



UUGAC
Unitarian
Universalist
Global AIDS
Coalition

Supporter,

Unitarian Universalists united to journey with those impacted by HIV/AIDS. We travel as advocates and educators. We look for partnership. We move with compassion and respect in a multicultural world.

This newsletter is our main communications tool in our effort to reach out to UU's and encourage them to join our efforts to address global AIDS issues. We ask that everyone receiving it help us by sharing it with their congregation and youth group. This is a simple but effective way to be involved in making a difference, so please help us get out the word! Check out our website www.uuglobalaids.org

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VISIT THE UU GLOBAL AIDS COALITION AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY JUNE 24-28 IN SALT LAKE CITY

This year we are delighted that we will be part of the UU International Organizations area in the Exhibit Hall, along with other international UU groups. We will also be having presentations by our Red Ribbon Congregations each day in the same area. This is a unique opportunity to learn more about the amazing work being done by our Red Ribbon congregations, and to see how what we do complements the work of the other UU organizations.

Thursday 25 June, 4.30 – 5.15: Zimbabwe Artists Project

Friday 26 June, 4.30 – 5.15: Cumberland Valley Mozambique Program

Saturday 27 June, 4.30 -5.15: Carbondale and Communities without Borders programs in Zambia .

Please join us, or if you are not going to be there in person, tell others from your congregation to come by, see the presentations and pick up information.

LOOKING BACK: LOOKING FORWARD

Amazing but true: it is seven years since a powerful address by Stephen Lewis, Ware Lecturer at the 2002 UUA General Assembly, led to the founding of the UU Global AIDS Coalition. Hearing his speech, it seemed clear that UU's should be involved in the social justice issues surrounding the pandemic, and yet no UU group was taking the lead in getting UU's involved in its global impact. The UUGAC was formed as a social justice group at First Unitarian in Portland (OR) and representatives returned to GA 2003 in Boston to bring about passage of an Action of Immediate Witness which committed UU's to involvement in global AIDS issues.

Seven years later we are in an exciting time of transition.

The UUA is working with emerging UU congregations in Africa to establish new working relationships and support them as they develop strong congregations and work in their communities, including caring for those impacted by HIV/AIDS. Here in the United States we have a powerful new administration in Washington which is sympathetic on issues from the need for support of the needs of developing countries to the danger of promoting abstinence until marriage as the primary tool for AIDS prevention.

At the same time we are sunk in a national and global financial crisis.

What has been accomplished in the last 7 years, and what changes lie ahead?

On the global front, there has been a heartening response from the developed world. PEPFAR, the US global AIDS initiative ("the one good thing to come from the Bush years"), and organizations including the U.N.- initiated Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria and the Clinton Foundation, have dramatically increased the funding available to battle the pandemic, and there has been a substantial drop in the number of deaths from AIDS. Movie stars have addressed the needs of orphans, and there is much greater public awareness of the devastation caused by AIDS. There is increasing interest in getting involved whether directly by travel to impacted countries or indirectly by financial support. And here we can be proud of the role of both our own role and that of UUA leadership. We have made World AIDS Day an annual time to remember those impacted by HIV/AIDS. At UUGAC we have publicized the work of Red Ribbon congregations which exemplify what can be achieved by even a small congregation, and we have worked hard to engage UU's nationwide in advocacy which was part of removing the abstinence until marriage earmark when PEPFAR was reauthorized last year. We are getting requests from organizations that seek help, and from organizations and individuals who would like to get involved.

Most exciting, we are deliberating how a small non-funded grassroots organization can most effectively continue our role as a catalyst and help connect those who would like to get involved with those who need help. See below for how we plan to involve others in the journey.

UUGAC : MAKING CONNECTIONS

The UUGAC steering committee is working to expand and improve our role as a clearinghouse to connect those who would like to get involved with those who need help. Up to now we have mainly relied on using the Red Ribbon Congregation Program to publicize the work of congregations who had become involved through their own efforts, in the hope that they would provide a model of what can be achieved. Now we want to take a more proactive role, to reach out to congregations and offer them a way to make connection with those who need help, and also to provide a way for those needing help to let this be known. Our hope is to develop a program which would be complementary to, and much less in depth than, the commitment of becoming a "Partner Church" through the Partner Church organization. We see a need for a variety of ways to get involved, from one time fund raising efforts, to ongoing fundraising or child sponsorship, to making the investment in an on the ground service project. There are MANY ways to "journey with those impacted by HIV/AIDS." We are committed to learning how best we can support those who make that journey.

