

# CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL

## An Overview of CUC Lifespan Learning Connections and Resources

Welcome to Lifespan Learning and the Canadian Unitarian Council! I am always awed by what a generous, creative, sharing and resourceful bunch UU religious educators are, so I encourage you in connecting with and talking to your colleagues across your region and nationally. Doing so will connect you to the larger denomination, help recharge your batteries and enrich your programs! Once you know where and who the resources are, you multiply the creative possibilities in dealing with your needs and concerns.

On July 1, 2002, the **Canadian Unitarian Council** took over much of the delivery of services that had previously been supported through the Unitarian Universalist Association and UUA District staff. The CUC has a new partnership with the UUA. The fellowshipping of ministers remains through the UUA, however the CUC staff and network of service consultants and volunteers now provide or arrange for services, training, and resources to approximately 5000 Canadian members in close to 50 congregations spread across the nation.

### Regions and RNGs

The country is divided into four regions and serviced through **Regional Network Groups, or RNGs** (pronounced "rings"). The regions are **B.C.**; **Western** (the Prairie provinces, plus Thunder Bay); **Central** (most of Ontario); and **Eastern** (Quebec, Atlantic provinces and eastern Ontario). The Director of Regional Services West covers congregational services needs for the two westernmost regions while the Director of Regional Services East covers the Central and Eastern regions. The RNGs are made up of staff, networkers and service consultants. "Of Regions and RNGs" is the document outlining the plan from the implementation task force. Regional Services and information can be found at <http://www.cuc.ca/programs/regions/index.htm>

### Staff

The CUC staff currently includes our Executive Director, Mary Bennett, two Directors of Regional Services Linda Thomson DRS East, and Laura McNaughton DRS West. Director of Lifespan Learning, Sylvia Bass West, will retire from the role June 30, 2008 after 6 years of service, and that role is being re-structured to fit the future vision and strategic plan. Updates will be available as soon as the plans are known. An inquiry sent to [lifespan@cuc.ca](mailto:lifespan@cuc.ca) will be forwarded to the staff or consultant who is best able to provide support.

An Administrative Assistant, Janet Vickers, works from the Vancouver office, a full time Information Coordinator /Financial Administrator, Philip Strapp and part time "east" administrative support staff Robbie Brydon are based out of the Toronto offices. Kirstie Peden works part time from Winnipeg (All CUC staff can be contacted by e-mail - easily remembered and reached - just list person's 'firstname@cuc.ca')

## Lifespan Learning

The **Director of Lifespan Learning (DLL)** coordinates lifespan religious education efforts across the country. The DLL is assisted by experienced volunteer **Lifespan Learning Service Consultants**, one in each region and contract consultants with specific areas of expertise. From the Directors or the Service Consultants you can obtain information, ask questions, request consultations and share ideas and resources about various lifespan learning topics such as: professional development opportunities and trainings; children's, junior youth and coming of age programming, youth, young adult and adult program development; big picture visioning; long range planning, program administration and implementation; current curriculum, methodologies and practices; new Canadian resources and curriculum development.

In planning to better serve the needs of congregations and based on feedback from the 5 year evaluation and our RNG team members, CUC staff are developing structures of Regional Shared Ministry Teams. We are looking to support an expanded volunteer base at the regional level, with Contract Consultants and Resource Contacts. By building a larger team a volunteers in each region, we will be able to offer more specialized consultations, teleseminars and workshops to our congregations!

Some of these leadership teams working with specific youth ministry learning conferences and integrated multigenerational workshops will be youth/adult or young adult/adult teams!

## Human Resources Supporting Lifespan Learning

The **Lifespan Learning Service Consultant or LL SC** in B.C. region is Lynn Sabourin: [lsabourin@nsuc.ca](mailto:lsabourin@nsuc.ca) ; Western region LL SC is vacant as of June 2008; Central region LL SC is Lissa Foster: [rockwoods@rogers.com](mailto:rockwoods@rogers.com) and Eastern region LL SC is Audrey O'Callaghan, [aocallaghan@cogeco.ca](mailto:aocallaghan@cogeco.ca).

