

# Spiritual Growth and Development (SGD) Annual Report 2021-22

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SGD Committee: Rev. Cassandra Hartley, Henrike Florusbosch (term ending), Delphine Benard (term ending), Tim Miller, Kyle Pellar-Kosbar, Beth Hospadaruk

## **Description of Program**

The SGD Program's mission is to create spaces where adults and children can learn from each other, build strong relationships, and explore life's big questions. We provide opportunities for children and youth to actively engage with the 7 Unitarian Universalist Principles and the 6 Sources of Our Faith through age-appropriate curricula, service projects, and multigenerational worship. The program has one full-time staff member and a rotating lay committee to provide guidance and assistance as needed.

## **Highlights**

The SGD Program returned to in-person programming in September and successfully held classes every Sunday throughout the year. We put together teaching teams of approximately five adults to lead classes for the following grade levels: Kindergarten/1st Grade; 2nd-5th Grade; 6th/7th Grade; 8th Grade; and 9th-12th Grade (Y.R.U.U.). For K/1 and 2nd-5th, we used Soul Matters RE packets. The 6th/7th grade class followed the Values, Leadership, and Team-Building curriculum. 8th graders also followed the Team-Building curriculum for the first part of the SGD year, before transitioning into Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education beginning in January. Some 9th grade youth opted to enroll in OWL as we were not able to offer the class remotely during the pandemic. Y.R.U.U. worked to rebuild their group with all new advisors and youth leaders. Preschool and nursery care were available for both services but all other classes were only available during the 11:30am service.

In addition, the SGD Program was able to offer the following opportunities, special events, projects or workshops:

- Halloween Children's Chapel and outdoor parade and party
- In November, MUUSJN taught a climate justice workshop across two consecutive Sundays for the 2nd-5th grade class.
- The 6th/7th grade class participated in Food Gatherer's Rockin' for the Hungry food drive and fundraising event in December.
- Equal Exchange led a food justice/fair trade workshop and chocolate tasting for the 6th/7th grade class in May.
- Weekly SGD bulletins with resources for whole family home worship from Soul Matters.

## **Challenges**

The ongoing pandemic created many challenges. Outdoor instruction with mandatory masks was difficult, especially for larger groups. Once we moved indoors in November, teachers reported an increased engagement and focus from their students. As expected, our numbers are significantly reduced from past years; we averaged about 50-55 children and youth every Sunday. Volunteer availability was also reduced and our offerings had to be slightly scaled back. For example, we did not offer a separate Coming of Age class and we had to consolidate OWL into one semester. We did not opt to create any opportunities for children, youth, or families to meet online through zoom, as there was very little demand and not enough staff or volunteers to make it successful.

## **Vision 20/50**

The SGD Program actively engaged with all three of the Vision 20/50 priority areas. Stella met with lay leaders to discuss ways to integrate children and youth into the Gathering Table events; kids created covenants with the Earth (Climate Action and Justice), learned about white supremacy and racism (Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression), and participated in anti-bullying conversations and activities (Radical Welcome). We also provided book suggestions and print and digital resources for display on those Sundays as well as in the SGD weekly bulletin.

## **Looking Forward**

As much as we would like to return to our full slate of offerings, the pandemic continues to make it difficult to predict levels of participation and to recruit volunteers that are willing to commit to a full church year of teaching. We anticipate that OWL will return in the fall as a full year program but it is unlikely that Coming of Age will return as a separate class. We hope to find a way to integrate key components of CoA (adult mentors and credo development) into YRUU. If we recruit enough teachers, we also hope to offer K/1, 2nd/3rd, and 4th/5th grade level classes again. 6th/7th graders will participate in the Soul Matters Crossing Paths curriculum (similar to Building Bridges and Neighboring Faiths) combined with service projects.

In addition to traditional Sunday classes, the SGD Program would like to offer more opportunities for families to engage with the broader community. For example, the staff is working to create space for weekday evening multigenerational worship and community time. We would also like to pair elementary aged children with YRUU youth in a mentorship/buddy program, to facilitate explorations of UU core values. As much as we would like to expand OWL offerings this year, the focus is on getting more congregants to attend facilitator training sessions so that we can offer OWL classes to elementary kids, high school youth, and adults in the years ahead. We are looking into hosting a facilitator training at the UUAA.

Finally, the SGD program would like to expand and restructure the SGD Committee in order to bring in the perspectives and insights of more parents, teachers, and youth. These discussions are ongoing.