

Alex, UUFH

This summer, I interned with the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice (UUCSJ), which is a part of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). My work revolved around communications and engagement to spread the word about UUCSJ and expand their reach. To do this, I managed their social media accounts, created an advertisement for UU World magazine, and designed flyers and other marketing materials with information about UUCSJ's services.

One of UUCSJ's primary goals is education. They facilitate immersion learning journeys and workshops that allow participants to learn from people who are directly impacted by oppressive power structures. These programs encourage a free and responsible search for truth and meaning (the third UU principle) by creating a safe space for people to reexamine their lives and the influence that oppressive structures have had on them, as well as how they contribute to them. UUCSJ also designs programming about how to show up effectively and make the greatest impact when working to create a more just and peaceful world community (the sixth UU principle). Sanctuary and solidarity are very important at UUCSJ, as they are keenly aware of the interdependent web of life (the seventh UU principle) and understand that when other human beings and the planet are suffering, we all suffer.

Much of UUCSJ's work is focused on migrant justice, which affirms the inherent worth and dignity of all people (the first UU principle), regardless of their legal status or the color of their skin. The Trump administration has been wreaking havoc on the lives of migrants who are legally seeking asylum by separating families with little hope of reunion and putting children in cages. In this political climate, there is a major need for thoughtful and capable activists who have the ability to stand up to our government while respecting those they are advocating for. UUCSJ's workshops, resources, and immersion learning journeys help UU's and non UU's alike develop their skills to do just that, and provide opportunities for UU's to put their faith to work and make a tangible difference in the lives of migrants entering the United States. I feel incredibly lucky to have supported this organization, and I am grateful for SAF because they have given me an opportunity to do meaningful work that brings me closer to my UU identity.

Benjamin, South Nassau Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Volunteering at the Mary Brennan INN (MBI) in South Hempstead, part of the Interfaith Nutrition Network (INN) organization, has provided me with so much. In addition to all the emotions and the invaluable experience it has given me, one major thing that it has done has been the strengthening of my Unitarian Universalist values.

The first of our Seven Principles is *the inherent worth and dignity of every person*, and this certainly plays a role at MBI. From my very first day, I was so impressed with how respectfully – usually without condition – the guests there are treated. If a guest calls me, or a manager, or another volunteer, they are treated so nicely regardless of what the situation is. I did this myself when I volunteered. In addition, the sixth principle – *the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all* – was at play. This is indeed more or less what the organization stands for. Our goal at the INN is to help the homeless and hungry members of society on Long Island get on their feet. We provide them with food, drink, shelter, showers, among many other things, and this helps them be part of community with justice. Being at the Mary Brennan INN for the past two months has been incredible, and I am more than grateful to all of its managers, staff, other volunteers, and to the Student Activity Fund for giving me this experience.

Ben, UUFH

Hello, my name is Ben xxxxxx. This is my second-year volunteering through the student activity fund. Over this past summer I volunteered at the Center for Transformative change which is the same place I volunteered at the first summer I worked through Student activity fund. The center for transformative change is a resource center located in Hempstead which assists homeless people in terms of getting housing, a job, governmental benefits, and more. We also have a soup kitchen located next door so they can get food. All you had to do to receive the center of transformative change, also known as “the INN’s,” benefits are to sign an

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intake form, and everything is completely free. That is why I have been so drawn to work at the INN, it is completely nonprofit and only strives to help people in need. The INN really demonstrates a lot of the UU's same values which is important to me.

The INN is extremely devout in following the first UU principle "The inherent worth and dignity of every person." Whenever a guest comes in the INN, no matter their skin color, clothing, appearance, attitude, they are treated with respect in worth. Staff and volunteers at the INN realize that we have no idea what these guests have been through which is why we need to be nurturing and empathetic to them. The INN has 100s of regulars who rely on the soup kitchen for food everyday which I also think is extremely important. We are also aware that in many shelters and camps there is a lot of violence and theft, at the INN, that is kept to a very minimum. I truly believe that one of the most important things is to treat people with respect, and the INN treats every human with an equal amount of respect. Whenever I go into the INN I feel like a better person and my values become stronger with each day I work there.

The INN really makes me feel like a better UU and shows me that there is always more I can do to help. It is really humbling to see people in situations that are so poor only because of the families they were raised into. Working 1 on 1 with guests and really making a difference in their lives is a gift like no other. This experience genuinely did affect me a lot and my major which is "social work" was determined because I want to do something like the INN when I get older. I'm so thankful to have been given this position at the INN and I'm also so thankful that it has made me realize what I want to do in life on top of strengthening my values and further identifying myself as a UU. Overall the INN is really a phenomenal organization and I plan on going back in the summers to come, and I really couldn't be doing this without the student activity fund. Without the SAF program I would've never found this opportunity therefore I wouldn't have ever wanted to major in social work and my UU values wouldn't be as strong and committed. I really couldn't be happier thanks to student activity fund and my internship.

