

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
DAVIE, FLORIDA

June 2011

FAREWELL ADDRESS: EXTRAORDINARY IS THE NEW ORDINARY

By Steve Tepper, Board President



This is the last newsletter article that will appear under the byline “Steve Tepper, Board President.” I have mixed feelings about the end of my two years of service as President of this wonderful congregation. It has truly been a pleasure, an honor and an amazing experience, but it will also be nice to have some free time for other pursuits both within and outside of congregational life.

I would like to claim that the past two years have been extraordinary, but it seems like our brief history is filled with extraordinary periods. When the extraordinary always happens, it starts to become ordinary. So here is the incredible, ordinary story of our journey together these last two years:

In 2009, we held Sunday services in an elementary school cafeteria, had a small business office, and searched western Broward every time we needed a large meeting space Sunday afternoon or any other day of the week. Today, we have our own space for worship, meetings, concerts, fundraisers, religious education classes, and pretty much anything else we want to do. And our flaming chalice is no longer powered by double A batteries!

In 2009, we had a budget deficit of more than \$130,000. This year we expect to book an operating *surplus* of \$30,000. This means we were able to fund the entire cost of our move and build-out with operating revenue and gifts and pledges from members, without dipping into our savings.

In 2009, very few visitors were finding us, and even fewer were following the pathway to membership. In our new home, we have new visitors every week, many with children, we have already held two Pathways to Membership classes, and we are planning to recommence regular New Member Sundays.

In 2009, our congregation was deeply divided over many issues, and love and trust seemed to be in short supply. Today, we are a much healthier congregation, with a shared vision of our mission and our future.

But not all the changes have been positive. Some of the steps back that we have taken are reminders of the work we still have to do:

Balancing our budget came at a high price, as we made many painful staffing cuts and became a lay-led congregation. Some of that has been positive in the short-run, as we have enthusiastically taken responsibility for defining our ministries. But it's hard to imagine we will be content to continue lay-led for many more years, or have the energy to do so.

We also lost most of our young adult members as we struggled with decisions regarding our capital fund, and eliminated staff positions. I don't know about you, but I look at every young adult who joins us and wonder if I am seeing next year's committee chair, a future Board member, maybe a future president. After all, we old-timers can't keep it going forever. I am encouraged that so many young adults and young families have visited us since our move and hopeful that the trend will continue.

One thing I have no mixed feelings about is the quality of the leadership to whom I hand over the reins on June 30. Marjie and the new Board are filled with the fire of enthusiasm, creativity and a deep love of our congregation. Please give them your hands and your hearts and your trust, as you have so graciously done for me these last two years, and let us all look forward to the next two years, secure in the knowledge that they will be extraordinary.

As usual.

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STAINED GLASS CHALICE

The Stained Glass Chalice donated by Michael Richardson has been set into the wall of the Hospitality Room, and will be one of the first things to greet congregants and visitors as they enter the sanctuary.



SERVICES

- June 5** Envisioning - Johnnie Peck
- June 12** "Justice Sunday - reflect, understand, and act." - Service and Social Justice Committee
- June 19** "The Wheel of the Year" - Full Moon Daughters
- June 26** Haiti Search & Rescue Experience - Jeff Crews as our guest speaker

River of Grass

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 Membership.... Linda Meerow, Vickie Koutoulas & Lynn O'Brien
 Service & Social Justice Alan Meerow & Judi Oltmans
 Shared Ministry Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz
 Worship Brit Lundell

OUR PRINCIPLES

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

OUR SUNDAY LOCATION

11850 W. State Road 84, Suite 1,
 Davie, FL 33325

EVERY SUNDAY

Faith Development Classes: 10:30 to 11:30am

Worship Service: 10:30 to 11:30am. **Hospitality Hour:** 11:30am to 12:30pm.

