

SYLVIA SPEAKING



A NEWSLETTER FROM SYLVIA BASS WEST— DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN LEARNING

NOVEMBER 2007



**GREETINGS
FROM SAN
ANTONIO!**



**FOR UNITARIANS AND
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS,
LEARNING IS THE
FUNDAMENTAL SPIRITUAL
PRACTICE.** Rev Dr. Rebecca Parker

The Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) promotes religious growth and learning for people of all ages by providing opportunities for continuing education, sharing resources, advocating for professional recognition, and providing encouragement and support for religious education professionals. If your congregation's Religious Educator (Director or Coordinator of Religious Education/Exploration) is not a member of this continental professional association, and you'd like to know more, check www.uua.org/lreda for information. New DRE and supportive memberships are available.

I am delighted to announce that LREDA will have an information table at our ACM 2008 in Ottawa and a workshop geared to the issues Canadian religious educators grapple with!

This year's LREDA Fall Conference, held San Antonio Texas, featured Meg Barnhouse, musician

and writer, the UUA's Lifespan Faith Development office staff team presenting "Tapestry of Faith" and the CUC team presenting our Lifespan Learning Community Program and The Twelve Keys. UUA Moderator Gini Courter presented an engaging day on the qualities of a Spiritual Leader.

LREDA INTEGRITY TEAM continues its work.

The mission of LREDA's Integrity Team is to articulate a compelling vision of LREDA as an organization made whole by the empowerment of all our members, assist LREDA in living that vision as an organizational priority, and monitor LREDA's ongoing progress toward that vision.

Our vision of LREDA is an inclusive organization that is intentionally willing to struggle to dismantle legal and social barriers to equal association, act with integrity, and honor the many gifts we bring.

Your congregation received a copy of the LREDA "A Blueprint for Excellence" brochure last year and you'll receive another in next month's mailing. This brochure is intended to help congregations decide how to proceed in doing the important work of seeking justice and equity for all kinds of people and honoring the many gifts that a diversity of people bring to our congregations. It offers suggestions, practical guidance and resources to congregational leaders and religious professionals in these areas:

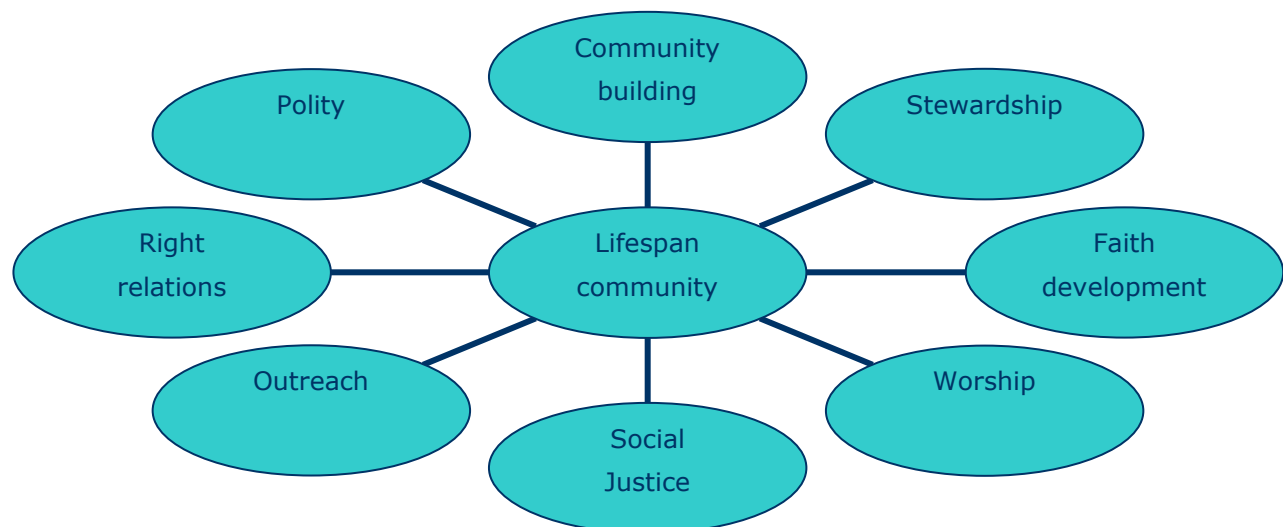
- Evaluating facilities for accessibility
 - Evaluating atmosphere for affirming the worth and dignity of every person
 - Evaluating curricula for use in religious education
 - Creating and planning worship with a multicultural, anti-oppression lens
 - Searching for more diverse professional leadership
- Please make use of it in all aspects of congregational planning!

