



UUJAZ

Unitarian

Universalist

Justice

Arizona

Youth Internship

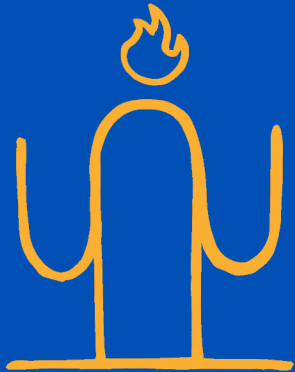
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Introduction



A friend asked me once, “Phoebe if you were to present a stranger with a list of Unitarian Universalist values completely separate from UU demographics and asked them to match what age group they think would make up the majority of UUs, what do you think they would say?” Young Adults. I would say young adults. So why is it the opposite? Why do we have an incredibly active youth community and a plethora of UU adults but such low numbers in between? Where do those youth go when they bridge? I don’t have the answers to this but I do have some ideas.

In literary analysis, people say that bridges mean all kinds of things: connection, parting, communion, etc. But at the root of all of these interpretations, a bridge implies one thing: difference. It shines a light on the disparity between two things. The shorter the bridge, the more binary the difference, the quicker youth are supposed to suddenly become adults on their 18th birthdays. So when it comes to keeping youth in UU spaces through their transition to being a young adult, maybe we ought to ask ourselves, how can we make the bridge longer? **UUJAZ has one answer: hire them.**



Youth can do more than stack chairs, take it from two youth who just wrote your fundraising campaign. Or just facilitated your book group. Or just represented your organization in countless partnering workshops. Or how about **all of the above?** UUJAZ's Youth Internship is pushing the boundaries of youth engagement and redefining the UU multi-generational community.

What we learned:

We were able to experience and learn from many of our community partner organizations, as well as at national UU events.

- Sunrise School
- Transforming Hearts Collective
- UUA General Assembly
- Intern Meetings with Janine



Sunrise School: Green New Deal Crash Course

This course was instrumental in our understanding of how our UU values can be applied through policy work. Seeing the Green New Deal as a way to heal from the COVID pandemic gave us insight into how adult UUs might feel about the progressive movements put in place during their lifetimes. Overall, this course gave us the sense that we might be able to lay claim over the zeitgeist we're in and the moves we make as a community.



Sunrise School: Defund the Police Crash Course

Another defining feature of this year has, of course, been the organizing for Black Lives Matter and call to Defund the Police. This Sunrise course helped us speak on, and reach a greater understanding of all the intersecting matters that make up the call to Defund the Police (in a way that was much easier to follow than corroborating Twitter posts and New York Times articles). Thanks to this course, we've been able to host deeper interpersonal discussions with family and friends as well as help facilitate conversations in the UU Book Group with confidence.

<https://www.sunrisemovement.org/defund-police>

Sunrise School: Graphic Design for Organizing



One of the most overlooked aspects of organizing is, in a bizarre way, branding. Often, the goal of a movement is to get a message across, and the purpose of graphic design is to do exactly that. To us, this course ripped back a curtain to understand the seemingly small things that create a movement. In this single-session class, we walked away with the affirmation that artists and their work are a beloved part of revolutionary organizing.

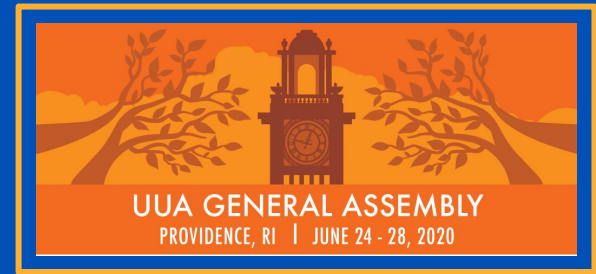
Transforming Hearts Collective

Another UUJAZ partner we had the pleasure of working with is the Transforming Hearts Collective. We were able to experience their six-part webinar series *Transgender Inclusion in Congregations*, which helped us understand some of the roots of gender oppression in our society and our faith, as well as move past our implicit biases to learn how to create our congregations a more inclusive space for all. This webinar specifically shaped our ideas about membership and welcoming in congregations, allowing us to rethink our standing paradigms of interpersonal interaction. UUJAZ purchased the Transforming Hearts webinar for all UU congregations in Arizona, allowing us to connect with other UUs in the state in a multi-generational setting.

<https://www.transformingheartscollective.org/>



UUA General Assembly



UUJAZ also hosted its interns at UUA General Assembly 2020. With the opportunity to represent UUJAZ in the greater UU national community we were able to build connections and community across both the adult and the youth communities, helping us find our place in the future of Unitarian Universalism. Going to GA also allowed us to stay up to date on national UU news as well as be a part of significant votes like the submission of the youth responsive resolution. General Assembly also offered us a multitude of justice-based experiences, from phone banking to community building services and, of course, workshops.

Intern Meetings with Janine

Each week, interns are part of the UUJAZ Team Meetings as well as joining executive director, Janine Gelsinger, afterward to learn directly from her experience in faith-based organizing. These meetings shared with us the secrets of how the gears turn in running a nonprofit. We learned about fundraising and budgeting, communications, hiring, calendar planning, and more. All the inner workings of what actually keeps a nonprofit going (vs all of the google-able info about how to start one).



Accomplishments: New Logo + Branding

Janine also entrusted us with the opportunity to redesign UUJAZ's logo and branding. While learning digital design software on Canva and Adobe Illustrator, we worked together to integrate our new designs.

Ultimately, we created a number of designs for UUJAZ subscribers to vote on as part of the fundraising email campaign. This gave us an opportunity to learn more about visual communication and apply the skills we learned through studying with Sunrise.



Accomplishments: Research Projects

We were also able to hone our research skills by doing mini investigations into topics such as a new email marketing platform provider, and a t-shirt company. We were given a few requirements, such as mobile app compatibility, and then were given the power to choose what program or company would fit best with our goals. This included at times talking directly with company representatives, which again helped us develop better interpersonal communication skills.



Accomplishments: Fundraising Campaign

Our greatest project with UJJAZ was developing the virtual fundraising campaign for 2020. After researching and deciding on an email marketing company, we became fluent in the software involved in the UJJAZ website design, to aid in the distribution of our main concept for the campaign: the blog. We worked together to author over 30 blog posts and newsletters detailing some of the highlight events UJJAZ has been a part of since Janine joined last year. We created a customizable timeline for the campaign so that it can be launched at any point in the month. Our goal was to gain 200 new monthly donors donating \$10 a month by the end of the campaign. In fact, we saw some success in donations even before the launch of the campaign.



Call to UU Youth!

The inclusion of youth in our faith is integral to living out our beliefs. It was a wonderful way to ground myself in my values and learn more about multiple communicational skills for the future. I enjoyed gaining work experience as well as exploring possible career paths and learning more about the inner workings of nonprofits. Furthermore, it allowed me to expand my UU community and meet those from all over the state as well as attend and learn about numerous events that I probably wouldn't have heard about without this opportunity.

If you're a current UU high schooler (or recently graduated), and want to learn more about the statewide action network, social justice initiatives, or even nonprofits in general, I would highly recommend this internship! We are the future of our faith and have the power to create and fight for change if we are willing to take it on.