



SAF— Student Intern Essays for Summer 2018.

Orkestai Farms

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock

This summer, I interned with Orkestai Farm in Oyster Bay. Orkestai is an ecological farm with a CCA (Community Cultivated Agriculture) program. The CCA is a collaborative environment in which a diverse group of members of various abilities and disabilities work together to grow their own produce. In addition, the farm also holds educational classes for young children and their parents.

As an intern, I performed hands-on agriculture work side by side with the CCA members, assisted disabled farmers, and worked with the children's program.

Orkestai farm's mission strongly correlates to UU principles such "*the inherent worth and dignity of every person*" and "*respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*". Persons with disabilities are a very important part of the farm's community and success. Members of ALL abilities work in harmony as a group toward a common goal. Being a part of this environment has strengthened my values and beliefs.

An experience I learned from was one day when a non-verbal boy was trying to tell us something but didn't have the language. The director showed me how she uses play so that he could tell her what he needed. It was incredible to see that there are ways people can communicate without using words.

Overall, my internship experience was so much more than working on a farm. I had the privilege of working in an inclusive environment that values the contributions of a diverse group of people.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

Long Island Progressive Coalition

UU Congregation at Shelter Rock

I interned at the Long Island Progressive Coalition (LIPC), an organization dedicated to socio-economic, environmental and racial justice. I interned under the Sustainability Organizer, Ryan Madden, and during my time at LIPC helped with their community solar project, Powerup Solar, as well as gathering support for meetings on the Climate and Community Protection Act. What really drew me to LIPC was their intersectional approach to issues such as climate change or fair schooling -- no one issue exists without being connected to the larger socio-economic and racial package.

My experience there related to both the inherent worth and dignity of every person, as well as the justice, equity and compassion in human relations, as well as respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part. When working on their community solar project, the lack of access low income people of color had to solar power was at the forefront of our understanding, and it is what made LIPC's solar goals so crucial. In today's system, developing affordable solar power opportunities is important so everyone can take part in clean energy. This was also the forefront of our advocacy for the Climate and Community Protection Act, which, if passed, would not only transition New York State onto 100% renewable energy by 2050, but would also invest back into the communities most vulnerable to climate disasters and the fossil fuel industry, again low income communities of color. When contacting organizations to come to LIPC's upcoming

September 22nd meeting on climate justice, the list i was given was extremely varied, challenging me to figure out how climate change connected to LGBTQ issues, or to reproductive health, or to the school to prison pipeline. It was instilled in me that Climate Change is not just a science issue, but rather an issue that connects to everyone and everything, and that the environmental decisions of one group of people would affect all. This strengthened my understanding of our interconnectedness and supported my UU values.

At this agency, I participated in things that would have previously terrified me, such as canvassing and phone banking, but I grew in confidence and learned how to talk to people from many different religious and political backgrounds. I also learned to be less complacent, which I think many in my age group tend to be --- this generation's brand of activism often involves posting rants on Facebook, but it may not include the tireless grunt work it takes to stick with an issue and keep after it in a targeted and meaningful way. This means not only protests in a liberal setting, but protesting in front of government buildings, where people may not agree with you. It means canvassing, knocking on the doors and having one-on-one conversations with people who may or may not agree with you. It means calling all your available networks and creating new networks. I learned through hundreds of calls and followups that getting yourself on another organization's radar can be difficult, but once you form an alliance the power of people working together can really change things.

One experience I had really left an impression on me. I only got to canvass for one day, due to my own schedule, but during that day a woman answered the door, who was very suspicious of what we were trying to do. My goal was to find out what was worrying people in the neighborhood, whether that be environmental, governmental or concerns about schooling. She was convinced I was trying to get something from her and kept asking what my target was. I said my only target was to get a sense of Freeport's major concerns, and to make sure she was going to vote in the primaries. I was intimidated by this conversation, because the woman was not in the mind to talk to a stranger, and with the way she sharply questioned me I felt rather like I was in a principal's office. But through my training at LIPC I had learned ways to stick with it, and at some point in the conversation she relaxed, and began to talk to me about the broken school system, as well as the high cost of living in that area. By the time I left the door she had promised to vote in the primaries and told me to have a good day. This experience not only taught me to stick with it and not get intimidated, but also to be accomodating to the experiences of others and realize that when people are under their own stress, they may be expecting a swindler rather than a friendly voice. It taught me how important these one-on-one conversations are, because trust is something that needs to be built.