With love for the children and encouragement for learners of all ages, Sylvia

THE TWELVE KEYS

TWELVE KEYS FOR BUILDING AND NURTURING LIFESPAN LEARNING COMMUNITY

1. Articulate your vision.
2. Assess current opportunities.
3. Develop a long-range plan.
4. Provide programs for all ages.
5. Provide programs for all life stages.
6. Assist with life stage transitions.
7. Provide opportunities for different generations to make meaning together.
8. Support members to teach and lead.
9. Nurture safe and respectful relationships.
10. Allocate adequate resources .
11. Provide opportunities for spiritual growth of staff and volunteers.
12. Regularly re-assess vision and long range plans.



**KEYS ONE, TWO AND THREE ARE FOUNDATIONAL.
WE RECOMMEND THAT THEY BE ADDRESSED FIRST.**

ARTICULATE YOUR VISION

A mission/vision statement creates an important starting point for developing and evaluating programs. Your vision will become your primary point of reference for all that you do. When evaluating existing programs, your community will quickly be able to determine if they are meeting your priorities by noting if they reflect your vision. When creating new programs, your community will be guided by the purposes reflected in your clearly articulated, congregationally “owned” written vision statement addressing what life-long learning means to the congregation. Vision must be clear. If the vision is vague, people lose interest. Vision of Religious Education, whether lifespan or addressed as age-specific, ideally is well-connected to the overall congregational mission and vision.

ASSESS YOUR CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

Very simply this means having a program map of the programs currently existing in your community, knowing which aspects of your mission/vision statement they meet, and for which members. You will see where needs are already being met - or are not being met - so that you can plan future initiatives, as a whole instead of as individual programs. Your community understands where and how the various ages and stages of its members find opportunities for growth and learning in the **whole** congregation.

HAVE A LONG-RANGE PLAN

A workable long range plan will make it easier for your community to create and sustain new programs. An action plan will help your congregation visualize its programs and its future and will allow a realistic timeline to implement your vision without becoming overwhelmed. It will ensure that you have time to build awareness, recruit leaders and designate any necessary financial resources. If you offer a variety of programs rotated over time, making a long-range plan will ensure that you still meet all of your objectives.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, THE GUIDEBOOK AND
ASSESSMENT VISIT [WWW.CUC.CA/LIFESPAN](http://www.cuc.ca/lifespan)**

THE TWELVE KEYS

The Lifespan Learning Community Guidebook and Assessment form are available on line at <http://www.cuc.ca/lifespan/llCommunity.htm>

Where do we start?

Print off a copy of the guidebook for interested leaders in your congregation, to read and digest.

Have a focussed conversation about the value of this tool for your congregation!

If there is consensus,

- Gather allies, champions – a team of enthusiasm and support
- Take your plan to begin to your decision making/governing body
- Develop an oversight team.

We recommend the oversight team should have about 5 people. These people should be strong leaders. Select members who represent different ages of life or different stages of their faith development. As an oversight team, complete the self-assessment, and then complete the “application to become an in process lifespan learning community” to inform the CUC of your interest. We’ll partner with you through the various on-going stages!

“Our work with the 12 Keys continues to be a revealing process, shining a light on areas that need support, as well as on those that are thriving. Our development as a Lifespan Learning Community in process unfolds with much thoughtful discussion and we benefit from both the big picture thinking that our vision statement inspires and the attention to practical detail that its implementation requires. We are making connections and seeing patterns, finding varied approaches to cultivate our multigenerational community and to create the structures that will allow it to grow.” *Susan McEwen DRE*

Building Whole Communities

The whole of the congregation includes its children, youth and young adults; its programs, worship, work and play, celebrations, outreach, staff, building, governance and property. Wholeness is relational, and involves the parts coming together and interacting.