

## **Two Summaries of Ideas from the UUFRC World Café** **Held Sept. 21, 2008**

This document includes two different summaries of the ideas and suggestions collected at our UUFRC World Café on the topic:

### **“How shall UUFRC demonstrate its commitment to the wider community?”**

More than 100 members and friends attended the World Café, at which people discussed their ideas within randomly created groups of 6-8 people, including children and youth. Ideas from the first round of discussions were carried on into the second round, and ideas from that round into a third. The third round of groups offered ideas that were collected on summary sheets by the moderators, Debbie Mytels and Kaye Bonney. These summary sheets, plus all the individual ideas recorded by participants on note cards, form the basis for this document.

Because of the length of the results, Debbie Mytels summarized half the results and Kaye Bonney the other half; thus, two summaries are included below. The activities and categories each drew from the results were very similar, which is a validation of both the process and the analysis. Many thanks to Debbie and Kaye.

### **Summary #1**

#### **Ideas and Analysis from World Cafe on UUFRC Community Action – Debbie Mytels**

The ideas from the World Cafe can be organized into three main types:

- A. Issue areas to work on
- B. Specific project ideas
- C. Ideas for improving our organizational structure and effectiveness

**Overall, we should also keep in mind two important comments:**

- ✓ UU is impressive already
- ✓ UU is doing a great job w/social action!!

Under each of these categories, the ideas can be summarized as follows:

#### **A. Issue areas to work on**

- Support Public Education
- Food-Related Projects
- International Project Ideas
- Environmental Education for Our Congregation and Community
- Work on Campaign Finance Reform

#### **B. Specific project ideas**

- Continue and Expand our Relationship with Roosevelt School Community
- Support Low-Income Families in the Redwood City Area
- Service Projects for Our UU Kids
- Food-Related Projects for Children
- Health-Care Project
- Barter Network and Support to Local Economy
- Adult RE re: Religion and Interfaith Understanding

- ❑ Adult RE re: Understanding Other Cultures
- ❑ Other Adult Educational Programs
- ❑ Other Specific Suggestions

### **C. Ideas for improving our organizational structure and effectiveness**

- ❑ Internal Re-Organization of Community Action Projects
- ❑ Improve Communication within UUFRC re: Community Action
- ❑ External Publicity about UUFRC Community Action Work
- ❑ Focus our Efforts and Don't Spread Ourselves too Thin.

Under each of these topics below are the “best ideas” recorded on the flipcharts at the end of the World Cafe (marked with a bullet), followed by the “raw data” from the index cards written by all the individuals participating (marked with a check mark):

### **A. Issue areas to work on**

#### **1. Support Public Education**

- ✓ Support Public Education:
  - Mentor/tutor
  - Support with investment/encouraging investment. How to channel that? (Tiki Dare)
- ✓ Work with Schools – help parents learn how to help their children
- ✓ Work with Redwood City Education Foundation to help in our local schools.
- ✓ Fiscal inequities in school districts
- ✓ Restore public education as foundation for a functional society, economy, and just world
- ✓ Collecting \$10 from each registered voter in San Mateo County to donate to schools and encouraging youth to participate in the collection efforts (Debbie DeMarco)
- ✓ Community activity to get each person in S. M County to donate a small amount (\$5-\$10) to San Mateo County schools
- ✓ School tutoring a) include parents b) fun activities for learning English
- ✓ Organize donations of kids' books to schools
- ✓ Educational tutoring/mentoring in schools
- ✓ Investing in public educating (esp. for college readiness). Public education is a statewide issue
- ✓ More public school student help: tutoring, healthy food

#### **2. Food-Related Projects**

- Put out a food collection barrel – revive what we already have been doing here
- Have the Second Harvest Food bank barrel always available for donations
- Put a major focus on food issues:
  - Establish UUFRC as a drop off point for a CSA
  - Classes on cooking, canning, nutrition, eating local
  - Ethical eating
- ✓ Food and/or Second Harvest Barrel
- ✓ Feed the hungry
- ✓ Make sure the Second harvest food barrel is filled year-round (especially summer, when poor kids aren't getting school lunches)
- ✓ Promoting year round donations to food barrel/bank
- ✓ Year round efforts – monthly food barrel donations
- ✓ Food: CSA sharing
- ✓ Adult ed classes in nutrition and cooking, canning
- ✓ Local farm trips; kids' trips

