

Social Justice Annual Report 2011-2012

At this time Social Justice focuses on these five areas or communities:

- Free Trade Coffee
- Handcrafters
- Homeless
- Migrant/Immigrant Families
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)

Bi-weekly sales of free trade coffee and chocolate has grown this past year – enough to help lessen the Social Justice portion of UU St Pete's annual Operational Budget. The focus on the homeless and migrant/immigrant families allows us to channel our energies and gain in-depth knowledge of the issues facing each community and to also develop solid partnerships with other churches and like-minded organizations – thus increasing the impact with our combined efforts. This year the Handcrafters continued to expand and included a fund raiser raffle of one of their beautiful quilts for UU St Pete. UUSC projects continued to become embedded in the UU St Pete calendar, and once again gained recognition from the UUSC because of the amazing growth in support from our congregation.

The five ministries plan projects to address the issues faced by those in need. Some projects are **Outreach** – like selling free trade coffee and chocolate, providing dolls to children going into foster care, feeding the Homeless, supporting three immigrant families thru the immigration process or gathering donations using *Guest at Your Table* boxes.

This past year we continued our **Justice** efforts – wanting to address systemic issues. Examples include supporting the Coalition of Immokalee Workers campaign against PUBLIX and economic justice thru our *Free Trade Chocolate and Coffee sales*.

We also maintained and strengthened our partnerships with other organizations – The Society of Friends, Coalition of Downtown Churches, the National Farm Worker Ministry and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Each ministry's report is on the following pages. We use a shared leadership approach and work together to plan projects that encourage and facilitate the participation of all congregants. YOU have, and we are most THANKFUL!

Marilyn Barber, UUSC
Karen Coale, Migrant/Immigrant Ministry
Reggie Craig, Homeless Ministry
Karen Frank, Free Trade Coffee
Dani Skrzyoek, Handcrafters

Fair-Traded Coffee & Chocolate Sales Annual Report 2011/2012

The UUSC Coffee Project links congregations with small farmers and their families through Fair Trade, allowing us to strengthen economic justice by our choices. As of December 2011, the Social Justice Committee has begun our fourth year of offering Fairly Traded Coffee, Tea and Chocolate. These products are available for sale, twice monthly, after the Sunday service. Each purchase benefits the work of our church, as the funds raised go into the Social Justice budget.

Our congregation's continued support of these efforts is helping to transform the lives of these small farmers around the globe, helping the UUSC continue its commitment to their human rights, and helping our church community to live our mission.

Karen Frank

Handcrafters Guild Ministry Annual Report 2011/2012

The Handcrafters Guild continues to meet twice a month, providing enjoyment and outlets for creativity to its members while "doing good works". Our members knit, crochet and quilt.

We have a core group of five very regularly attending members and a double-handful of others who drop in periodically. We also have members who work on projects at home and donate their items to our inventory for charity.

We have had two primary projects this year. One was a large "Friendship Braid" quilt, made of fabrics donated by church members and worked on by eight Handcrafters. The quilt was displayed at the church in November and December and raffled off on December 18, 2011. We raised \$183.00, all of which was donated to the UUScPete General Fund.

Our other ongoing project has been knitting Peace Pal dolls – bright, colorful, soft little dolls just big enough to be cuddled by a child. We have chosen to give these to the Guardian Ad Litem program for its volunteers to take to children in foster care in Pinellas County. In January we donated 48 dolls to the program, along with three small afghans and three baby blankets. All the items were distributed within two weeks and GAL volunteers are asking for more. We have another large donation of dolls and miscellaneous items planned for April.

Church members and the Handcrafters themselves have been very generous in providing yarns and materials for all our projects. In fact, at one point we had so much yarn that we made a donation of two large shopping bags of yarn to a girls detention center in Bradenton that was setting up knitting classes. *Therefore, once again, we do not require any operating funds from the budget.*

Dani Skrzypek

Homeless Ministry Annual Report 2011/2012

The Homeless Ministry takes to heart and carries our mission forward -- offering compassion and advocating for the rights of the homeless.

Through the initiatives of the Homeless Ministry, the generous support of this congregation and other faith based groups we partner with, we continue to be on the front line of homeless issues with direct outreach, political action and support to local agency's.

