



**NEIGHBORHOOD UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**

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Director of Religious Education

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Dear Senior High Parents,

I would like to welcome new and returning families to our Senior High Youth Group or YRUU (Young Religious UU's). This letter is meant to provide you with some basic information about our youth group (much of which you probably already know) and outline some areas for which we would like your participation.

Our Senior High Group differs in structure from all our other YRE programs. This group is self-directed and led by a youth board, elected by the youth themselves, with guidance from their adult advisors. Sunday gatherings include worship, discussions, formal learning, guest speakers as well as some fun and games. This year's advisors include Erin Lindsay, Kit Petrie, Josh Stallings and me. We require that a minimum of two adults be present with the youth during group and other events. All advisors attend a training session with me, receive the UUA's Youth Advisor Handbook and are asked to attend the district's Basic Youth Advisor Training as soon as it is available. It is our goal to work with the youth to create a community of shared leadership where youth are supported as leaders of their own group.

We have established some new programming traditions as part of Senior High, which include field trips and overnights. This year the group will participate in the fourth annual Faithful Fools Street Retreat in late February (dates TBD). This time we'll be joined by youth from the Santa Monica UU Church. This is a weekend trip to San Francisco where the youth join the Faithful Fools organization to minister to the homeless in the tenderloin of San Francisco. You can find more information on their website at www.faithfulfools.org and details will be provided to you well in advance of this trip.

We also encourage members of the group, especially seniors, to participate in district conferences and our annual national conference, General Assembly (GA). This year, Neighborhood will be hosting our **annual District Assembly** of the Pacific Southwest District **(DA) on May 20 & 21**. We will be planning youth programming and hosting youth from all over our district for the entire weekend and hope our youth will come out in force as the local hosts. **This summer GA will be held in Charlotte, NC June 22 – 26, 2010**. GA is an incredible opportunity for youth to participate in the business of our faith on a national scale. Again, more specific details will be made available—but mark your calendars now!

Overnights happen regularly throughout the year and provide great community building and bonding opportunities for the youth. We have found that these overnights actually change the dynamic of the group and create much closer connections to Sr. High and the church itself. Generally these overnights begin Saturday evening and end with group the following Sunday and are properly supervised by a minimum of two advisors. Permission slips for all events will be provided in advance with a copy of our NUUC Youth Event Procedures document outlining our expectations of our youth. We ask that you make every effort to return them as quickly as possible.

(OVER)

We actively encourage our youth to participate in the life of the church. Last year they raised enough money to send the entire group on the Faithful Fools trip at no cost and have covered GA registration fees in previous years. Youth also attend Intergenerational services and generally sit together in the Sanctuary. We do not hold youth group on those Sundays.

We would like to begin offering more social and fellowship opportunities for our Senior High youth outside of Sundays (i.e. movies, lunch, bowling etc). If you and your family would like to host or sponsor a social activity, we would love to have your help and ideas. A copy of our NUUC Youth Event Procedures document outlining our expectations of our youth will be sent with all permission slips.

This group is ever evolving and changing and it is a very exciting time to be part of the Senior High. The following are a few important administrative items about the structure of our program and the year. For further information, please consult the RE Handbook:

- ❖ **The Senior High generally meets during the 11:30 service only in room 23** and will begin doing so on Sept. 19. September 12 is our welcome back Intergenerational service and youth are encouraged to attend and sit together.
- ❖ **We request that all families participating in YRE complete a registration form.** These forms are crucial because they include emergency contact information and an area for you to tell us of any special needs or allergies your youth may have. There is also a very simple permission slip for all off-site activities. Our youth like to take walks, but cannot leave the property without this form on file.
- ❖ **Parent participation is vital to the success of our RE program.** Though Senior High parents are not able to volunteer in their room, we do still need your help with events and in other classrooms. As we add more social events for Senior High we will also be looking for chaperones, drivers and even families who might want to host or sponsor a social gathering.

Please return the registration form by August 22nd. You may bring completed registration forms to the YRE table or mail them in the envelope provided. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your involvement; thank you for recognizing the need for religious education in your youth's lives...thank you for adding your presence to this community.

See you in church,



Sara LaWall
Director of Religious Education