

2009 MUUSJA ANNUAL REPORT

April 2010



A sampling of MUUSJA accomplishments:

- Passed an Action of Immediate Witness in support of Voting Rights at General Assembly in Salt Lake
- Fostered deep intergenerational conversations about comprehensive sexuality education via the film “The Education of Shelby Knox”
- Engaged UUs in racial and economic justice work through our partnership with the HIRE Minnesota coalition
- Built connections across congregations, around the Association and with allies
- Mobilized UUs for multiple lobby days at the Capitol, constituent postcards, calls and e-mails on issues that matter to you



www.muusja.org

More Power to UU!

Message from the Board Chair

Kathleen Hollinger

When MUUSJA started nine years ago, it was hard to spot a UU in a social justice crowd. We knew we were there, and we wanted **to connect. It’s much easier now to spot a UU in a bright yellow or bright blue “Standing on the Side of Love” t-shirt or one of our blue “Raise UUp Your Voice” buttons.**

2009 was a year of challenges and opportunities, and we accomplished many great things! I would like to mention a few highlights:

- Voting Rights working group passed an Action of Immediate Witness at General Assembly in Salt Lake City. Jenny, Carol, and the whole team have led the way in the progress towards clean, honest and fair elections.
- UUs Out for Marriage had 25 people walking in the Twin Cities Pride parade, with colorful hand-made banners, a batik dragon and a pair of brides supporting marriage equality.
- EcoMinds have taken on multiple roles within the HIRE Minnesota Coalition (Healthcare, Infrastructure & Renewable Energy),

working for racial, economic and environmental justice.

- Reproductive Rights/ Sacred Choices hosted an amazing intergenerational showing and discussion of **the film “The Education of Shelby Knox,”** which over 60 people attended.

The year ended with our board chair Jo Haberman leaving. Thank you Jo for your years of service and dedication to MUUSJA! We would not be the strong organization we are if not for you.



Kathleen & partner Tina, Twin Cities Pride 2009.

This past year has tried our financial and volunteer resources. We have not been immune from the economic turmoil and took steps to offset the downturn in grants.

To save money, we reduced **Ralph’s hours over the summer.** We raised money with two wonderful house parties

and the first annual Walk for Justice, and congregations held special collections for us.

We are excited to be a part of General Assembly 2010 in Minneapolis, and continuing our amazing work in social justice. Please consider donating your time, talent or treasure to continue the work of furthering social justice!

+PowerUU (More Power to you!)

Kathleen Hollinger
Board Chair MUUSJA

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Finance Highlights

As we all know, 2009 was a year of recession in the US economy, and a challenging year for non-profits across the board. The good news for MUUSJA was that in the midst of the downturn, we increased our individual support by an amazing 72%, or an increase of well over \$5,000 in memberships and gifts.

We expanded our reach by hosting house parties and through our Walk for Justice. Your individual support was a shining star in our year.

Congregational/organizational support held steady relative to the previous year, which again was a solid accomplishment given the economy, but did not meet budget goals.

Clearly, the area of greatest challenge for 2009 was in grant support. In our communications with fellow State Advocacy Networks and other non-profits, this was a common theme. For 2010 we must identify new areas of grant writing.

Looking ahead, the UU State Advocacy Networks, including MUUSJA, have received a \$2,000 grant for 2010 from the UU Funding Program specifically to offer training and support across the Networks in fundraising. The UUA is offering the Networks pro-bono development support, too.

MUUSJA was selected for \$5,000 in collaborative project funding from the UU Service Committee. The work (and funding) are for racial and economic justice work in 2010, so while that amount did not appear in our 2009 ledger, the funds are in place at this writing and have helped us

start off 2010 on a firmer footing.

MUUSJA also responded to the situation with significant cost-cutting. Overall expenses were trimmed by more than 10%, or over \$3,000 in savings, with minimal impact to our effectiveness.

It was a year of financial challenge, but with reserves on hand to carry us through, and support of individuals and the new collaboration of the UUSC, we're optimistic that 2010 will be a year of recovery for the US economy, and for MUUSJA's finances!



