

MANY WAYS TO BECOME INVOLVED



at the
Unitarian Society of Hartford
2009 – 2010



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MANY WAYS to BECOME INVOLVED at USH

Please check the following pages for descriptions of the many groups and activities available to newcomers, as well as to our regular members and friends.

- **Look for “Easy Entry” listings:**

These activities have been identified (**EE**) as easy ways to get started with “hands on” involvement in our multifaceted USH community – putting a “toe in the water”, so to speak.

- **A special invitation to newcomers to serve as our “New Eyes”:**

As a “Newcomer” you offer a valuable resource to USH: “New Eyes”! You see things from a fresh perspective. These insights and inputs can enrich our work at USH and help us build a stronger community.

Because we value your “New Eyes”, we want to make it easy for you to put them to work! We invite you to join any of the groups identified as “New Eyes” (**NE**) on the following list, as a “New Eyes” participant. The group (or groups) you join will benefit from your observations, feedback, and suggestions. Being a “New Eyes” member will provide you with an opportunity to learn about a group, and see if it is a good fit for you.

If you volunteer to join one (or more) of these sub- councils as “New Eyes”, the role would be for no more than a year. At any time during that year you are free to consider joining the group on a permanent basis, or to leave and move on to another sub-council.

Please consider giving the Meeting House that which we did not have until you walked through our doors:

your “New Eyes”!

What are *YOUR* interests?

How to get started:

Opportunities are listed under headings geared to areas of interest you may have:

- **People**
- **Children and Youth**
- **Personal growth**
- **Worship**
- **Social Justice**
- **Music**
- **Art**
- **Writing, Photography, Graphic Arts**
- **Building & grounds beautification and care**

The listings that follow attempt to give you an overview of the many groups and activities found at USH. We hope you will find this helpful in finding a “fit” for your own interests and readiness for involvement, extending your hand to both give and receive.

Groups or activities that offer “**easy entry**” opportunities for involvement are marked **EE**. Groups in which you might participate in a temporary “**New Eyes**” role are marked **NE**.

Please check off any groups or activities listed on the enclosed “My Interests Checklist” that might be of interest to you and return it to the Welcome Table in the lobby or the Visitor’s Table downstairs, by placing it in the offering basket, or by mailing it to The Unitarian Society of Hartford, 50 Bloomfield Ave, Hartford, CT 06105.

Someone from the group(s) you have checked off will contact you to answer your questions and/or discuss “Easy Entry” or “New Eyes” opportunities. You are also invited to get in touch with a contact person directly, if you wish (see enclosed contact list).

People? . . . then consider:

- **(EE) Small Group Ministry**, which is offered throughout the year. Groups of 8–10 people meet, often in private homes, for an eight-week session. Meetings focus on discussion of a specific topic and how it relates to our personal life and spirituality. Small Group Ministry is a great way to deepen your own spiritual journey while at the same time meeting other people in a nonjudgmental atmosphere.
- **(NE) Small Group Ministry Steering Committee**, which meets to organize semester programs, plan readings, and work with facilitators. Once newcomers have participated in a Small Group Ministry, they might consider serving as “New Eyes” on the steering committee.
- **(NE) Membership Sub-Council**, which coordinates activities aimed at welcoming visitors to the Meeting House, promoting the assimilation of new members into our congregation, encouraging a friendly and supportive community, and promoting membership growth of the Society.
- **(EE) Sunday Welcome Volunteers**, who serve 4 to 6 times during the year in one of the Sunday welcome roles (ushering or greeting and welcoming visitors before the service or during coffee hour). Complete instructions will be provided, as well as support in getting started.
- **(EE) Neighborhood Networks** - If you'd like to help foster communication, collaboration and connection with fellow USH members and friends from your "neighborhood" or geographic region, call the contact listed above for ideas and suggestions for networking and relationship-building activities. The Neighborhood Networks are intended to help individuals and families create linkages both in and out of the Meeting House. As someone once said, " Mr. Roger's **Neighborhood** makes us, young and old alike, feel safe, cared for and valued. So... Please, won't you be my neighbor?? !
- **(EE) Small Dinner Parties**, which include six to ten adults randomly assigned to be together in a different grouping and with a different host each date. Enjoy old friends and meet new ones.
- **(EE) Men’s Luncheon Group**, which is a group of men that meets monthly, (3rd Tues., 12:00 noon - 2pm) for a restaurant lunch and lively discussion of a selected topic. **Ladies are also welcome!**

Interest in People, continued:

- **(EE, NE) Unitarian Alliance Ministry to Women**, which provides activities and opportunities for sisterhood as well as programs to serve our Society and the community
- **(EE, NE) Interweave Sub-Council**, which works to ensure that we are a welcoming congregation for all people, with particular emphasis on welcoming and supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual, questioning, transgender people and their friends and allies. Activities include social events, inviting speakers, creating bulletin boards, outreach, increasing awareness and understanding of GLBQT issues and assisting GLBQT community groups with their events.
- **(NE) Caring Network**, which helps our members and friends by providing meals, rides to services and occasionally to appointments, information on Aging Resources, phoning and visiting members, sending greetings for all sorts of joys and sorrows, and arranging various other services tailored to the individual.

