMM).

Other members of the

Bowens-Wheatley Grants Panel are Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, senior minister at New York City's Fourth Universalist Society and a member of the UUA Board of Trustees; and Rev. Leslie Takahashi Morris, a founding member of the Thomas Jefferson District Anti-Racism Transformation Team, past moderator for All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in Durham, NC, and current co-minister at the Mt. Diablo UU Church in Walnut Creek, CA.

Honoring Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley, *CONT. FROM PAGE 1*

It is my hope that the financial support continues, broadens, and expands in all the many ways of life's abundance.

Dr. Denise Hall, Greeley, CO, holds a doctorate in veterinary science and will finish her studies at the Illiff School in 2010.

Kathleen McGregor Work I Cannot Not Do

I am the product of a Mexican-American mother and a European-American father. From earliest memory, I have been a border person, la Frontera. Not quite white, not Mexican enough to speak Spanish, not Indian, I was a girl with dark hair and eyes looking



out on the world. Having a European name afforded some privilege, but I was acutely aware of the differences, especially the physical differences, between me and the thin, blue and green eyed relatives of my father's side. As a result I learned to see the invisible and became conscious of the people who made the world run: the workers in restaurants, the gardeners, the maids. These were my people and they worked hard.

I was always a church person, loving its safety, beauty and calmness amidst the chaos of growing up. I became a Unitarian Universalist in my mid-twenties because the principles and purposes made explicit my beliefs – many of them incompatible with the Catholic Church in which I had grown up. I considered ministry early on, as I wanted to be a nun in my youth and still felt called to service. Yet, the two theological schools were too far away and expensive to a person putting herself through college.

Encouraged by Clyde Grubbs, I reconsidered ministry. His wife, Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley, became my inspiration as I learned about her remarkable body of work and legacy. Anti-racism and anti-oppression work continues to be a growing edge in our denomination. It is also where we need the most healing and yet have the most potential. For me, this is work I cannot not do, and it will serve as the cornerstone of my ministry.

Kathleen McGregor, Pasadena, CA, is a student at Claremont School of Theology.

Jodi Tharan A Gift of Time

As a practicing Jew and with Apache ancestors from my dad's side of our family, my identity as a multi-ethnic person is both sus-

taining and complicated. Many people do not recognize my ethnicity and make assumptions:



I hear things one should never say to another human being because I "pass." Others want me to choose one "side" and leave the "other" behind. Obviously, that is not truly possible, as I am one, whole person.

For a long time, this was simply painful. Within a UU context, I have learned to frame these micro-aggressions as opportunities to learn and sometimes, to teach. Classism also has a huge impact on my call, for although the United States claims to be a classless society, this is simply not true.

Presently, I am focused on how we can create vibrant, inclusive worship. The Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley grant is such an honor and a gift of time that will help me participate as a member of the Starr King School for the Ministry's Chapel Committee during the coming academic year.

Jodi Tharan, El Cerrito, CA, is in her third year in Starr King's M.Div program and is a co-author with the UUA's Tapestry of Faith program.

IALRW to Celebrate “Centennial Congress” in India

by Kathy Matsui
IALRW President

The International Association of Liberal Religious Women Centennial Congress will be held in Kochi (Cochin), Kerala State, India on Sept. 1-4, 2010, when we gather to celebrate our 100th anniversary as the worlds oldest women’s international interfaith organization.

Kochi is on the south-western tip of the Indian coast in the state of Kerala. Women there enjoy a high rate of literacy and social status. Kochi also has a long tradition of religious amity. The major



religions are Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. There are smaller communities of Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism and Buddhism. Following Hinduism, the Christian population of Kochi is the largest in India.

Since Kochi has such a diverse, multi-cultural community – where all religious denominations live in peaceful co-existence – one might say that there has never been a conference site more appropriate for inter-faith dialogue and cooperation.

The conference theme is “Women in Action.” As key speakers, we’ll invite women from various walks of life who are active in their respective careers, working to nurture care for women and children – especially those in poor, difficult circumstances.