Here are some of the steps you will see in the next few months:

- We will have a new Red Ribbon Congregation status for Affiliated Congregations, and we are adding a page to our website, www.uuglobalaids.org for "Affiliated Congregations". This will be a way for non UU congregations and potentially other organizations to apply for Red Ribbon Congregation status, to let others know what they are doing and what kind of help they need. They will submit an application to the UUGAC steering committee, and if it is approved they will be listed on our website.
- We will be placing a regular ad in the UU World advertising what we are doing and asking congregations to let us know what they are doing and/or how they would like to get involved.
- We will have a packet of information with more detail on what is involved and an application form. Our goal is to have this available at our booth in the Exhibit Hall at General Assembly.

We hope that the internet and the inimitable UU grapevine will help us find those who are looking for connection. That involves YOU! If you know of congregations that are wondering how to get involved or of organizations needing help, please pass on the word and tell them to contact us.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

This section of the newsletter traditionally spotlights the work of congregations on service projects abroad, often in Africa. However, this month I am posting a letter from All Souls Kansas City who made a difference recently by including the UUGAC in their Special Offering program.

UUGAC Members and Supporters,

I am proud to inform you that the Special Offering held to benefit the UUGAC was collected on Sunday, May 10, 2009 at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in Kansas City, MO. The proceeds from this collection are included with this letter.

All Souls has been a Red Ribbon Congregation since 2008 and our continued congregational commitment to the global and local AIDS organizations and advocacy truly warms my heart. Our journey continues with no end in sight, but we can't let that stop us from moving forward and doing whatever we can to help those who are affected by this pandemic.

As I mentioned while introducing the UUGAC and accepting the special offering on its behalf, one of my favorite quotes is from Martin Luther King, Jr. who said "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter". One child is orphaned due to AIDS every 14 seconds. By the end of our service that day, there would be more new AIDS orphans than we could seat in our auditorium. I think that matters.

Please accept this gift on behalf of All Souls members, our Social Responsibility Board, and our Red Ribbon Committee. We are proud to be associated with the UUGAC and to be recognized as a Red Ribbon Congregation.

In peace and love,

Terry Cushman
VP Board of Trustees
Red Ribbon Chair
All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church
4501 Walnut
Kansas City, MO 64111



ADVOCACY UPDATE

One of the changes in the role of UUGAC is a welcome and increasing emphasis on “domestic” AIDS as well as “international AIDS”. As a result, this edition of Advocacy Update will be split into two parts, global and domestic.

But first we at UUGAC want to recognize the role of Adam Gerhardstein, international relations legislative assistant at the UUA Washington Advocacy Office and currently acting head of the office. Adam is moving on to other challenges, but he was definitely in the right place at the right time for UUGAC. He advocated for us with UUA leadership; he built partnerships with other advocacy organizations; and he ensured that UUA President Bill Sinkford was visible every World AIDS Day speaking out on global AIDS issues. THANK YOU, ADAM, for all your work and positive energy! We will miss you!

GLOBAL ADVOCACY

There are three main global advocacy issues that are likely to arise in the next few months:

1. There will be undoubtedly be a need for vigorous advocacy to ensure appropriation of the full funding for PEPFAR, the President’s Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief, and the main conduit for U.S. Assistance to countries impacted by HIV/AIDS.

2. We may be called on to support specific issues to do with the implementation of PEPFAR prevention policies.

3. There will be interesting opportunities to partner with other organizations working on global health and global poverty issues. These include funding for AIDS partner diseases, TB and malaria, and a revamp of the whole foreign aid bureaucracy.

The reauthorization of PEPFAR in November 2008 did two very important things. Congress voted to make a dramatic increase in funding and to allocate \$48 billion over 5 years. It also eliminated the “earmark” which in the first 5 years required a third of prevention spending to go to abstinence until marriage programs. It was left to the current congress to assign funding and there are some prevention provisions in the new bill which will have to be watched as they are put into operation.

