

RE Happenings from Jotters June 2007 through December 2008 are archived in this file.

December 2008 RE Happenings

RE Vegetable Garden Update

Late in October several members of the Green Sanctuary Committee joined Joel Tippin of "Salt of the Earth" in beginning a garden project for our RE children. We met at UU with shovels, rakes, hoes, garden gloves, etc. and got to work digging! Thanks to Sharon Rich who introduced us to Joel. He has experience creating community gardens. So, he brought the materials necessary to build a few raised beds. He also supplied what was needed for enriching the soil. Then, Terri Kolaska went to a local garden supply shop and purchased quite a few starter plants for us to plant. There is quite a variety and she was able to buy them at wholesale price. The monies we have collected from our recycling of aluminum cans paid for everything she purchased! Now, thanks to Terri the garden is planted and starting to grow.

The children planted tomatoes, iceberg lettuce, romaine lettuce, red leaf lettuce, cabbage, cucumbers, squash, onions, collards and strawberries. With great care, the garden will flourish. It is totally organic and the vegetables are going to be delicious. The children plan on celebrating the garden's fruits by making a home grown salad!

When you have a chance, take a look at both the herb garden (in the clay pots at the west end of the building), and the vegetable garden which is located in the RE playground. Thanks kids, you have done a wonderful job!!

- Terri Kolaska

A special thanks to Terri Kolaska and Ron Watkins for watering our garden mid-week!! Thanks to their loving care we will surely have a fruitful harvest.

RE Ten Tree Challenge

The RE children have accepted a challenge to plant and adopt at least ten new trees in 2009. This is part of an initiative called the Ten Tree Challenge which is sponsored by the UU Ministry for the Earth (UUMFE).

Population growth and urban sprawl have resulted in tremendous tree loss, and cumulative harmful effects upon our environment. Our RE kids ask that you help lead the way to reverse the trend and replenish our planet's tree population.

Here's how we plan to implement the program: Adult members of the congregation simply pledge to plant and nurture a tree in 2009 & RE kids promise to provide a free tree for them before Earth Day of 2009.

If every UU congregation plants 10 trees, the result will be 10,500 new trees!!

Most churches could easily plant and adopt at least 10 every year. Trees heal our environment in many ways. They slow global warming, improve air quality, and provide shade, beauty, and much-needed infrastructure for wildlife. Together UU's could really make an impact on our environment!

For more information, or to make your 10-tree pledge, please contact Debbie Johnson at dbeckjohnson@earthlink.net

Healthy Children, Healthy Planet On Sunday, November 23rd Kurtland Davies lead the first session of "Healthy Children-Healthy Planet".

This "course" designed by NW Earth Institute, includes several sessions that address today's world of electronics kids and the fact that overall kids are spending much less time outdoors in touch with nature.

While we all agree as UU's that we should teach kids to respect our planet and the interconnectedness of all its inhabitants, we often are too busy to contemplate just how we can get them outside more! RE parents and other interested individuals will discuss how we can help kids resist cultural influences and strengthen their connection to nature.

For more information, or to join in this dialog, please contact Debbie Johnson at dbeckjohnson@earthlink.net or Kurtland and Gaia Davies at gaiadavies@gmail.com.

November 2008 RE Happenings

The RE children are very busy this fall with opportunities that allow them to demonstrate their "Faith In Action". Please read on to learn more about how our kids learn to "walk their talk"!

RE Kiva Fall Update

On October 12th, Debbie Johnson gave Lisa and I the honor of co-teaching our second Kiva lesson with the RE children. Having recently been paid back, in full, their original investment of \$25 to Maria Esther Guerrero López of Tampico Tamaulipas Mexico the decision was made by the group to re-invest.

Careful thought and deliberation was given by each of our students and they unanimously chose to loan their money to Guadalupe Contreras Tovias of Villa de García N.L. Mexico for his General Store. It was truly inspiring to see each of the children take their turn and discuss the criteria's that were important to them.

Geographic location, animal kindness and length of loan (shorter loans can be re-invested sooner) were all considered in the decision process, but ultimately Guadalupe's "...wishes to provide his children with an education so that they can better themselves, get a good job, and have a better quality of life" Seemed to unite them all. Guadalupe's total micro-loan is for \$325 and is scheduled for full repayment in four months; investment partners include individuals from five other States, Portugal, Ireland, Switzerland, Finland and Canada. For more information on their past and current loan please visit our Lenders page at <http://www.kiva.org/lender/uukids6883> - Jack S.

RE Children Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF

Thanks to all who participated in Trick-Or-Treat For UNICEF this month! This is the third year that we have collected donations and we appreciate your generosity. Through this program our RE children learn the importance of helping other children who are in need. They discover how UNICEF uses the monies collected for safe water, good nutrition, health care, and education. The lessons help our children to appreciate the difference between wants & needs and to consider circumstances different from their own. It is another great opportunity for our RE students to become active global citizens!

RE Welcomes a Guest At Your Table

Each year on the Sunday before Thanksgiving many friends and families in congregations across the US participate in the UU tradition of Guest at Your Table. This will be our third consecutive year of participation beginning on Sunday, November 23rd. By bringing home a beautiful Guest at Your Table box, families and individuals learn about how the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee puts our shared principles into action in the United States and around the world. Sharing our blessings through Guest at Your Table ensures that UUSC's human-rights work continues, while building UUSC membership. UUSC members are vitally important, as UUSC is an independent, membership-based organization that receives no funding from the UUA or the U.S. government.

Each participant takes a Guest at Your Table box home and places it in a prominent spot, often at the family meal table. When family and friends gather to enjoy their blessings, they can reflect on their blessings and then give generously to a "guest" in need.