Catherine, UUCSR

This summer, I had the honor of working at the Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Center at New York University. Since the late 1980s, this center has taken a unique and groundbreaking approach to music therapy that is widely respected around the world. Nordoff-Robbins' philosophy revolves around that of Paul Nordoff and Clive and Carol Robbins, founders of the

center. Patients are seen as equals regardless of their situation or diagnosis, and everything is based around the concept that every human experience is unique, and therefore each patient will respond to music differently. As a result, the approach to music therapy relies heavily on improvisation and working off of what works best for each patient.

The first Unitarian Universalist value of the inherent worth and dignity of every human being is present at Nordoff-Robbins. Regardless of someone's situation, everyone is treated as equals when they make music. No assumptions are made about the patients' talents or musical abilities except that they all have something inside them that's unique and special that can create music.

The second principle of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations is also a very strong value at Nordoff-Robbins. In the recordings of past sessions, it is obvious that there is a strong respect and an equal relationship between the patient and therapist. The therapist makes it so that the center is a safe space for patients to express themselves and to grow as people and musicians. Finally, the seventh principle of respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are all apart is another Unitarian Universalist value present here. It is firmly believed that the different experiences of each person is important to the greater community, for we can each contribute different things.

Personally, it was an extremely rewarding experience to intern here. Paul Nordoff and Clive and Carol Robbins revolutionized music therapy, and it was an honor to be a part of working to preserve their work. I was personally drawn to this organization because not only am I passionate about music, but it has helped me learn to accept myself as someone on the autism spectrum who also suffers from a severe anxiety disorder. Throughout my life, I have experienced many situations where I have been treated differently or less than because of my disability, and it has caused me to feel massively inferior. Being a musician has helped increase my confidence and as a result I have decided to give back and teach music to other special education students as a way to empower them. I actually wrote my college essay about this, and I sent them a copy of my college essay along with my inquiry to show them how passionate I am about this and how personal it is to me. Upon coming in, I was open about my experiences and I was accepted as a person of value, which was extremely meaningful not just in that I had a space to be true to myself, but also because it told me that they treat their patients as people of value. This was further proven to me as I began working with preserving documentation. I am

incredibly grateful that not only is there a successful organization that provides a safe space for people with disabilities through music, but also for having the opportunity to work for such a great organization.

Colleen, Unitarian Universalists of the Great South Bay

Over the course of this summer, I had the privilege of volunteering for Hospice Care Network at their Bay Shore office. As a senior-year nursing major wishing to work with the geriatric population in the future, I was incredibly excited to take part in this experience for a second summer. Throughout my time with this organization, it was clear to me that both Unitarian Universalists and the organization of Hospice Care Network share similar values that are closely intertwined with the first principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person. This summer internship greatly strengthened my Unitarian Universalist values and beliefs, while also providing me an enlightening educational experience.

Upon arriving on my first day of volunteering, I was once again warmly received by each of the employees of Hospice Care Network. It made me so happy to be able to catch up with all of the nurses, social workers, bereavement staff, chaplains and doctors. They were all very excited to have me back, as well as fully invested in hearing how my previous semester of nursing school had gone. Once again, the nurse manager at the Bay Shore office, Medina Fornville, graciously took the time to explain all of my duties within the organization and how this would directly help patients and their families. During my time in the Bay Shore office this summer, I helped by updating patient information on Suncoast, ordering/organizing nursing supplies within the supply room, visiting patients with a hospice nurse named Diana and periodically covering the nurse manager's desk and taking phone calls for her.

Out of all of these tasks, the one that I found to be the most challenging was covering the nursing manager's desk during her weekly Thursday meetings. During this time, I was responsible for answering incredibly diverse phone calls and offer my help in any way I could. Some calls were simply regarding renewing patient's medications while others were full of stress and tears, asking for clarification regarding a dying loved one's needs. Through answering such calls, I could tell that my communication skills through the telephone were progressing and I was better able to adapt to emergencies I was presented with.

There was one experience in particular that left a great impression on me this summer. While “out in the field” with one of the hospice nurses, Diana, we visited a female patient who had been diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. When we arrived early in the morning, the patient was sitting up in her hospital bed in the middle of her living room. Beside her was a small television set and her personal aide who was in the process of feeding her breakfast. The aide then began telling us that although she was newly hired, she had experience within various local nursing homes and how much she preferred working with one patient at a time. It made me smile to see the aide brushing the patient’s hair, kissing her hands and verbally explaining everything her actions to the patient. After only a few minutes in the home, I came to realize that the patient was nonverbal. It became clear that the newly hired aide was passionate about maintaining respect for the patient and being compassionate towards her regardless of the patient’s inability to verbally communicate with her.