Past MUUSJA Chair Jo Haberman, promoting our successful 2009 Walk for Justice fund-raiser.

Full year 2009

Income	
Memberships & Gifts	\$12,930.00
Congregations/Organizations	2,574.43
Grants	-0-
In-kind (non-cash)	290.00
Total Income	\$15,794.43
Expenses	
Personnel & Professional	\$22,029.19
Office/Admin (incl. in-kind)	1,090.02
Fundraising	296.47
Travel/G.A. & PSD Conferences (incl. in-kind)	1,859.56
Total Expenses	\$25,275.24

Thank you!

Our work is strengthened by the financial support of our donors. Thank you to each of you!

If your name should be included in our recognition list, please contact Ralph Wyman at 612-998-6624 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.

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Russ Adams | Gary Blegstad | Eric Cooperstein | Bill Elwood |
| Ruth Agar | Fran Bohlke | Glenn & Nan Corliss | Nancy Erickson |
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| Martha Bird | Laura Cooper | Connie Dierks | Jane Hallas |
| Margaret Blazek | | Donald Grant | Lois Hamilton |
| | | Catherine Dorr | (continued pg. 6) |

Partner spotlight: HIRE Minnesota Green jobs, opportunity and justice

At MUUSJA's March membership meeting we voted to join the HIRE Coalition (Healthcare, Infrastructure and Renewable Energy).

The coalition counts some 70 organizations as members and is working to ensure that public investments in infrastructure and renewable energy help lift people out of poverty, reduce racial disparities, and contribute to healthier communities for all of us.

Through a series of public demonstrations and events — including town-hall meetings that drew as many as 500 constituents — HIRE built power and

developed relationships that led to successful outcomes.

Most importantly, HIRE secured groundbreaking legislation providing \$2.5 million for green jobs training for low-income people and for outreach programs.



HIRE MN advocates at the state Capitol

The law includes strong reporting requirements — state agencies administering funds must frequently report to the community on progress in training and hiring low-income people and people of color.

HIRE continues to call on leaders to make decisions that benefit all members of our community by:

- **Ensuring publicly funded green jobs** and training opportunities reach low-income people and people of color.
- **Ensuring agencies in charge of public infrastructure investments** meet their women and minority hiring, contracting, and training goals.
- **Ensuring that our government is accountable and transparent** in its processes and reporting.

Challenges and rewards

Message from the Director/Organizer

Ralph Wyman

Briefly summarizing a year in the life of an organization as diverse and vital as **MUUSJA is never easy. But “Challenges and Rewards” comes pretty close!**

MUUSJA continues to grow in many positive directions: The HIRE Coalition. Growing our UU State Advocacy Networks. General Assembly collaborations. Multigenerational film events. Huge public rallies. Legislative briefings. Training citizen-lobbyists. Intimate gatherings of open-hearted sharing our stories. This is all part of a day, a week, a year in the life of MUUSJA.

The year also featured a sharp focus on finding new ways to fund our work.

Grants, frankly, didn't come through as planned. Funders shifted focus to *social service* as budgets everywhere were tightened. The always limited *social change* dollars became more scarce just as the social justice community has been waking up to the long-term, stra-

tegic need for exactly the kind of advocacy and change work of MUUSJA.

Our fundraising committee rose to the challenge! Many dedicated MUUSJA volunteers put together a fantastic plan to inspire our generous members and friends.



Ralph Wyman, with Rob Keithan at the 2009 State Advocacy meeting, Boston.

House parties and the **“Walk for Justice”** raised funds and energy and forged new connections for MUUSJA. It was a particular delight to introduce three new

area UU ministers to everyone at our August event.

Years of careful budgeting did mean that we held reserves to see us through the financial challenges, and remained ready to do the daily work of justice that our members and communities have grown to expect from MUUSJA.

Our dedicated citizen-leaders, activists and volunteers saw to it that much good work was accomplished. Each of

our working groups and their key accomplishments are highlighted on pages 4 and 5 of this report. I am so proud of all that they do!