The very good news is that as this is being written President Obama has nominated Dr. Eric Goosby as his choice for State Department Global AIDS Coordinator and PEPFAR administrator. Dr. Goosby is a medical professor at the University of California, San Francisco, a pioneer in the fight against AIDS and has held senior posts in the Clinton administration. The Times article points out that Dr. Goosby “will probably become the lightning rod” as organizations seek to rewrite PEPFAR guidelines and introduce flexibility in prevention policies. Several international advocacy organizations hope to see a complete rewrite of the way the United States distributes foreign aid. The current system is an uncoordinated mix of programs with the likelihood of overlap and unintended gaps in aid. At the same time, there are concerns that the successful lobbying on behalf of PEPFAR has resulted in additional funds being channeled to HIV/AIDS programs at the expense of equally needed and important funding for other infectious diseases, notable TB and malaria. In addition, an internal World Bank report reported the failure of the majority of World Bank projects to combat AIDS over the past decade, while nine out of ten projects aimed at malaria and TB were successful. This is of course not to say that we should forgo advocacy on behalf of HIV/AIDS. Comparing the

complex issues surrounding the prevention and treatment of AIDS to more straightforward campaigns to introduce mosquito nets to prevent malaria for example is comparing apples and oranges. But on the other hand, it is a concern if funds are addressed to one disease over the others, and we should take advantage of opportunities to partner on issues rather than oppose others' efforts.

As the Advocacy Office moves to other priorities it is important that we retain a national network of UU's interested in global issues and able to mobilize effectively as issues come up. We are investigating the possibility of working with the advocacy office to take the lead in trying to develop a network of interested congregations and individuals who can be called upon to work at the local level and involve local Congressional delegations. UUGAC has been most successful in playing a role in global AIDS advocacy when there was a specific issue where we could partner with other organizations and mobilize our contacts in congregations all over the country. Please consider starting now to form alliances and contacts so that we can move quickly when it counts, and let us know that you are out there.

DOMESTIC ADVOCACY

The following article was posted on the Immigration Equality web site prior to President Obama's appointment of Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius as Secretary of **Health and Human Services (HHS)**. This issue seems to have dropped off the radar in light of more pressing issues, including the H1N1 flu pandemic. Now is as good a time as any to bring this issue to the attention of the new HHS Secretary.

From ImmigrationEquality.com

Despite high hopes that the HIV ban would be fully lifted by the end of the Bush administration, unfortunately, we are still waiting for the regulatory change necessary to lift the ban. The 2008 accomplishment – removing the statutory HIV ban from the Immigration and Nationality Act – was huge, and we all know that it is now just a matter of time for the Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”) to complete the lifting of the ban.

The next step in the process is for HHS to issue proposed regulations which will state the agency's intention to remove HIV from its list of “communicable diseases of public health significance. There will then be a period of time during which the public can submit comments, and then, probably 60 days later, HHS will issue a final rule.

Meanwhile, Immigration Equality is continuing to work in coalition with other immigration, public health, and HIV/AIDS organizations to pressure the new administration on this issue. Since HHS does not yet have a new Secretary, on February 11, 2009, we sent President Obama a letter that was signed by 152 organizations, urging him to take swift action to lift the HIV ban. As soon as we receive a response, we will post it on our web site.

Despite the incredible achievement of removing the HIV ban from the statute, our work will not be done until the regulation is amended and foreign nationals with HIV can travel and immigrate freely to the U.S. Until that happens, unfortunately, foreign nationals living with HIV must still obtain waivers to enter the U.S.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL UU WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

UUGAC incoming chair Carla Feldhammer was active at the first International UU Women's Conference in Houston in February. She had an exhibit with information on UUGAC and items for sale made by the women's income generating project supported by the Carbondale UU Fellowship. She also sponsored a workshop given by Mary Chidgey the founder and manager of the Ranchod Hospice and Orphan Care in Kabwe, Zambia, which is partnered with Carbondale. Her presentation was entitled "The Effect of HIV/AIDS on Women in Africa." Mary received a scholarship from the convocation planners to enable her to attend. They also showed the video "Women and HIV/AIDS" distributed by the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

THINKING GREEN AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT THE SAME TIME!

Linda Bell of First Unitarian Portland had the good fortune to meet Rev. Mark Kiyimba, pastor of the UU congregation in Uganda, while she was visiting her daughter who was a Peace Corps volunteer. She and her husband have been making donations to support their work in caring for AIDS orphans. This year rather than spend the money to attend GA (and add to the impact of global warming) she donated the money she would have spent to attend GA to the orphans in Uganda. Talk about a Win-Win! Thank you to Linda for showing all of us how easy it is to make a difference and save the planet at the same time.