Our first principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person, was the first principle that came to my mind while I was in the patient’s home. By making eye contact and speaking directly to the patient, brushing her hair and kissing her hands, the aide’s physical actions dictated how much she respected the patient even though she was newly hired to work within her home. Sadly, this is not something that happens within the homes of all hospice patients. It is easy for one to become overwhelmed, anxious and even angry in regards to the sheer amount of work it takes to take care of a dying individual. This is quite understandable considering the circumstances one is unexpectedly placed under! It made me so happy to be a part of this incredibly intimate and special moment. The first principle is deeply connected to hospice patients.

I could not be more grateful for the experiences that Hospice Care Network has afforded me for the past two summers. Due to this scholarship, I was able to work with experienced professionals within the medical field and learn more about the extensive work Hospice Care Network does within the community. Moreover, I have established everlasting relationships with the Hospice Care Network staff which will only continue to grow as time goes on. I am immensely grateful for my experiences with Hospice Care Network this summer as well as the SAF committee. Without the Student Activity Fund, I would not have been able to expand my nursing knowledge while also developing enduring relationships with arguably the most

compassionate group of people I have ever met. Thank you for all that you do and please keep the Student Activity Fund going!

Daniella, UUFSB

During the summer, I worked at Bethel Hobbs Community Farm. Since I was extremely busy, I only worked twice a week for about two hours on average. However, during this time I learned a lot about farming while also putting many UU principles into action. Sometimes, it is difficult to see our UU principles put into action, but with this experience, I was able to be a part of our food chain and help nourish those who are not as lucky as I am. I think the principles that were most present throughout this experience are 1) the inherent worth and dignity of every person, 2) justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and 3) respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Most of the fruits and vegetables harvested in the education garden are given to soup kitchens. This honors the fact that everyone deserves to be fed, and closes gaps in social status since a soup kitchen is a place where anyone can get food and eat in a communal way. This also respects the interdependent web of life because we are acknowledging the fact that we must nourish everyone because we are all connected. One day, a group of people with disabilities came to the farm to help weed some beds. Although I did not get to work with them very closely, I was able to meet them. Seeing them be able to help others in such a meaningful way, no matter how seemingly indirect, was amazing. The farm is a place where many groups come to help. This shows the true compassion of the community and the willingness to work for and help one another. As long as we help as many people and other living beings as much as we can, we can maintain our existence and continue to thrive in the interdependent web of life.

Elizabeth, UUFH

For the second consecutive summer I have had the pleasure of interning at The Family Service League Administrative office. FSL is an incredible non-profit organization that provides hope and help for individuals and families. My job there was assisting in any way possible to make the daily operation run smoothly. That consisted mostly of answering phone calls, designing web pages, communicating with and helping Spanish speaking people, and helping with the Back to School Backpack drive. Although my job was secretarial, I found it to be really

rewarding. This internship was the highlight of my summer because I was able to assist people first hand and I felt how much they truly benefited from and appreciated the help that they got.

As a Unitarian Universalist I feel very compassionate and connected towards people. I especially associated this job with our first principle; *the inherent worth and dignity of every person*. It was my responsibility to help people with all different backgrounds and histories without judging or disrespecting them. I think a lot of people forget that everyone is someone and they end up judging too quickly. If a mentally ill person who happens to be homeless comes up to you and asks for help you need to treat them with the respect and compassion that they deserve. At FSL I also witnessed and practiced our 6th principle; *work for a peaceful, fair, and free world*. Every staff member at FSL, no matter their position has one goal in mind, to provide help to as many people as possible. I think that is so remarkable, everyone who I have met at FSL loves their job and really cares for the work that they are doing. When you truly care for what you are doing that's when you accomplish the most and make a huge impact.

One day during my internship I talked with someone about the word *quality*, its different meanings and how you can view quality throughout the workplace. The quality of care I have witnessed between not only staff and client but between staff and staff, as well, is something I highly admire. It's not often you see C-level executives making an effort to learn everyone's name and to ask them how their day is going. It's small gestures like that, I believe, represent quality and the seven UU principles and they make the workplace run smoothly and efficiently. I am incredible grateful to be an intern at an organization who not only cares for their clients but also for their staff members. The Family Service League is a one of a kind organization that helps people get the assistance they need, whether that's mental health resources, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, housing help or financial assistance. Being a part of the administrative office I was able to learn and grow immensely. Every day was a new challenge that I was able to conquer. The skills that FSL gave me will take me far in the future. Thank you SAF for connecting me with such a fantastic non- profit organization.