Through the booklet Stories of Hope our RE children connect with people in the United States and around the world who are working hard to advance human rights - and protect their own rights - in partnership with UUSC. These stories will be available to you at Thanksgiving. We hope that you will join us and share with a Guest at Your Table.

If you would prefer not to bring home a box, you can take a donation envelope or support UUSC directly online at www.uusc.org -
Debbie Johnson, DRE

October 2008 RE Happenings

A Warm & Heartfelt Water Communion & Child Dedication

19 children were dedicated on Sunday, September 14th!
It was challenging to address so many families at once, But it was done so beautifully!!

The Story For All Ages was most appropriate. It told of "the river of life". Pastor Bud framed life's choices as moments when each of us decides if it is time to hold on to a branch or twig, or simply let go and ride with the water's current. The previous week the children had painted a river using watercolors. Thanks to Ashara, it adorned the windows, and created an illusion of the choppy waters we experience from time to time, as well as the smooth flowing river we welcome! The ceremony itself included water from the Children's Worship Service from the previous week in RE. It was presented by Jasmine, an RE student who represented the children. Special words were exchanged and the children received a splash from the mix of shared water. Pastor Bud gave each child a rose and together we sang "Peace Like A River". Tessa the eldest of the RE students led the children back to RE with a small candle lit from the chalice.

A great big thank you goes out to Pastor Bud for the powerful message and to the congregation for the meaningful exchange of words...

Thanks for all you do for Religious Education!! Debbie Johnson, DRE

September 2008 RE Happening

Information for RE Parents and Volunteer Teachers:

Fall Schedule for Religious Education (RE)

Drop off at 10:15 Classes 10:30-11:45 Pick up by 12:00 Please do your best to arrive by 10:30.... Thank you!!

During our RE class time children will continue to enjoy a snack, and after class they will have social time together on our playground (weather permitting), or inside with adult supervision. In any case, please know that children under age 12 must stay with our teachers until their parents arrive. Youth over age 12 may visit the adult coffee hour, if given parental permission. However, unless they are 16 or older, youth must have adult supervision when visiting coffee hour. All children should be picked up from their teachers no later than noon, and preferably after 11:45.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation. --Debbie Johnson, DRE

Upcoming RE Project:

This fall the Green Sanctuary committee and the RE kids will plant an organic garden.

Stay tuned for details, so that you can join in the fun :)

For now, check out the herb garden from summer camp. You will find it just outside RE on the west of the bldg. It's very green and flourishing... thanks to the kids' green thumbs, and a whole lot of watering by Terri & Ed Kolaska and Ron Watkins! Thank UU!

August 2008 RE Happenings

RE NEWS!

Reflections On Summer Vacation

Summer brings many things: a change of pace and a change of scenery are two of my favorites. Now, most folks would expect that this refers to lazier days and time away on vacation... Well, I did take time to sleep in late (which many of you know means until sunrise as opposed to rising at 4 am), and I did travel to spend time with family and visit exotic places like Niagara Falls. However, my change in pace and change of scenery included more hours on the job both "at the office" and "away on assignment".

"At the office"

The summer began with planning for our "Camp Creative UU." It included coordination of camp activities and over twenty adult volunteers for a program that served fourteen children ages 4-13. Opportunities for free expression through art, music, and drama resulted in a UUnique script about summer vacation. This allowed all of the children to perform in a way that featured them as UUnique individuals. The older children volunteered to record the week's events and final performance using a still camera & video recorder, while the other kids acted and sang as they told their story. Their program, which included a PowerPoint presentation and video showing, was featured at the July Potluck. Thanks to all of you who helped with the program and attended the

Potluck. I couldn't possibly list each of your names.... Please know that you are appreciated by the RE families and me.

"Away on assignment"

July brought the close of Camp Creative UU and the beginning of a personal and professional retreat for me. I traveled to The Mountain, a UU camp in Highlands, NC. There I had time to learn about many UU related topics, including the Youth Ministry, Conflict Resolution, and Pastoral Care. I was also able to connect with other DREs and build a foundation for future networking. The motto at the Mountain is to "create an environment that energizes people to work for positive change", and that's just what we did.

I also had personal time away from my own children (which is something that had not happened for three years). This served as time for free reading, personal & professional reflection, and getting close to Mother Nature. I rocked on the porch of the Lodge and read uninterrupted. I contemplated the universe as I sat on Meditation Rock, walked the Labyrinth, and scoped the 360 degree panoramic view from the Look-Out Tower. I enjoyed hikes up and down the Mountain as well as sacred moments that included a night time cloud slipping into our conference room at the Lodge.

Thanks for the opportunity to "get away". Much work was accomplished as I "embraced the diversity of life" atop The Mountain.

Stay tuned for news of the fall RE programming as we plan for the next school year, which is fast approaching....

-Debbie Johnson, DRE (Director of Religious Education)

JULY 2008 JOTTER RE Happenings:

Special Thanks:

- Thanks to Dottie & E.D. Mann for their kind hospitality... the RE Family pool party was fun for everyone :)
- Thanks to the RE parents for bringing their children to the end of school year "rehearsal" and Sunday service on June 1st... Great job everyone!!

Camp Creative UU

Soon our children & youth will spend a week creating a kid -made-movie at our second annual Camp Creative UU.

Two teams of kids will take on a challenge, and work through it in a creative & unique manner. Older kids in the group will videotape and scrapbook as they "score" their work.. Adult volunteers who share a passion for a creative approach to life will share their ideas through many forms of artistic expression. The program will take place June 30-July 4 with a Special Presentation on July 4th... please mark your calendars for this special event:

Galleria/Performance

Friday, July 4th, 6:30 pm

Please plan to bring a dish to pass...and join us afterwards at Granada bridge for the Independence Day fireworks!

