

UUC Social Justice Council Meeting October 26, 2024

Minutes

The Mission of the UUC Social Justice Council is to facilitate communication and cooperation between the Council members, Social Justice Committees, UUC Board of Trustees, UUC congregation, and the wider community.

Meeting Chair: Linda Stoller Secretary: Trude Diamond

Attendees: Carol Hamilton, Christina Bellamy, Bob Hedlund, Eloise Hardman, Anne Burnham, Lore Eargle, Maryann Hamilton, Cibby Orozco, Carole Vaughn.

9:30 Chalice Lighting and Opening Words, Brief Check-in

9:45 Acceptance of Minutes of Meeting September 28, 2024

UUC Community Note: Ann Stoner was been hospitalized on Oct. 25 for an infected cut she sustained while working on her severely damaged house on Indian Rocks Beach. She is being treated at Morton Plant Hospital and is responding to texts, so send her some caring thoughts.

10:00 Treasurer's Report and Community Outreach Recipients:

1. *Treasurer:* Linda was reimbursed for her BLM sign outlay: \$199.84 (from acct #9550, but Bob will talk with the Finance Committee about taking it from the old RJ fund, as originally intended).
2. *Community Outreach:*
 - a. August, Recovery Epicenter Foundation: \$154.
 - b. September, Poynter Institute: \$362.92 check requested, plus second check for still uncounted amount in the collection box.
 - c. October, Pinellas Meals on Wheels: \$ TBD.
 - d. November: Guest at Your Table (UUSC)
 - e. December: Feeding Tampa Bay
3. *Discussion*
 - a. *UUC Better World Emergency Fund:* Better World Emergency Fund: Marlene Calderone is resigning from SJC for health reasons. Linda will take over BWEF responsibilities. Marlene received a Carl Hansen Lifetime Achievement Volunteer Award. Checks for \$1000 each will go to UUA Disaster Relief Fund and Feeding Tampa Bay (which is also our December recipient). Eloise will look for the Andersons' usual annual check and let UUC Treasurer Tim Thorne know who donates how much to the BWEF (the Andersons and one other family who also donates annually).
 - b. *UUSC Guest at Your Table:* November will be UUSC Guest at Your Table: We have 60 GAYT brochures and two posters that will be in the sanctuary lobby. Linda will suggest that people fill out their form at a Sunday Service put their cash, check to GAYT, or credit card number. People on Zoom can use a link in the chat to contribute directly via the UUSC website.

10:45 Committee Reports

1. *Racial Justice:* Not much. RJ took a meeting break over the summer.

1. Trude sent the mailing list the usual links to supporting minority-owned businesses monthly and to Juneteenth activities in June, and I asked the list members (1) who would attend the SJC retreat and (2) what ideas they had for how the justice teams could support each other's projects. One person said they'd attend the retreat; nobody sent ideas for mutual support.
 2. As to Arts Unite Us, we've had the last one ... at least, the last one Trude will organize. Why? Mainly, Trude's observation of arts exposure and sales for POC in Tampa Bay has convinced me that there are many more organizations and venues that successfully attract audiences for POCs' visual and performing arts with events that are well attended and profitable for the artists. OTOH, our AUU events have seen no increase in either attendance or "love" donations by UUs or the wider community, so the UUC budget for AUU hasn't ever been fully reimbursed, much less has there ever been money to pay the artists for their time and effort to mount their shows and make presentations to the audience, which was the original intent.
2. *FAST*: This Year is Different – Everyone is Invited to the FAST Assembly
- The ground has shifted once again in our congregations and community. So many are suffering the shock of two major hurricanes taking so much from so many. Yet we also recognize that our two issues of focus: increase of affordable housing and storm water management have taken on new urgency in our community. We also recognize that people living on the margins are impacted the most in any catastrophic event and we must be vigilant that their needs are met. Therefore, while recognizing that our people are in a fragile condition, we are going to have our Assembly as planned *on Monday October 28th at 7PM at Holy Family Catholic Church, 200 78th Ave. NE, St. Petersburg, FL*. This will be an opportunity for folks to come together and feel the power of community. We will affirm our priorities! Candidates running for St. Petersburg City Council have been invited to attend and voice their support of our affordable housing issue. New FAST Board members will be introduced. Everyone interested in FAST is invited to attend this year. I hope you will be able to be there. People wanting to carpool to the event will meet in the UUC parking lot at 5:45. Lore Eargle will meet you there to organize the carpool. Wear your UUC tee shirt if you have one. Please contact me at socialjustice@uuc.org if you have any questions.
3. *Environmental Justice*: EJT skipped the October meeting due to hurricane Milton. We resume in November. The volunteer sign-up event last week yielded three new EJT enthusiasts; Eloise will contact them. Next meeting: Wednesday, Nov. 20, 7-9 PM; look for the Zoom link in the *Octagram*.
 4. *NAMI*: National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) Pinellas continues to support our community, especially after our double whammy weather events. The NAMI monthly Family Support Group continues to happen every second Wednesday, noon to 1:30 in the Patio Room and on Zoom. This is our second year, and we plan to continue until at least Sept. 2025. If you know anyone who might benefit, please pass this welcome along. Open and free to any UUC'er, and also to the general public. Donations are gratefully accepted to operate the space. NAMI Pinellas often sends us people, and they are so grateful for an in-person place to download all the confusion, chaos, anger, sadness, and overwhelm. Also just glad to have a brave space to sit and listen. Contact Composting Christina Bellamy for further questions.
 5. *Interfaith Tampa Bay*: This is Interfaith Tampa Bay Week.