FRIENDLY REMINDERS FOR OUR MEMBERS

There is plenty of parking outside the sanctuary, but please leave the closer parking spaces for our guests and physically challenged worshippers. All meetings are held at 11850 W State Road 84, Suite 1 in Davie unless otherwise noted.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

By **Deb Giblin-Davis, Faith Development Chair**

As Director of Religious Education (DRE) four years ago, I wrote a newsletter article at the end of the school year which started off with a reflection by Pat Infante, a fellow DRE. Pat wrote:

“It is my hope, and I believe the hope of many parents, that their children come away with a sense that there is something greater, a mystery that cannot always be explained with the words that humans have created. I want them to discover the strength that can be found in joining hands, hearts and voices with a room full of other people who are on parallel journeys and with whom we share the path for a time.

“I want them to respect all people and the natural world and to be able to give of themselves to others without expecting anything in return. I want them to be in fellowship with us as often as they can and have some fun along the way.”

WHAT IS OUR VISION FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT?

We have had many moves and changes in our Faith Community this past year, and we find ourselves blessed with a beautiful new home! Now is the time to assess how programs have worked this past year and – believe it or not – to start thinking about the fall!!

Questions we need to ask of the Faith Development/ Religious Education program:

- What is our vision for Faith Development and Religious Education?
- Is there a better way to do FD/RE?
- Could the curriculum be more interesting and involve the kids more?
- How can we get more people involved with our children who normally would not be?
- How can we boost attendance and appeal to visitors?
- How do we appeal to the Faith Development teacher’s creative sides?
- How do we incorporate various learning styles into teaching FD?
- Are we willing to risk change?



THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH NEED YOUR INPUT!

Do you have some creative ideas about what you would like to see taught in FD? This summer we will gather together to plan. Please look for further announcements regarding date and time. If you would like to help in planning this summer or would be interested in teaching in the fall, please contact FaithDevelopment@RiverofGrass.org.

Pat concludes, “No one of us can schedule when a moment of clarity or a moment of transcendence will occur. But it will. Religious education is about much more than curriculum, classroom activities and service projects – it’s about believing in each other, sharing a journey and trusting that providence will, in good time, take us where we need to go.”

Come share the journey with us!!

BRIDGING CEREMONY

On May 1st, we had the wonderful privilege of “Bridging” – or welcoming into the adult congregation four talented and thoughtful young adults – **Sara Oltmans, Shawn May, Shane Richardson** and **Elaine Golden!** Congratulations to our four newest

high schools graduates and best wishes and blessing on your journeys.

OWL PARTIES!!

We concluded our very successful Our Whole Lives (OWL) program this spring with a party on May 22nd. We love our OWL teachers, **Diane Lade** and **Lou DeSantis!** AND we love our OWL parents, who fed our Owlets every Sunday and were dedicated to getting their youth to class not an easy task for high schoolers!

CHILDREN’S SUMMER FUN FELLOWSHIP

This summer we will be asking parents and mature high schoolers to assist in supervising our Children’s Fellowship hour. If you or your high schooler would like to help, please contact **Karen Gonzalez** or **Diane Lade** (our new Faith Development Committee co-chairs!!!) at the congregation office, 954-723-7877 or at FaithDevelopment@Riverofgrass.org – or look for the sign-up sheet at service. It can actually be a lot of fun - we have a great bunch of kids!

WANTED: ROOMMATES

By Susan Juncosa, Facility Management Chair,
and Esther Sampol

“There is no joy in possession without sharing.” - Erasmo da Rotterdam

Remember the dream we had? You know, to have our own space to love and to cherish – and to share. What? Share? Absolutely.

Now that we have our own space, we need to start sharing it. Besides being an economic necessity (we need additional income to meet our budget), we want to share our wonderful space with others so that they can get to know us. As the saying goes: “There are a lot of people out there who are UUs but don’t know it yet.” If we do not share, those UUs in the making will not have the opportunity to find out more about us – including where we are located. Now, this doesn’t mean we get pushy, but we just need to get our name out there! There are folks just waiting to hear about the good news of Unitarian Universalism.