Shoes That Fit!

Throughout the month of July RE will be collecting money and making purchases for this program.

Please see Debbie Johnson or Joyce Nelson if you'd like to contribute.

A note from the DRE...

Just an FYI: I will be attending RE Week at the Mountain in Highlands, NC from July 6th-July 11th. There I will complete a Renaissance Module on Youth Ministry. I am looking forward to the professional stimulation as well as making time for personal reflection. Stay tuned for a follow-up with bits & pieces of what I have experienced. - Debbie Johnson, DRE

JUNE 2008 JOTTER RE Happenings...

RE Celebration:

On Saturday May 31st, the RE families are invited to the end of school year RE celebration.

We will begin at 10 am:

- kids "walk through" program for Sunday service (10-11:30)
- families eat their "brown bag lunches" (11:30-12)
- swim at the Mann's following the "rehearsal" (12:00-2 pm)

Please plan to attend so that your child(ren) know what to expect on Sunday, June 1st. Thanks so much :)

Building Blocks of Our Faith:

On Sunday, June 1st the RE kids will take part in a Sunday Service reflecting the RE focus for this year: Our UU Sources.

Please join us as we reflect on this past RE school year, thank those who volunteered to help in RE, and look forward to the lazy, hazy days of summer!

Camp Creative UU:

We invite your child(ren) to spend a week creating a kid -made-movie at our second annual Camp Creative UU. Two teams of kids will take on a challenge, and work through it in a creative & unique manner. Older kids in the group will videotape and scrapbook as they "score" their work.. Adult volunteers who share a passion for a creative approach to life will share their ideas through many forms of artistic expression. The program will take place June 30-July 4 with a Special Presentation on July 4th.... Stay tuned as we plan for this fun-filled week!!

Reflections on the RE "Stand For Peace"

Last month the children of RE, their parents, and many adult members of this congregation came together to "Stand For Peace". We joined many people across this nation as we recognized and supported Julia Ward Howe. Our RE kids made prayer

flags with messages of peace which we hung on the playground fence. As our messages of peace blew in the wind, and the children's wishes were sent out into the universe, each of us took just 5 minutes out of our busy lives in silence to promote peace & "speak out" against war. Here are the reflections from two of our RE parents...

As so many of us stood quietly around the children's flags, heads bowed, meditating on peace, little Jack, who was frustrated in his efforts to climb down from the top of the playhouse and had asked for help a couple of times, howled out into the silence: "how long am I going to be stuck here?" The question ricocheted in my mind. "How long ARE we going to be stuck?" I looked up at Jack and recalled that when I was his age, the U.S. was fighting in Vietnam... The United States have been involved in military conflicts for a total of 34 years out of the 68 that have passed since we entered World War II. I was a baby when the Vietnam War began and a teenager when it ended. My country has been involved in some sort of war for over half of my entire lifetime. We have been fighting in Iraq for over half of my son's life. These wars have resulted in the death or wounding of at least 1,506,577 servicemen and women. And we all know that the number of foreign civilians killed or wounded—men, women, and children—is too large to ever ascertain precisely.

How long are we going to be stuck, frustrated with the ineffectualness of our efforts to achieve lasting peace? How long are we going to keep raising beautiful, precious children, only to have them sacrificed to a war? Garrison Keillor pointed out recently that many of these lives were not voluntarily given, but forcibly taken, in the name of our country. Those of us who recall the draft and tremble at the mention of reinstating it know that this is a crucial distinction. Thanks for bellowing your question, Jack. It may not have achieved the results you wanted, but it was a question that inspired reflection. Our great UU kids (and adults) are often a source of unexpected insight for me. Thanks to you all!

Having reservations about the prospect of standing in silence for 5 minutes at the perimeter of a playground with a group that included children who are full of curiosity but are not yet walking and particularly my own children, who are energized by the sight of slides and open spaces, I tried to eliminate any expectations and possible worst-case scenarios before the "Stand for Peace." But I believe that there was something extremely enlightening and joyous that began to mount when the collective began to organize, almost like a moment of perfection being created before the gaze of those searching for our own truths. The culmination of this experience expressed itself in mirrored silence, prodigious contemplation, and the warm breeze of the ocean.

If this moment is something akin to what one would refer to as a "sign," it is possible that the "Stand for Peace" constitutes such a thing... When elements of compassion and understanding combine, if only momentarily, we experience serene, ineffable moments like the "Stand for Peace." I can say, without reservation, that the moment was certainly befitting Julia Ward Howe; I can only hope that others experienced something similar to what I had.

-Harun Karim Thomas (parent of Mikah, Azsia, & Jayden, ages 3, 4 and 8 respectively)

MAY 2008 JOTTER RE NEWS

RE Happenings!

Earth Day at Washington Oaks State Park it was great success... over 150 kids visited our booth to make buttons! Thanks to those who assisted, and to those who helped us cook over 150 solar s'mores!

HOSPITALITY BUDDIES visit social hour...

On Sunday May 4th, there will be an RE Parent Meeting while the RE children visit Hospitality Hour with an adult "Special Pal". Kids will be paired with an adult UU who escorts them to the refreshment table. The intention is that the kids learn "how to" serve themselves, and then sit quietly with their Pals to visit. After visiting, the Pals will show the kids "how to" clean up after themselves and then escort them back to the RE playground (weather permitting). Supervision will be provided by a few familiar UU faces until the RE parents' meeting closes... no later than 12:30.