(EE) Caring Network volunteer opportunities:

- Write notes to those in their Neighborhood Networks with self-introduction and voice of care, concern or joy when appropriate
- Provide a ride to church to a neighbor when there is a need
- Cook an extra portion for dinner...package, label with contents/ingredients and add to the Caring Network shelves in kitchen freezer, or take a meal to someone in the congregation. * Be sure to add or subtract your entry to the list on the shelf in the freezer.
- **(NE) Lay Listeners**, which is a group that has a mission to extend a caring net to all church members, enhancing relationships and fostering interpersonal connections throughout the Meeting House community.

To ensure that no congregation member ever feels isolated and alone, lay listeners will reach out to provide spiritual support and comfort, extending their hearts to individuals and their families in complete respect and confidentiality.

The Lay Listener group meets intermittently throughout the year, but most work is done "in the field".

- **(EE) Comfort Shawl Ministry**, which invites you to join other knitters as they meet to knit together, relax, enjoy good conversation and create warm and wonderful shawls to give to persons needing comfort. You can also learn to knit with the group, or knit these on your own (directions are available.) The Comfort Shawl Ministry started in November 2002; since then, members have knitted and given away more than 200 shawls.
- **(EE) "Affinity Groups"**, which could be any of a variety of small special-interest groups. New ones can be formed at any time when several members indicate an interest and would like to collaborate and get a group organized (for example, poetry, book discussion, woodworking) Groups might also be formed around certain age ranges (say 30-40 somethings, men ages 40-55, etc.) or family circumstances (singles or single parents, for example). We will keep track of any specific needs or interests which are passed on to us and try to connect you with any folks who have expressed similar interests.

Children and Youth? . . . then consider:

- **(NE) Religious Education Sub-Council**, which supports the Ministry of Children and Families, by overseeing the programs for children and youth through high school, including Religious Education classes and other activities throughout the year. The Sub-Council members work in collaboration with the Director of Religious Education.

(EE) activities include:

- Assist the teacher of a religious education class
 - Help chaperone a youth event, such as the Middle School conference or a visit to a different religious institution
 - Be a family greeter
- **(EE) Noah Webster Partnership:** (see page 6)

Personal growth? . . . then consider:

- **(NE) Adult Programs Sub-Council**, which strives to provide lectures, classes, workshops and other offerings for continued spiritual growth, religious learning and community fellowship. Join us to help make these opportunities available to the members and friends of USH.
- **(EE) Adult Programs**, which offers a number of workshops and activities. Participating in one of these is a great way to meet people and have a great experience. A listing of offerings is available at both the Programs Table and the Visitors Table in Fellowship Hall during Sunday Coffee Hour, on the ledge next to the Welcome Table in the upstairs lobby, and on the USH website. Stop at the Programs Table to find out more about the individual offerings or just to say hello. We look forward to seeing you!
- **(EE) Friday Night Dinner/Movie** (See Programs catalog)
- **(EE) Small Group Ministry:** (see page 2)

Worship? . . . then consider:

- **(NE) Worship Sub-Council**, which oversees aspects of the worship services and experiences.
- **(EE) Chalice lighting**
- **(EE) Meditation Dharma Gathering**, which meets weekly and provides an opportunity to participate in sitting meditation, walking meditation and contemplation of Buddhist teachings (Dharma) presented by well known teachers such as Pema Chodron, Jack Kornfield and Thich Nhat Hahn, among others. We sit together as a community, in silent or guided meditation, softening our hearts and minds as we listen together to the audio presentations.

You are welcome to drop in as your schedule allows for it. There is no sign up or fee. Come early if you are new to meditation for some tips. We hope you will join us. For details, please check page listing contact information.

Social Justice Issues? . . . then consider:

- **(NE) Council on Social Justice**, which has over-all responsibility for social justice at USH. The Council members include the Chairs of all of the following Social Justice sub-councils as well as others with a broad passion for and interest in a variety of social justice issues.
- **Social Justice Sub-Councils**, which are the groups listed below, act upon various social issues that impact us both locally and globally.
- **(EE, NE) Interweave:** (see page 3)
- **(EE, NE) Green Sanctuary:** Join this fun group dedicated to making USH and it's inhabitants as environmentally informed and green as possible. All aspects of USH are affected so you may work on a particular interest of yours to "green" (i.e. RE, B&G, Worship, Environmental Justice, etc) or work with the group as we accomplish our action plan to become a certified "Green Sanctuary".
- **(EE)The Noah Webster Partnership Project**, is a program USH, as a member of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition of Equity & Justice, joined in the fall of 2007, providing tutors and volunteers at Noah Webster School. This is a K-8 school located on Whitney Street in Hartford. Approximately 40 volunteers from USH and five other area congregations serve as reading tutors in the 1st through 4th grades. Math Tutoring is starting this fall in the 2nd and 3rd grades. There are openings for both the morning tutoring program and the afternoon homework center. Commitment is one day a week for about 90 minutes. This offers a deeply rewarding experience!
- **(NE) Equal Access Sub-Council**, which focuses on issues of full inclusion in congregational life, issues which enhance participation in USH for those of us with disabilities and our families, friends and allies. From education to barrier removal to testimonials and sermons, our sub-council advocates for folks with hearing, vision, mental health/neurological, cognitive, and physical disabilities.

