

Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance

2008 MUUSJA Annual Report

March 2009



A sampling of MUUSJA accomplishments:

- Registered voters and canvassed for turnout in under-represented precincts
- Celebrated 35 years of Roe as the law of the land
- Reached thousands of State Fair goers with energy & carbon saving solutions
- Trained over 50 UUs to help build the movement for justice in this new *Movement Moment*
- Mobilized UUs for multiple lobby days at the capitol, constituent postcards, calls and e-mails on issues that matter to you
- Built connections across congregations, issues and with our allies



www.muusja.org

MUUSJA—On the Move in 2008!

Message from the Chair

Jo Haberman

Everyone involved with MUUSJA – indeed, all UUs throughout Minnesota – should take a moment to be proud of what we’ve accomplished together. We have built a Unitarian Universalist social justice organization that brings our moral voice to the critical issues of our time.

We have worked with two dozen partner organizations – interfaith and secular – to help people and the planet. We have reached into our Minnesota congregations for relationships and community, for reflection and training, and to deepen our understanding of the connections between UU principles and UU actions.

Again and again we mobilized our “troops” – UUs in the pews – for justice, equity, sustainability and opportunity. Our reputation among partner groups and the larger community is growing because we act on *deeds not creeds* worldview.

When I started working with (then yet-to-be-named) MUUSJA, one of the motivating factors was believing that Unitarian Universalists want to make our religion **real**. We want Unitarian Universalism to mean what it says –

in the real world of complex and imperfect human decision-making.

I looked around the community to see Catholics, Jews, Lutherans, and Quakers all acting on important issues of the day, in the name of their religion – but were UUs present and accounted for?

UUs have always done great work for justice, but we weren’t working together, as **Unitarian Universalists**. So hardly anyone knew we were there. No one could find us in the work of justice. Not even ourselves. We may have been lost, but now we are found!



Jo Haberman, “Now What?” training, Nov. 2008

One of the key lessons learned is that building a Unitarian Universalist social justice organization is cyclical – we need to do it over and over again! Build energy, take on an issue, make a plan, work the plan, learn from and celebrate our work, and start the cycle again. For each of our

issues, and for MUUSJA as a whole.

We are enormously helped by our excellent staff – Ralph Wyman, MUUSJA director and organizer. My fellow board members are an amazing, fun, and hard-working group: Marcy Leussler, Lois Hamilton, Kathleen Hollinger, and Steve Hughes.

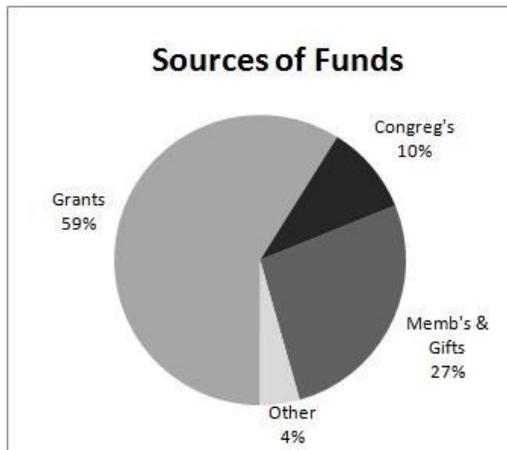
Working group chairs lift up the core issues onto their shoulders and run swiftly (and strategically) toward their goals, bringing many UU hands and hearts along with them.

Through their effective leadership and activism, we often experience the joy of progress. Sometimes even victory!

We are moving forward – and experiencing the joy of meaning what we say about who we are as Unitarian Universalists.

We are, however, not immune from the current economic crisis, and our challenge is to sustain this joyous and meaningful UU justice work – so we will be doing more asking, more describing why this is such an important effort, and why **you** should invest your trust, confidence, involvement – and funds – in MUUSJA. Here’s to another year of building our UU social justice organization!