- RE parents please plan to attend as we will be discussing the end of the year plans & UU Summer Day Camp!

- Adult UU's if you would like to visit with an RE student over "cookies & milk", please contact Debbie Johnson. RSVP: dbeckjohnson@earthlink.net or 386-956-4444. Thank you!

On MOTHERS' DAY Let's "STAND FOR PEACE"!! On Sunday, May 11th we will be part of a celebration honoring a famous UU, Julia Ward Howe. Please join us as we help restore the holiday to her original intent: A day to promote peace & speak out against war! Here is what we have planned for RE friends & families:

- kids visit service for Pastor Bud's "Story For All Ages"
- kids draw messages on the sidewalk w/ chalk for their moms
- kids make prayer flags w/ messages of peace the week before & hang them from the railings in front of UU that day
- all of us enjoy simple buffet of fruit, cheese & crackers & desserts
- Mothers & others stand together for Peace at 1 pm & then leave...

Please RSVP to Debbie Johnson so that we have enough refreshments for those who

APRIL 2008 JOTTER RE NEWS

[April Religious Education Happenings](#)

Invitation to join us in our Religious Education Program...

On Sunday, March 30th RE kids were part of the Sunday Service:

"It's Easy To Be Green". The kids shared their Earth Pledge, sang a song with the congregation, and helped to lead a special mini-sermon regarding repair of our world. The Solar Dedication followed the service. Families enjoyed yummy food, while RE children visited the solar playhouse and took a ride on a solar golf cart. Both were provided by SolarFit.

This Sunday service was part of our Green Sanctuary action plan. Our Society has applied for the UUMFE's (UU Ministry For the Earth) Green Sanctuary designation. Our action plan promotes recycling at our society & reducing use of disposables. It includes restoration of the hammock, planting of new gardens, the recent installation of solar panels & other energy efficient measures we are taking. RE families have an opportunity to help distinguish our society as a Green Sanctuary. Please read on to see how you may help us out:

- Please bring as many aluminum cans as you can this month. We are planning a garden for the kids, and hope to use the cash from recycling to cover the cost. Thanks to Ron Watkins & Kurtland Davies who are busy building a raised bed to get us started. Stay tuned for dates for planting!

- Please plan to attend the Earth Day program at Washington Oaks on Saturday, April 19th. UUSDBA will have a booth on both Sat & Sunday April 19th-20th. We will need help managing the booth. This event is fun & educational. So mark your calendars and let us know if you can help for an hour or two. We hope you plan to join in the fun!

If you have any questions, suggestions or comments about RE's involvement in Green Sanctuary, please email or call. Debbie Johnson, DRE (Director of Religious Education) dbeckjohnson@earthlink.net

Recently RE hosted a baby shower where gifts were collected for a family from Pierson.

RE families played baby shower games and ate yummy cake as we celebrated a life soon to be born to a family in need. When Karen Gehringer delivered our gifts to her student's family, she was greeted by a thrilled family! They were, as is Karen, truly touched by the generosity of those who contributed! Among the gifts were several large items: a stroller & car seat combo, a play yard (playpen), and a crib. There was also smaller items including a diaper bag, wipes, & changing pads, bottles, pacifiers, a bathtub, baby shampoo, lotion & towels, sweet little girl outfits, small toys & stuffed animals, etc. It was quite a nice collection and it covered nearly all of the items that the mom had on her wish list!

The mother gave Karen a card which says: "May kindness return to you in the same beautiful way that it was given. God Bless you for all your support you have given to us economically and spiritually in these tough moments". Together we made a real difference for this family who recently suffered the loss of their father. That just plain makes us happy :-)

Thanks!

MARCH 2008 JOTTER RE NEWS

[March Religious Education Happenings](#)

During the school year 2007-08 the students of RE are learning about our UU sources.

Over the next few months we will be exploring Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. If you have an interest in these faiths we would love to hear from you. There are opportunities to join in for just a day or for a few consecutive weeks. You may provide a lesson/experience yourself, or simply “teach” from a “Sundayn-Aox”. When volunteering, there are several different age groups from which to choose, including: Chalice Children (PreK-Kinder), Star Kids (1st -3rd graders), Cosmos Kids (3rd-5th graders), and our newly formed group of Galactic Girls & Guys (5th-7th graders).

Throughout March & April there will also be opportunities for you to explore the 7th principle with the RE kids. In anticipation of our involvement in the Earth Day Celebration at Washington Oaks we will be learning about solar energy, continuing our recycling efforts, and using our green thumbs to plant! **If you are a greenie, or just have a green thumb, please let us know. We’d love for these RE activities to be intergenerational with children & adults discovering ways that can make “it easy to be green”.**

To volunteer your time &/or ideas, please contact Debbie Johnson: [E-mail](#) or call (386)-956-4444

Benefit Baby Shower will take place on Sunday, March 9th from 11:30-12:30 RE will sponsor a baby shower for the mother of a student in Karen Gehringer’s class at Taylor High. The student’s family has just suffered the loss of their dad and the mom is expecting a baby girl very soon. There will be fun baby shower games, and you may enjoy cake and goodies as we collect donations for this baby girl. Congregants are welcome to visit RE, if you have a gift that you would like to contribute.

RE Recycling Drive on Saturday, March 15th from 9:30-10:30 & Super Solar Fun 10:30-12:30.

RE is trying something new... While we appreciate your donations of aluminum on any given day, we feel we may be able to handle a larger volume if we have a recycling drive on a Saturday. So, the kids will crush cans and bag them for delivery to the recycling center.