**B.C. region- Lynn Sabourin at: [lsabourin@nsuc.ca](mailto:lsabourin@nsuc.ca)** Lynn, a children's Religious Education specialist, and the DRE of 26 years, at North Shore Unitarian Church, brings to the team her experience as a trained Covenanting workshop facilitator, co-leader of Renaissance Modules, former dean of Eliot Institute family camp, start-up facilitator, intergenerational workshop and activities coordinator, and curriculum and resource developer.

## Western Region – vacant

**Central Region – Lissa Foster, [rockwoods@rogers.com](mailto:rockwoods@rogers.com)** Lissa, a skilled facilitator, has extensive background with training in the Volunteer Canada Safe Steps (Screening in Faith) initiative, has managed Canada Summer Games volunteer coordination and has done extensive program and team development in not-for-profit organizations. Lissa has been involved teaching in both the London and Toronto First congregations and served on the Board of the Unitarian Fellowship of London and Pillars London (Diversity in the workplace) Lissa writes, "A member of Unitarian Congregations since 1992, I am inspired by and committed to the seven

principles that guide UU activities in North America. I see the principles as the reference point for all congregational activities and I value the role they play in shaping activities of congregations.”

**Eastern Region - Audrey O’Callaghan, [aocallaghan@cogeco.ca](mailto:aocallaghan@cogeco.ca)** An Early Childhood Educator and Social Service Training Coordinator, Audrey began as a welfare worker, then continued training and became a life skills coach facilitating groups of adults who were re-entering the work force. Audrey served as DRE at the Ottawa UU Fellowship and says, “It excites me to create friendships and shared kinship with others involved in religious education. I can trace my enthusiasm in accepting challenges in life as being directly related to my ongoing involvement with religious education and how I feel about lifespan learning. I look forward to sharing my enthusiasm!”

**LIFESPAN LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAM**

We are very excited about our Lifespan Learning Community Program endorsed by the CUC Board. It offers you a framework, whether you choose to apply, receive supports through the process and upon successful completion be recognized or simply use this tool to guide your own processes. We support visioning toward lifespan community – one which intentionally encourages and creates opportunity for spiritual growth and learning at all ages of our lives and all stages of our faith development.

As a lifespan learning faith community we address the following 12 Keys:

1. Have an <b>articulated vision</b> of lifespan learning as it relates to our community and its overall mission.
2. <b>Assess our current opportunities</b> for learning at every age of life and stage of faith development.
3. Have a <b>long-range plan</b> to maintain our current lifespan learning opportunities and create desired new opportunities.
4. Provide opportunities for people to grow and learn at <b>all ages</b> of their life.
5. Provide opportunities for people to grow and learn at <b>all stages</b> of their faith development.
6. Assist members through <b>life-stage transitions</b> with programs and ceremonies of recognition.
7. Provide opportunities for members of <b>different generations</b> to form relationships and learn from one another.
8. Support and inspire our members to <b>teach and lead</b> others.
9. Nurture <b>safe and respectful relationships</b> amongst our members and safeguard against abuse.

10. Allocate **adequate resources** including space and funds to create quality thriving programs.

11. Provide encouragement, opportunity and financial support for our lay and professional leaders to continue their own **spiritual growth**.

12. Regularly **re-assesses** our vision, goals and plans for lifespan learning.

### CANUUE

Canadian religious educators will find a wealth of resources and timely information in *CANUUE*, the **Canadian Unitarian Universalist Educator** newsletter/resource packet, back issues available on line for your use. Originally published quarterly by the CUC specifically for Canadian religious educators and lifespan RE program support, pages can be copied for visitors, teachers and parents. Updates and connections are there for the sharing. The more we can share our understandings, creative solutions to challenges, program successes, and growth strategies the better we all can be! The CANUUE editor was Terry Stafford – we are grateful for Terry’s work. An index of CANUUE articles 2001-2005 can be found at [http://www.cuc.ca/canuue/CANUUE\\_Topical\\_Index.pdf](http://www.cuc.ca/canuue/CANUUE_Topical_Index.pdf)

### LIFESPAN LEARNING UPDATES

“**Sylvia Speaking**” Newsletters 2003 through 2007 and newly named “**Lifespan Learning Updates**” in 2008 are available on line at <http://www.cuc.ca/lifespan/index.htm>