- ✓ Gleaning programs
- ✓ Share food among ourselves
- ✓ Discussion groups – eat locally, impact of eating
- ✓ UUA theme of Ethical Eating
- ✓ Food barrel here
- ✓ Focus on food – UUA Ethical Eating
- ✓ CSA, food bank, nutrition
- ✓ Have an on-going food donation bin – reminders one time/month
- ✓ Fill up canned food bin during summer, too. Not just around X-mas

### **3. International Project Ideas**

- ✓ Think globally, act locally
- ✓ Work with international groups
- ✓ International projects
- ✓ “Trust in Education” – Three Cups of Tea (Afghanistan/Pakistan/international)
- ✓ Working towards an international involvement
- ✓ Undermine terrorism & poverty by giving financial (and other) support to groups – building schools where they are most needed.
- ✓ Invite speaker from group in East Bay, Trust in Education (ask Elizabeth Rossi) which sponsor school building in Afghanistan. Support this group or this niche as described in “Three Cups of Tea.” (RE?)
- ✓ Women for Women International: Sponsoring a woman and her children in a country at war.
- ✓ Raising funds to build schools in poorer countries.

### **4. Environmental Education for Our Congregation and Community**

- ✓ FAQ and chat room or online forum for answering recycling questions, (eg, trade-offs) and sharing information on green living. Start this info gathering process through group meeting and knowledge sharing
- ✓ Seminar on maintaining green living. Increased access to info on green living.
- ✓ Greener living beyond sanctuary -- in our own homes, and sharing ideas of what each is doing. Check list on what we are already doing – sharing resources and knowledge on green living in home.
- ✓ Expand on styrofoam. Accept donations to be delivered to Goodwill, recycling to be delivered to center, etc. Work on reduce/recycle problem
- ✓ Creek cleanup is great! & other local efforts & ☺
- ✓ Recycle Bottle & can, to raise money for church

### **5. Work on Campaign Finance Reform**

- Public finance for campaigns
- Redwood City is a charter city – we can decide to have a “no corporations can finance city campaigns” ordinance.
  - ✓ Federal funding for people running for office so the billionaires cannot control who gets into office. And limit the funds of elections by the Federal Government.
  - ✓ Public financing of State and federal elections.
  - ✓ Campaign finances reform as a long term effort, to engage Republican & Democratic UU’s

## **B. Specific project ideas**

### **6. Continue and Expand our Relationship with Roosevelt School Community**

- Expand relationship with Roosevelt School and the families there
- Collect children’s books for Roosevelt School

- Expand involvement with Roosevelt School
  - ✓ Community Hiking group – Roosevelt
  - ✓ Gardening at Roosevelt
  - ✓ Roosevelt School tutoring and general student mentoring at other schools (including my idea to teach crafts – Marianna Tubman)
  - ✓ Adopting Roosevelt School in order to provide a broader range of support to local families
  - ✓ Gardening and composting at Roosevelt (veg. garden that kids can do & some flowers)
  - ✓ Roosevelt School