There we will collect \$ for the aluminum. This money will be used to purchase items that encourage us to be a little greener. Refillable pens, earth-friendly cleaning supplies, & reusable canvas bags will soon be available for you to purchase. Also the RE kids will soon be starting their very own organic garden.

Parents please plan to stay all morning. We have a super solar fun morning in store for the RE children and we don't want anyone to miss out! Just for fun, the RE kids will make their own pizza box solar oven and then use it to make s'mores! They will also have a chance to enjoy time in SolarFit's Solar Playhouse and may even get to ride on the SolarFit golf cart! So mark your calendars & plan to attend!

Sunday, March 30th, "It's Easy Being Green", RE kids assist Green Sanctuary Team as they present the Sunday Service. Come join us in worship & song as we celebrate the "Web of Life". "We've got the whole world in our hands" & we will pledge to honor this planet... with actions that help sustain it!

FEBRUARY 2008 JOTTER MORE RE NEWS

[February Religious Education News](#)

Curious about KIVA and socially responsible investing? Join the RE kids as they sponsor businesses and help the world's working poor The RE children are collecting small contributions of less than \$5 and using them to invest through KIVA. Are they investing to make money? No, they are simply pooling dollars, and supporting individuals. Who are they lending to? Individuals who have applied for loans through an organization called KIVA. How does it work? KIVA helps arrange micro-loans that "sponsor a business and help individuals make great strides toward economic independence". What is the goal? To demonstrate how each of us can make a difference!

You may visit our link on the KIVA website and meet the first recipient of RE contributions. As you read about Maria, you will see that our RE kids are truly supporting the seventh principle: caring for "the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part". First of all the RE kids simply gave \$25 to support someone in need whom they will never meet. Secondly, since they have chose someone who is reselling clothing, the RE kids are promoting the reusing of goods, and helping others to care for our planet! Way to go RE!!

For more information about the individual recipient of RE's contribution, see:
<http://www.kiva.org/app.php?page=businesses&action=about&id=31920>

You will see that our RE kids are helping one woman to successfully support herself and her family. When she is able to repay her loan our kids will reinvest their dollars in a second individual, and then a third.... And so our contributions to KIVA will just keep on giving!! You may wonder how likely it is that we will receive our money back. Over 98 percent of KIVA loans are paid and over 80 percent of contributors decide to "reloan". If you'd like us to help the RE kids invest in another individual, please give your contribution of \$5 or less to Debbie Johnson or Jack Schwadron. You may call or email

us at: Debbie 386-956-4444 dbeckjohnson@earthlink.net Jack 386-451-6782
artmouveau@yahoo.com

One last fun fact about KIVA... it is a Swahili word meaning 'agreement' or 'unity.' Hope you'll join us as we make agreements with needy individuals and foster unity among all people.

JANUARY 2008 JOTTER, RE News

▪ Rook ▪ Snap ▪ Hearts ▪ Go Fish ▪ Spades ▪ Old Maid ▪ Bridge ▪

Saturday, January 12, 6:30-8 p.m.

Universal Birthday Party & Card Game Night

Everyone Invited!

Fun for All Ages Cake and Ice Cream Provided

* Bring your favorite Card Game

Schedule: 6:30-7:00 Mixer activities;

7:00-7:15 Cake & Ice Cream;

7:15-8:00 Card games

For more information call

Debbie Johnson, 386-956-4444 To RSVP

dbeckjohnson@earthlink.net

▪ Gin Rummy ▪ Michigan Rummy ▪ Poker (bring chips) ▪ Skippo ▪ Uno

REflections on presenting Elijah's Angel and the Sunday Service on 12-09-07

As a teacher who is fascinated with the interconnectiveness at the core of world religions, I was very moved by RE's holiday celebration. The concept of candle lighting as a connective ritual was perfect and reflected the ancient solar origins that have prompted worldwide observances throughout history. I really believe the children got the idea and had a taste of 4 religious rituals. Their participation in singing and acting gave them a dynamic role in the service which they seemed to enjoy. I know I really enjoyed working with them and got to do all the things I love, being a part of a dramatic presentation, sharing music and honoring my multiple paths to spirituality. Thank you for organizing such an inspiring event!

- Debbie Hanson

As parents, Reed and I enjoyed sitting up front watching the children take part in the presentation. What a great way to bring together the congregation and the children! Our children, Robbie and Ellie Berger really enjoyed being in a "play". They were so excited about their parts, they practiced at home. I think they learned a lot about the traditions by acting them out and hearing them over and over again.

- Bev and Reed Berger

As a congregant, it has been my pleasure to be involved with our younger UU's. I participated in "A Story for All Ages" by reading The Runaway Bunny. It was a delight to

become engaged with such young, inquisitive and eager minds. It was also rewarding to look for and find a UU message in that sweet little book. Momma bunny's unconditional love and acceptance gently leads to an authentic little bunny. That theme of love and acceptance was on display again with the recent play Elijah's Angel. Young and old, Christian and Jew, woven together with love.

- Cliff Jackson

Thanks to all who participated... RE children, RE parents, UUSDBA volunteers, and our narrators (and program planners) Dottie Mann and Pastor Bud Murphy!!

From DECEMBER 2007 JOTTER, RE News

Update on RE Sponsored Programs

Our congregation earned over \$200 for the 2007-8 Guest At Your Table program. This was in addition to our contribution of just over \$200 to the Trick-Or-Treat For UNICEF program last fall. It is wonderful to see the RE children's goals for giving realized because UUSDBA is so generous ☺ Thank you!

Thanks to all who participated in the UNIVERSAL BIRTHDAY PARTY!

