

Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance

2010 MUUSJA ANNUAL REPORT

May 2011



A sampling of MUUSJA accomplishments:

- Provided much-needed research and reporting on the high integrity of Minnesota elections
- Showcased Minnesota Social Justice partners to General Assembly
- Strengthened our racial and economic justice work through ongoing partnership with HIRE Minnesota
- Saved soles while saving carbon and raising awareness of climate issues
- Mobilized UUs for multiple lobby days at the Capitol, constituent postcards, calls and e-mails on issues that matter to you



www.muusja.org

Making a Difference

Message from the Board Chair

Jenny Jewell Thomas

In 2010 MUUSJA marked ten years of coordinated Minnesota UU justice work in a big way—with General Assembly (GA), the UUA's national meeting, held right here in Minneapolis.

Thanks to strong efforts by MUUSJA Director/Organizer Ralph Wyman and 2010 board chair Kathleen Hollinger, MUUSJA helped the *Standing on the Side of Love (SSL)* public witness event be a huge success. Nearly a thousand GA participants flooded Minneapolis' Grant Street over to Loring Park's Twin Cities Pride festival for a stirring program supporting all LGBT families.

Kathleen and fellow MUUSJA-ers raised several hundred dollars—and visibility—selling SSL-themed “Pride Kits” that featured a parade map, an SSL-color bandana, matching bumper sticker, as well as sunscreen and water for sun-weary convention delegates.

MUUSJA's EcoMinds team partnered with UU Ministry for Earth and the UU United Nations Office for a fabulous locally-sourced, vegetarian dinner/networking event that connected activists attending GA from around our UU world.

As that weren't a full enough plate of GA action, MUUSJA organized three official GA programs:

- 1) *Beyond "Duh!": UU Youth Speak on Marriage Equality*,
- 2) *HIRE: A Racial Equity-Environmental Coalition*, and
- 3) *Honoring the Inherent Worth of Voters for 36 Years*.

Throughout 2010, our working groups were hard at work:

Voting Rights put MUUSJA in the state and local news in November when they published a report co-authored with Citizens for Election Integrity-MN on the near-undetectable level of voter fraud in Minnesota. The report can be found on the MUUSJA website and has been cited in testimony at the Capitol.



Jenny Thomas introduces voter fraud study at a November 2010 press conference

UUs Out For Marriage, in addition to developing their GA workshop on youth attitudes towards marriage, organized a wonderful UU float

for the Pride parade, and supported a faith organizing workshop during OutFront's Minnesota's annual LGBT lobby day.

EcoMinds made significant contributions to our coalition with HIRE Minnesota (Healthcare, Infrastructure & Renewable Energy). This year was focused on racial and gender employment equity in state funded programs. Green projects such as Central Corridor light rail being built to connect St. Paul and Minneapolis were of particular EcoMinds interest at HIRE.

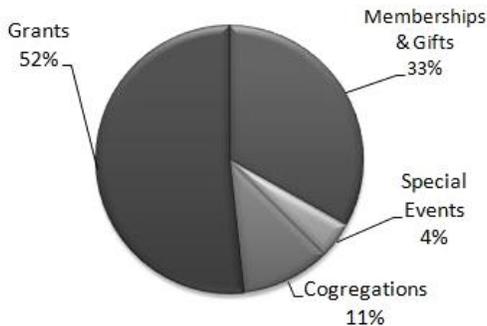
Reproductive Rights/Sacred Choices organized a good turnout in support of Planned Parenthood on Good Friday to counteract the anti-choice protests that have become annual and daily events.

Building our board, improving sustainability of funding, and growing state-wide UU connections top are priorities for 2011. Watch for ways you can help build MUUSJA into an even stronger force for change in our next ten years!

Jenny Jewell Thomas
MUUSJA Board Chair

Finance Highlights

2010 Sources of Funds



Full year 2010

Income	
Memberships & Gifts	\$8,008.00
Special Events	1,063.25
Congregations & Organizations	2,617.25
Grants	12,500.00
In-kind (non-cash)	220.00
Total Income	\$24,408.50
Expenses	
Personnel & Professional	\$21,808.19
Office/Admin (incl. in-kind)	1,498.80
Programs	1,292.75
Fundraising (incl. in-kind)	329.43
Travel/GA & PSD Conferences	807.68
Total Expenses	\$25,736.85

After weathering a challenging 2009 with great support from our membership, the news improved greatly for 2010 with two grants totaling \$12,500 to support our work.