One of the speakers, Prateep Ungsongtham Hata, is the founder of The Duang Prateep Foundation’s “New Life Project,” which helps children from the slums of Bangkok, Thailand. The children, many of whom

have a background of drug abuse, go to a rural center where they receive conventional schooling and vocational training, and participate in agricultural work

In addition to learning from our guest speakers, we plan to conduct study groups on religious cooperation, peace education, ecology, and human dignity. Community visits to various religious institutions are also being planned.

Please plan to join us as we get together in southern India for a grand celebration of our longevity...and to help plan our course for the next 100 years. And check out our new website at www.IALRW.org, where you can find out more about us and also sign up to join the IALRW.

*Reprinted with permission from the Fall 2009 issue of Global Sisters, the online newsletter of the International Convocation of U*U Women: <http://portal.icuuw.com/icuuw/Newsletter/ICUUFallNewsletter09.pdf>*

Grant Recipients, *CONT. FROM PAGE 1*

women’s lives through anti-poverty and empowerment initiatives in education, health care (including reproductive rights) and preventing violence against women and children. Our grant will help support development of the ICU*UW’s Global Sisters Groups Council and Online Community.

The Real Wealth of Portland Project: \$2,000 for “Dr. Riane Eisler & The Real Wealth of Portland Workshop”

Our grant helped the Economic Action Group of the First Unitarian Church of Portland, OR, bring a workshop on their caring economics project – inspired by Eisler’s book *The Real Wealth of Nations* – to GA 2009. The workshop educated participants about the caring economics concept and Portlanders’ involvement in initiatives advocating for children, sustainability, and other aspects of a durable local economy.

UU Church of Marblehead, MA: \$2,500 for “Pipelines for Clean Water Distribution”

Between 1999 and 2002 violent conflict involving Christian and Muslim communities took place on the Indonesian island of Hal-mahera. It left many women in the village

of Duma the sole breadwinners for their families and also destroyed the pipeline that supplied clean water to the village. This burdened Duma’s women and girls with the work of fetching water from a nearby lake at the same time that they were moving into new roles as community leaders. Our grant will help replace the pipeline, saving these women and girls time and energy they can devote to other activities.

Margaret Fuller Grants Supporting UU women in scholarly, prophetic and innovative explorations of religious feminisms

The Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual, a Washington, DC-based non-profit women’s organization, received \$1,500 for “Creative Feminist Ministers – Education, Training, and Networking,” a training institute which generated resource materials currently available at www.hers.com/-water.

A grant of \$1,500 went to **Samantha Wilson of Moreno Valley, CA**, in support of “Conversations in a Beauty Parlor: Stories of Activism and Feminisms.” This work

will result in a book and website reflecting Samantha’s organizing work with youth and women in India.

Laurie James, New York, NY, received \$2,200 for “A Medley for Margaret Fuller,” a staged presentation of Fuller’s works, in observance of the 200th bicentennial of her birth.

Dr. Cynthia Grant Tucker, Cordova, TN, will use her \$1,425 grant to develop a free, web-accessible study guide to her forthcoming book, *No Silent Witness*, a biography of the Eliots: three generations of Unitarian ministers’ daughters.

The Church of the Larger Fellowship, UU, received \$2,275 in support of “In Our Mothers’ Footsteps,” a free, online course on significant women from our UU history.

The \$1,100 awarded to **Pamela Gerke, Everett, WA**, will help with production development of “Nightingale: A Musical of the Life and Passionate Nature of Miss Florence Nightingale.”

“Standing on the Side of Love” One Focus of UUWF Intern’s Work



By *Orelia Busch*
*UUWF Clara Barton Intern/
Legislative Assistant for Women’s Issues*

It has been my pleasure to serve for the past ten months as the UUWF Clara Barton Intern/Legislative Assistant for Women’s Issues at the Unitarian Universalist Association’s Washington office. Focusing primarily on reproductive justice, including comprehensive sex education, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights, I work with individual Unitarian Universalists and UUA congregations, as well as with interfaith and secular coalitions, to change United States

policy and culture on the above issues and to support effective, congregation-based action for justice.