Over 40 people of all ages joined in the fun. We began with a game of mixer BINGO and then enjoyed a night filled with yummy cake & ice cream... and games galore! Some groups even worked cooperatively on a UU game of "Squiggles". It required small groups to use their imagination and then create from a few "squiggles" drawn on a paper. Watch for a display of these creations, as well as photos of this fun occasion! You might even see a shot of Byron Spice doing the "chicken dance" with a few RE kids! If you couldn't make it this time, stay tuned! RE plans to host other intergenerational events... and perhaps next time we'll "Let it Be a Dance"! (Hymn #311)

Thanks to all the parents (and grandparents) who chaperoned for the RE Sleepover! 8 kids and 7 adults slept over night after a movie showing of "Fly Away Home". Curled up with their pillows they nibbled on popcorn, and enjoyed the story. Then, everyone got into PJ's and brushed teeth for bed. In the morning there was breakfast cereal with cartoons (DVDs) and a lively game of charades! Finally, the RE kids joined the congregation for The Story For All Ages and enjoyed Pastor Bud's reading of Where the Wild Things Are! Fittingly, the message from the pulpit was entitled "Little Heathens". However, after staying up rather late, the RE kids were neither angelic, nor terribly mischievous... Instead thankfully they were just a little "playful"... and that was to be expected!!

From November 2007 JOTTER, RE News

Semi-Annual Report for RE

As DRE I would like to thank all of you. I began 1 ½ yrs ago with about five children gathered around one table.... And now, there are 13 families with 21 children who are regular participants in our RE program! The program has grown from one class to three plus the Nursery. And each Sunday we utilize the nursery space, classrooms #2 and 3, outdoor picnic areas on the playground and in the hammock, as well as the Pastor Bud's office on occasion!

In fact, since things have really changed in RE, we found it necessary to make a few adjustments... Thanks to Alliance for moving the refrigerator to the kitchen and to Cliff Jackson for purchasing a wall mounted baby changer. Thanks also to Edward Derks for his hard work moving the frig. and mounting the changer! Thanks also to Cathy Jackson for donating a rocker/glider for the nursery, and to Matthew King (my nephew) for donating additional outdoor play equipment. Thanks as well to the library and decorating committee for assisting us with the purchase of shelving for our RE classrooms.

So, what are some of the things that have made this RE growth possible? Volunteer participation has increased tremendously. There are now over 20 adult members of this congregation volunteering, as well as RE parents, who are assisting in Sunday school class 2x per child during each semester. This will collectively equal over 72 x before the end of this school year! Thanks to all of the parents and other adults who have volunteered.

What then makes our RE program unique?

A few things come to mind, and all of them involve integration. First of all, we have parents who will meet to consider the direction RE takes and integrate what happens within the different groups of children. This includes the nursery, Chalice children ages 3-5, Star Kids ages 6-8, and Cosmos Kids ages 9-12, and hopefully teens in the near future. Thanks to the parents for taking time for RE in spite of other commitments!

Secondly, we have a newly expanded RE committee, including Pastor Bud, myself, Dottie Mann, Kathryn Hansman-Spice, and Byron Spice. Byron serves as the RE chair person. It is the vision of the RE committee that RE now encompass both religious education of children and youth, as well as Life Long Learning for adults. Thanks to Byron for his willingness to take on this role!

And finally, but definitely of equal importance with regards to integration... This UU society has a team spirit. And within that spirit, Pastor Bud and I have worked together closely to integrate the sermon topics with the focus of our RE lessons. Just recently, we met and mapped out a plan that takes us through the next calendar year... 2008. This coordination is in all my experience not typical, but boy it is integration at its best! Thanks to Pastor Bud for his enthusiasm as we plan for adults and children together!

So, how do we know that RE is not only busy, but also alive and well? Just consider the following two turning points:

1st: The RE parents formed their connection group, Spiritual Parenting, about 1 year ago. And that group not only continues with additional participants, but they have also added an additional meeting time, increasing from once to twice per month. On top of that, when its founder was going to be away for a month the group decided not to wait until she returned but to continue meeting using the format she and Pastor Bud had established. Thanks to Maura Riebensahm and the parents for giving SP a life of its own!

2nd: Sunday school class also has a life of its own! With quite a bit of planning, and a few kind-hearted volunteers, RE class is blossoming. Kids are exploring RE with their peers and the gentle guidance of an adult leader. The small groups I mentioned earlier each now have their own identity... a five yr. old now separate from a 10 yr. old. This move was essential for the faith development of our children. A more age-appropriate program ensures the future success of RE... RE is alive and well! Thank you Natalie Williamson... for you began the RE spark which has now grown into a steady flame!

With sincere gratitude, Debbie Johnson, DRE

From October 2007 JOTTER RE News

Hello UU Families... Just an FYI regarding our Green Sanctuary Aluminum Can Drives...

One way to help our planet and make some money at the same time is to recycle aluminum cans.

We have started doing this with our recycling receptacle in the sanctuary, and donations from a few others who have been saving their cans for UU. This has given a good start, but we have figured out that taking small amounts to the recycling center wastes both time and gas, so we have decided to try something new.

Would you please bring your aluminum cans from home to UU on Sunday mornings? Ron Watkins will take the cans home on Sundays in a vehicle/trailer that can accommodate many bags of cans. Then, Ron will be storing them near his home until he takes them to the recycling center during the week. (The center is not open on Sundays.) It helps if your cans are rinsed and drained... and crushed if possible. If not the kids can do this after Sunday School. Clean, crushed cans are not necessary, but they are helpful. This is because on occasion the cans may need to remain at UU, and this way they will be more compact for storage. We also appreciate clean cans because they do not attract bugs or make sticky messes!