Harry, UUCCN

My whole life I have been very busy. It's weird when you think about it but very rarely do I have a day off. Whether it's tutoring, soccer, track, work, family trips, etc. I just always find myself having little free time. As a UU I have values and I've always wanted to volunteer because if there is one thing I feel like I

didn't do enough of my life thus far, it's give back and volunteer. I always knew I would be like my late grandfather and give back when I have time and money later in my life. But, fortunately through SAF I had the opportunity to give back and get paid at the same time. And this is so important for kids in college and going into college because we can't volunteer because we need to spend time making money as college and the next stage of our life seems to cost so much. But this program has given me the opportunity to volunteer and give my time at an age where it seems impossible too. I volunteered at the Mary Brennan Inn in Hempstead and it was very rewarding work. I did a lot of work there and a lot of manual labor because most of the regular volunteers there were retired and older. I did things like preparing food, sorting clothes, serving food, cleaning, bringing in donations, whatever they needed. But the best part about it was interacting with the guests. As I served food, handed out toiletries and stuff the interactions I had with the guests made my work rewarding and were the reason I came back everyday. I specifically remember a young man, woman, and child who went out of there way to thank me each day. The feeling you get by helping out truly exists and I'm so glad I had the opportunity to volunteer here. I had an amazing time spending time with the other volunteers some who were sixty years older than me and talking with them. I learned a lot. The impact this had on me led me to go home clean out my room and donate all my clothes I don't wear or rarely wear because these people need them more than I do and I'm more than happy to give it away. My time at the Inn was short but I'll remember it forever because now I want to do something just like it when I am older and retired just like the amazing people I met.

Henry, Unitarian Universalist Shelter Rock Congregation

This summer I again had the privilege of working with Jamaica Bay Terrapin Research (JBTR). JBTR's goals include the conservation of the diamondback terrapin and the environment on which they depend, the Jamaica Bay wetland. This is done by identifying the biotic and abiotic factors that determine the health and size of the Jamaica Bay terrapin population, to promote the long-term persistence of a healthy Jamaica Bay terrapin population, to contribute to scientific knowledge and conservation efforts concerning terrapins and their wetland ecosystems, to train new scientists and conservation biologists, and to use citizen science to involve a variety of people as deeply as possible in these aspects. Though on the surface, this is a primarily scientific approach, when looking at it with a wider lens, one can see the environmental justice and spiritual aspects of it.

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is part of the larger Gateway National Recreation Area, operated by the National Park Service. Gateway includes various areas around Jamaica Bay, some parts of Staten Island, and Sandy Hook, New Jersey. All of these locations are easily

accessible from all around New York City, and for free. One person who I spoke to while I was working was a retired teacher who often brought students from poorer neighborhoods in Brooklyn to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and worked to have more trips to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.

This way of teaching links together many of the UU principles. Of course, the clearest in this example is the seventh principle, respecting the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. By helping with conservation efforts, I gain a greater understanding of both where we, as a species, fit on this planet while also developing my own internal spiritual beliefs. However, because of where Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is, and because of how Jamaica Bay Terrapin Research operates, all of the other UU principles can be linked to Jamaica Bay Terrapin Research, and, more broadly, conservation efforts as a whole.

To gather the data we need to preserve nature, there has to be an effort at many levels, from our interactions with the people we work with, to large-scale, political efforts. In order to best understand our planet, we have to work with such a diverse set of people, and in order to do that, we must treat each other with equity and dignity. That involves encouraging spiritual growth across faiths while everyone searches for their meaning. Only together can we work towards a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. By engaging with one another, following our own conscience, we can cause massive change. We're all part of the same interdependent web of existence, and we all have a duty to protect it as best we can, regardless of faith, regardless of class, regardless of any lines we can be divided along. We all share this planet, and it's the only planet we have. As such, we should focus our collective efforts towards making our planet an equitable and just one.

My work at JBTR shaped through the lens of the UU beliefs I was raised with leads me to this conclusion. And, for that, I am thankful for being associated with UU and also JBTR.

Jared, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook

For the summer of 2019, I had chosen to spend my time doing some part-time work at Carecen. Although I did not have the opportunity to work as many hours as I would have liked to, I did learn a few lessons. Among these, the 1st Principle "The inherent worth and dignity of every person" and the 2nd Principle "Justice, equity and compassion in human relations". Most of the people passing through the organization's offices were here looking for a guiding hand to lead

them through various legal processes that are complicated in the United States. For example, citizenship services are a big part of the work Carecen does and as a result, you see people as just people as opposed to other labels such as immigrant. Working in a more direct setting with people trying to become US citizens has opened my eyes a little bit more to those specific issues. One case of this is the paperwork, which asks very specific and often personal questions of the applicant. Most of the time, many of the applicants are getting legal assistance from the legal office of Carecen and are more often than not, unsure of what's needed. Carecen initially started off as an organization serving the needs of refugees who were primarily coming in from Central America in 1983. In the years that have followed, it has expanded to include several programs designed to meet the needs of the local immigrant community on Long Island. These programs include legal services, pathways to citizenship, ESL classes and preparation classes for the citizenship exam. Carecen also hosts training sessions such as what to do if stopped by agents of ICE and financial literacy in Spanish and English. I thoroughly enjoyed the more hands-on approach, as most of my duties revolved around assisting in the citizenship classes that were being led by another volunteer. These classes involved teaching a mix of civics, English language through the classes civics content and practice with listening and writing sentences from the citizenship exam. The classes were taught in a mix of English and Spanish to accommodate for the primary demographics of the students that would seek out these particular classes.