DID YOU KNOW?

Reports from Kaisernetwork daily HIV/AIDS report, www.kaisernetwork.org

According to Smita Baruah, government relations director for the Global Health Council, PEPFAR, the United States global AIDS initiative, helped prevent more than 1 million AIDS related deaths in Africa in its first 3 years, and reduced the mortality rate by 10.5% in the 12 African focus countries that received PEPFAR funding. It did not however have any effect on overall HIV prevalence. "The irony – and it is a positive, is that the more people are staying alive, the higher the percentage who are living with HIV". The gap between available funds and those needed will continue to increase unless the incidence of HIV in Africa is substantially reduced. "As you move from emergency to sustainability its not going to work just to treat your way out of the infection. You need to figure out how we prevent new infections." (knw 4/7/09)

- Although last year the CDC reported that the U.S. HIV epidemic was much larger than previously thought, a recent survey found that the public's sense of urgency is down even among high risk groups. Only 17% named HIV/AIDS as the most important public health risk in 2006, down from 44% in 1995. (Blacks and Hispanics have HIV rates 7 and 3 times respectively that of whites). (kff, 4/28/09)

- According to Anthony Fauci, director of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, "Although vaccines have been mankind's best weapon against the worst infectious diseases, (due to) HIV's unique and formidable nature, an effective vaccine is not likely to be available in the near future". He talks about 3 "bold new approaches": pre-exposure prophylaxis, universally available annual testing, and efforts to find a cure rather than continue lifelong ARV treatment. (knw, 4/16/09)

- President Obama has nominated Melanne Verveer, chair and co-CEO of Vital Voices Global Partnership, as Ambassador at Large for Global Women's issues.(White House press release, 3/9/09)
- World Bank programs aimed at fighting HIV/AIDS, particularly in Africa, are less effective than programs aimed at addressing other health and development issues. A recent report assessed the Bank's \$17 billion investment in health, nutrition and population programs since 1997. It found that 8 out of 10 HIV/AIDS programs in Africa had unsatisfactory results, with a 25% success rate compared to 89% success for all programs. (knw,5/1/09)
- The current economic downturn could threaten anti-retroviral treatment access for about 1.7 million HIV positive people by the end of 2009. Developing countries could face drug shortage, treatment interruption and an increase in HIV prevalence. (knw, 5/1/09)
- First Lady Obama has agreed to partner with French First Lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy on efforts to address HIV/AIDS worldwide. Bruno-Sarkozy is a goodwill ambassador to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. (knw, 4/6/09)
- The Kaiser Family Foundation has launched a new section of its website to focus on U.S. Global health policy, <http://globalhealth.kff.org>. They also publish comprehensive global health statistics at www.globalhealthfacts.org. (knw 4/28/09)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE UU GLOBAL AIDS COALITION

What is the UU Global AIDS Coalition and how did we come about?

What later became the UU Global AIDS Coalition was originally founded in 2002 as a Social Justice Action Group at First Unitarian in Portland, OR. in response to a powerful address given by Stephen Lewis, then UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, at the Unitarian General Assembly that year. He faulted those of us in the West for sitting by while the devastation of the AIDS pandemic is causing millions of deaths every year. Many of these deaths could be prevented if medical care easily available in western countries was available elsewhere in the world.

We now have a national steering committee and have made contacts in around 160 congregations throughout the U.S., also in Canada, Mexico and Europe, and we are especially delighted to be in contact with UU's in Kenya and Uganda and to be working with them to support their work in caring for AIDS orphans. We are a grassroots, all volunteer organization.

•Our vision is to support the work of UU congregations by sharing information and learning from each other. Our Red Ribbon Congregation program recognizes congregations that are making a substantial effort to address global AIDS issues and can serve as a model for other congregations. Congregations or individuals who are considering getting involved and wondering how to start are encouraged to contact any of the Red Ribbon Congregations listed later in this newsletter. While they are all heavily involved in their own programs, they have a variety of in depth experience in starting and sustaining projects to support communities impacted by HIV/AIDS and are happy to share what they have learned. And we hope other congregations who are already actively engaged will apply to become a Red Ribbon congregation- that would be wonderful!

•Funding: We are a totally volunteer organization composed of individuals from UU congregations throughout the United States. Thanks to our new fiscal agent, Carbondale UU Fellowship, we can now accept donations, but individual congregations do their own fund-raising.