So, yes, now is the time for all of us to do a little promotion. Do you belong to a club or a craft group that might need a regular meeting space? Is someone planning a small wedding? Or perhaps a tutoring space might be needed? If so, please be sure to mention our very own River of Grass facility.

Here are some of the points of interest (aka our selling points):

- We can handle up to 150 people in the hall
- We have tables and chairs on site
- We have a kitchen which a caterer can use as a staging area
- We have a convenient location
- We have ample free parking
- We have clean, modern bathrooms
- And you have to admit - it looks pretty good, too!



For smaller space requirements, the multi-purpose room can accommodate tables and chairs for up to 25 to 30 people. There’s a television with a DVD player and whiteboards – all ready to use. For a very small meeting, the teen room can hold up to 10 people and is equipped with a television and DVD player. If small children need to be cared for, we have a nursery room.

Kitchen privileges can be arranged for small or large groups.

Of course, first and foremost, renters will want to know the cost. Many groups are non-profit and would like to use space at no cost. And, as much as we would like to offer this community service, this is not a viable strategy at this time. However, the good news is that we can (probably) meet or beat the cost of similar facilities in the area. (Cost is an area that we are working hard to define and finalize.)

We must remember, also, that once we start renting out our facility, we need to address the issue of access. Someone either has to let users in and lock up afterwards, or (for recurring rentals) we can provide a key (with a key deposit fee). Also, renters would need to know that they are responsible for cleaning and returning the space to us in good condition at the end of an event (or they could hire a service). We, at River of Grass, are experts at being “good” renters after years of setting up and taking down worship space, auctions, Christmas Eve services, and Seders at other facilities. We know that part really well.

Finally, we need volunteers! In the next few weeks, we need to develop a brochure, get information ready for our website, and show the facility to potential renters. If you have experience with renting facilities, your advice is needed! In fact, help with all aspects of running our facility is needed, so please don’t be bashful. Step up – you are needed. Let’s travel down this exciting new path together.

For more information or to volunteer to assist, please talk to any Board member or send an email to me at: Facilities@riverofgrass.org.

BOARD MATTERS

By Johnnie Peck, Board Secretary

At its May 10th meeting the Board focused primarily on routine details related to our new space and preparing for the new Congregational year. Items requiring Board motions or approval were as follows:

- Kathy Jens-Rochow requested a safe for depositing funds collected at evening events. We are beginning to fill our calendar with evening fundraisers and are expecting evening rentals. There is a safety concern if members must leave the premises late in the evening with large amounts of money. The Board supported the purchase of an appropriate safe with funds from the office budget.
- Brit Lundell requested that the Board continue to provide a "Board Host" for Sunday Services in the coming year. Steve Tepper suggested that Capital Fund Board members be added to the Board Host list. Marjie Loring volunteered to check with the Capital Fund Board and report their response back to Worship Chair Brit Lundell.
- The Board postponed implementation of the proposed change in the name of the Faith Development Program pending input from the incoming chairperson(s).
- Marjorie Loring reported on the volunteers to date for Committee chair positions. The Board decided that chairpersons will be officially selected and approved at the June Board meeting.

TREASURER'S TIDBITS

By Kathy Jens-Rochow, Treasurer

As of April 30, 2011:

- The balance in the TD Ameritrade account was \$626,223.61.
- The balance in the Operating Account was \$51,037.82.
- The balance in the Benevolences Account was \$3,264.95

Note: The Benevolences Account was previously called the Minister's Fund and used at the discretion of the minister for special requests. The Board has not determined an appropriate and confidential procedure to disburse these funds. So for the time being, this account is inactive.

Our PayPal account continues to be useful. There were 14 tickets for the Marc Hansen concert purchased through PayPal.

Capital Fund Corporation has established an account with Northstar, our financial planners, and \$500,000 from our TD Ameritrade account was transferred to that account before the Annual Meeting on May 22nd.