In my time there I feel that I was able to contribute by establishing connections with houses of worship around Long Island by weekly phone banking, consolidating information on town meetings and other avenues in which LIPC could advocate through, and with another intern contacting up to a hundred high schools about sharing Climate Change information with their students. I also wrote a debrief for a Climate Committee meeting, spread the word about the upcoming Climate Justice meeting, made signs and gave a speech about net metering at a press conference, drafted a post to submit to newsday, and drafted many social media posts. I hope I was able to set up many projects than can be continued by new interns and by the employees there.

***Family Service League
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington***

Over this summer, I volunteered at family Service League of Suffolk County. Family Service League is a social Service agency that provides services for residents of Suffolk County. They provide programs that enrich the lives of individuals who may struggle financially and have challenges accessing services. Each year UUFH partners with Family Service League for back to school supplies, holiday toy drive and HIHI.

My role in working with this agency this summer was to assist in relocating and painting preschool classrooms. I also assisted in sorting and preparing backpacks for children in need. Finally I assisted assistant director Lisa Jamison in office reorganization and shredding papers.

My work connected to the 7 Unitarian Universalist Principles by assisting this wonderful agency in its mission to support and serve individuals that experience challenges in our society. The preschool program provides early education and social experiences for children who may not have the ability to attend preschool. The backpack program provides necessary school supplies to children who may not have the financial means to get them otherwise. These programs are valuable in our community because they support the UU Principles of the inherent value and worth of every human being.

I learned that many people in my community struggle with basic needs that most people my age take for granted. I believe my participation helped the Family Service League with the preschool and backpack projects. I enjoyed my experience there.

***Center of Transformative Change, The INN
UU Fellowship of Huntington***

Hello! My name is Ben Sussman, and for the past few months I have had the privilege of being able to volunteer at the Center of Transformative Change located in Hempstead, Long Island. I go to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock. Spending time volunteering at the Center of Transformative Change gave me the rare opportunity to interact and connect one on one with homeless individuals living in Hempstead, Roosevelt, and Uniondale. Assisting homeless individuals in terms of helping to get them services, housing, job opportunities, and many more things to help them reach a higher quality of life, has made me see the problem of homelessness at first hand, and has inspired me to continue volunteering my time to help homeless people. Volunteering at the Center of Transformative Change has strengthened my UU values and has further developed my beliefs in the 7 principles.

I feel that the Center of Transformative Change has strengthened my beliefs in the first and second principles. The first principle is, "The inherent worth and dignity of every person." I feel that the CTC showed this by treating every guest with respect. As some can imagine, a lot of guests come in who may have had very rough pasts and tragedies occur in their life, but we always treat them with respect, and try to make it clear to them that we care about them, and want to help them in any way that we can. Many of the homeless guests who come in to the CTC for resource even say that the only reason they continue coming back is because we respect them, and want nothing more than to get them into a better life. If we see that someone is suffering, we never fail in at least getting them the appropriate clothes and food to get them through the rest of their day comfortably. This is one of my favorite parts of the CTC. So many people treat homeless people with very little respect and no self-worth, but the CTC treats all the homeless people with a friendly and respectful attitude. I always felt like this was appropriate because we really have no idea what they've been through, and treating someone disrespectfully off the bat isn't going to make them want to ask you for help and advice. This is how the CTC embodied the first UU principle, "The inherent worth and dignity of every person."