Overall, my only issue with doing my summer internship at this agency was what would amount to a lack of available hours for me to be able to participate in while at the Brentwood office. A massive funding cut in a grant from New York State was most likely contributing factor, and I would later learn the full extent of this cut. I do believe in the work that this organization does but feel like it would be better for future interns from SAF to participate at the Hempstead office as opposed to the Brentwood location unless they are looking for a part-time experience.

Jasmine UU Congregation at Shelter Rock

The nonprofit organization I chose for the 2019 SAF program was the Commonpoint Queens Beacon Program. I had volunteered for them last year, however their agency name was previously Samuel Field YM & YWHA Beacon Program. Nevertheless, it is the same program, same location, but a different name. This time

around, I would definitely say I got a lot out of this summer internship, maybe even more so than last year.

This year, I was placed with the fourth and fifth graders. Right off the bat, they were more compliant than the first and second graders I had last year. This was a little bit expected since they are older. But it was refreshing to work with this age group. Since my little brother is in that exact same age group, communicating with my kids came very natural. It was also so much fun getting to know each of them throughout the six weeks. There were the good ones, the troublemakers, and the ones who came once in a blue moon. I loved all of them and I looked forward to seeing them everyday.

It wasn't only my fourth and fifth graders that I got to spend time with. I was floating around the first through third graders and even the middle schoolers. As great as it was getting close to my group, it was just as much a joy getting to know the kids from different groups and grades. Simultaneously, I also thoroughly enjoyed getting to know my fellow staff, and forming a bond with them. In the time we've worked alongside each other, I can easily say we became a family. Especially when there were times of stress, there was always someone to lean on.

This internship surely brought out some of our UU principles. The first principle, for example, had a big spotlight on it this summer. Not only was I practicing the inherent worth and dignity of every person, but my supervisors, my coworkers, and even the children were implementing this principle within the program. It was quite the experience to witness, especially since the majority probably don't know what UU is! Another principle that had a great role this summer was principle number seven. In my training, my supervisors made it crystal clear how vital respect was for the efficacy of the program. Not only was it mandatory to respect our coworkers and children, but to enforce respect amongst the children's relations with one another. It was also required that we respect the space in which our program was held, M.S. 158. All in all, this was summer was incredibly fulfilling. I've even had a few children come up to me and tell me I'm their favorite counselor. Through it all, despite the long hours, and heat, it was a very

rewarding summer. I'm very grateful to have been in SAF and volunteered at the Beacon program again.

Katie UUCSR

This summer I interned at the Long Island Progressive Coalition (LIPC), a community-based grassroots organization dedicated to promoting racial, social, and economic justice. In my time at LIPC, I learned skills ranging from public speaking to research, to telecommunication, and everything in between. I learned so much, made many friends, and gained a better understanding of both myself and my community.

Right from the start, I was drawn into my internship. On the second day, LIPC went to Albany to pressure Gov. Cuomo to pass the Climate and Community Protection Act. I found myself in an office studying the bill one day, and on the Million Dollar Staircase the next speaking out in support of it. Over the course of the summer, I got to watch the bill progress through the NYS government as it was whittled down into the Climate Leadership and Protection Act. While frustrating, I had the opportunity to see how politicians compromise in order to fit their needs.

For the first few weeks, I was assigned a topic to write a series of brief speeches on called testimonies. Testimonies are arguments read to local governments in under three minutes which are meant to persuade the council members. In the process, I learned how to research better as I educated myself on the issues of police in schools and a lack of counselors. When my statement had been prepared, I had the opportunity to practice my public speaking with extra attention to timing and word choice. This exercise strengthened many of my skills while also educating me about many progressive issues we face here on Long Island.

The bulk of my internship was spent organizing and hosting a series of events we called our "Summer of Progress". For a total of seven events, the intern team worked to plan each detail from securing a space, to outreach, to facilitation. As a team, we each learned first hand how to draft mass emails, Facebook posts, and phone scripts. We learned the frustrating "organizer math" of calling 75 people and having three or four show up but by the end of the summer, we had learned how to outreach better than we could have dreamed at our first event. I was forced to push myself outside of my comfort zone to leave voicemails and was rewarded when I finally had someone on the phone say they could make it.