This congregation continues its generosity with our outreach. \$772 was collected and sent to the Mid-South District Storm Relief Fund from a special collection. Our monthly contributions to LifeNet 4 Families have averaged \$500 per month.

AUCTION EVENTS IN JUNE

By Elly Keane, Auction Chair

As we plan for our summer actives there are two exciting events in June offered from the 2010 Auction.

June 4th is the Neil Zirconia show, the ultimate faux diamond, and buffet dinner at the Pavilion Grille (Liz and John Perez' restaurant) in Boca Raton (301 Yamato Road, Boca Raton, FL 33431). Dinner from 6:00pm to 7:30pm then a three-hour Neil Diamond Tribute concert. Only \$40 for the dinner and show. Contact Kathy at Treasurer@riverofgrass.org or click on the Events tab at www.riverofgrass.org to purchase tickets on line. Invite your friends to this wonderful night.

June 16th -17th (Friday night to Saturday morning) is the Mother/Daughter women sleep over. This is a pajama party for all goddesses- with or without a daughter. The night will include activities to deepen connections and understanding, a healthy supper of salad and breads, snacks and a continental breakfast. Hosted by Carolyn Sant Angelo. Come connect with the other women and friends of our congregation. The cost for the night is \$15. Contact Auction Committee at Auction@riverofgrass.org.

Still looking for a few people who want to play dominoes. We need at least 20 people who want to try the adult version on Dominoes. Susan and Eddie Juncosa and Cory and Bill Rish are planning an evening with a Cuban flair of Dominoes and food. Now all they need is a few more people. This is a rescheduled event to happen in the fall. Let the auction committee or Susan know if you are interested, then we will set the date and place.

GIRLS' NIGHT OUT

By Kathy Jens-Rochow, Women's Group Facilitator

What better time to get together with some of your best women friends than the end of the school year, the end of the congregational year, the beginning of summer?

Every year, the Women's Group hosts a Spring Girls' Night Out. We will meet at Tommy's Italian Restaurant, 4777 University Drive, Davie (Southwest corner of University Drive and Griffin Road (look for the Publix mall) on June 27 at 6:30pm. All women of River of Grass and their women friends are invited. For more information, contact Kathy Jens-Rochow at WomensGroup@riverofgrass.org.

JUNE 2011



Sat.	4 th	10:00-11:30am 6:00-10:30pm	Wildpine Covenant Group Neil Zirconia Dinner and Show (Auction event)
Sun.	5 th	10:30-11:30am 10:30-11:30am 11:30am-12:30pm 11:30am-1:00pm	Faith Development Classes Worship Service Hospitality Hour Membership Committee
Mon..	6 th	7:15-10:30pm	Board Meeting
Thu.	9 th	7:00-9:00pm	Men's Group
Sat.	11 th	6:00-10:00pm 6:30-9:30pm	ContraDance Rental Spiritual Arts Group
Sun.	12 th	10:30-11:30am 10:30-11:30am 11:30am-12:30pm 11:30am-12:00pm	Faith Development Classes Worship Service Hospitality Hour Board Report Back
Wed.	15 th	7:15-9:00pm	Newsletter Deadline bUUKies Book Group
Fri.	17 th	8:00-11:00pm	Mother-Daughter Pajama Party (Auction event) Coffeeshouse Event
Sat.	18 th	8:45-11:30am	Mother-Daughter Pajama Party ends Volunteer Service Day
Sun.	19 th	10:30-11:30am 10:30-11:30am 11:30am-12:30pm 12:30-3:00pm	Father's Day Faith Development Classes Worship Service Hospitality Hour Swamp Rose Covenant Group
Tue.	21 st		Summer Solstice