Our board, too, has faced change. Long-time MUUSJA leader Jo Haberman took a well-earned and carefully **planned leave from the board.** I've deeply appreciated her commitment, skill and dedication.

You've probably heard that a young generation of leaders is on the move in our country. MUUSJA is one of the beneficiaries—**Kathleen's leadership is making MUUSJA truly multi-generational.**

My work continues to be fed by many sources, including our connections **with the UUA's office of Advocacy and Witness** and by the new, audacious and exciting ways that the Standing on the Side of Love campaign (a UUA project) is changing hearts and minds on issues that divide our nation.

Most of all, the challenges and **rewards of a year of MUUSJA's work** tell me that there is power in our commitment and strength in our many connections, and that our community is moving ever towards a better future.

EcoMinds

Advocating for sustainability

EcoMinds is MUUSJA's primary connection to the HIRE coalition (see p. 3) and a significant focus for the group. We are enriched by all that we are learning in this shared work for environmental and economic justice.

EcoMinds mobilized UUs for hearings on the energy efficiency bill that was HIRE's first big legislative success.

We turned out for HIRE's Rally for Green



MUUSJA supports substantive carbon reduction goals.

Jobs — despite snow and rain on a late April day. We also donned hardhats to count people of color on job sites (not enough!) and applied pressure to MnDOT to serve notice that they must meet the goals they set for hiring equity.

Climate change is a key area of collaboration with the UUA and with the UU State Advocacy Networks. By collaborating, we were able to provide joint testimony directly to the EPA on

greenhouse gas regulation. We generated UU contacts to legislators to get a federal climate bill passed by the US House. Senate action has been sidelined, but action should resume soon, and we'll be active in pushing for the best possible bill.

EcoMinds participated in the 350.org International Day of Climate Action in October. Why 350? If the amount of carbon in the atmosphere tops 350 ppm, we can't sustain a planet similar to the one we know. 350 represents more than just a benchmark for a safe climate — there are deep moral and spiritual reasons for getting back below 350. Join EcoMinds to help us get there!

UUO4M

Civil marriage is a civil right!

UUs Out For Marriage continued to "Stand on the Side of Love" throughout 2009.

We mobilized UUs for LGBT Lobby Day sponsored by OutFront. Members of Unity Church Unitarian contributed to a very successful, inspiring, youth-focused Lobby Day Institute on youth voices of faith.

Unity also was the home of batik banner-making for the 2009 Twin Cities Pride Parade. The banners proclaimed our support for full marriage inclusion.

The Rev. Karen Hering, literary minister for Unity, offered MUUSJA members a creative writing workshop: Telling Our Stories. This carefully crafted guided creativity class led participants through exercises that helped us access stories, some deeply personal, others to share with our communities.

If you were at MUUSJA's Fall meeting at White Bear UU, you got to hear moving stories of personal commitment and



Rev. Safford at the Capitol

UUs also played a key roll in the October launch of a state-wide faith-based initiative to support legal, civil marriage equality in Minnesota.

transformation from same-sex couples and their kids, families that took the short but profound journey to Iowa to legally celebrate marriage.

Coupled with Rev. Victoria Safford's inspiring words, we gained new appreciation for the compelling reasons that marriage equality must come to Minnesota, and the entire USA.

GA in Minneapolis

A once-in-a-generation opportunity!

UUs from around the country will be here soon. This will be a wonderful opportunity to show off the Minnesota — and MUUSJA — to 3,000 of our UU friends!

MUUSJA is offering three workshops during GA:



- Beyond "Duh!": UU Youth Speak On Marriage Equality
- Unlikely Allies - HIRE: A Racial Equity-Environmental Coalition
- Honoring Inherent Worth of Voters for 36 Years

MUUSJA needs volunteers throughout GA, both on-site and off. We'll have a booth in the GA exhibit hall, we're helping the UUA with the Saturday witness event at Loring Park, and we're helping organize a Sunday UU unit in the Pride Parade!