## 7. Support Low-Income Families in the Redwood City Area

- Provide more resources to needy families
- Adopt a family
- Outdoor field trips for disadvantaged kids
  - ✓ Provide services/support for single parents in the community
  - ✓ “Adopting” a child in RCSD that has financial needs and getting that child school supplies to start the year off on solid ground
  - ✓ Backpack idea – Kat Eden discussed a great idea [DM: I think this may be something about a project that fills back-to-school backpacks for kids... we should check this with Kat.]
  - ✓ Sponsor “Great Start” Backpacks and supplies for kids who can’t afford them – First day of school.
  - ✓ I really liked the idea of helping low income children be paired with volunteer dentists
  - ✓ Sponsor a family for a year [written twice]
  - ✓ Sponsor a family – in the local community (ie., trailer parks) – with trips (enrichment or to the doctor), meals, childcare
  - ✓ I think that buying things for children for the first day if they can’t afford anything
  - ✓ Helping local family
  - ✓ Books for disadvantaged families
  - ✓ “Angel Brigade” at a local school, Sponsoring a needy student, Taking them shopping for shoes, jackets, etc. So they feel better about themselves in school.
  - ✓ One-on-one mentoring needy students – in reading programs.
  - ✓ Outings for disadvantaged children; enrichment for kids – 2 or 3 kids per adult
    - Exploratorium
    - Art museum
    - Science museum, etc
  - ✓ Sponsor a fundamentalist family for a year
    - in rural Tennessee
    - or a low income, Catholic, Mexican family
    - or in east Menlo Park
    - or in San Carlos
  - ✓ or a two-income, two kid family
  - ✓ Kids killing each other – D. P. [DM: I assume this means, “do something about this problem.”]

## 8. Service Projects for Our UU Kids

- Let the Youth Group plan and execute an on-going service project, with parent support and involvement
- A World Cafe by and for kids
- Youth group to plan and execute a project
  - ✓ Service Projects in Children’s RE
  - ✓ Support school service project for UUFRC young kids, age 5 and up – involve them in community

- ✓ Kids in one community reaching out to kids in other community
- ✓ Kids generate and implement their own community action project
- ✓ Kids going to a homeless shelter and doing arts and crafts for the kids (multiple times)
- ✓ Kids' Cafe – kids projects at homeless shelters or schools
- ✓ More emphasis on outdoor activities for kids
- ✓ Kids World Cafe (“These were my favorite ideas, but they were all wonderful ideas!” – written by a person who wrote down three kid-related ideas; I assume it was a young person -- DM)
- ✓ Website for UU kids
- ✓ UUFRC Website: Facebook for kids
- ✓ On-line website to help UU kids come together
- ✓ Volunteering to sort and organize food and clothes for people that can't afford them. (written by a young person – DM)
- ✓ Children's Programs: Recycling/swap toys and clothes
- ✓ Free school lunches in summer. Food drives in summer. [signed] Will Fuller
- ✓ We need space in our lives for action – stuff that you do with the kids [I think this was written by a young person – DM]
- ✓ Reach out to other faith organization (example: Maclean) & have kids work together to reach out to other faith group in another country. The idea being to reach across socio-economic boundaries.
- ✓ Alternately – get kids involved w/Roosevelt school program

## 9. Food-Related Projects for Children

- Provide lunch to children during summer
  - ✓ Cooking group – Catherine
  - ✓ Nutrition awareness to children
  - ✓ Healthy snack to lower \$ schools every month
  - ✓ Growing wheat – Pie Ranch
  - ✓ School nutrition – local food organic
  - ✓ Support for nutrition education/healthy snacks at local elementary schools. (Could be gardens, composting, healthy snacks)
  - ✓ Partner with Farmer's Market
  - ✓ Grow school garden
  - ✓ Food basket every week, kids give cans etc, before they leave for RE
  - ✓ Nutrition(?) for low income kids' schools -- growing food & Real food – learn by exposure organic local & healthy
  - ✓ 1 snack 1 a week for kindergartens
  - ✓ Start at the bottom as children are more malleable

## 10. Health-Care Project

- ✓ Health Care Access – Continue UUFRC support for this work
- ✓ Support for PIA health care initiatives
- ✓ Tom Atwood & organize slowly

## 11. Barter Network and Support to Local Economy

- Bartering with each other – everyone's time has equal value
  - ✓ Barter network – build a directory
  - ✓ Bartering – make a list/website/space for people to be able to do so. People can bring. offer skills/goods for exchange. Could help local economy (Tiffany Karow)
  - ✓ Local marketplace (food and crafts locally made)
  - ✓ Support the local economy – local biz, crafts, etc:

- Farmers' market and craft space – ongoing, not just Sat. am.
- Farm out piece work (maybe add bartering to space)

## **12. Adult RE re: Religion and Interfaith Understanding**

- An Adult Religious Education – Life Education pilot series
  - ✓ Adult RE: Life & Theology (Other religions)
  - ✓ Bring a minister from another faith to give a sermon
  - ✓ Look for ways to share more with other faith communities within the Bay Area and expanding to other parts of the world. Concrete suggestions include inviting other pastors to lead our services, attending services elsewhere and joint social events.
  - ✓ Adult Ed: (regular) religion and life (eg. life stages) [DM: by “regular” religion, does this person perhaps mean “classes about other, more typical religions?”]
  - ✓ Invite other RWC churches to a Family Social event.
  - ✓ “God” columns, other

## **13. Adult RE re: Understanding Other Cultures**

- More cultural diversity – have an open house, let people outside know what we're doing, the projects, etc
  - ✓ Open us our congregations to people from other cultures such as Latinos. Would require a cultural shift to be less single-mindedly oriented around liberal political agenda.
  - ✓ Get more local-immigrant community support/homeless support
  - ✓ four languages [???

## **14. Other Adult Educational Programs**

- A knowledge-sharing forum – and open it to the public – to reach out
- Adult Education: What is going on economically? Who is baling out whom and why?
  - ✓ Citizen education to help identify where political action is needed, eg., economic system, tax loopholes
  - ✓ Forums
  - ✓ PowerPoint before church
  - ✓ On back wall, one time a month [?? documentary films ?]

## **15. Other Specific Suggestions**

- ✓ Tutor of the Day spot
- ✓ Volunteer at San Mateo Medical Center – tens of thousands a month may need help
- ✓ Weekly shoppers for housebound people
- ✓ Habitat – helping people in need
- ✓ MLK Freedom train
- ✓ Suffering Watch Box
- ✓ Needs Box – anonymous to communicate needs

## **C. Ideas for improving our organizational structure and effectiveness**

### **16. Internal Re-Organization of Community Action Projects**

- Set goals under a broad umbrella
- Need better structure to bring people together to work on various topics/projects:
  - Campaign finance reform
  - Carbon Dioxide reduction
  - Support for local schools
  - Local currency

- Cooking and food co-ops
- Challenge ALL the community action groups at UUFRC
  - provide a short-term opportunity for action
  - engage all ages, especially young families
  - improve communication
- Overcome fragmentation
- Broader Social Action Council to set goals and facilitate what we want to do, plus improve communication. Choose one theme or area for community action.
- Social Justice Council
- Strategic – Vision
- PIA – is part of PICO, and PICO does upstream work, so does UULM
- Upstream/downstream aspects are both important, for example, providing books to kids at Roosevelt School
- A dichotomy in the suggestions – “save the babies in the river” vs. asking “Why are the babies in the water?” How can we change the basic structure? Charity is good, but let’s not just paper over the upstream injustice.
- Upstream and Downstream projects
  - ✓ UUFRC Social Justice Council -- A place where committees have one member attend to vet and parse out ideas, and create synergy by working together on a project.
  - ✓ Council for Social Action (include RE and other committees)
  - ✓ Support PIA
  - ✓ Justice Council
  - ✓ SAC, PIA, etc.
  - ✓ website to tie in other UU churches to our main project so we can make a bigger impact. Maybe do this first – Have older kids make website.
  - ✓ Easily implemented actions that can be done by all, weekly: food donations, kid’s book donation new/used
  - ✓ More activities that can be done as a whole family – kids can come too
  - ✓ Intergenerational activities, teacher not in classroom. Multi age, families involved, all ages.
  - ✓ Every third Friday: official day for volunteering

## **17. Improve Communication within UUFRC re: Community Action**

- Create and reorganize how information and ideas are disseminated at UUFRC – spread our ideas to the greater community
- Network – Improve communication. Have a clearinghouse of activities at UUFRC
- On-line bulletin board – one source of info about actions
- Coordinate and convene – create a “Craigslist of Social Action” on our website, and center the listed actions on our UU values
  - ✓ Communication of what to work on that’s already happening
  - ✓ Networking - Connecting individuals with projects
  - ✓ More outreach – publicity within UUFRC: who is doing what in the community; need to inform all
  - ✓ Directory/network list (clearing house) Share info; newsletter, posters.
  - ✓ Clearing house to find out what other groups are doing so we can support, rather than reinventing the wheel.
  - ✓ Expand information at services – like now 8 months of the year
  - ✓ Expand announcements
  - ✓ Publication?