### LIBRARY

The CUC also maintains a growing **Lifespan Learning lending library** of all kinds of books for both congregational and religious education leadership, plus curricula and other valuable resources. For borrowing procedures or to order materials for loan contact the librarian at: [lifespanlibrary@cuc.ca](mailto:lifespanlibrary@cuc.ca). The CUC website lists all the available materials. [www.cuc.ca/lifespan/lifespan\\_learning\\_library.htm](http://www.cuc.ca/lifespan/lifespan_learning_library.htm)

For purchase of new resources and curricula, please check with [lifespan@cuc.ca](mailto:lifespan@cuc.ca) as some resources are available for sale through the Lifespan Learning office. The RE Road Map, Canadian Edition, is a hugely valuable resource packet that can be borrowed through the library or a copy purchased through the LL office.

You can order other UU books through the CUC west office: 604-264-0088, The People's Co-op Bookstore in Vancouver: 1-888-511-5556; [www.peoplescoopbookstore.com](http://www.peoplescoopbookstore.com) , the UUA Bookstore or Alban Institute.

### MENTORING

If you are new to the work of religious education, you may be interested in developing a mentoring relationship with another DRE or experienced RE contact who can share ideas , address day to day planning issues, loan you resource materials, advise you about policy, make suggestions about physical space, advertising, setting up a committee, etc.

All religious educators have been beginners and know that it can be isolating and overwhelming, so they usually welcome the opportunity to help someone else who is in this position. The outcomes of these mentoring relationships could sometimes include joint activities (retreats, fundraising efforts, youth activities, joint social action projects) and can be fruitful and rewarding ways to meet and work with other Unitarians and Universalists.

We encourage networking on line, by phone and at regional and national gatherings.

## YOUTH SUPPORTS

Youth in the four regions of Canada are currently organizing themselves with the support and visioning of a national **Canadian Advisory Youth Adult Committee (CAYAC)** [formerly the Youth Advisory Group or YAG] that includes youth representatives from our region, plus the CUC Youth Observer to the Board (YOB) Canadian Social Action Coordinator (C SAC), an eastern and western adult and the DLL. The CAYAC meets monthly by teleconference and annually for a weekend retreat of meetings and connection mid winter.

The youth have various listserves:

- [bc-yac@yahoogroups.com](mailto:bc-yac@yahoogroups.com) for YRUUs in the BC region. To subscribe, send a blank email message to [bc-yac-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:bc-yac-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)
- [cuc-youth@yahoogroups.com](mailto:cuc-youth@yahoogroups.com) for all Canadian youth and youth allies. To subscribe, send a blank email message to [cuc-youth-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:cuc-youth-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)
- [cuc-youth-news@yahoogroups.com](mailto:cuc-youth-news@yahoogroups.com) for monthly news via email about what's happening across Canada. To subscribe, send a blank email to: [cuc-youth-news-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:cuc-youth-news-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)
- [quomyouth@yahoogroups.ca](mailto:quomyouth@yahoogroups.ca) for YRUUs in the QuOM region (Quebec, Ontario, Maritimes). QuOM YAC can be reached at [thequomyac@yahoo.ca](mailto:thequomyac@yahoo.ca).
- [rrysc@yahoogroups.com](mailto:rrysc@yahoogroups.com) for YRUUs in the Western region (includes Thunder Bay). To subscribe, send a blank email message to [rrysc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:rrysc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

Our UU youth in Canada have had a newsletter, *Busking on the Causeway*, that is posted on the CUC website and the regions each have youth newsletters as well. Newsletters promote upcoming events, networking connections, and news from youth and youth groups across the country. Check out [www.cuc.ca/youth](http://www.cuc.ca/youth) or follow the path through Programs and Resources, to Lifespan Learning and then click on Youth.

## YOUNG ADULT AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

You may be looking for resources or information about young adult programming or campus ministry. The continental connections are shifting for this area of ministry and we are unclear what supports will be available from the UUA after July 2008. Our **Canadian Regional Organizing Consultant (ROC)** through the UUA YA/CM office at the present time is Scotia Buchan.

We support regional young adult representatives as volunteers assisting with connections in their respective regions. We also welcome young adults on the Annual Conference and Meeting planning group, and regional fall gathering planning committees.