We raise funds to support, through monthly and annual fund raisers, established and emerging outreach institutions. Including ASAP Homeless services, Free Clinic- Beacon House, Homeless Image Newspaper, Family Promise Pinellas County, Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless and Celebrate Outreach.

In addition to helping fund our many partners -- immeasurable hours are also contributed by many church member volunteers.

Our Friday night Picnic in the Playground is one example of the level of commitment in our Church. This interfaith weekly event serves over 5000 meals annually to all those in need of a meal and has been held up as a positive example for other groups to follow.

Our Beacon House servers have increased their participation to include serving meals every Monday evening of the month (up from 3 Mondays a month last year)

With our children we have collected over 1000 lbs of nonperishable food for distribution to those in need this past year

Our new program "Sharing Abundance" that allows otherwise unused fresh food to be used by members of the congregation to help those who might need it has been a great success.

Our members have helped co-sponsor the National Memorial Service held to remember those in our community that have died without homes.

We remain flexible and open to new ideas for finding solutions to the ever-changing landscape of homelessness.

Thank you for your continued support

The Homeless Ministry Chair, Reggie Craig

Migrant/Immigrant Ministry Annual Report 2011-2012

This ministry identifies outreach and justice projects that support farmworker and immigrant families. We organize supporting activities that enable and encourage members and friends of all ages and means to participate

Major Activities for 2011/2012 Church Year:

1. Via our bi-monthly food collections during the service we have provided four families with food that they have difficulty funding on their own. We supplement your donations with fresh produce and baked goods from the Homeless Ministry's *Sharing Abundance*.
2. The mothers of three families and all of their children who came here from Mexico received their Legal Permanent Residency or "green" cards this past year. UUSP supported them by paying for and taking them to immigration related medical exams. One family joined us for this ministry's holiday celebration – where one of the children was presented his green card. This ministry is also supporting this middle-school aged child who is experiencing language and learning difficulties. The mother is now taking English classes as well. We added a fourth family in November – and we are now currently helping them relocate to a safer living environment.
3. Comprehensive Immigration Reform remains illusive within the US Congress. As a result some states are attempting to write and enforce immigration laws. The Florida Legislature attempted to pass two bills that would have allowed resident students in-state tuition. Neither passed the Senate Judiciary Committee – but the vote was close 4 NO to 3 YES. This was big shift from the punitive type of legislation introduced a year ago.
4. Our educational skit, *Arizona Is Our Town*, was performed at the West Central Cluster's annual meeting. This play was written by a member of our ministry and its purpose is to educate people on the complex issues surrounding immigration in this country
5. This year marked our Congregation's eighth year of participating in the National Farm Worker Ministry's Holiday Gift Distribution in Plant City. We provided underwear and socks for 770 children. Collections from our Congregation and the Cluster were most generous.
6. From November thru March we made monthly visits to farm worker camps – bringing clothing for the children. The volume of donated new and gently used children's clothing continues to amaze us – and we are so appreciative. Sorting the clothing has proven most helpful with the distribution – and doing it after service– has been an opportunity to engage members who are not available to visit the camps.

All of the above accomplishments were only possible with your generous support. THANK YOU!

Migrant/Immigrant Ministry Chair, Karen Coale

UUSC

Annual Report 2011/2012

UU St. Petersburg continues its active support of the UUSC through individual and congregational involvement.

This past fall, the congregation again received a Creating Justice Society Banner from the UUSC in recognition that 25-49% of the congregation are members in that fiscal year. Our banner has been proudly displayed in the Sanctuary and in Gilmour Hall. In addition, the church as a whole contributed one dollar per member, \$142.00, at the James Luther Adams level. While these levels represent the lowest levels of participation and giving by the congregation that is recognized and honored by the UUSC, it is, nevertheless, an achievement for our church.

The Guest at Your Table giving over Thanksgiving and Christmas brought in over one thousand dollars for UUSC.

The Religious Education Director and the children participated in our projects and their help was appreciated. Time for All Ages skits and stories helped to illustrate the work of UUSC.

Nancy Clark, our co-representative to UUSC, sold Holiday cards, gifts and pecans through UUSC.

This congregation continues to be increasingly supportive of the work of the UUSC in humanitarian crises, and in advancing human rights and social justice around the world.

Marilyn Barber

Nancy Clark