## **18. External Publicity about UUFRC Community Action Work**

- Outreach and advertising to the larger community – get an intern from the Biz School to do promotion
- Community outreach – Be known as “We are UUs and this is what we do”
- Develop relationships
  - ✓ Advertising/marketing PR person for whatever projects we decide to pursue. It can be free: community calendars, KQED, Craigslist
  - ✓ Talk about UUFRC
  - ✓ Recruit new members
  - ✓ When we go out into the community to do good works, let people know who we are and where we come from
  - ✓ Wear t-shirts (UU t-shirts). Be proud!
  - ✓ “San Mateo Times” to run an article on different churches by Thursday – it would be a good idea for our church to write what we do to help outside of our church.
  - ✓ Letters to Editor etc.
  - ✓ More T-shirts etc.

## **19. Focus our Efforts and Don’t Spread Ourselves too Thin.**

- ✓ Don’t spread ourselves too thin – one focus for the congregation each year
- ✓ Reduce the number of programs so we aren’t spread so thin
- ✓ Dave George made the point about doing more with what we are already doing – “double down” on current activities
- ✓ Pare down. Focus on efforts that involve many people. For example, adopt a family/small community with after school programs, meals, clothing, transportation, interfaith kids
- ✓ Focus on fewer areas and have a greater impact, than diluting efforts by being involved in too many projects
- ✓ Pick one project & really focus the whole UU community on that, kids, everyone. We can do more projects but have a focus where we can make a measurable difference in someone’s life – Adopt a family

## Summary #2

### World Café Ideas – Kaye Bonney

(Note: In this summary, an asterisk has been added each time an idea was mentioned again—that is, ideas with one asterisk were mentioned twice, those with two asterisks were mentioned three times, etc.)

#### Improve Internal Communication

- \*\*\* Community Council
  - Strategic vision
  - Coordinate/manage what's happening
  - Coordinate actions of all of our committees
  - Promote events
- \*\*\* Social Justice Council
  -
- \*\*\* Suffering Watch Box to note needs, identify specific causes of injustice
- \* Activity bulletin board (with name, description, contact) in social hall
- \* Kid's website
- Up-to-date, online bulletin board listing activities
- Create a way to connect individuals with each other around initiatives that reflect their need to express their focus of community service
- To expand participation: better communication about what we are already doing
- More reminders
- Posters
- Publicize family events and for what ages they are appropriate, communicate through families
- Volunteer coordinator

#### Improve External Communication

- \*\*\* Identify ourselves as UUs when we do good works
  - Have fun, too
  - New T-shirts
- \* Promote our church and its positive activity in the community
- \* Hold an open house
- Publicize and widen our assistance to Roosevelt School
- Promote the creation of information posting spaces in high-traffic areas around town to allow people to publicize their activities. Public and business notice spaces are limited
- Interfaith social action event
- Make list of local media (newspaper, radio) available to activity organizers with sample news release or a fillable form
- San Mateo Times Thursday full-page called, "Faith."
- Ashoka model
- Promote Peninsula Cluster Group (seven UU churches) working together on common issues to broaden our connection with each other and, thus, our effect on the world
- Improve organization of community outreach
- Invite Latinos and Conservatives into service. De-emphasize stereotype of Liberal
- Advertise benefits of interfaith, strengths of this practice in local newspapers
- Write newspaper articles about our activities
- Generic church email, church address pool
- Talk about our activities, others may join us
- Contact business professor at Canada or CSM who's teaching PR and ask to be taken on as a class project