The past few months have been an exciting time in Washington. I’m writing this article fresh on the heels of the passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which expands the definition of Federal hate crimes to include disability, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation. Many UUs, including Rev. Meg Riley, the director of Advocacy and Witness for the UUA, have been working to pass this law for over a decade; I am privileged to celebrate this victory with all of you.

This fall also marked the launch of the Standing on the Side of Love campaign, a dynamic, multi-faith public advocacy campaign that’s being run out of the UUA Washington Office. Standing on the Side of Love aims to harness love’s power to stop oppression. Our Unitarian Universalist values call us to love our neighbors and welcome the stranger, and through this campaign, we can work in solidarity with

people of many faiths and those who suffer from oppression in our communities.

I’ve enjoyed having the chance to work with and represent Standing on the Side of Love. I was drafted to help roll out the campaign at the 2009 General Assembly, and more recently I helped organize over 1,000 UUs who came to Washington, D.C., on October 11, 2009, to march for full equality for LGBT people. Marching past the White House under our big yellow banner, surrounded by signs and t-shirts proclaiming LOVE to be at the foundation of our theology and our work for justice, I felt like the whole street was my church. The same spirit moved me at the interfaith service for marriage equality in the District of Columbia on October 29. Hundreds of people gathered with leaders of all faiths and denominations, proclaiming that they Stand on the Side of Love for marriage equality in D.C.

Standing on the Side of Love and the Washington Office for Advocacy are currently working on a coordinated campaign to pass the Employment Non Discrimination Act (ENDA), which would guarantee federal protection from workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Standing on the Side of Love delivered over 8,000 petition signatures to Senators before the November 5th hearings on ENDA. Rob Keithan, director of the UUA Washington Office, and I are working closely with other faith-based organizations to collect endorsements and clergy signatures on a letter supporting ENDA, to promote an online advocacy campaign and national call-in days, and to educate people of faith about ENDA’s importance to the struggle for LGBT justice.

To learn more about how you can bring Standing on the Side of Love into your community, please go to www.standingonthesideofloveside.org. And as always, please feel free to contact me at obusch@uua.org.

Linda Lu Burciaga, *CONT. FROM PAGE 2*

We have a few fond farewells to acknowledge this morning. Much appreciation goes to Rev. Tracy Sprows-Jenks, retiring chair of our Margaret Fuller Grant Program and to Cathy Chang, rotating off as member of our Equity and Justice Grants Panel.

As sad as it is to say good bye, it’s a pleasure to welcome our new Margaret Fuller chair, Elizabeth Fisher. Liz is a life member of the UUWF and the author of the much respected curriculum, *Rise Up and Call Her Name*. The UUWF Board, in consultation with Liz and her panel, is planning activities around the Margaret Fuller Bicentennial in 2010. We’ll keep you all posted.

I also have the great pleasure of introducing you to a most hard working and devoted UUWF Board: Luz Bravo-Gleicher, liaison to our grants programs and chair of Equity and Justice; Catherine Onmelukwe, Vice President for Development; Mary Mercier, Treasurer/Secretary.

And, last but certainly not least, Rev. Marti Keller, Vice President for Communications, about whom I have some special news. I’m very pleased to announce that when my term as UUWF president ends at the close of next year’s General Assembly, Marti will be taking on all the joys and challenges of that position.

Thank you, thank you for a great year.

And, as hard as all these gals work, we couldn’t do anything without the invaluable Ellen Spencer, our Executive Administrator, our face and voice at the headquarters in Boston. Ellen, we truly admire and appreciate well over 30 years of service to the Women’s Federation. As her parents sold her into indentured servitude with UUWF at the age of four, she was a mere child when she started working for us!

And so ends a memorable year in the life of the UU Women’s Federation.

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www.uuwf.org



UU Women

*Advancing justice for women
through education and advocacy*

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that effect positive social change*

Margaret Fuller Grants
*Funding accessible projects
exploring UU religious feminisms*

Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Grants
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the UU ministry who identify as
women of color, Latina or Hispanic*

Grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000

2010 Grant Application Deadline for all programs: March 15, 2010
Applications available at uuwf.org or call the UUWF Office at 617-948-4692