

ANNUAL REPORT from Religious Education

Careena Cornette, 4/4/11

Musical rehearsals & performances gave our R.E. students many fantastic opportunities to participate, & to practice dedication & "on stage" bravery. Our church puts even preschoolers on the mic, sharing their personalities with dozens of adults on a regular basis. This will give them extra confidence & eloquence that they can use to share their UU values. In addition to the musicals, the inaugural "Inter-Generational Day" festival was a great success. Also, Vandana Dillon spearheaded the creation of the Esprit De Corps Youth Group.

This fiscal year, we taught a total of FIFTY-EIGHT students in our upstairs classes, including 14 "Regulars" (see "statistics"). One challenge is to make our Regulars' attendance less "spotty." A Safety Policy-compliant student carpool system might be an option in the Fall.

Upstairs classes continue to invite great learning; our group of children are receptive to the community's values. The church has been loyally served by Joe Benjamin (our praiseworthy on-staff teacher), as well as Rob McCabe & Dolores Benjamin (frequent volunteers). Careena Cornette has been director of R.E. for a little over a year. Her personal assessment is that it took some months to "learn the ropes," making conservative decisions, but she is now confident that the program is ready to be more adventurous.

This fiscal year, the R.E. budget was used very frugally (since the D.R.E. was new, and erred on the side of caution). Books were library loans rather than purchases; craft projects were created with inexpensive materials or materials on hand, etc. Now, however, the teachers, committee, parents, students, & volunteers have established a wonderful rapport, & are ready to head in much bolder directions, using judicious purchases to enhance the children's experience & also attract new families. Goals for the upcoming year include: 1) heightened outreach to families who've never heard of U.U.ism, 2) introduction of the Our Whole Lives curriculum, 3) consistent recruitment of additional volunteers, & 4) fancier pamphlet materials & "Welcome" baggies for Church Shopping families.

STATISTICS: 58 students total. 14 are our "Regular" students. Among our "Guest" students, at least 15 had direct ties to a UUSP member. Aside from those with KNOWN direct ties, 19 other guest students' names appear on the role on only 1 occasion. The remaining group (fewer than 6 Sundays each) are categorized as "irregular/seasonal."