Towards the end of the summer, we began going door to door canvassing Amityville. Our goal was to speak to community members to understand the issues the district was facing so that we could put together a coalition of concerned residents to fix it. Walking through a community I had never been in, despite it being just a few minutes away from me, opened my eyes to the bubble I live in. While canvassing, I was able to see a new part of Long Island in a productive and endlessly interesting manner. Canvassing felt very natural to me and I even ended up extending my internship so I could spend more time doing it. I learned about the issues facing Long Island in depth while also gaining a better sense of my abilities and passions.

Overall, I feel I put my UU values into practice by working at the Long Island Progressive Coalition, specifically the first, second, sixth, and seventh. Not only was my work rewarding, but I also met so many amazing people and became part of a team that I know will organize again. I am so thankful to SAF for providing me with this opportunity and I hope to remain a part of this program.

Kayla, Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock

For the past couple of months, I've been interning at the Commonpoint Queens Beacon Program. I was a counselor for a group of children that were ranging from first through third grade. I had about 26 kids in my group, which was the biggest class of the entire camp. I had other volunteers and staff with me, so the responsibilities weren't so heavy, and as most people know, kids can be quite a handful. The summer began on a great start, and everyone was getting to know each other, preparing for the long, hot summer days. I was getting to know the kids and they were getting to know me, as I would be with them everyday for the whole summer. They looked so bright and full of life, and I was beyond excited to start working with them and caring for them, as if they were one of my own. I volunteered at this location last summer, so I already knew how things were going to play out. Our schedule was consistent with different games, classes, and activities to keep the kids entertained, and motivated to come back. We had cards and games, cooking classes, gym and dance, field trips, theme days, a classroom decorating contest, and even a color war week between all the participants. Some things may have been a little different from last year, but having my prior experience, I was able to efficiently do my job, and have fun while doing it.

I found that this internship really connected me to my values. Each of my principals were being put to work and I didn't even know it at the time. While working closely with each and every one of the kids, I found that all of them had a unique background and upbringing, none of which are the same, not even similar. All of them had a different way of thinking, and at each at a different pace. That itself

reminded me of the 3rd principal, acceptance of each other and encouragement in spiritual growth. But in this scenario, I took it as accepting each of them as who they are, and encourage growth in not spiritual, but out of what their futures hold for them. As the kids have their disagreements, which were pretty frequent, I had to come into my “teacher” role, as they would call me, and try and dispute them. Talking to them, reassuring them, and encouraging forgiveness, emphasized the 2nd and 7th principal; justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, and having respect for the interdependent web of which we are a part.

One of the most difficult elements of this experience was having kids that had behavioral and developmental challenges. Some were on varying parts of the autism spectrum, and others just had different ways of thinking than others did. However, they were portrayed to the other kids as “being annoying” or they didn’t want to interact with them. I found that to be difficult for me in the sense that it wasn’t fair to that one kid that just wanted to make friends, or play that one game with the other child. In the other participant’s eyes, they were viewed as annoying, while in reality, they were just the same, but one having to try a little harder than the rest. I discovered having more patience than I thought I had in those moments. Principal 1 was the most prominent at these times because I really felt that every kid in that room should be treated with respect and are worth so much no matter what.

I really enjoyed my time at Beacon, as I will come back for the following year. I am so appreciative of this experience, as it further enhanced my application of my principals and what it really takes to be a UU.

Maya, UUCSR

This summer, I had the privilege of working an internship at the Long Island Progressive Coalition. The LIPC is a grassroots organization dedicated to creating a more progressive Long Island, through work on a variety of different issues. When I entered the organization, the legislative session of New York State had just ended, meaning that I missed lobbying season as well as the prime time for organizing. However, my experience there was still extremely fulfilling and educational.

Along with myself, there were six other interns. One of my favorite parts of the experience was getting to learn from and bond with these other young people. Although I was not fully in agreement with the majority of their views, they taught me how to recognize alternative perspectives and collaborate with different people. As a group, the seven of us created a Summer of Progress at the LIPC, which was a series of events we planned that informed people about various modern issues, as well as increased member and volunteer engagement with the

orientation. Planning these events gave me a deeper sense of the challenges and strategies in organizing. They also allowed me to meet a variety of people, with a variety of experiences that I could connect with.

I believe my internship most heavily connected with the second and sixth principles of Unitarian Universalism. The second principle is, “Justice, equity and compassion in human relations,” as stated by the UUA. Working at the Long Island Progressive Coalition taught me the intersectionality of issues such as race, climate, housing justice, and a multitude of other issues. This in turn taught me that in all forms of organizing and activism, we must be constantly fighting for the core values of justice, equity, and compassion. That is the foundation of the work that LIPC does. The sixth principle is, “The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.” This goal is analogous with the goal of LIPC, and through several trainings we received, as well as learning about the organization as a whole, I learned the methods that have been used and are continued to be used in order to achieve this goal.