The CTC also embodied the second UU principle "Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations." One day a family came into the CTC and the mother's 3 kids didn't have any shoes. CTC volunteers immediately got the kids' shoes and any other clothes that they needed. This is a perfect example of how the CTC is supporting the second principle, by showing compassion to a helpless family. Another example of where a kind act done at the CTC supports the second principle, was when I gave a guest two belts that I donated to the CTC a day previous. I saw that many guests were coming in needing belts, but the boutique

didn't have any for a period of time. The next day I brought 3 belts in, and it happened to be a day where multiple guests came in that were in need of a belt. Whenever they come in wearing the belts I donated I realize how such a small effort on my part made such a big difference in their life. Overall, volunteering at the CTC has strengthened my UU values and my belief in the 7 principles.

***The World Organisation Against Torture
UU Fellowship of Stony Brook***

Perhaps, the purpose of life is to find ourselves and work to better the world; and through that journey of self-discovery we must learn who we are and our role in the rest of the world. While it wasn't until my first year of college that I fully understood terms like *neoliberalism*, *globalization*, and *radical freedom*; my mind was provided with tools of which have unleashed questions like 'what is the meaning behind *violence*?' and 'what does one mean when people say that they want to create a *peaceful world*?' and 'How can we create *peace* in a country that was built on theft, genocide, slavery, and institutionalized misogyny?' The United States of America, with our unanimous support and involvement within imperialism and global capitalism has notoriously led to the continual oppression, discrimination, and murder of marginalized groups of people and their culture from Tibet, Afghanistan, to Syria, Mexico, and Rwanda, Yugoslavia, to Palestine, Venezuela, Yemen, and Myanmar. Out of my passion, advocacy, and commitment to challenging these systems throughout to world to promoting an international resistance to global inequalities I applied to serve as a summer intern with the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT-Secretariat) in Geneva, Switzerland.

The World Organisation Against Torture is the world's largest coalition of non-governmental organizations fighting against arbitrary detention, torture, summary and extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances and other forms of violence. The 6th Unitarian Universalist principle: the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all resonates with the work that I contributed to the organization.

During my internship with the World Organisation Against Torture I assisted in developing social media posts for Twitter and Facebook. I also advertised summer side events co-sponsored by the organisation on social media. Furthermore, I represented OMCT at the 38th Human Rights Council at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva as well as at the 64th Committee Against Torture at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. I assisted in the development of the Annual Report for OMCT which covers our work with supporting asylum seekers and human rights defenders that were victims of torture or are in danger of being tortured. I transcribed interviews for the Istanbul Protocol Video Project and created a list of partners and organisations that would potentially be interested in sharing the Istanbul Protocol Video Project on social media. While assisting with the development of the Annual Report, I translated human stories from French to English, collected photos, and assisted in collecting data for the Key Numbers Page for the 2017 Annual Report.

I created a spreadsheet of partner organisations that the World Organisation Against Torture has worked with for 2014, 2015, and 2016. I noted whether or not pictures from the websites of these organisation would be useful in the Annual Report 2017. I developed two bibliographic documents of emails with press stories from 2017 that 1) gave OMCT visibility and 2) that focused on impact for OMCT.

I also documented the languages published in, country of origin, and whether OMCT was directly mentioned from the articles reviewed in the two bibliographic documents mentioned above. Additionally, I reviewed UN treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council, etc..on refusal of military service and political opposition.

I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with such passionately driven individuals at the World Organisation Against Torture. I'm grateful for the Student Activity Fund for the financial support to participate in this opportunity.

Atria Tanglewood

South Nassau Unitarian Universalist Congregation

This summer was my third time working for Atria Tanglewood Senior Living in Lynbrook. Although it was not a new experience for me, there are always new lessons I walk away with at the end of each summer. I also leave Atria with a feeling of purpose and direction, knowing that I helped improve approximately 100 residents lives. But above all, I leave with the sense that I was able to effectively put into practice the 7 UU principles that I strive to live by.