1. Fred Johnson held a multicultural event at Midtown Unity in St Pete, with 100+ participants.
2. Today's event: "Listening to Every Voice," Bahai of Pinellas, 2898 Gulf to Bay.
6. *Garden*: We belong to the [Tampa Bay Coalition of Community Gardens](#), through which Cibby got 200+ plants at a nursery in Odessa.
 1. We have given away 150 plants to small businesses whose gardens were damaged by hurricanes and saved 100 plants for today's plant sharing event at UUC.
 2. [Sacred Lands Preservation and Education](#)'s grounds, 1700 Park Street North, St. Petersburg, were devastated by the hurricanes, and they would appreciate any leftover plants from today's event.

11:15 New and Continuing

1. *Black Lives matter banner update*: Bill Newton is building a frame for it. There will be a formal event to honor re-hanging the banner.
2. *Social Justice Retreat - Update*: Rescheduled for November 16th 9:30, in the Social Hall. Linda will notify everyone of the date and agenda. Please ask anyone you invite to RSVP so we know how many chairs/tables and lunches to provide. Lore will notify/invite FAST network members.
 1. *Trude will serve as recorder* – Please send any materials you plan to use at the retreat to Trude as email attachments. These will be helpful to people who cannot attend the event but will get the documentation.
3. **HEP**: Carol Hamilton, Elaine Bovinette, and Anne Burnham met to discuss the HEP Adopt-a-Family program and decided that the earlier SJC decision to adopt one family was not a good fit for the Mitten Tree (no good way to divvy up 4-5 family members in a way to involve enough members at a reasonable cost—estimate of \$400-800 for a family of 4). Anne will notify HEP that we won't participate this year.
 1. Anne agreed to check into working with the Shepherd Center again, but a few members who were involved in recent years did not recommend going with them again because they had not been well organized.
 2. Anne then contacted Directions for Living, the Clearwater organization where Natasha Cruz-Knopf used to work and from which she secured 20 adoptees for UUC in 2022. I got an immediate and enthusiastic callback from Lisa Alchin, in charge of their Adopt a Family for the Holidays, and she said that although they are running a little later this year because of the hurricanes, they expect to be able to post names/wishes for 500+ children in early Nov. As soon as the list is online, Anne will select 30 children for our Mitten Tree.
 3. Diana Fraser told Anne that her covenant group is not interested in helping again.
 4. Anne will post a heads-up to the membership in next week's *Octagram* and covenant group facilitators/leadership to ask if there is a covenant group that would like to do the Mitten Tree this year.

11:45 Social Justice calendar - any additions?

1. Next lecture at the Clearwater AA Museum on Marshall St. is Friday November 15, 2024 from 7-8:30 PM. Green Book of Tampa Bay co-founder Dr. Hillary Van Dyke presents [“Splash of Color” Screening + Community Discussion.](#)
2. Next SJC Meeting: November 23rd, 9:30 on Zoom.