This year marked a grant-funding milestone for MUUSJA: our first non-UU award, in the form of funding from the Ms. Foundation for work with HIRE Minnesota to promote employment equity for women. While UU-based sources are likely to play a significant role in MUUSJA's work for the foreseeable future, knowing that funders outside our faith community can and will stand behind MUUSJA and our partners is encouraging.

MUUSJA held personnel expenses steady, and saved on travel by having General Assembly (GA) right in our front yard. On the other hand, GA programming carried some cash costs to MUUSJA, though the investment in our work for justice was worth the outlay. Overall expenses increased only 1.8% over 2009.

Expense control combined with grant success moved us much closer to even than in 2009, but a modest draw from reserves was again needed to balance funding for the year.

Sustainability will be watch-word for the fundraising committee for 2011. A major report commissioned by the ad-hoc national UU State Advocacy Network, and funded by the UU Funding Program, considers developing sustainable funding for UU justice groups like MUUSJA to be one of the top challenges—and opportunities!

We'll be hard at work throughout 2011 to partner with congregations, individuals, and funders to have the resources MUUSJA needs to be the public voice for our UU values. The fundraising committee has great house parties as well as our Walk for Justice in the works for 2011. Join the fun!

Thank you!

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

Thank 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.

Ruth Agar
Betsy Allis & Bill Elwood
Cathy Apostle
Ruth Arnold
Nancy & Tom Atchison

Jody Beresford
Nancy Browne
Chris Burda
Cathy Burek
Judie Carlson
Janet Chandler
Catie Chi Olson
Bob & Suzannah Ciernia
Tom Clarke
Glenn & Nan Corliss
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Barb Weatherhead
Webster Family
Bill Wier
Mary Lou Werner
Suzann Willhite
Faith Woodman
Ralph Wyman
Winthrop Wyman

State Advocacy Study

Major report supports MUUSJA and 14 UU advocacy networks

Adapted from a UUWorld.org article by Don Skinner, pub. Jan 2, 2011

UUSAN, the network of UU advocacy groups like MUUSJA, commissioned a 2010 study to determine how they could be more effective organizations.

Rev. John Gibb Millspaugh completed the study in September. He had four major recommendations for UU state legislative networks.

First, he found there was little awareness of the state networks by other UU justice groups. “Their stories are astonishingly unknown,” Millspaugh said. He advised state networks to develop sto-

rytelling techniques—the creation of “narrative frameworks” that would showcase their work. He encouraged them to use social media more fully.

His second recommendation was for greater collaboration among the networks, the UUA, the UU Service Committee, and other justice-seeking organizations. He also suggested that UUSAN hire a national network organizer since most networks focus almost entirely on state issues.

Millspaugh’s third and fourth recommendations are that the networks seek increased financial support from con-

gregations, individuals, and grant-giving organizations and that they develop more effective governance structures.

He concluded that state networks have the potential to draw people into UU congregations. He cited one minister who reported that when members of his congregation worked on a ballot initiative it led 42 people to find and join that congregation in two years.

The groups also help UUs deepen their faith. “The networks are not simply advocacy organizations,” says Millspaugh. “They equip UUs to discover and articulate their UU values, faith, and identity. Participating in any SAN program equips UUs to live this faith in a new way and transform and deepen their commitment to this faith as a result.”

Growing into Our Faith

Message from the Director/Organizer

Ralph Wyman

The Rev. John Millspaugh, a UU minister serving a congregation in Massachusetts, researched and wrote an amazing, 60+ page report for us. Yes, a major study, including interviews, a survey, and deep inquiry and reflection, was done for MUUSJA.

True, it was also done for the dozen-plus other states that have each mustered the combination of guts, sweat, love, vision (and funds) to organize UUs across congregations to be legislative and public witness advocates. His work, *Recommendations Regarding the Statewide Networks*, is proving to be a significant, guiding resource as MUUSJA strives to grow into our next phase.

We’ve said for a number of years that we are “Minnesota’s collective voice for our UU values,” but as 2010 marked 10 years since the formation of the UU Affordable Housing Partnership—which launched MUUSJA (back then *Metro*) in 2001—we’ve experienced both great work and times of challenge in finding and articulating our collective voice, values and vision.

John’s thorough and challenging report is proving to be a catalyst for MUUSJA,

as well as several of the other commissioning states, to work through key recommendations and take new strides in growing our faithful work for justice.