Watch also for a UU Ministry for Earth networking event, and the UU UN Office is sponsoring workshops and an evening event. Contact Ralph at 612-998-6624 to help out!

Voting Rights

Clean, fair, and accurate elections

The Voting Rights working group worked closely with UUs from New York, Florida, and Massachusetts to pass an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) at General Assembly in Salt Lake.

It was quite an accomplishment to draft and successfully negotiate the complex and collaborative process for an AIW—a call to action to all UU congregations.

Based on the AIW, this MUUSJA/AUW collaborative group's goal is to enact federal legislation requiring

every state to use secure paper ballots and manual audits similar to Minnesota. The primary bill, by Rep. Holt of New Jersey, has been stalled due to healthcare reform, but the hope is the upcoming 2010 elections and our efforts will get it moving again soon.

Also at the 2009 GA, Voting Rights presented Bruce Funk, a local Utah election official committed to reform of electronic voting, at a Saturday



Voting rights leaders with their GA ballots

afternoon workshop titled "Does Touchscreen Voting Violate the 5th Principle?"

Members of the working group were also very involved in monitoring the recount in the Franken/Colman race during 2009, and we as Minnesotans can proudly point to the lack of fraud in our elections, as demonstrated in this intensely and closely observed race.

Voting Rights maintains active links with the Citizens for Election Integrity MN and the League of Women Voters. An item to watch for in 2010-11 will be redistricting.

Reproductive Justice

Sacred Choices

A highlight for the year was the intergenerational screening of "The Education of Shelby Knox." This documentary follows the inspiring story of Abilene, TX, student Shelby as she becomes a champion for comprehensive sex ed.

The event drew over 60 people — from high school age through grandparents — and featured pizza (thanks to Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom's



Kathleen welcomes 60+ participants!

sponsorship) and facilitated engaging small-group discussions.

The Reproductive Justice team turned out in strong numbers for the annual ProChoice Lobby day at the Capitol, delivering scores of postcards collected at our film night in support of comprehensive sex education.

Due to gubernatorial opposition, 2009 continued to be a difficult year

for passing needed sex education reform, but these efforts are paving the way for future success.

MUUSJA/AUW's Reproductive Justice team also supported and contributed to the Twin Cities first-ever "ProFaith-ProChoice" prayer service and vigil at Planned Parenthood's clinic in St. Paul. RJ/SC also sponsored a moving workshop on faith and choices at the Prairie Star District conference in Duluth.

And, we joined the sad vigil in Loring Park for slain physician George Tiller. Clearly, there is much work yet to do to secure reproductive healthcare in our state and country.

View to 2010

Moving forward, with your help

MUUSJA is working on multiple issues and issue campaigns in 2010. Our work with the HIRE Coalition continues, we're deeply involved in General Assembly, and each of the issues our membership voted to support at the Fall Meeting continue to need your involvement and engagement.

We are a grassroots, volunteer run organization. Our limited staffing supports the work of each of our campaigns, our board and our fundraising efforts. But our accomplishments happen because of your commitment of time, treasure and talent.



Board positions will be open at our Fall Meeting. Our fabulous fundraising committee (parties! Walk for Justice!), web site improvements, and any of our working groups would benefit from your participation.

As little as an hour or two per month can make a big difference for MUUSJA's work for justice.

Come, raise UUp your voice with us!

Thank You!

2009 MUUSJA Donors, Continued from Page 2

Nancy Heege	Janet Keysser	Sara McMullen	Pam Peters	Jeff Stout
Robert Henderson	Louis King	Barb & Gary Melom	Harry Pontiff	Joyce Sutherland
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			Philip Spoehr	Ralph Wyman
			Ken Stern	Winn Wyman
			Julie Stewart	Theresa Zingery & Rev. David Breeden



Support MUUSJA. Your contribution builds our public moral voice for UU values. Suggested membership levels are \$50/individual, \$100/household, \$200+/sponsor. Gifts may be made in any amount.

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.

www.muusja.org

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

We're also on Facebook. Search "MUUSJA" and fan us! 

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