Music? . . . then consider these musical opportunities:

- **Choir.** Did you once sing in a chorus or a cappella group? Do you miss making music with other singers? New singers are welcome in our choir (Baritones/Basses especially needed), and we do encourage joining on a trial basis to see if this is the place for you.

Rehearsals every Wednesday 7:30 - 9:00, plus warm-up rehearsal on Sunday before the service at which we sing.

- **(EE, NE) Opportunities:**
 - Come sing hymns and songs after the service the third Sunday of every month, in the chapel.
 - Instrumental or vocal performance in a Sunday service
 - Help plan performing arts programs

ART? . . . then consider:

- **(NE) Art Sub-Council:** coordinates the artwork displayed in the Meeting House. Ideas and suggestions for displays are welcome.
- **(EE, NE) Chancel Arts Sub-council:** creates chancel hangings and displays.
- **(NE) Artist's Way:** a 13-week program and progression of exercises to help you honor the artist within and release your creative force – come try it out.

Writing, photography, and Graphic Arts? . . .

- **(NE) Communications Sub-Council:** coordinates all of the internal and external communications ... newsletter, public relations, and bulletin boards.
- **(EE) activities include:**
 - write articles for weekly Enews
 - assist with bulletin boards
 - take photos of new members and updates for Directory
 - help assemble Order of Service/Meetinghouse Weekly on occasional Friday afternoons, as needed.

Building and Facility Beautification and Care? .

. . then consider:

- **(NE) Building and Grounds Sub-Council:** oversees the care and enhancement of our physical facilities.
- **(EE) Adopt-a-bay:** adopt a section of USH outdoors to take care of and beautify (contact Green Sanctuary Sub-council)
- **(EE) "Work Day"** at the Meeting House
- **(EE) Help maintain the Memorial Garden or Pet Garden** on our Meeting House grounds
- **(EE) Donate flowers** for a Sunday service

Finance? . . . then consider:

- **(NE) Stewardship Sub-Council:** oversees the annual pledge drive and, working with the Board of Directors, considers the broader issues related to the resources that USH members and friends contribute toward the achievement of the Society's mission and goals.
- **(NE) Finance Sub-Council:** works with the Board, the Councils, and Sub-Councils, and the Society Business Manager to oversee the financial health and well-being of the Society. The Treasurer of the Society is the chair of the Finance Sub-Council.

This Sub-council meets monthly to review current financial results and to address issues affecting financial health by creating and recommending solutions to the Board. They also oversee the annual budget process and work closely with the Stewardship Sub-Council and the Endowment Committee. The Finance Sub-Council meetings are open to all members and they would value the input and perspective of all interested members, both new and "seasoned".

Learning more about Unitarian Universalism? . . . then check out:

- Check out the Book Cart in Fellowship Hall
- Adult Program offerings (see description above)
- UU Bookstore: <http://www.uuabookstore.org/>
- Beacon Press: <http://www.beacon.org>

My Interests Checklist

Select and **check off your areas of interest, if you'd like someone to get in touch with you** to answer any questions you may have and/or discuss "Easy Entry" or "New Eyes" opportunities.

You can return the completed form any of the following ways:

- by email: copy and paste it *or* attach it and send to Helen David helendavid11@yahoo.com
- print it and place it in the offering basket or at the Welcome Table in the lobby
- mail it to The Unitarian Society of Hartford, 50 Bloomfield Ave, Hartford, CT 06105.

Name:

Date:

Phone number:

Email:

People:

- Small Group Ministry)
- Small Group Ministry Steering Committee
- Membership Sub-Council
- Sunday Welcome Volunteers
- Neighborhood Networks

- Small Dinner Parties
- Men's Luncheon Group (Ladies welcome too)
- Unitarian Alliance to Women
- Interweave

- Caring Network
- Lay Listeners
- Comfort Shawl Ministry
- Affinity groups
- Please list any specific Interests:

Personal Growth:

- Adult Programs
- Small Group Ministry

Worship:

- Worship Arts Sub-council
- Meditation Dharma Gathering

Social Justice:

- Council on Social Justice
- Green Sanctuary

Children and Youth:

- RE Sub-Council
- Noah Webster Partnership

Music:

- Choir
- other Musical opportunities

Art:

- Art Sub-council
- Chancel Arts Sub-Council
- Artist's Way

Writing, Photography, and Graphic Arts:

- Communications Sub-Council

Building and Facility Beautification and Care:

- Building and Grounds Sub-council
- Help tend Gardens (Memorial, Pet) and plantings
- Donate flowers for a Sunday Service

Finance:

- Stewardship Sub-council
- Finance Sub-council

Other: