

UUFBC Social Justice, July 2013-June 2014

July 2013:

- President Jack Harvey appointed Ruby Jo Faust, At-large Board member to provide oversight to the board of Social Justice committee activities. Bob Gilmore agreed to chair the committee, and Harriett Myers, Jennifer Wilcoxsin, Audrey Tobias, Jo Shaffer, Jan Stricklan, and Steve Bornhoft agreed to serve on the committee. At the July 16 Board meeting, Jack Harvey directed the committee to plan a Social Justice Forum to be held on September 20 to let UUFBC members vote on a project for the upcoming year. Emphasis from the 5-Year Plan was placed on forming a partnership with some group in the local community.

August 2013:

- Beginning on August 8, the SJ committee held at least four meetings to explore possible projects. Suggested issues to explore were: bullying and LGBT activism, support for Every Child One Promise to aid children with a parent in prison, the School-to-Prison Pipeline, Homelessness, the Living Wage, Advocacy and Support for the Disabled, partnership with DCF to support teens aging out of foster care, Backpack Food donations to students at an elementary school in an economically disadvantaged community, Voter rights advocacy and activism.
- Bob took the initiative to join UU Justice Florida.

September 2013:

- By Sept. 11 SJ committee meeting, three projects had been identified to present at the Forum: Jan Stricklan and Ruby Jo Faust proposed *Adopting Patterson Elementary* to mentor students in reading and coordinate food donations for a backpack program, Jo Shaffer proposed *Assisting Youth in Foster Care* by developing a project called *Bay Youth Interdisciplinary Leadership Development (BYILD)* to consist of a series of activities for teens, and Bob Gilmore proposed *Empowering Democracy* by voter registration, issue forums, and other citizen activism.
- On Sept. 20, about 40 members attended a spirited SJ forum, culminated by voting on the projects above, with the foster care BYILD project gaining most votes. Twenty-two attendees signed a volunteer list for one or more specific activities.
- On Sept. 29, UU Justice Florida board member Gerard Goen spoke briefly at our Sunday service to encourage members to join UU Justice Florida (UUFJ) initiatives.

October 2013:

- From Oct. 8 through Nov. 22, Jo Shaffer, Bob Gilmore and Ruby Jo Faust attended a series of meetings with various DCF staff to initiate a partnership to provide enrichment activities for teens in foster care. Meanwhile, we also prepared for a Meet & Greet event to bring together UUFBC volunteers, various DCF staff members, and the teens.
- On Oct. 16, Bob Gilmore joined UU groups in Washington, DC, who visited Congressmen to protest the government shutdown then in progress.

November 2013:

- On Nov. 5, UUFBC volunteers hosted teens and DCF staff to dinner at Sonny's Barbecue with about 35 people in attendance. Besides socializing, there was a lively brain-storming session to explore possible community service projects we might adopt.
- On Nov. 19, Jo, Bob and I met with DCF staff, who reported feedback from the youth in favor

of a nursing home visit during December as a community service project.

- On Nov. 19, SJ volunteers met with teens and staff at a group home to refine a schedule to include preparing baked goods for a fundraiser to buy gifts for nursing home residents.
- On Nov. 21, SJ committee announced a one-time collection of food donations for Patterson Elementary students during the winter holiday.
- On Nov.26, UU volunteers met with teens at Hidle House to make posters and holiday hats to be used in the fundraiser.

December 2013:

- On Dec. 3, UU volunteers met with teens at Claire's house to bake and decorate cookies, and on Dec. 7, some volunteers also helped with the bake sale, primarily managed by DCF staff and teens, yielding \$160. DCF staff also worked with teens to buy and wrap gifts to be delivered to nursing home residents.
- On Sat., Dec. 14, UU volunteers hosted volunteers from *Family of God Baptist Church* to give them a very large amount of food items collected for Patterson Elementary students.
- On Dec. 17, a large group of UU volunteers, DCF staff, and teens met at our Fellowship to rehearse carols and then all caravanned to Bay Nursing Home to sing, read a traditional Christmas poem, and distribute gifts to residents. Everyone involved felt the event was a success.