Wed.	22 nd	7:00-9:00pm	UUA General Assembly thru 26 th Executive Board Meeting
Thu.	23 rd	7:00-9:00pm	Men's Group
Sun.	26 th	10:30-11:30am 10:30-11:30am 11:30am-12:30pm	UUA General Assembly ends Faith Development Classes Worship Service Hospitality Hour
Mon.	27 th	7:30-9:00pm	Women's Group Girl's Night Out

DEFICIT REDUCED AT ANNUAL MEETING

By Bev Kaufman

A bare-bones budget got whittled down even more at the May 22nd annual meeting as the congregation agreed to do without a paid part-time Faith Development assistant for another year, thus cutting more than \$8,000 off the budget. A further savings of \$3,000 was made when Gayle Giese agreed to take on half of the Pianist's workload but to return her stipend as a donation.

Finally, the income side of the budget sheet was pushed up another \$5,600 as members increased their pledges, allowing the congregation to shaved the deficit to a little under \$12,000, down from a projected \$28,000 at the start of the meeting.

One cost-saving measure that did not survive was a move to eliminate the position of part-time Office Administrator (\$23,792). Members argued successfully that volunteers filling in since the position was vacated were facing burnout, and that the duties were better handled by a professional.

The congregation also approved the uncontested election of officers, including one who hadn't been on the ballot. At the start of the meeting, Treasurer Kathy Jens-Rochow announced that she was resigning effective June 30. Janet Schwartz was elected to fill the remainder of her term.

Other officers elected were: Marjorie Loring, President; Ken Bresnahan; Vice-President; Susan Juncosa, Secretary; Trustee (two-year), Diane Diaz and Grant Basham; Trustee (one-year), Deb Giblin-Davis.

Also elected were Riley Cothran, Gayle Giese, and Audrey Stang to next year's Nominating Committee. Paige Giese was elected as Youth Representative to the Board at the Young Religious Unitarian Universalists meeting last month. Steve Tepper will remain on the Board as Past President for one year.

At the Capital Fund Board meeting that followed immediately after, Rob Giblin-Davis was elected as a Trustee of the Board.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

By Wendell Abern

Please note the path for new River of Grass members: first you're born in Spain; then you emigrate to Colombia; then you graduate from the German high school in Bogota. This was the exact odyssey for two new members, brother and sister Katrin and Alex. Please give them a welcome hug – and while you're doling out affection, don't forget our three returnees also.

THE NEWEST

Katrin Förster-Csvany was born in Spain and lived there for some years until her family moved to Bogota, Colombia, where she attended the German high school and subsequently received a B.A. degree in Business Administration. She is a lieutenant in the Colombian Army Reserve. She has been married to Daniel Csvany for eleven years (the same amount of time she has been living in Florida); they have three-year old twins, a boy and a girl, and three cats.

Although raised “kind of Catholic,” Katrin really sounds like the rest of us who feel we have been Unitarian Universalists all our lives. “I always had a great interest in the different religions of the world,” she says. “That and my twins are the reasons we joined River of Grass. I want my kids to get a more global education about religion rather than just focusing on one. And being taught the importance of respecting the different spiritual pathways people take. I think Unitarian Universalism and this congregation is the perfect match for us.”

Sure sounds like it to us, Katrin.

Alex Foerster, traveling along the same route as Katrin, struck out on a different path after high school. Single (never married) and a lawyer, Alex has a law degree from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota; he also has an L.L.M. (Master of Laws) in European Union Law and private law from the University of Hamburg Law School in Germany, and is a longtime member of the Colombian American Bar Association in Miami.

Alex recently became a consultant helping to structure loans oriented to emerging markets.

He is a newcomer to both Florida (fourteen months) and River of Grass. Born and raised Catholic, he has been a Unitarian Universalist only since joining our congregation.

When asked about pets, Alex writes, “I had many wonderful cats and dogs who brought lots of joy, but also sorrow, to my life. At present, one stray dog and five cats, rescued from the streets, who live with my parents in Bogota.” A Lt. Commander with the Colombian Naval Reserve, Alex has a wide range of interests and hobbies: motorcycle and bicycle riding, scuba diving, shooting, photography, reading, movies and scale modeling.

