

## **RE Council Meeting Minutes - draft July 17, 2016**

**Attendees:** Geri Knoebel, Mia Noren, Desiree Spielman, Carol Cowan, Nicia Rae, Stirling Crow, Colin Spooner, Callie Cone, Benita Terrell

### **Administrative Agenda**

- Opening Words (from Colin): "Life is a gift for which we are grateful. We gather in community to celebrate the glories and mysteries of this great gift." - Marjorie Montgomery.
- A few updates to last month's minutes in regards to teacher classroom ratios.
- Geri won't be able to attend next month's meeting.

### Teacher Recruitment and Enrollment:

- We're still low on numbers for our Fall teachers for our elementary kids. If you plan on teaching but haven't signed up yet please sign up; also need youth advisors (for the youth program).
- The difference between the youth advisors and the elementary teachers is that the youth advisors are more mentors than teachers. There's more to it than just teaching a class. There's more of an emotional commitment.
- Stirling will put together a draft of another letter in regards to recruiting possible teachers to parents.

### Bridging Ceremony:

- four La Amikoj high school students will be graduating this year. Mia is planning on having a Bridging Ceremony this spring. UU transition from youth to young adulthood.

### *RE Teacher Training Manual:*

- This was finalized with the student/teacher ratios. It will be used at the August 7th training.
- Mia and Geri have finalized the *Teacher Training Manual*. From the last draft, the Child/Adult ratios have been added. Also the Emergency Procedures have been significantly revised thanks to help from Paul Browne and Linda Skye.
- Over the last several months we have finalized the *RE Council* and the *Youth Program Manuals*, which are compilations of RE-related policies, procedures, and operations. these manuals help orient volunteers in their leadership positions. The last manual to be revised is the Childcare Manual. I will be working with Alana on this project.

RE Child Care Manual: This is the last manual to be worked on. Geri is still revising it.

### Buildings and Grounds:

- Mia has decided to assume the duties of the Buildings and Grounds portfolio while another Council member for that position is being recruited. She will work with Mark (our facilities person) to get estimates for the needed retaining walls and other items.

## Staff Reports

Mia Noren (Director of Religious Education):

1. As of this week there are two Sundays left before the fall semester begins. Getting volunteers for summer classes has been challenging all throughout the summer.
2. It has also been a challenge to get people to sign up for the teacher teams for fall. This is truly the most difficult part of my job.
3. Registration for the OWL Facilitator workshops is now available. I am working hard on getting the word out there.
4. I attended a La Amikoj planning meeting. Colin has information about planning. I talked to the youth about improvements they'd like to see in their meeting room, and will be meeting with Paul Browne in the beginning of August to talk about short-range inexpensive improvements to the La Amikoj-Wesson-Arnold building.
5. Carol suggested and I think it's a good idea to have ALL of the teacher teams meet, perhaps at 10:30, on Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup> for training, mainly because of the workshop being held in the afternoon.
6. A Saturday workshop for recognizing and working with children on the autism spectrum will take place on Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, after church.
7. Parents of children will be invited to attend a SMART workshop about gun safety on Sunday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is my intention to have the youth attend this workshop rather than their regular programming that day.
8. Mia July 13<sup>th</sup> Facebook Posting: Opinions wanted! I just cut the teacher team size from four to three. After looking at the calendar for 2016-17, and realizing that there are only two, possibly three months with four curriculum Sundays in them, I think we will be all right with teacher teams of three and floaters. This means that most months, for each team of three, there will be six teaching/assisting opportunities, still resulting in a twice a month obligation. I hope that this will help with getting our teacher teams complete. This change means that, for the fall, we have 11 teachers and need only 13 more. Please sign up!

Colin Spooner (Youth Programs Coordinator):

- We have two more summer classes before the end of summer programming. We have been studying Twilight Zone episodes, discussing the themes contained within each episode and relating it back to present day events and concerns, and have had okay attendance, averaging 5-10 attendees, from 6th-12th Grade (what Colin is calling "youth").
- We had a La Amikoj Steering committee meeting. Lots of good discussion about the coming year, **including adding a Sunday evening youth program**, that would give a more social aspect to church for our youth. I envision this program being mostly youth led, which will give our youth a chance to get Squishy (doing something unfamiliar and out of ones comfort zone) with leadership in a low risk environment. We want to build leadership in our youth, and the best way to do that is to give them leadership roles and enable them to be successful!
- Also perhaps have one of the youth participate in RE Council meetings.
- Some youth will be going to the Isotopes intergenerational night on July 17th

- **We have several youth interested in attending GA next year (in New Orleans)**, which is very exciting! We will be working on scholarships and fundraising in the coming weeks and months.
- Looking forward to camp that is coming up.
- Ideas regarding parent involvement for the youth (6 - 12) program:
  - Kids run the meeting and one of the parents would be responsible for bringing dinner.
  - If we can get involvement on Sunday evenings hopefully it would foster involvement in the mornings on Sunday.