You may be wondering what we will do with the money we receive for our recycling efforts. We plan to use it for a special garden project the Green Sanctuary will be doing with the R. E. children. We have been getting about \$10 for a big garbage bag of crushed cans. So, the dollars could really add up fast once we get going!! I hope your families will help us recycle cans and earn cash for this program. Contributions to date have raised \$ for purchasing two outdoor trash cans for collection, plus a balance of \$30

cash!! Thanks to those who have already contributed... and thanks to Ron for his help with this project!!

Bet you'll be surprised by how far a dollar can go today.
Bring your loose change to church on Sunday, October 28th to find out!
The children of RE will be Trick-Or-Treating for UNICEF during the UUSDBA hospitality hour. You'll learn more about how UNICEF helps needy children around the world, while giving our youngsters a chance to parade around in costume.
All are invited to an intergenerational event...

[Jotter Announcement October](#) **Pumpkin Carving & Decorating**

Sunday, October 28th following hospitality hour

Please bring:

1. A Scooped Pumpkin
2. Your creative self We'll have safe carving tools or paints for decoration
3. Your sweet tooth Our RE families will provide Donut holes and apple cider
4. Costumes are encouraged, but not required Extended family & friends may join in the fun!

A spectacular lighting of the Jack-O-lanterns will follow pumpkin carving. (Candles will be provided.)

If you would like to participate and/or help with setup & clean-up, please contact Debbie Johnson at dbeckjohnson@earthlink.net or 956-4444. Debbie Johnson

From September 2007 JOTTER, RE News

RE News from the Director of Religious Education (DRE) It's been several months since the congregational approval of Green Sanctuary, and I am still struggling to make my 1-2-3 pledge. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with this, some of us agreed to:

- a) Put our A/C up one degree at home
- b) Drive 2 mph slower on the road
- c) Change 3 light bulbs to compact fluorescents

Seems easy enough... So why the struggle? Well, it's like this:

- a) My closet now has a musty smell
- b) I am a busy mom... and about 50% of the time I just plain need to drive the speed limit to get where I am going... It seems I "have to", if I want to get there on time!
- c) My husband advised me that he would need to research which bulbs were rated best for their "life-span" and quality of the light itself... And since he's a busy professional who travels often and struggles to make time for family, the research (and the purchase) just haven't quite happened yet!! Now that it's time for me to ask for help with RE and our expanded program for the fall, I considered how parents and friends of RE might commit to a similar 1-2-3 pledge for RE. And how could I make both my Green

Sanctuary pledge and our RE pledges happen?

Well, for starters I gave my husband a “dead-line” of September 1st regarding which bulbs we should purchase (ha,ha!)... and secondly, now with both kids in school, I am trying to sloooooow down, so I won't need to drive that couple of extra miles per hour to get me there on time!!

So, what about our pledges to RE... Well, most of us have no problem understanding that with our increase in RE children, we need to further divide our groups. These groups will include Nursery age children (birth-3yrs), Chalice children (preschool and kindergarten), primary students (grades 1-3), and intermediate students (grade 3 and up). Not to mention teens that will, at this point, be addressed on an individual as needed basis. One person (even with the help of a childcare attendant and usually one parent volunteer) cannot do it alone. We need more parents... and other members of the congregation to come forward and volunteer.

Here is my request for a 1-2-3 pledge to RE. Some of you have already done one or more of these... so, I say “thank you”! Hopefully, it was rewarding and please know that you are appreciated ☺ 1) Volunteer 1x in our Sunday school classes.

2) Donate 2 ten dollar bills (\$20) for RE snacks (all snacks must be nut free, due to allergies)

3) Serve RE in 3 small ways. You may sign-up for RE sub-committees/RE tasks. Just visit RE and see what suits you, or email me for further details!

You know, they weren't kidding when they said “it takes a village”, and also that “many hands make light work”!

Join us... no matter how great or small your contribution, what you do can make a difference in the lives of our RE kids ☺

Thanks for your support! - Debbie Johnson (dbeckjohnson@earthlink.net)

From August 2007 JOTTER, RE News

Did you know that another new year is just around the corner? Traditionally, we think of the New Year as January 1st; however, there are several other beginnings throughout each calendar year, and each one offers an opportunity for renewal. At UUSDBA we are a few months into our new fiscal year, and I have personally celebrated my year anniversary as DRE. We have seen our RE program grow from 4-5 students at Sunday School to 17 campers at Camp Creative UU. And now we are planning for the fall program. Looking back... Last school year our focus was UU Identity and we learned about our UU principles. This was especially important for our families since many were new to Unitarian Universalism. This summer we have been learning about the elements of worship. Our Sunday morning actually looks much like yours. Each Sunday we begin with Chalice Lighting and Joys and Concerns. We pause for Reflection/Moment of Silence. Our Sermon is generally story based and resembles the Story For All Ages. Sometimes we include Music and Readings. We don't actually pass a plate for the Offeratory, but the kids have been invited to bring their loose change for the “Shoes That Fit” program. We have also learned about the Covenant of this UU Society and

