

Social Justice Leadership Team

Hiliary Keating (Secretary) Bob Keating (GOSP) Paul Introcaso (Racial Justice and Immigrant Solidarity) Karen Thomas (Community Dinners and NSKS Casseroles) Kate Messner (Community Outreach) and Livia Gershon (UU Action NH). Ben Atherton-Zeman, Ministerial Intern also participated on this team. He represented UUCN @ The Nashua CROP Hunger Walk.

Members of this team took turns “chairing” the Social Justice Leadership Team as there was no permanent chair.

Racial Justice

Building the World We Dream About was facilitated by Jodie Haloway, Jess Wood and Sadie Kahn-Green and met the 3rd Tuesday each month.

"Building the World We Dream About" supports Unitarian Universalists and our congregation to build the multicultural world of the beloved community we dream about by cultivating participants' knowledge, skills, and capacity to address issues related to race, ethnicity, and cultural identity as individuals and congregations.

Community Dinner

The Community Dinner Planning Team consists of lead volunteers. Members are Karen Thomas, Geri Davidson, Elizabeth Lewis, Stu Davidson, Laurie Barry, Barbara and Steve Pugh, Moe Daniels, Paul and Alice Introcaso.

This month, June 2020, is the 8 year anniversary of Free Community Dinners at UU Nashua offered on the 3rd Sunday each month.

Community Dinner welcomes everyone. Some guests may be seeking personal transformation and a spiritual home, although many are not. A goal of Community Dinner is to provide a safe space for those who may usually struggle to be accepted in the community of Nashua. We see the inherent worth and dignity of each person and treat each person as we ourselves would like to be treated. Each month we receive grateful comments about the serving style, the food quality, the kindness of the volunteers, the take-away table goodies, the clean & relaxed environment, and the music.

Attendance at Community Dinners varies from month-to-month. During the 2019-2020 church year we had anywhere from 41 guests to 98 guests monthly, averaging 68 guests per month. We now plan for 80-100 guests each month. After our volunteers are fed any remaining food is donated directly to The Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter so there is no waste.

While working as volunteers at Community Dinner, UU Nashuan's are joining in fellowship with other members and friends. The volunteers who work on Community Dinner give generously of their time while promoting our church's mission.

Our volunteer crews often get to know each other better because of the work they do in the kitchen & the time they spend together. We feel Community Dinner is a form of worship. Is there any better way to live our first principle than to care for all who show up both in the kitchen and the dining room? No questions asked. No judgements placed. Preparing & serving Community Dinner is a worship that nurtures, challenges, and inspires.

By lighting a chalice to center the volunteers and bring everyone together, Community Dinners help create a beloved community among UU Nashuan's.

Most months, soothing background music is provided by UU Nashua volunteers. The music is a unique gift that Community Dinner patrons do not experience anywhere else they eat. There are many positive comments each month about the wonderful ambiance that live music provides. The music has inspired some of our guests to sing and dance as well. THANK YOU to the musicians!

Youth are an integral part of our church community and we encourage their participation in volunteer opportunities throughout our church community, including Community Dinner. A youth volunteer policy was created this year allowing the youth to safely participate in our monthly dinners. That policy can be seen [here](#).

Children under the age of 15 are to be accompanied and supervised by a parent/guardian at all times. For our youth's safety, due to the large number of moving parts and pieces and potential dangerous situations, they are not allowed in the kitchen during meal preparation/cooking, set up and serving. We will evaluate having youth in the kitchen during clean up on a case by case situation. The

Since the summer 2015, John Burkitt's "Let's Put People on Bikes" has generously donated time, supplies, and talent to perform bike maintenance at several of the spring/summer/fall monthly dinners (weather permitting). This endeavor has been well received by both dinner patrons and cyclists who happen to hear about it or see it while passing by. Many thanks to John & his crew of dedicated bike mechanics who make this possible.

UU Nashua volunteers give Community Dinner life. It would be impossible to serve Dinner guests without the hours of help provided each month by cooks, bakers, set up & servers, take-away table & cleanup crew. We are in awe of and appreciate every volunteer who makes the time to help at Community Dinner. These Dinners would not be possible without you!
THANK YOU!

We were unable to serve our April, May and June Community Dinners and we do not anticipate resuming Community Dinners in the format we are used to for the foreseeable future. The funds we would have spent on the April dinner were donated to Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter. Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, we partnered with NSKS to provide 150 bagged lunches. The Community Dinner Planning Team is looking at new ways to continue to safely feed our community during this pandemic.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Thomas on behalf of the UUCN's Community Dinners

UU Action NH

UUCN has been an integral part of efforts by our State Action Network. Highlights of our activities this year include:

- We continued our work on immigrant justice in partnership with GSOP, the NH Immigrant Solidarity Network, and other organizations, participating in actions including a Solidarity Walk to the Stafford detention facility in Dover in August, as well as car rallies in Dover calling for the freeing of detainees in light of the danger COVID-19 poses.
- We are working with the national UU the Vote campaign and local allies to boost turnout in November and help ensure that everyone can vote safely despite the pandemic.
- Since December 2019, our NH Bail and Bond fund has bonded out nine people from ICE detention for a total of \$44,500. In addition, we have continued to pay a few bails at Valley Street Jail in Manchester for people who have fallen through the cracks of the state's bail reform law. We have raised money for these efforts from sources including a Faithify crowdfunding campaign and an outreach offering from UUCN.
- In January, we officially launched the UU Action NH Climate Team.
- We held our annual Story Slam fundraising event in Concord in November. Our Spring Summit, with the theme No Cages No Carbon, took place over Zoom in May.