January 2014:

- At our SJ committee meeting on Jan. 8, Pres. Jack Harvey reviewed our progress toward our 5-Year plan goals, commending progress toward our main goal of establishing a partnership with a community group, and deferring some minor goals.
- On Jan. 12, Jo Shaffer led UU volunteers in a second-hour planning session for upcoming BYILD events. This dedicated group made good progress toward fleshing out plans for numerous events.
- On Martin Luther King weekend Jan. 18-20, UU SJ volunteers participated in Goodwill Industries' Clean-a-Park project, NAACP's MLK Breakfast, and ACURE's MLK Parade.
- On Jan. 25, UU BYILD volunteers and a large group of foster children and teens shared a hot dog dinner at our Fellowship and then attended a women's and men's basketball game at Gulf Coast State College.

February 2014:

- On Feb. 5, SJ committee made plans for tabling event in March, agreed to maintain a bulletin board for SJ news, and continued to figure out how to begin a community garden.
- On Feb. 9, UU volunteers held a Kitchen Commando BYILD cooking skills event in our Fellowship hall with a small group teens participating. It was deemed a success, with requests for a repeat.
- On Feb. 21 and 22, Cheryl invited teens and UU volunteers and BYILD teens to participate in Mardi Gras parades, but the response was disappointing.
- On Feb. 26, Al and Jack led a successful BYILD event on cooking and restaurant management at *Somethin's Cooking*, with half a dozen teens.

March 2014:

- On March 8, BYILD event on broadcast journalism, touring WJHG TV, Panama City Beach; teens were excited. Charissa Thacker arranged and conducted this event.
- On March 9, tabling event at Sunday service, with Bob and Harriett Myers sharing information on various political issues.
- On March 24 and 25, Bob Gilmore and 5 other UUFBC volunteers attended Lobbying Days in Tallahassee, meeting with our state legislators and attending meetings with other UU's from around the state. Ours was the largest delegation of UU's there.

April 2014:

- On April 4, UU volunteers and members supported a fundraiser given by Emerald Coast Pagan Community (ECPC) to benefit UUFBC Social Justice projects. Good food, good music, good fellowship and a donation of \$700.00 plus.
- On April 10, 20 foster teens and staff were treated to a tour of the FSU campus arranged by Jo Shaffer, in coordination with Casey Lathem, Senior Admissions Officer, who was one of two tour guides. Afterward they came to our Fellowship hall for a meal and social time. This was a very good BYILD event, with the usual girls from Claire's house plus some 18-year-olds already in transitional housing.
- On April 17, BYILD event on careers in health care, arranged and led by Diana Avrigian. She held it at Lisenby Center and made workbooks to hand out covering some of the most important components of her presentation, including educational programs and employment contact information. Jo Shaffer attended this event.
- On April 24, Chris May facilitated our first BYILD small group session at Claire's house.

May 2014:

- On May 24, Charissa Thacker led an outstanding BYILD event, when several teens enjoyed an all-day outing at St. Andrews State Park. The agenda included a guided nature hike and collecting sea creatures from the bay under the direction of a master teacher and a naturalist from FWC who donated their time. Then UU volunteers provided a picnic lunch, and afterwards the teens enjoyed snorkeling in the kiddie pool.
- On May 29, UU BYILD volunteers provided a pizza meal and for our second small group session at Claire's house. The teens were less enthusiastic about this event than any that we have had so far.

June 2014:

- During our Fellowship's annual business meeting on June 8, members voted 38 to 0 for us to endorse the *Move to Amend* initiative. A notice of this endorsement is being sent to UU Florida Justice to stand with other congregations across Florida who are endorsing it.
- Bob Gilmore and Bob McNeal will facilitate a BYILD event on *Careers in Hospitality* on June 19.
- Diane Mouskourie will lead the girls at Claire's house in an art activity for the Small Group event on June 26, and Ruby Jo, Susan, and others will support her with food, etc.