Through doing this work, I also realize how interconnected each of the principles are with one another. 'A free and responsible search for truth and meaning' would not be possible without 'the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all'. 'Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part' goes hand in hand with 'the inherent worth and dignity of every person'.

Working at a senior living facility, where many of the residents are sick with dementia and nearly all have physical ailments, is bound to test ones patience at times. The depression and physical pain that they experience makes them lash out at the workers/volunteers, and many times their dementia leads them to feel paranoid about their surroundings. This is exactly where the second principle of 'justice, equity and compassion in human relations' comes into play. Being snapped at most days by the residents who I am there solely to help them grated on my nerves, and I found myself feeling angry and frustrated at certain points. However, I chose to view their outbursts with compassion, and I frequently put myself into their shoes and realized the struggles that they are facing. Because of this, when they would become angry, I chose instead to try and talk to them and handle it with kindness. Many times, once I spoke to them, they no longer felt isolated and alone. In turn, this would cheer them up and transform their demeanor.

'The inherent worth and dignity of every person' also was apparent within my work. To some degree, there is a shared opinion on the elderly population, that they are too old/sick/confused to be worth spending time with. This unfortunate way of thinking is prevalent in many people, even family members. I've seen it firsthand at work or even when I would tell some people where I worked. I never thought this way, but working with them for several years strengthened this belief I held that they are not any less worthy of our time and consideration. They are entitled to basic respect, as well as a 'free and responsible search for truth and meaning' as the rest of us are.

Going along with what I discussed in the previous paragraph, this way of thinking also ties into 'respect for the interdependent web of life of which we are a part'. No matter what ailments or diseases they are experiencing, no matter how confused they are about their surroundings, they are absolutely deserving of everything that young people are, and deserve respect.

Finally, although working with a group of approximately 100 elderly residents is perhaps not much, I still feel that I contributed towards a 'goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all'. Along with my daily duties, I took the time to get to know these people. I listened to their stories and all the wisdom they had to offer. I feel that I am a better person for this, and in turn I can connect more with others and help contribute towards a sense of peaceful world community.

The principles I've listed above are the ones that I can connect most strongly to my experience working for the Atria, although I feel that working there has made me a better person in general and has made me more connected to my core UU values. I am so grateful for this experience, this gift of being able to spend 3 summers changing lives and learning from these people. Without the SAF program this would not have been possible, and I thank you for this.

Hospice Care Network Unitarian Universalists of the Great South Bay

Over the summer, I had the privilege of volunteering for Hospice Care Network in their Bay Shore and Woodbury offices. As a nursing major wishing to work with the geriatric population in the future, I was incredibly excited to take part in this experience. Throughout my time with this organization, it was clear to me that both Unitarian Universalists and the Hospice Care Network work closely with the the first principle, the

inherent worth and dignity of every person. This experience greatly strengthened my Unitarian Universalist values and beliefs, while also providing me an educational experience.

Upon arriving on my first day of volunteering, I was graciously shown around the Woodbury location by the volunteer coordinator, Sommer Allen. She took the time to explain all of my duties with the organization and how this would directly help patients and their families. During my time in Woodbury, I helped by updating patient information online, updated powerpoint presentations for nursing education and did other administrative activities.

I was then offered a position to volunteer within the Bay Shore office. In Bay Shore, I worked directly under the nursing manager for the Purple Team, Medina Fornville. During my time there, I was able to update patient information within the computer system, organize nursing education paperwork and create a nursing supply room in the basement. Another task I took on was covering the nursing manager's desk during her weekly Thursday meeting. I was able to answer 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 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 an impression on me. Knowing I was a nursing student, the nursing coordinator for my team aided me in setting up two home visits with hospice patients. During these home visits, I was able to shadow a hospice nurse and learn more about their duties. At the first home, the patient was an older woman in her 90's dying from COPD. Her son was her primary caregiver and was becoming increasingly overwhelmed. Once we entered the home, we found the patient covered in feces and in a queen sized mattress pressed up against a wall in the bedroom. In order to clean the patient properly, the hospice nurse and I needed to replace the bedding with fresh linens. After yanking the mattress away from the wall, I needed to crawl across the boxspring in order to gather the linens on the other side of the mattress. I did this all while also checking the patient to make sure she would not fall off off mattress. This situation is incredibly common in home care. When you are not in a hospital environment with supplies within your fingertips, you must make do with your resources. I was grateful to have that experience.