Respectively submitted by Livia Gershon

Sanctuary 2019-2020 report

In June, the partnership between UU Nashua and UU Manchester agreed to sponsor Bienfait Pole Pole, an Asylum Seeker from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Note the NH Bail Bond fund contributed to Bienfait's bail from Strafford County Jail. Bienfait was a victim of intense persecution in the Congo. He leaves behind a family of eight who have to remain in hiding. Bienfait's goal is to someday bring his family to the U.S.

Accommodations were made for Bienfait to stay at UU Manchester. The team worked to support Bienfait with various necessities to help him assimilate into our community:

Volunteers UUM and 12 UUCN delivered dinners daily or took Bienfait out to dinner or shared dinner with Bienfait at their homes. Some volunteers provided gift cards for Market Basket. Bienfait began English classes at the International Institute of New England. He began working out at the 34 Manchester YMCA. He set up a phone card program, received a library card. Clothing was donated. The team helped Bienfait find a Psych Therapist and helped introduce him to people in the Manchester Community.

Bienfait received his work permit and a Social Security number. He passed his written NH Drivers' License, and subsequently passed his road test.

Late September, Bienfait landed a job at the Crotched Mountain campus in Greenfield. Marissa Volpe (Nashua UU Church) donated a car to Bienfait. With the team's help, Bienfait navigated the Motor Vehicle system: registering the car, obtaining license plates, passing NH state inspection, and buying insurance.

In November 2019, Bienfait visited the UUCN and spoke to our congregation on behalf of the Bail/Bond Fund. He told us his story and personally thanked us for our support.

Members from both UU Manchester UU Nashua and friends attended the hearing at the Federal Court House in Boston. Bienfait told his story well, as horrifying as it was. We were ecstatic when the judge made the decision there to grant Bienfait asylum. She welcomed Bienfait to the United States and she encouraged him to begin the process of bringing his family over!

April 2020- May 2020 At Crotchet Mountain, Bienfait came in contact with a client who was Covid positive. Bienfait had to be quarantined for 14 days. He successfully came out of quarantine and recently Bienfait shared-1 this experience at "The NH People's Bailout: A Covid-19 Town Hall"

Thanks to all at UUCN who contributed to installing the shower and intercom system at UU Manchester and to those who supported Bienfait with meals, accompaniment, and encouragement.

And thanks for helping make this difference in Bienfait's life!

Respectively submitted by Paul Introcaso.

GSOP

GSOP overall continues its focus, in the broadest sense, on creating a moral economy. We have worked to strengthen our safety net, as, for example, on raising the minimum wage, voter education, and get-out-the-vote efforts so that all will be counted. It does so by organizing across diverse groups and religions, racially and age-wise. GSOP has formed interfaith groups to address issues as broad-based as greater protection for children from lead paint poisoning to working to release refugees in detention and helping our community members, particularly the most vulnerable, deal with the impact of the pandemic.

Addressing the needs for much more safe, decent, and affordable housing throughout our state has been a central focus throughout GSOP's history, and it very much remains so. In Nashua, we have been working with the Interfaith Housing Justice Group, of which our own Reverend Allison has been a leader, to create significantly more affordable housing in Nashua, with a goal to create 2,000 units over the next 10 years. We have been working closely with the mayor and other city officials on this goal.

Just last week (5/21), we attended a Zoom meeting to hear a proposal by Nashua Housing and Redevelopment Authority to create about 150 new affordable housing units where the Bronstein apartments are located. Unfortunately, the proposal would mean the 48 families living there currently would have to be relocated as the buildings would be demolished. We will be standing with the residents of Bronstein to achieve a just solution for them as we did previously with the residents when another plan was proposed and then withdrawn as it did not meet their needs.

Finally, a proposal to build 150 apartment units on the site of a city parking lot downtown has been moving forward. The School Street Project is a block and a half from the Bronstein apartments. No affordable housing is proposed for this project. We have been raising our concerns about the lack of affordable housing for this project and will continue to do so.

The above gives you some idea of the scope of things we are involved with. We meet generally the 3rd Monday of the month from 6-7:30 pm at the Adult Learning Center on Lake Street, although of late it has been via Zoom. We would love to have your presence either way. Please contact Bob Keating at 883-6903 if you have any questions.

Outreach Collections

Month	Recipient	Amount	
June - July 2019	Habitat for Humanity	\$4,013.06	
Aug - Sep 2019	Sanctuary Boston	\$3,635.34	
October, 2019	NSKS Christmas Gift Bags	\$2,841.05	
November, 2019	UU Action NH Bail Bond Fund	\$2,636.64	
December, 2019	SNHS Fuel Assistance	\$5,379.03	
January, 2020	AFSC Arnie Alpert Fund	\$2,662.13	
February, 2020	SJCS Meals on Wheels	\$3,041.96	
March, 2020	The Donna Purkhiser & Gregory McDevitt Scholarship Fund	\$5,095.00	
April, 2020	NH Council of Churches (opiod addiction)	\$2,066.40	
		\$31,370.61	