## COMMUNICATION

Besides *CANUUE* and *Busking on the Causeway*, the CUC itself issues a quarterly newsletter called *Canadian Unitarian*, plus each Program Staff member offers updates and information through their monthly newsletters. Much information about local congregational activity appears in these newsletters, as well as news about regional and national events, training opportunities, and social action. Mary Bennett, Executive Director, envisions content and requests contributions for the *Canadian Unitarian* and writes a column for each issue.

A monthly mailing goes to congregations from the CUC Toronto offices.

The CUC website ([www.cuc.ca](http://www.cuc.ca)) contains a wealth of useful information: listing of all congregations; history of Canadian Unitarians and Universalists; history of the CUC; publications; event calendar; Canadian curricula; lifespan learning library; worship resources; *CANUUE* and *Canadian Unitarian* newsletters; congregational initiatives; growth programs; email listserves; contact information for members of Parliament; a media kit for congregations; various products including books/videos/brochures for purchase; listing of ministers; information on the lay chaplaincy program; funding resources; areas of active social responsibility involvement; CUC Social Responsibility Resolutions; CUC staff, volunteers, Board and committee membership; and CUC Board minutes. If unsure how to find what you're looking for, call toll free 1-888-568-5723 or send a message to [info@cuc.ca](mailto:info@cuc.ca)

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The CUC supports both professional and lay members with growth and leadership training opportunities. Subsidies are available to assist those attending. Best practice is that religious educators have a professional development budget separate from the RE program budget, to support their attendance at trainings and gatherings. The actual training opportunities are always useful and the networking that happens at these events is invaluable! Some trainings are geared for people working with local religious education and youth programs, including the Our Whole Lives lifespan sexuality education training; Leadership Development and Spirituality Development Conferences for youth; Youth Advisor Trainings; Campus Ministry workshops, Lay Chaplaincy Trainings and various workshops and streams at Regional Fall Gatherings and at the CUC Annual Conference and Meeting (ACM) each year, the Victoria Day long weekend in May.

Renaissance Modules, specialized 15 hour intensive trainings for religious education professionals and others supporting religious education, have been featured at RE Days, pre-ACM for the past 6 years. These workshops, developed by the UUA, are: Worship for All Ages, Ministry With Youth, Unitarian Universalist History, Unitarian Universalist Identity, Teacher Development and Support, Administration, Philosophy of Religious Education, Multicultural Religious Education, and Curriculum. Please contact [lifespan@cuc.ca](mailto:lifespan@cuc.ca) if you

would like more information or go to the UUA Renaissance web site <http://www.uua.org/re/landscp/renaissance.html>. Canadians are generally welcome at UUA District sponsored trainings as our USA colleagues are welcome to attend ours. An additional premium may be paid for out of area attendees.

#### **CU\*UL Program:**

Canadian Unitarian\*Universalist Leadership School is the residential component of a comprehensive CU\*UL program

- CU\*UL school provides experiential leadership training in an on-site 4 day program which includes: Personality Preference tool training, Canadian Contextual Theology, Canadian U\*U history, Worship, Whole Church, Safe Congregations, exposure to Covenant Groups (Small Group Ministry Model), basic information on Systems Theory, Church Conflict and Church Growth Theory
- Leaders benefit from additional support and training and some modules are currently in place, while others are in development. Human Resources, Committee Leadership and RE Leadership are modules that have been piloted with success. Certain Renaissance programs will count as credits in this CU\*UL pathways program. Others trainings may also be credited. For further details please visit the CUC web site.

#### **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION**

Your resource connections still includes the UUA. The Lifespan Faith Development Staff Group at the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston develops and publishes curricula; publishes biannually and available online a wonderful packet of resources and information called *UU Faith Works* (hard copy subscriptions are \$20 US/year plus shipping); develops resources for families; and generally consults on all areas of congregational lifespan religious education.

The Lifespan Learning Resources section of CUC web site outlines the Unitarian Universalist Association's **Tapestry of Faith** Programs

Tapestry of Faith is the UUA's new series of programs and resources for all ages that nurture Unitarian Universalist identity, spiritual growth, a transforming faith, and vital communities of justice and love. All Tapestry of Faith curricula are published free online for all Unitarian Universalist congregations (and anyone in the world) to download and adapt for their own needs. Some supplemental resources for Tapestry of Faith are published as print books, as is the new Our Whole Lives program for young adults.