have established one for our RE classrooms. Finally, we have focused on spiritual practices that go beyond Sunday morning. We have explored things like Yoga and mindfulness, and have experienced guided meditations/visualizations. Our intention is to give kids a few new tools that encourage spirituality and help them develop inner peace. Looking ahead... we are anticipating the 2007-2008 school year. Our focus will be Our Six Sources. These include: • Direct experience and transcending mystery & wonder • Words and deeds of prophetic men and women • Wisdom from the world's religions • Jewish and Christian teachings • Humanistic teachings • Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions Throughout the school year we will also consider: • Creation Stories, including Michael Dowd and Connie Barlow's, The Great Story. It is an integration of a science-based understanding of the world and the cosmos with our personal spiritual or philosophical worldview. • "The Golden Rule", stressing commonalities rather than differences between faiths. Last year was successful for RE students ages birth-12. It is our hope this year that we may provide a more individualized and age-appropriate program for all children and youth. Therefore, we anticipate dividing the students into these groups (age being approximate): • Nursery: age, birth to 3 yrs. • Chalice Children: ages 3-5 yrs. • Primary Students: ages 6-9 • Intermediate Students: ages 10-13 • Youth: teens 14-18 (if possible) This naturally will require a creative use of our RE space, more volunteers, and training for use of RE curricula and/or Sunday-Aox lessons. If you are interested in volunteering, would like some training, and/or have some ideas you would like to share, please join the RE parents for a brief meeting on Sunday, August 19th from 11:45-12:30 in Room #2. We welcome your views and look forward to the contributions you will make to 2007-2008, no matter how great or small they may be ☺ **Thanks for your continued support!**
Debbie Johnson, DRE (Director of Religious Education)

We Get By With A Little Help From Our Members and Friends!

From July 2007 JOTTER, RE News

As many of you know the RE kids finished out this school year leading the congregation in a UU version of "Do Re Mi". This "Rainbow Principles" song was a perfect summary of what they had learned throughout the year:

- R Respect for everyone
- O Offer people fairness
- Y Yearn to learn through life
- G Grow through your search for truth
- B Believe in our ideas--- AND ACT!
- I Insist on peace and freedom
- V Value the web of life

That's the UU way of life! Now as kids make the shift to their summer routines, the focus in RE has also shifted from "Our UU Principles" to "Our Spiritual Practices". We are first exploring the composition of both the Sunday Services and our Sunday school class. The children are currently learning about the elements of worship: chalice lightings, joys and concerns, reflections, meditations, stories (for all ages), lessons (sermons), readings and music. Later this summer they will have the chance to create their very own RE worship service. For more info regarding Children's Worship see the following link: http://archive.uua.org/re/reach/fall00/worship/worship_with_children.html

Also, throughout the summer the RE kids will explore ways to quiet the mind. We will explore ways that we can find a quiet place within and then listen to our inner voice. This will include the use of music, meditation bells/centering chimes, guided meditations & reflective readings, yoga & deep breathing, journaling, UU prayer beads, etc. In this ultra busy world, it can be very hard to quiet down. The goal is to provide our RE kids with the tools they need, so that they may find inner peace and experience less stress in their lives. For more info regarding the benefits of "quieting the mind" you may visit this link: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/16/us/16mindful.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

Lastly, if you visit our UU Society during the first week of July, you may find yourself wanting to join in the fun at our very own Camp Creative UU! Many of our RE kids, as well as some visiting youth, and several adult volunteers will be discovering self-expression through art, drama, music, and writing. There will be a Galleria/Performance on Saturday, July 7th at 10 a.m. for the participants and their family & friends. The RE "Kids' Creations" will also be displayed at the July Potluck. Hope you are able to visit the display and/or performance.

What better way for our kids to spend "the lazy, hazy days of summer"... May you also experience opportunities for self-discovery and creative expression along with moments of inner peace & quiet reflection! ENJOY!

From June 2007 JOTTER, RE News

CAMP CREATIVE UU

For the congregation... This summer RE will offer a unique day camp opportunity for your children. The focus of our week-long program will be discovering self-expression through a variety of art-oriented activities. It will include art, drama, music, and writing and would culminate with a special Galleria/ Performance which will reflect the week's activities. There will be a small fee (\$25/child suggested) for supplies, snacks, etc. The camp will take place the first week of July. Several adult members of this congregation who have shown interest in RE and the Arts have volunteered to assist with this camp program. Please contact Debbie Johnson at: dbeckjohnson@earthlink.net or 386-956-4444, if you would like to be part of this unique (and creative) opportunity. Although we are looking forward to a sharing of artistic talents, you need not be artistically inclined to

“apply”... there are many small (and big) ways you can help out!

For the RE families... Camp Creative UU is a unique opportunity to explore our world through the Creative Arts. We invite your child(ren) to spend a week discovering self-expression through a variety of art oriented activities. From music and movement to art and drama our summer day camp has something for everyone. This dynamic program is facilitated by volunteers, who will share both their artistic talents and their personal passion for a creative approach to life. The program will culminate in a special Galleria/performance which will reflect the week's activities. The campers will host this special event, and family and friends should plan to attend. The program is planned for Monday through Friday July 2nd through 6th. The cost will be \$25 per child. The following is our proposed daily schedule: 9:20 earliest time for Parent drop-off 9:30-9:50 Opening Circle: Focus for that day 9:50-10:30 Project of the Day 10:30-11:30 Music/movement/drama activity, etc. w/ volunteer visiting artist 11:30-11:50 Closing Circle: Sharing of the creations of that day 11:50-12:20 Community Brown Bag Lunch 12:20-12:50 Supervised Free-Time (indoors &/or outside) 1:00 Latest time for Parent pick-up The Galleria /Performance which is a special event for family and friends, will take place on Friday, July 6th from 6:30-8pm.

Brochures will soon be distributed and registration will take place throughout the first three weeks of June. All monies and registration forms will be due to RE no later than Wednesday, June 20th. Please contact Debbie Johnson at dbeckjohnson@earthlink.net or 386-956-4444, if you have any questions &/or comments. Hope to see many of your children at Camp Creative UU!!