My experience with SAF was extremely valuable. It led me to work with an organization that I would have never even heard of without this program. Now, I have a deeper knowledge of the process of creating change, an understanding of the issues that plague our society, and greater connections in the world of grassroots activism and organizing. I am so very grateful for this internship.

Milagros, UUCSR

Orkestai Farm is a sustainable and organic teaching farm located in Oyster Bay. Interning on the farm exposed me to experiences I’ve only read about. I had never before worked on a garden, much less a 1-acre farm. I learned so much about plants and nature- but also about people and communication. Orkestai Farm provides educational opportunities to folks of all abilities, and I worked with many new people.

Working at Orkestai was overall a positive, transformative experience. I learned how to identify different plants, how to harvest, transplant, and maintain a multitude of crops, and how to effectively manage a farm. Orkestai uses a CSA program as well as participating in a farmer’s market to sell their crops. CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) is where people will pay a set amount of money at the beginning of the season, and then throughout the 18-week growing

period they will come once a week to pick up fresh veggies. All excess vegetables are either sold at the farmers market or donated to a food bank.

However, the job didn't come without challenges. Working on a farm for 6 hours a day, in the heat of summer, is no easy task. Physically, it was exhausting. Aside from the physical requirements of the job, I found myself really enjoying working outdoors.

Aside from the things I learned about farming, I also learned a lot about myself. I learned that I really enjoyed being outdoors and that is something I want to continue to incorporate into my future experiences. I also learned that I like agriculture, and I might end up incorporating that into my pursuit of a degree in environmental engineering.

Orkestai Farm is such a shining example of UU principles. If I were to choose one, I would say the "inherent worth and dignity of every person" is at the core of Orkestai's mission. It was clear that everybody was valued at the farm, regardless of their disabilities. It really was quite life-changing working in such a loving and respectful community. It's truly a special place.

Thank you so much for this experience, I'll never forget my time here.

Milagros, UUCSR, Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center

The Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary is a historic site as well as the venue for a summer camp I interned at this past summer. My experience here was overwhelmingly positive. I fell in love with nature all over again. I also got to work with some amazing people, and some lovable kids.

The purpose of the camp is to provide children with an experience to learn and play in nature. Many of the activities we planned were centered around environmental education. We caught and released tadpoles, frogs, caterpillars, and worms almost every day. We taught the little ones about the importance of our environment and the vitality of conservation. One of their favorite activities this summer was shelter building

The camp was broken up into three age divisions; the 10 to 1-year-olds were the Eagles, the 7 to 9-year-olds were the Blue jays, and the 5 and 6-year-olds were Chickadees. My more specific responsibility was to the Chickadees- I was one of two counselors dedicated to the little ones. Although they could be a bit treacherous sometimes, I have to say I had the most fun experiences with the Chickadees. There is something so impossibly imaginative about the mind of a 5-year-old. It's refreshing to around such unlimited creativity.

The people I worked with at camp were also so amazing and inspiring. There was an amateur ornithologist, an accounting major (and fellow UU), and an archer from North Carolina. I was so lucky to be able to work alongside them, I don't think you often find such a lovely group of people. I laughed more than I thought I would, the sanctuary was a happy place for me.

The Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary truly honors its namesake. It is for this reason that I believe they 7th UU principle is the clearest here. "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part" is evident in all aspects of the camp. The amount of compassion and respect given to each and every person at camp truly made it a special place to work. Thank you so very much for everything you've given me.

Mina, UUFSB

This summer I had the wonderful opportunity again, to work at the organization Sweetbriar Nature Center, a local nature center on Long Island, through the Student Activity Fund. The organizations was very much in touch with my Unitarian Universalist values and principle, and it related very much to the seventh principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are all a part of". Through my tasks at Sweetbriar Nature center, which varied from working in the garden to working with children, and helping with the care of animals, I was able to connect more to my Unitarian values

Sweetbriar Nature Center is an organization run out of Smithtown, and their main goal is to serve the community, and function as a nature discovery center, where people, especially children, can go to experience the natural world. Much of their work involves wildlife rehabilitation, in which the organization rescues local wildlife that is brought to us by community members. The organization also has a summer discovery camp program, which is an educational program for children to gain a hands on, unique experience in the natural world. This organization helped me to connect to the Unitarian Universalist values in several ways that connect to our principles. In connection to the seventh principle especially, I found that working in the garden helped me to gain a unique appreciation for the natural world, through having such a hands on work environment. Through working in the garden, I was able to have a deeper understanding of the ecosystem that we're a part of, and the impact we have on it. At Sweetbriar Nature Center, I was also given opportunities to share my knowledge with the children who were attending the summer discovery program as part of my internship. I was able

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to educate the children in areas such as the ecosystem, the lifecycle of animals such as butterflies, the dangers of global warming, and the importance of teamwork, which all help to relate to the seventh principle ! This organization has always been a joy to work with, their commitment to helping educate the community has always been admirable, and this summers opportunities were wonderful!