Here are the links for the K-1 and 2-3 levels of UUA's Tapestry of Faith on line curriculum, Creating Home and Moral Tales. They are large files to download but you can choose to view and use parts of the whole. The parts contain a comprehensive guides, teacher "spiritual" prep for the lessons, parent materials etc.

<http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/creatinghome/index.shtml>

<http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/moraltales/index.shtml>

View, download, adapt and print any Tapestry of Faith curriculum at [www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith](http://www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith).

### **OUR WHOLE LIVES**

Our Whole Lives Lifespan Sexuality Curriculum is available for purchase through the UUA. Training of Trainers currently happens through the UUA offices as well. Trained leaders from Canada are at your service! Contact [lifespan@cuc.ca](mailto:lifespan@cuc.ca) for more information on how to set up a training if you wish to host something locally, or as a cluster within your region. Trained leaders must be used and their expenses and honoraria covered. A training is weekend long. Total costs are approximately \$3000-\$3500.

The Unitarian Universalist Association telephone number in Boston, Mass. is (617) 742-2100 and the UUA Bookstore number is (800) 215-9076. The Bookstore also has email: [bookstore@uua.org](mailto:bookstore@uua.org). You can order online at: [www.uua.org/bookstore](http://www.uua.org/bookstore).

### **UUA RE Credentialing**

A program has been implemented at the UUA to encourage professional standards accreditation for religious educators. The Religious Education Credentialing Program of the UUA is supported by staff at the **UUA RE Credentialing Office**, a part of the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group at the UUA. This three-level program for lay religious educators is intended to provide a comprehensive path for professional development and to provide meaningful recognition of such achievement. LREDA, the UUA and the CUC have negotiated Canadian access to UUA RE Credentialing program, with a \$500 annual administration fee payable to the UUA. Trained Canadian mentors will support Canadians in the program. To apply to this UUA program see their web site.

### **LREDA and CLF**

Two additional valuable sources of information are the **Liberal Religious Educator's Association (LREDA)** and the **Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF)**. LREDA is a continental professional organization with various membership categories so virtually anyone interested in religious education can join. LREDA sponsors an excellent annual continental Fall Conference. In addition, LREDA trains people to act as Good Offices advocates for religious educators who are hoping to have an outside resource to support them professionally, especially when they might be experiencing difficulties or conflict in their position. They are available for advice and even intervention meetings to qualified LREDA members. LREDA has a listserv for members. This is *your* professional group and religious educators and others in professional roles supporting lifespan religious education are encouraged to join. For membership and other information, check the website: [www.uua.org/lreda](http://www.uua.org/lreda).

Church of the Larger Fellowship was established to provide resources to isolated families and small groups unable to attend a local congregation and too small to affiliate with the UUA or the CUC. Their "church by mail" services offer regular monthly mailings; loan library of sermons, books, curricula and audio/video tapes; beautiful seasonal order-of-service covers; chalice jewellery; and a magazine for children and families called *UU and Me*. Family groups "pledge" money to CLF the same way they would to a congregation. For more information call Church of the Larger Fellowship at (617) 948-6166 or email [CLF@uua.org](mailto:CLF@uua.org).

### **Electronic Communication**

The age of electronics has increased our ability to network and share resources. The CUC is developing and enhancing our website regularly. Check out [www.cuc.ca](http://www.cuc.ca). In addition, both UUA and CUC have email lists on a variety of topics and you can subscribe to them free of charge as long as you have internet capability.

For a complete listing of all the lists available to you, go the UUA and CUC homepages and find "Email lists" or contact [info@cuc.ca](mailto:info@cuc.ca) the CUC Toronto offices and someone will assist you.

**Welcome again to a network of support services to your lifespan religious education programming within Unitarianism and Unitarian Universalism here in Canada !**

*Sylvia*

Sylvia Bass West  
Director of Lifespan Learning 2002-2008  
Canadian Unitarian Council - Conseil Unitarien du Canada

(Some text herein was excerpted from the RE Road Map, Canadian Edition. Thank you especially to Cindy Leitner and Lynn Sabourin for this resource)