## **Portfolio Reports**

### **Benita Terrell, Program Evaluation**

- Benita offered to host a social gathering for the REC over here, with families. Some dates that would work for us are Fridays in August beginning on the 12th. Or August Sundays beginning on the 14th. If none of those work, I can look at September.

### **Callie Cone, OWL Portfolio**

- For the OWL portfolio, Mia and I came up for a plan of attack to support the facilitator training on September 9, 10, and 11. Mia is communicating with the district trainer, publicizing the event, and identifying potential participants from our congregation. We are especially in need of male teachers, since most classes recommend having at least one female and one male teacher.
- Meanwhile, I have started recruiting volunteers to offer home stays for participants from other cities and volunteers (or groups) to help provide meals at the church during the training. I am approaching extended families from our church, UU Families on Facebook, and families of recent OWL classes, and have started to get a few responses.
- We need males for OWL. The commitments are:
  - 09 Sep 2016 to 11 Sep 2016
  - Spring 12:30 - 2 on Sundays.
  - Please let Callie know if there are any interested male volunteers that would be interested.

### **Desiree Spielman, Community Events**

- We cancelled July 3rd Picnic due to low attendance at church. Picnic for August conflicts with Workshop - continue with Picnic and have special events volunteers coordinate, cancel for August, or bump to a back to school picnic on August 14?
  - We decided upon a picnic on August 14.
- Pool Party - Sept 4th, different Sunday, wait until next Summer?
  - We discussed this and decided to aim for September 4th for a pool party at Sandia High School. It costs \$100 for 2 hours.

### **Nicia Rae, UU Kids Camp**

- Camp Dates: Next Sunday - 24 Jul 2016 (Sunday) - 29 Jul 2016 (Friday)
- 39 kids registered.

- We are just about ready for camp... Our staff training is going to be this Wednesday evening and I believe CIT training is this weekend. We have parent volunteers who are going to help with check in and check out.
- We could still use one more volunteer for Sunday morning at 7:45 (to make sure there's safe church - kids going to the bathrooms and such), if an REC member would be so kind! Colin and Carol volunteered.
- The budget for craft activities is pretty limited; but we were well-stocked last year, so we'll be able to squeak by with what we have. Thank you!

### **Stirling Crow, Recruitment**

- Nothing new to report for Recruitment. Mia did reserve us a table for Connection Sundays (August 28th and September 11th).
- Geri said that Linda is interested in helping create some type of presentation or display board for the connections table.

### **Carol Cowan, Curriculum**

- Nothing new to report.
- Teacher Training is August 7th. Because we are having the Autism workshop after lunch Carol recommends we have a 10:30 session (instead of 9:30 and 11:00 sessions). That way folks would be able to stick around after the class.

### **Upcoming Dates**

- July 24 to July 29 – UU Kids Camp
- August 1<sup>st</sup> – Roll out 2016-17 registration form
- August 7<sup>th</sup> –
  - 10:30 a - Teacher training
  - 12:30 lunch (lunch is provided for teachers)
  - 1:00p - Autism Workshop (Led by Desiree) (childcare will be provided)
- August 14<sup>th</sup> – First day of fall curriculum
- August 21<sup>st</sup> – next RE Council meeting
- August 21<sup>st</sup> (11 AM) - Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America will be hosting a workshop, "Be SMART: A Conversation about Kids, Guns & Safety"
- August 28<sup>th</sup> – Angela to give sermon on transgender issues to be followed by lunch and discussion with youth and parents (this is geared to youth).
- August 28<sup>th</sup> & September 11<sup>th</sup> – Connections Sundays
- September 9 – 11th- MDD OWL Training at First U – All RE Activity – UU Birthday celebration