Finance Highlights



In December 2007 MUUSJA received a challenge grant from the UU Funding Panel. The goal: raise \$4,500 through matching new memberships and additional giving from supporters. We are happy to report that we met the entire challenge! Member support grew from 14% to 27% of our budget. Thank you. This base of support is so important to MUUSJA's ongoing work.

As 2008 unfolded, we did see impacts from the declining US economy. MUUSJA has received multi-year support from the UU Service Committee — vital start-up assistance as MUUSJA developed. The UUSC intended at least one additional year's grant support, but in the current downturn, they found it necessary to focus on core programming and made the difficult decision to end funding of MUUSJA and our sister UU Advocacy Networks. The UUSC remains a strong ally and continues to support monthly Network conference calls and a 2009 retreat in Boston.

Full year 2008

Income

Memberships & Gifts	\$7,486.00
Congregations	2,797.50
Grants	16,500.00
Events	1,248.16
In-kind (non-cash)	760.00
Total Income	\$28,791.66

Expenses

Personnel & Professional	\$23,529.05
Office/Admin	1,934.00
Events	793.54
Travel/G.A. & PSD Conferences (incl. in-kind)	2,140.10
Total Expenses	\$28,396.70

2008 marked an increase in-kind giving in support of our website, Frequent Flier miles for G.A. travel, DVDs and other programming materials. If you would like to support us with "non-cash" donations, please contact Ralph Wyman at 612-998-6624.

MUUSJA made a significant investment in training for 2008. We contracted for a top-notch local trainer for our annual leadership development. MUUSJA also retained a local fundraising consultant to help us better understand the challenges and possibilities of grant writing as a faith-based social change organization.

MUUSJA ended the year 2008 in stable financial condition through careful budgeting, monitoring of expenses and the generosity of our funders and donors.

We enter 2009 with the financial picture more uncertain. As with other non-profits, UU congregations, and in households everywhere, MUUSJA will be striving to use our resources as effectively as possible — and redoubling our efforts to secure funding for this vital work as Minnesota's UU moral voice in the public arena.

Thank you!

Our work is strengthened by the financial support of our donors.

Thank you to each of you!

If your name should be appearing on this list, please contact Ralph Wyman so that we may correct our records and acknowledge your gift.

If you prefer to be listed in future Annual reports as "anonymous," please also let us know.

Bob Aderhold
Ruth Agar
Betsy Allis
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Catherine Dorr
Phyllis Fairman
Doug Federhart
Rita Franchette
Judy & Ray Goebel
Flo Golod
(continued on pg. 4)

Stop pushing the boulder uphill: Training UUs in the new Movement Moment

As you've dedicated your heart, your energy, and sometimes your cash to causes you care about, have you wondered why this or that issue seems to take hold and become a powerful movement while another with the same sort of effort and passion feels like rolling a boulder uphill – over and over?

MUUSJA became very interested in this question after hearing Beth Zemsky present her surprising findings to LGBT movement leaders at a series of local meetings.

Over 50 Minnesota UU leaders and advocates came to MUUSJA's "Now

What? Using this Moment to Build a Movement" training to gain from Beth's deep experience, knowledge, and energizing concepts.

Movements happen in waves, Beth tells us, and the wave that brought us the major civil rights gains of the mid



Beth Zemsky, MUUSJA's "Now What?" training, November, 2008.

and late 60's has long since crested and waned.

Her research tells us that since then a new wave, with a "frame" of values around individualism and security, began making significant inroads – and the frames that progressives were using for our goals started bouncing off the electorate and policy makers.

The good news is that each movement and its frames crest and ebb. It now very much appears that a new wave of social movements is rising. "Yes we can!" may turn out to be far more than an electoral slogan.

Change is coming and MUUSJA will be part of the new wave. Join with us as we build on Beth's insights in this new Movement Moment!

A UU moral voice for Minnesota

Message from the Director/Organizer

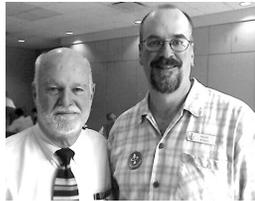
Ralph Wyman

MUUSJA's mission is to be an organized, moral voice for a just and sustainable world. 2008 saw us growing in this ambitious vision.