Miranda, UUCSR

This summer, I was a student intern at The Friends of Garvies Point Museum where I helped with the education of children from ages four to eleven. The topics included the history of indengeous people, the environment, as well as our glacial history. This was my second year interning for this organization and each year, I am also further educated with knowledge which allows me to further educate new and returning students. And although many of these children are less than half my age, they often help reinforce the core values of what a Unitarian Universalist is, as well as remind me of my own values. This further grounds me as an individual who is about to go into my first semester of college. This year, more than last year, I interacted with many children from all from different economic and ethnic backgrounds with many different personalities.

In many instances, I saw that it was challenging to teach the children, as they all had different attention spans and rates at which they process the information. I mentored and helped frustrated children who had trouble with keeping up with the others in learning and exploring the various topics. What was exciting to me was that I spent more time with those children assisting them as they discovered the world around them on an individual level. This reinforced the first of the seven UU Principles, as every person has equal worth and deserves to be treated with respect, no matter their disabilities. Spending more time with the children who needed me allowed me to see the growth those students are capable of, if treated with equity.

Additionally, spending extra time with students who learn at a slower pace than others, made other students slow down and help others learn and have fun. This relates to the second principle, justice, equity and compassion in human relations, in that other children started to realize that students had trouble learning, so they began to share their experiences and what they knew. For instance, instead of moving onto the next step of their craft, they stopped and helped

each other so everyone was on the same level . Watching these children help each other is a big part of what a Unitarian Universalist is about. Not leaving each other behind and helping others in need was repeatedly demonstrated. Additionally, the third principle is also seen as all the children, no matter race, economic stability, or disability, accept each other and help each other grow as individuals. These children teach each other about acceptance, growth and support that each person needs to give and receive. The compassion the children exemplified was astounding.

Overall, The Friends at Garvies Point Museum reinforced all the 7 principles, as our mission was to teach each and every student about history, geology and also about our environment in a way where each student feels heard, respected and cared for. We also taught how critical it was to respect the environment during this time of climate change and toxic philosophy towards the earth. We did teach and the children supported one another when needed. All of us thrived, as they all enjoyed learning new information, regardless of gender, race, economic tier and disability.

Sierra, UUCSR

Throughout my internship at the Nordoff Robbins Center for Music Therapy, I have learned and experienced many things pertaining to music and the fundamentals of Unitarian Universalism. Out of the seven Unitarian Universalist Principles, the one that most strongly reminds me of my internship experience is the third: *Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations*. At the Nordoff-Robbins Center, I witnessed true acceptance from the eyes of a therapist to a child client. To expand on this, the therapists would not only let the child who is disabled physically and/or mentally feel comfortable in the musical environment, but they would interact with them through music to develop a sense of acceptance and respect between both people. Accepting a client (in this case, a child) for who they are ultimately allows for growth within the child, emotionally and mentally. Doing so through music only creates a more comfortable, friendly environment. A moment that specifically relates to this theme was a video I observed, which was a hide and seek game that the therapist was initiating. When the round was finished, the child came out and sang how she was found as the therapist played the melody on the piano. Not only was she found in the game, but she found herself, and accepted who she is through the music.

Vandana, UUCSR

I chose to write this essay on the last day possible before submittance because I wanted to include how I've felt these last four days post-internship. And God, I didn't realize I would miss it this much. Clark Gardens is a 30 minute walk from my house, of which I would wake up for every weekday, and I miss that calm reflection period pre-work that I received each morning walk, rather than rushing from sleeping to school as I do now. I miss the routine of it, and how much I looked forward to the day ahead of me each morning, and which exciting animals I would experience each day.

Although the Town of North Hempstead's Clark Botanical Gardens is focused on plants and flowers, I can't say I focused much on them. Snakes, frogs, lizards, turtles, and toads were my forte during the internship, relating to UU's seventh principle, respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part. I monitored native vs. non-native turtle populations and how they affected each other, I followed the journeys of an Eastern Garter Snake I dubbed "Big Fatty" throughout the summer, helped 24 baby Snapping Turtles move from underground nest to pond edges, and witnessed both toads and frogs graduate from tadpoles to small versions of their adult selves. I was also extremely lucky to have the privilege to raise 9 baby Northern Bobwhite Quail for release in the woods near North Hempstead Beach Park. I watched them grow from tiny wet babies into tweeting full grown birds; it was very rewarding but passed very quickly. They grow up so fast! And although I did manual labor like shoveling mulch and weeding in the sun and moving hundreds of chairs for outdoor concerts, there is nothing I miss about Clark Gardens. I am nearly 100% positive about returning there next summer.