

Social Justice Project History

2000 Our first Seder project was the creation of a "Freedom Quilt." Our pledges to act for justice were recorded on pieces of fabric. These pledges were stitched together into a quilt that adorns the UUFCC sanctuary each spring as a testimony to our hopes and to what we can achieve when we work together.

2001 Our justice project focused on learning about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/25.htm). This human rights treaty about young people was accepted by the United Nations General Assembly and has been adopted by more countries than any other international human rights treaty. The United States has not ratified the convention. Letters were written at the Seder and sent to our elected officials encouraging them to ratify the convention.

2002 We sent postcards advocating education legislation and we worked with Kids Can Free the Children (www.freethechildren.com) an organization working to end child labor worldwide. UUFCC children assembled more than 200 School Kits for children in Sierra Leone and 200 Health/Hygiene Kits for children in Nicaragua. UUFCC is on the "Free the Children" Honor Roll of supportive organizations.

2003 The U.S. invasion of Iraq, inspired us to assemble peace postcards with pictures, drawings, and messages of compassion and peace in English and Arabic for children and families in Iraq.

2004 We focused our attention on the Mine Ban Treaty and monies were collected to Adopt a Minefield (www.landmines.org).

2005 We learned about modern slavery and raised money to purchase resources for our library and religious education program. In addition, we sent \$744 to support Free the Slaves (www.freetheslaves.net) to help bring slavery and human trafficking to an end.

2006 We joined with the UUFCC's Religious Education programs efforts to raise "Pennies for Peace" (www.penniesforpeace.org). Pennies for Peace is an organization that works to create cross-cultural understanding and encourages American children to be active participants in the creation of global peace.

2007 We turned our attention to a local housing crisis for low income families in Centre County as residents were evicted from the local trailer park to make way for development. At the Seder \$2,000 was collected for Housing Transitions, Inc. (www.housingtransitions.com)

2008 A new tradition began! The Seder kicked off a year-long educational and fund-raising initiative to prepare a contingent of UUs for work with impoverished people in Puerto Rico. March 7 to 14, 2009, a group from the UUFCC will be traveling to help with home construction for deserving families and to experience life in a different culture. The \$2,327 raised at the Seder will be used for home-building supplies on this trip.

2009 At the Seder there was a report from the 21 justice project participants and we saw them in action via video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZpofhtbwCk>) building homes in Puerto Rico. Based on the enthusiasm and success of this project, contributions from the 2009 Seder will be the seed money for a second UUFCC justice trip. \$1792 were raised!

2010 Funds raised at the 2009 Justice Seder were invested in 14 volunteers from the UUFCC who partnered with one volunteer from UBBC (University Baptist and Bretheren Church) to help with recovery from hurricane Katrina. Our experience, orchestrated by the New Orleans Rebirth Volunteer Program (the anchor program of the Center for Ethical Living and Social Justice Renewal) included daily work assignments and a week long curriculum to learn about the history of the city, the flood and levee system breaches, and recovery efforts. Contributions at the 2010 Seder will be the seed money for a third annual UUFCC justice trip. At the end of the Seder, \$2,604.26 was the justice trip account.

2011 Funds raised at the 2010 Justice Seder supported 36 volunteers working locally on a 3-day "justice trip" to Bellefonte, PA. At CentrePeace (<http://www.centrepeace.org>) volunteers worked with prison inmates on a variety of projects, from upholstery and painting to cleaning, organizing, sorting, and even shoveling snow! CentrePeace had more than enough projects to keep us busy and our collective efforts resulted in a large contribution to the mission of CentrePeace. A "trip" so close to home allowed many more people to participate. The effort was supported by preschoolers and their moms (bringing homemade snacks), elementary, high school, and college students, and mid-lifers of all ages. Money raised at the Seder provided meals for all the workers with enough left over to support plans for a summer justice trip.

Funds also supported a team of 8 doing work with RAIL (<http://www.railwv.org/>) from June 12 to 18, 2011, in Mullens, W.V. Projects included restoration work on an historic church that is being converted to a community center and help with home improvement project for those in need.