I fully agree with John when he says that participating in work with a UU advocacy network like MUUSJA “equips UUs to live this faith in a new way and transform and deepen their commitment to this faith.”

I’ve said many times that we each could do our justice work directly in the fantastic organizations we stand with—OutFront, MN Environmental Partnership, League of Women Voters, RCRC, etc. Yet we do this work here. Seeking justice helps us to grow more fully into our faith as UUs.

For us do that more effectively, with greater connections and a stronger sense of who we are, I and the whole board started digging into the detailed ideas (revelations, in a few cases!) John offers. Plus, we’re in a wonderful place

of doing this growth in community with other UU state networks, so that we can share successes as well as a few lessons hard learned.

I’m really excited to be embarking on these next steps with the able leadership of new MUUSJA board chair Jenny Thomas. And I am grateful for the joyful leadership that Kathleen Hollinger provided through much of 2010.

We have a small but strong and growing board, and they share a commitment to building governance that is deeply connected and visionary. I hope you’ll take a look at the brief article on pg. 5 that outlines in broad terms what we are planning organizationally for 2011 and how you can participate.

And of course I am so thankful for and proud of the huge commitments of time and energy that so many of you put in to our 2010 working groups. The brief reports on the following pages just skim the surface of all the great work of our dedicated grass-roots leaders.

Many thanks to everyone who supports MUUSJA in our faith and our action!



Ralph Wyman at a HIRE-MN protest for equity in MnDOT contractor hiring.

EcoMinds

Advocating for sustainability

This past year has seen EcoMinds continue the work with HIRE Minnesota (see pg. 3) which included a collaborative workshop at General Assembly: *Unlikely Allies – H.I.R.E.: A Racial Equity-Environmental Coalition*.

We also collaborated with UU Ministry for the Earth to host a dinner during GA at which we had a slide show about our work, UU Ministry for Earth leaders spoke and we showed the movie "No Impact Man".

We had a great time meeting over

sixty cohorts from around the USA and sharing our stories and ideas.

In October, EcoMinds was part of the 10/10/10 Global Work Party for the Environment, organized worldwide by 350.org.

Our own special event was Reduce Your Footprint and Renew Your Sole. We collected shoes that needed repair and dropped them



Renew Your Sole! A MUUSJA EcoMinds event as part of the Global Work Party for the Environment

off at local cobbler/repair shop Shoe-A-New for repair or for donation to charity.

Rev. Wendy Jerome made a lovely banner that we proudly waved to everyone on Hennepin Avenue, and in our photos sent to 350.org and posted on their website as well as a

MUUSJA Facebook album. We estimated that 3,000 pounds of CO₂ were saved!

We were a part of the worldwide effort, one of many events on that day, trying to save the planet, one sole at a time!

UUO4M

Civil marriage is a civil right!

This was the year Standing on the Side of Love really came to town! With General Assembly, Minneapolis became a hub of activity for this amazing campaign that fights for all: LGBT, immigrants, and anyone facing oppression.

UUO4M worked closely with Standing on the Side of Love (SSL—which people call "Sizzle!") to get maximum turnout with minimum confusion as a huge crowd from GA



Rev. Justin Schroeder and family attended Freedom to Marry day at Capitol, St. Paul

streamed out of the Convention Center and packed the main stage area of Pride in Loring Park. Local UU ministers Kendyl Gibbons, Justin Schroeder and David Breeden spoke to the crowd, and UUA Moderator Ginny Courter roared up on a motorcycle wearing full, golden SSL regalia.

It was quite a scene—and a powerful message to Pridegoers and the state that people of faith are witnessing and working for equality.

UUO4M worked closely with OutFront's People of Faith Allies roundtable to hold a big, welcoming, interfaith and inclusive Faith Rally for Freedom to Marry on Valentine's week—part of a national campaign of over 100 Valentines day events.

We supported a faith-organizing workshop during OutFront's annual Lobby Day. That forum has now become "Speaking From Faith," an evening of conversation about equality and religious texts that has been presented at communities such as Anoka and Edina. This deeply researched and well facilitated conversation is available to be presented many times in the years ahead.

HIRE Minnesota

Equity for women and communities of color

We started off the year with a collaborative project with the UU Service Committee to engage more UUs in the racial justice campaign at HIRE Minnesota, and we are grateful for the financial as well as technical support.

It was very exciting to bring HIRE Minnesota to our wider UU audience through a GA session featuring the story of *Unlikely Allies—HIRE: A Racial*

Equity-Environmental Coalition.