MUUSJA is committed to systemic social change – shifting Minnesota's civic culture toward values which serve the common good: reproductive justice and sexuality education, a clean environment that is just in its resource uses and impacts, integrity in and full access to the democratic exercise of the vote, and full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Throughout MUUSJA's nine years we've trained and developed leaders, educated hundreds on the causes and impacts of our issues, and mobilized significant cadres – "boots on the ground," UUs in the pews – for lobbying, rallies, movie nights, "power-ups", voter drives, letter-writing, community forums and other tools of movement building. We did this all again in 2008! As Jo re-

minds us on page one, this work is cyclical and ongoing. Persistence is how we keep our UU moral voice present in the public arena – year after year, issue after issue.



Ralph & UUSC Pres. Charlie Clements
July 2008 MUUSJA member meeting

I am so proud of the leadership that each of our issue working groups has shown – impressive, determined, tireless are all words I freely use to describe the volunteers who show up time and again for MUUSJA!

In 2008, many moments amazed and energized me. Here are but a few:

- Big turnout and powerful witness for reproductive justice at the 35th anniversary Roe v. Wade event by AUW/MUUSJA Sacred Choices.
- Huge UU contingents at the Iraq war anniversary march and the peace march during the RNC.
- The dedication that EcoMinds puts into C3's State Fair Eco-Exhibit.

UUs were half the volunteers at this year's ten-day run.

- Voter Rights packed 440 viewers for the Minnesota premiere of *Uncounted*, a major documentary on risks in our flawed election systems.

As with our work group leaders, so our board members are dedicated to MUUSJA being a clear and effective voice for justice. We are well served by these five – and you are invited and encouraged to share your talents with us. There is a space for you on the board, on our fundraising committee, or in a working group! You'll be supported and find a core of camaraderie and power with these amazing people.

Trainings such as Beth's Movement Moment (above) are central to our work. Developing leaders – and the relationship building that happens in those spaces – are building our local UU vision for justice for people and the planet.

We know we have much to do. We have successes and skills to build upon. Our campaigns are busy doing the work of justice. Let us be about it!

Thank You!

2008 MUUSJA Donors, Continued from Page 2

Jo Haberman	Yleen Joselyn	Gene & Anita Martinez	Duane Peterson
Lois Hamilton	Mary Junge	Melissa Martinson	Rolf Swanson
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MUUSJA THANKS OUR 2008 INSTITUTIONAL AND GRANT FUNDERS: THE UU FUNDING PANEL, THE UU SERVICE COMMITTEE, FIRST UNIVERSALIST FOUNDATION, FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY.



UUs march for an end to the Iraq war, Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, March 2008

Visit www.muusja.org for news, updates and actions!

Join our e-news to stay up to date on MUUSJA, UU and allied justice actions & news. Click on the  Sign-up button on our home page.

MUUSJA
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Minneapolis, MN 55404

Ralph Wyman, Director/Organizer
612-998-6624 rwmuusja@gmail.com

Support MUUSJA. Your contribution builds our public moral voice for UU values. Suggested membership levels are \$50/individual, \$100/household, \$200+/sponsor. Gifts and limited income memberships may be made at any level. Mail your check payable to "PSD-MUUSJA" to: Prairie Star District/MUUSJA, 122 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 303, Minneapolis MN 55404.

Donate online at www.muusja.org/join

Thank you!

The Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance is a multi-congregational organization with a mission to bring together UUs to work collectively for social change by:

- Building a strong and lasting social justice organization
- Preparing UUs to use a reflection, action, collaboration model of change
- Developing a distinctly UU moral voice, based on deep exploration of our UU values and legacy
- Waging campaigns in coalition with interfaith and secular partners to achieve winnable systemic change
- Shifting the political climate toward a social agenda that serves the common good.