After addressing my patient, I was able to get into my car and drive myself home. This is when I began to think about our Unitarian Universalist beliefs and values. Our first principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person, was the first one to come to mind. While visiting patients' homes, the nurse and I worked to make the patient feel as respected as possible. We did this by introducing ourselves to the patient and directing them on what we were doing at all times even if they were unable to verbally communicate with us. By doing so, we demonstrated our respect for our patient. While chatting with family members or fellow caregivers, we were able to hear about the patient's life before being admitted to hospice. This was incredibly special to me. I find it heartwarming to be able to know details about a patient's life while I am working hard to make them feel as calm and pain-free as possible. The first principle is deeply connected to hospice patients.

I could not be more grateful to have such a fulfilling experience volunteering for Hospice Care Network. Due to this scholarship, I was able to work with experienced individuals within the nursing industry and learn more about Hospice Care Network. I was also provided with the opportunity to personally interact with hospice patients in their homes. There is nothing more fulfilling than leaving a patient's home knowing that you were able to hold their hand, answer all of their questions and allow them to breathe a little easier knowing that they are our priority. I can only hope that someone will be able to do that for me in the future. I am incredibly

grateful for my SAF experience this summer and cannot wait to hopefully be included in next year's scholarship.

**Family Service League
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington**

This summer I had the privilege to volunteer at both The Family Service League Administrative Office and the Family Service League Manor Field Family Center. Family Service League provides hope and help to families and individuals in need. Whether someone needs housing help, drug and alcohol related treatment, ESL classes or psychiatric assistance, FSL offers a variety of programs that are very beneficial. My favorite part about FSL is that they don't refuse anyone help. If someone comes in seeking something but there is no program available, a staff member always points them in the right direction or puts them in contact with another organization that might be able to assist. My time spent at these places has been such a rewarding experience that has definitely strengthened my Unitarian Universalist beliefs. At the Manor Field Family Center I helped with the *Mommy and Me* program which promotes positive interactions between the parent and their young child. Every Thursday I helped set up each activity station as well as helped the parents appropriately interact with their child throughout the two hours. My supervisor and I are both bilingual which was very important since all of the parents that we had spoke little to no English. By being able to explain things to the parents and children in Spanish and English there was a mutual form a respect and understanding that was created which lead them to learn much more efficiently. Also, it was amazing working in such a positive and kind environment. Like the second principle states, there should always be *justice, equity and compassion in human relations*. No matter their situation, we always listened to, talked with, and cared for the participating families, which is something I really admire and try to practice every day.

My second volunteer position was working at the front desk at the administrative office in Huntington. There I did various tasks to help make the day run smoothly. I often wrote emails, answered phone calls and updated various pages on the FSL Intranet. This was such a fantastic volunteer position and I am very grateful for the opportunity to have had so much independence throughout volunteering each day. I was taught about everything that the Family Service League has to offer and how to properly assist people if they call or come in to the office. Every day I interacted with different clients and helped them to the best of my ability.

Having the chance to volunteer at a non-profit organization that puts so much time and energy into truly finding people the help that they need really resonated with me. To me, the 7 principles are all about love, equity, respect, compassion and kindness which are many of the characteristics demonstrated by the FSL staff, no matter their religion. That just proves to me that the 7 principles are alive and well and should always be carried out in our day to day lives. On my last week volunteering I had a conversation with the Vice President of Development, Jonathan Chenkin, where he said something that helped me to better understand the seventh principle (*Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*). He told me that within a non-profit organization there is no such thing as a "small job". Everything is connected; by getting the "small" tasks done first it makes the rest of the operation run without fail. Even the seemingly simple tasks like organizing files or sorting mail is such a huge help. One big take away I have from this summer is that without the 7 principles, nothing would ever get accomplished. Be kind, have respect and work together, you never know what could come out of it.