The Returnees

Deb and Jon Kitner, charter members, have been so eloquent in expressing their feelings on returning, that we have decided to quote them directly.

Jon: “About a year ago, I decided to leave River of Grass to join a Congregational church, thinking that it would provide a more focused community where I could grow into my faith amongst people who shared my Christian values and vision. The dogma was killing me! How could I think that I could walk out of my UU experiences of the past 35 years and take on another religious identity?”

“Those who have known me at River of Grass know that I am outspoken and passionate about my own spiritual journey. But I didn't know myself very well. What I found out was that any kind of religious dogma kills the very spirit that it claims to nurture. Most importantly, I came to realize that River of Grass is a sacred community because it does NOT espouse a religious dogma!

“I came to realize how precious such a community is only when I found myself inside a community that blindly accepted dogma. So I have rejoined ROG (and the Unitarian Universalists Church of Fort Lauderdale) and will never leave again. Just think of me as the ‘returning, prodigal elder.’”

Deb, while more succinct than Jon, expresses feelings just as heartfelt: “I am delighted to be back to my real church home, River of Grass. Even though we met some wonderful people at the Congregational church and the minister there is an amazing, gifted person, we missed River of Grass more and more as time went by. We have a new appreciation for Unitarian Universalism and were very happy to be welcomed back so warmly!”

Bill Baumgartner's mini-bio will appear in a subsequent issue.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

By Vickie Koutoulas, Membership Co-Chair

The Membership Committee hosted its first Brown Bag Luncheon on Sunday, May 15th directly after services. Every member and guest had been invited to bring their own brown bag lunch and beverage. Because we also hosted a Pathways to Membership class that day, we invited all the prospective members and presenters to attend and sit together as a group.

It turned out very nicely. Our next Brown Bag luncheon is scheduled for Sunday, June 12th.

(Editor's Note: What brought you to Unitarian Universalism? Were you born into it? Did you drop into it in a delightful moment of serendipity? Did you claw your way to it out of some other faith where you just didn't belong?

If you have a story to tell, we want to hear it. Send your Spiritual Journey accounts to Bev Kaufman at NewsletterEditor@riverofgrass.org.)

MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

By Vickie Koutoulas,
Membership Co-Chair

My Spiritual Journey began twenty-three years ago when I began my quest for the perfect church to attend. I had been raised a Greek Orthodox since both my parents were of Greek descent. I found the Greek language difficult to comprehend since my parents always spoke English in our home, and it was frustrating not to be able to understand what the priest was saying. As a child, I found the large paintings of the saints in the church to be intimidating, and I didn't care for the rituals and incense.

When my children were pre-schoolers, I decided that it would be nice to belong to an English-speaking congregation. I sought out the Presbyterian church, but always felt that I

was somewhat different because I was an "ethnic." I attempted to fit in, became a Sunday School teacher, enjoyed the family potlucks and the friendships I shared with a few other teachers. I found the services were inspiring to a young mother who was working hard raising a gifted child and a set of twins. And the minister was very comforting when my father suddenly passed away. But as time went by, I realized that I really didn't fit in at this place either.

Disappointed, I decided to continue my search for the perfect place of worship. Shortly, thereafter, my family moved to Cooper City, a neighboring town, and I decided to join the local Methodist Church. The Methodists were sincere and polite but very conservative. Though I remained there for several years and enjoyed working in the nursery as well as attending services, I felt that something was missing.

It was time to move on and I was encouraged by several friends to visit a neighboring Christian church. The minister there was a motivational speaker and was very interesting. There was a lot about self-help and teaching people how to live a better life. But I soon realized that my values were much more liberal than theirs were. During one of the sermons, the minister encouraged us to "Vote our Values" which I felt was encouraging the congregation to vote conservatively. I was turned off immediately because I've always believed in the separation of church and state.

