



Rev. Jon Luopa, Senior Minister
Rev. Dr. Alicia Grace, Minister

Seeds of Justice Grant Program May 2010

Summary

For nearly a century, University Unitarian Church has worked for social justice and against oppression. Part of our work is to provide financial support to social justice and social action activities and organizations outside of the church that are consistent with the principles of Unitarian Universalism and UUC's social justice goals.

The Social Justice Committee is pleased to announce the first open round of grants from the Seeds of Justice Grant Program, which will focus on addressing the root causes of injustice. For 2010-2011, we seek to build on UUC's long history of working on behalf of, and in partnership with, people and communities whose voices, rights and needs are invisible or dismissed in society.

Background

Over the years our congregation has fought for fair housing, women's reproductive rights, marriage equality, fair and compassionate treatment of immigrants and refugees, safe and supportive foster care, living wage jobs, and an end to torture.

We gave shelter to dozens of people fleeing Central American wars as a Sanctuary Church in the 1980s. We have housed dozens of people with mental illness and AIDS in homes that we own (including the very first AIDS housing in Seattle), and built three homes through Habitat for Humanity. We feed people who are hungry, and help care for urban gardens that provide healthy food to those who cannot afford it. Brigades of our youth and adults have made international service trips, and we funded microlending banks in Guatemala and Haiti, helping to alleviate the world's worst poverty. In 2008, we became a founding member of the Sound Alliance, a community organizing alliance of religious and labor organizations. In 2009, our congregation voted to become a Green Sanctuary, a commitment to deeply live the UU principle of respect for the interdependent web of life.

Our social justice work is grounded in our church's purpose, as stated in our founding documents and guiding policies. We awaken our members to the personal or spiritual growth they seek, and inspire them to return the gifts of their transformation to UUC and their communities.

We are also grounded in the Unitarian Universalist values which we share with all members of our faith, particularly those principles which covenant and affirm:

- the inherent worth and dignity of every person
- justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all
- respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part



Focus Areas

For 2010-11, we wish to build specifically on UUC's history of advancing justice for people and communities whose voices, needs and rights are invisible or dismissed in society. This continues a strong thread of our social justice work – from being “ahead of the curve” in addressing the AIDS epidemic, to offering witness and aid to refugees and immigrants, to housing the chronically mentally ill. We plan to award one grant of \$10,000 in one of the following areas. We hope this will be a first step toward expanding the grant program over time.

Justice, equity and compassion for immigrants and refugees

We recognize that our broken immigration system divides families, and fails to protect the due process and labor rights of immigrants. Our church's immigrant justice ministry works for fair treatment of immigrants in our community, and our denomination has taken positions in support of immigrants and a just immigration system going back to the early 1960s. *In particular, we are interested in supporting and partnering with organizations that work in the following areas:*

- Pathways to citizenship for immigrants and refugees
- Family unity and the well-being of children in immigrant families
- Dignified work on fair terms for immigrants
- Self-organizing of immigrant and refugee communities for mutual assistance and empowerment

Justice, equity and compassion for those transitioning from incarceration

We recognize that people returning to their communities from jail face barriers to employment, housing, health care, and voting rights. High rates of incarceration are intertwined with intractable cycles of unemployment, homelessness, substance abuse, and neighborhood crime. Restorative justice has been a top legislative priority for UUs in Washington state, and our denomination has a history of working for criminal justice system reform. *In particular, we are interested in supporting and partnering with organizations that work in the following areas:*

- Education opportunities in prison
- Restoration of voting rights
- Programs supporting re-entry into community life and employment
- Alternatives to incarceration

Justice, equity and compassion for girls and women living as second class citizens

We recognize that women and girls are second class citizens in nearly every country in the world. At best, they lack access to political and corporate leadership positions, equal pay for equal work, and sources of capital. At worst, they lack access schooling, medical care, safety, and basic human rights. We also recognize that providing resources to women and girls improves not only their own well-being but that of their immediate families and the wider community. *In particular, we are interested in supporting and partnering with women-led organizations that work in the following areas:*

- Improving community well being by increasing education, economic independence and entrepreneurial options for women
- Expanding participation of women in leadership and governing roles in societies and arenas where they are systemically excluded or under-represented



Process and Guidelines

Guidelines

- Applicant organizations should be not-for-profit.
- We are interested in organizations working in, or with a presence in, the Seattle area.
- We are interested in supporting smaller organizations.
- Although it is not a requirement, we are interested in organizations which offer opportunities for our church members to become engaged as volunteers or advocates.
- Because we would like to build this connection with our congregation, priority would be given to organizations that have some relationship with one or more UUC members.

Process

- Proposal letters can be submitted by the organization themselves, or by a University Unitarian Church Member or Pledging Friend on behalf of an organization with which they are familiar or involved as a volunteer or board member. Members of UUC are also encouraged to bring this opportunity to the attention of eligible organizations in our community.
- The Social Justice Steering Committee will review proposals and make decisions. An information forum will be held for the congregation to learn about the short list of potential awardees, with opportunity for feedback.

Our Commitment and Philosophy

- We are committed to a grant application process that is simple, with a reasonable amount of time and information required given the size of the grant.
- All grant awards are for general operating support.
- We would hope to supplement our congregation's financial support with the time and talent of our members. However, we do not seek to impose ourselves as volunteers where it is burdensome, overwhelming, or inappropriate.
- We strive to be in authentic partnership with community organizations. We recognize that we gain and learn from social justice ministry, just as community partners can benefit from our congregation's time, talent, funding, and moral voice.

Proposal Letter

A proposal letter should be simple – three to five pages – but complete enough to convince the committee that the proposal is worthy of further investigation, and that the organization can implement the proposed work.

1. The applicant organization's name, brief history, mission and activities
2. A little about the opportunity or problem to be addressed, and how this work would produce positive results for the community
3. Indication of whether the organization is:
 - a 501c3 public charity
 - a nonprofit corporation which has applied for 501c3 charity status
 - a 501c4 public charity
 - another not-for-profit organizational structure (please explain)



4. The size of the organization's annual operating budget and number of staff (FTEs), and a brief explanation of the organization's other main sources of support
5. Ways in which volunteers from the congregation might be able to get involved with the organization, and the organization's capacity to work with volunteers.
6. Contact information:
 - o Key contact person, with phone and email
 - o Mailing address
 - o Web site (if any)
7. You are welcome to attach an annual report, brochure, or other supplemental information.

The letters should be submitted by September 10, 2010 to:

Jennifer Bright, Social Justice Coordinator

University Unitarian Church

6556 – 35th Ave. NE

Seattle, WA 9815

Electronic submission is preferred: jenniferb@uuchurch.org

Our goal is for applicant organizations to hear back from us no later than November 2010, and to make the grant award in January 2011.