## Children's Events

- \*\* Kid's World Café
  - Organized, lead, participated by kids
  - Adults can watch but not talk
- \*\* Service project organized, lead, participated by youth group/kids
- \* Provide service opportunities for all ages, community service for five-year-olds
- \* Connect kids from different socio-economic groups
- Active activities
  - Dances
  - Hikes
  - Camping
- Reach out to kids outside immediate community
  - Pen pals
- Party with
  - UUSM, UUCPA
  - PIA member churches
  - Our interfaith group
- Nutritional awareness for young people
- Involve children in social-action projects by making it a "party"

## Food

- \*\* Arrange with a CSA to provide locally-grown food, deliver produce boxes to UUFRC
- Cooking group
- Support Pie Ranch: wheat processing, educational programs for kids.

## Local Economy

- \*\* Barter within UUFRC
- Provide space for crafts-people and growers to sell their wares
- Community/local sustainability

## Roosevelt School

- \*\* Donate books
  - Teachers give books to especially disadvantaged students who do not own their own
- \* Vegetable garden at Roosevelt School
- \* Invite students to outdoor activities
- Publicize and widen our assistance to Roosevelt School
- Bring young adults into fold as tutors. Use their particular skills such as technical and computer
- Kids from many faiths paint a mural at Roosevelt

## Adult RE

- \*\*\* Compare religions
- \*\*\* Life, stages of adult development, life-stage support
- \*\*\* Macro economics (economics, politics, current issues, bailout, social security, inheritance tax)
- \* "Green" living
- Speak-Up Service. Pick a few areas, such as:
  - I am a vegetarian
  - I stand for \_\_
- Global retreat, spiritual travel
  - Auschwitz "Bearing Witness" trip lead by Zen Peacemakers Institute
  - Salem, witch burnings

## Public Education

- \*\* Raise money by asking each adult to donate \$10 toward education in San Mateo County
- \*\* Donate books to schools

- Find reliable and consistent source of funding statewide

#### Help Local Community Members

- \*\*\* Year-round food drive, continual Second Harvest food barrel
- \*\*\* Take disadvantaged youth out
  - Hikes
  - Farms
  - Museums (Exploratorium, Academy of Sciences)
- \*\*\* Adopt single parents to provide mentoring and support
- \* Publicize availability of free food at food banks for kids during the summer
- \* Donate organic food to food banks to help prevent childhood obesity
- \* Raise money to buy school supplies for children who can't afford to buy their own. Adopt-a-Kid. (MNRShees for school supplies)
- \* Parent-child fellowship activities to learn English, ESL tutoring
- Offer adult education workshops (with childcare) about health issues and where to find useful info. Public libraries provide meeting rooms and publicity
- Provide education about using the library and the internet, can be offered at public libraries
- Recruit bowling alleys and other places to donate food
- Create program to teach/take underexposed children to nature near us. Advertise this in schools. (Increase cross-cultural understanding and birth environmentalists)
- Committee of Charities with \$10 donation
- Once per month food donation at church
- Use building as temporary homeless shelter

#### Political

- \*\* Public financing of elections
- \* Health insurance
- Register voters, be sure community-members understand the importance of this election and what the candidates stand for

#### Environment

- \*\* Make RWC safer for bicycles and walkers to get more cars off the road
- \* Recycle. Use money to go bowling.
- \* Recycling parties for items that are hard to recycle (fun and educational)
  - Batteries
  - Computers
  - Light bulbs
- Speed bumps
- Provide "green" FAQ on our website

#### General

- \*\*\* Get entire families to work together on an issue
  - Emphasize parent-child activities (especially with younger children)
  - Working families lack time, leadership and structure for these activities would make them happen more often
- Do fewer things
- Do both upstream and downstream work on fewer topic areas for more impact
- Tension between:
  - Many areas – few areas
  - Global – local
  - Foundational/upstream – Intervention/downstream
- Provide short-term commitments
- Provide childcare for planning meetings