•We work by partnering with others. We have worked hard to collaborate with other UUA agencies so that we include their perspective on global AIDS issues and reach the widest possible audience. We are especially proud that we are able to partner with the UUA Advocacy Office and the UU United Nations Office to engage UU's at all levels in speaking out on the issues and in participating in global AIDS events.

•We work to engage UU's in political advocacy. We are especially excited by the growing role of the denomination in political advocacy on global AIDS issues, and use our network of local contacts to support the work of the UUA Advocacy Office.

•We work to develop culturally respectful ways to share the journey with those impacted by poverty and HIV/AIDS.

•We are always looking for leaders who are interested in working with youth. Please contact Carla Feldhammer at hospice88@aol.com if you are interested in getting involved in this important part of our work.

LEADERSHIP

- Chair 2008-June 2009: Ann Pickar, First Unitarian, Portland, OR.
- Vice Chair 2008- June 2009 and Chair Designate July 2009: Carla Feldhammer, Carbondale ILL UU Fellowship
- Secretary: Madeleine Lefebvre, Juneau Alaska fellowship
- Treasurer: Debbie White, Carbondale ILL UU fellowship
- Mail list and newsletter distribution: Terry Cushman, All Souls, Kansas City, MO
- Communications. (Pending). Darcy Roake, Harvard Divinity School and Peter Smith, First Unitarian Society Newton MA
- Development: Madeleine Lefebvre, Juneau Alaska Fellowship
- Red Ribbon Congregation Program: Lyle Smith, Michael Servetus UU fellowship, Vancouver,WA.
- Advocacy Coordinator: Adam Gerhardstein, UUA Advocacy Office. (ex-officio)
- UU-UNO Liaison/Resource developer: Bruce Knotts/Holly Sarkissian, UU-United Nations Office.(ex-officio)
- At large: Priscilla Laws, Unitarian Universalists of Cumberland Valley, PA
- At large: Dennis Reynolds, Unitarian Universalist Church, Eugene, OR
- At large: Al Jacobson and Rodney Lowe, First parish, Lexington MA (shared position)
- Youth/Youth Advisor representatives: Vacant
- Fiscal Agent: Carbondale, ILL UU Fellowship
- Web updates: Greg Zupan, First Unitarian, Portland, OR
- Newsletter: Ann Pickar, First Unitarian, Portland, OR. And Terry Cushman, All Souls, Kansas City.

RED RIBBON CONGREGATION PROGRAM

The following congregations have been recognized as Red Ribbon Congregations for their continuing leadership in addressing global AIDS issues. We encourage others to contact them direct for information and advice.

- All Souls Kansas City, Kansas City, MO. Contact Terry Cushman, tcushman@yahoo.com
- Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship, Carbondale, IL. Contact Carla Feldhammer, hospice88@aol.com
- First Parish Lexington, MA. Contact Al Jacobson, aljacobson@comcast.net
- First Unitarian Portland, OR. Contact Ann Pickar, apickar@cs.com
- First Unitarian Society in Newton, MA. Contact Peter Smith, psmith@igc.org
- Juneau UU Fellowship, AK. Contact Madeleine Lefebvre, toisondor@gci.net
- Michael Servetus UU Fellowship, Vancouver, WA. Contact Lyle Smith, llbs@aol.com
- Unitarian Universalists of Cumberland Valley, PA. Contact Priscilla Laws, lawsp@dickinson.edu

TO BECOME A RED RIBBON CONGREGATION:

Go to the Red Ribbon Congregation page on our web site, www.uuglobalaids.org, or for more information contact Lyle Smith at llbs@aol.com or contact any of the congregation contacts listed above.

GETTING INVOLVED WITH UUGAC

CHECK OUT OUR WEB SITE: www.uuglobalaids.org

We encourage both individuals and congregations to join our coalition. This is not a membership organization and any individual can sign up to receive the newsletter. There is no charge. We are especially looking for people who will be the contact for their congregation. Besides letting us know that you are out there, we hope that congregational contacts will:

- Distribute the newsletter and brochures and perhaps maintain a local sign up list
- Share news of what is happening in your congregation and community

To receive the newsletter or to become a congregational contact, e-mail
UUGACNEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM

The newsletter comes out three times a year, usually in January, April and September. Contributions and suggestions very much welcome!