Luckily, for me, my mother had introduced my family to the Unitarian Fellowship of South Florida in Hollywood, FL, and we began to attend regularly. I visited frequently and enjoyed the services immensely and realized that I was Unitarian at heart. I had worked as a social worker and always felt the desire to help disadvantaged people. My mother had always taught us that it was our responsibility to help the poor people.

When I discovered that there was a congregation in Weston, my mother and I visited a few times and then returned when River of Grass moved to Plantation as it was closer to home. I've been a happy and very involved member ever since.



RIVER OF GRASS SIGN IS FINALLY UP

Yes, that is a big green sign on the outside of building, announcing our presence to the world, and not a photo-shopped picture of what it might look like. The sign was installed the last week of May. Hey West Broward! Hey World! WE ARE HERE!

AND SERVICE IS OUR LAW

RIVER OF GRASS SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

By Alan Meerow and Judi Oltmans Service and Social Justice Co-Chair

The **Postal Food Drive** on May 14th was, as usual, a great service event for River of Grass. Across our three shifts at the Inverrary Post Office, we packed 9 pallets and 15 unpalletted boxes of food (a total of 303 boxes), or 12,120 lbs. SSJC thanks all participants this year: Riley Cothran; Diane Diaz, Karen Dickson and Olga Dickson-French; Steve Jens-Rochow; Pat and Dave Katz; Bev Kaufman; Linda, Alan, Andrew and Erica Meerow; Lynn and Cara O'Brien; Judi and Rick Oltmans; and Pixie Wright and Bob Brindley. The last shift had the worst of it as most of the food didn't arrive until then. Hardest worker award goes to Olga Dickson-French for her tireless efforts lifting and filling boxes, wrapping the pallets with shrink wrap, and being there to help anyone in need. She had unlimited energy!



As in the past, we are gathering donations of school supplies for middle and high schoolers in the ACTS programs (Agency for Community Treatment Services, Inc.). ACTS is a private, not-for profit agency whose mission is to provide and manage a broad array of human services to include prevention, acute care and stabilization, treatment and supportive services in the arenas of substance abuse, co-occurring substance abuse and mental illness, child protection, delinquency, criminal justice, housing, economic self-sufficiency and health and wellness. Please give generously in the form of the following needs:

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| Book bags | highlighters | staplers with staples |
| 3x5 index cards ruled | pocket folders in different colors | book covers |
| black pens | post-it notes | glue sticks |
| red pens | rulers | page dividers |
| calculators (able to do algebraic functions) | graph paper | composition notebooks |

A collection bin will be situated in the hospitality area each Sunday for you to deposit your donations. The materials will be collected by an ACTS rep at the end of July. If you are going to be away most of the summer, please donate early!

Mark your calendars for the Sunday June 12th service as we celebrate Service Sunday. SSJC will be leading the service and we promise the congregation some food for thought on a subject dear to our Unitarian Universalist hearts and minds, but sometimes obscurely understood. Please join us.

A reminder that each Sunday we are accepting donations of canned foods and nonperishable items for Lifenet 4 Families (Cooperative Feeding). Look for the donation basket in the back of the sanctuary. LifeNet 4 Families is always in need of **peanut butter, canned vegetables** and **baby food**, but all non-perishable foods are welcome.

GREEN TIP

Want to clean your oven? Instead of using a commercial spray with large amounts of toxic chemicals, like Sodium hydroxide or lye, try citrus oil, a plant based solvent; a paste of water and baking soda [let it stand overnight, then scrub it off]; apply a spray of warm water, 2 tbs. of liquid soap and 2 tsp. of borax, allow to sit, and then scrub it off; or soak difficult areas with vinegar for two hours and then wipe off. Greenlivingtips.com says, "It's likely that the earth-friendly methods will take a little more elbow grease than the heavy-duty chemical products, but minimizing negative impact on the environment and reducing health risks is a good consolation." - Submitted by Steve Jens-Rochow