Once construction season was under way, HIRE was in the news regularly—drawing attention to contractors on the I-35 Crosstown Commons who had failed so often to hire people of color that a corrective action had been in place for *five years*. MnDOT is moving now to have much greater accountability for contractor perform-

ance on hiring equity, thanks to HIRE.

We played a significant role in the fall construction season for the new Central Corridor. These contractors, too, started off on the wrong foot—missing goals month after month.

HIRE swung into action at the Met Council and the Dept. of Human Rights. At year-end 2010, contractors, legislators, and city and county officials were on notice that this project must hire a workforce that reflects the communities CCLRT will serve.

Voting Rights

Clean, fair, and accurate elections

Our *Honoring the Inherent Worth of Voters for 36 Years* program at GA was a highlight of the year and great opportunity to share with UU's nationally about Minnesota's successful experience with election day voter registration. Speakers included Mark Ritchie, Minnesota Secretary of State, and Keesha Gaskins, LWVMN Executive Director.

Another significant highlight, was hearing MUUSJA reported on Minnesota Public Radio! MPR



Carol Johnson at report press conf.

and other news outlets were there covering our press conference at the State Capitol on November 22nd.

The occasion was the release of a report co-authored by Carol Johnson of MUUSJA and Kathy Bonnifield of Citizens for Election Integrity-MN, "Facts About Ineligible Voting and Voter Fraud in Minnesota". The report, started by Carol to support our program at GA, was based on extensive data from Minnesota

County Attorneys from the 2008 election,

The report showed that only 38 people were prosecuted for ineligible voting statewide out of 2.9 million ballots cast, all resulting from felony sentences that had not been completed. The report documented that there is no need for photo ID requirements for registered voters and has been in such demand it required a second printing.

The 2011-2012 legislative biennium will require close attention. Though our report confirms a history of minimal fraud, a voter-ID bill, which we strongly oppose as unneeded and discriminatory, is at risk of passage.

Sacred Choices

Reproductive Justice

The Sacred Choices campaign again focused energy on an intergenerational film night, this year selecting "I Had an Abortion"—a documentary that candidly describes the experiences of ten women spanning seven decades, before and after *Roe v. Wade*.

The event drew over 50 people and nearly 100 postcards were sent to public officials in support of choice.



The Reproductive Justice team turned out in strong numbers for the annual ProChoice Lobby day at the Capitol, and participated in the very impactful training for people of faith who would be speaking to their legislators.

MUUSJA/AUW's reproductive justice team also supported and contributed to the Twin Cities second annual ProFaith-ProChoice prayer service and vigil at Planned Par-

enthood's clinic in St. Paul.

At the close of the 2010 legislative session, Sacred Choices members decided to lower the tempo of their work after five heart-felt and very active years.

In late April Cathy Apostle said "the Sacred Choices Committee has had five active and successful years as a working group of MUUSJA, sponsoring educational events, public actions and supporting the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Rights." She added "We will take a short rest and recharge time" and continue with ProChoice Lobby Day and the Good Friday prayer events in 2011.

2011: Visioning for our future

Values — Mission — Governance

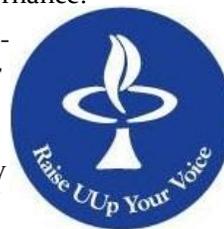
MUUSJA is completing its first decade of service, and we are working to build sustainability and accountability for the next decade.

In addition to directly implementing many of the recommendations of the UU State Networks Report (see pg. 3), MUUSJA will be engaging in a values, mission and governance project with Unity Consulting in the year ahead.

Unity has worked with the UUA, First Universalist of Minneapolis, and dozens of UU organizations and congregations on mission and governance.

The board sees this as a well-timed moment to clarify our mission, our scope and our key constituencies. Unity will use Appreciative Inquiry to answer the "Nested Bowl"

questions of: Values, Mission and Ends. We seek to include at least one representative from each UU congregation in Minnesota as we fill these bowls. Help us infuse our work with the energy and passion of UUs committed to social justice!



Please contact Ralph or Jenny if you'd like to be a part of what is next for MUUSJA. We welcome contributions of any amount towards the costs of this important work.



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www.muusja.org

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Support MUUSJA. Your contributions build our public moral voice for UU values. Membership levels: \$25/Student & limited income, \$50/Individual, \$100/North Star, \$200/Justice Builder, \$250+/Leadership.

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

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.