**Jamaica Bay Terrapin Research
Unitarian Universalist Shelter Rock Congregation**

This summer I worked as a member of Jamaica Bay Terrapin Research (JBTR). Terrapins are a type of turtle that live exclusively in brackish water, which occurs between freshwater and saltwater, making the water less salty than the ocean, but saltier than a lake. The five main goals of Jamaica Bay Terrapin Research are: to identify the biotic and abiotic factors that determine the size and health 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 as wide a variety of people as deeply as possible in the above goals. Though on the surface, the work by JBTR is primarily scientific, I believe that the work also speaks to my spiritual experience as a UU and to the principles of the UUA.

The clearest relationship between the UU principles and my work at JBTR is via seventh principle, respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. We at JBTR demonstrate and follow this principle, regardless of our personal beliefs. In addition to the pursuit of conservation, in which we care for and study the terrapins, a major aspect of JBTR is its status as a citizen science project. Citizen science projects involve people coming together, regardless of age, class, gender, ethnicity, or belief. In that way, JBTR also links to the UU principles of the inherent worth and dignity of every person, justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, and the acceptance of one another. Our positions, supervisor or otherwise, at JBTR didn't change how we interacted with one another. We were all there simply because we cared for our environment and the animals that live within and wished to learn more about the environment in which we live. As a member of JBTR, I have certainly become more aware of conservation and what it entails. It served to solidify my pursuit of teaching and learning more about the world we live in. Through the lens of the Student Activity Fund, and my UU values, I have become more interested in questions of environmental justice, and what we, as citizens in a democratic society, can do to both protect and learn about the nature all around us.

In addition to learning more about field work and strengthening my commitment to protect the environment by actively working and researching in it, I learned more about sharing science with the public. Citizen science projects rely on having an engaged public. I believe this engagement starts at a young age, but it can also be ignited in older members of the public. On one day I was scheduled to work, I was sent to a location in Jamaica Bay with another volunteer already there. To my surprise, this volunteer brought her six-year-old daughter. This six-year-old, was, like most six-year-olds, a bundle of energy. She absolutely loved playing in the sand and picking up shells and arranging them. She also constantly was asking questions about what she was seeing on the beach, from the tree we were sitting under, to the dozens of shore birds wandering along the water, looking for food. Unlike the shore birds, which were constantly plodding up and down the shorelines, without a care in the world, terrapins are far wavier. At multiple points, the girl's mother, my fellow volunteer, kept telling her daughter to quiet down, lest she scare away the terrapins. To my surprise, this worked. This ball of energy of a child suddenly quieted down whenever her mother warned this. As we were scanning the shoreline, we finally saw a terrapin head bobbing up and down in the water. All three of us were completely silent while waiting for the terrapin to come ashore. As soon as the terrapin was halfway to the dunes, I dashed to it and caught it, so we could take notes of any abnormalities on the terrapin. When I walked back to where we were sitting, the girl was exuberant. All of the energy that she had conserved while waiting for the terrapin to reach shore shot out. She was ecstatic to see a terrapin up close. What this taught me was that if a child has an opportunity or desire to learn about something, they will do anything to learn about that thing. I don't believe this is exclusive to children, either. This event solidified my belief that education is the best way to open people's minds to other possibilities and that it is far more important to engage in conversation with someone who may not agree with your views on things as opposed to just saying "you're wrong, here's an article that supports my view and discredits yours." This event also gave me hope for the future in that there will always be people who care about the environment or anything else, so we needn't despair no matter how some people appear to not care. We simply must talk to each other.

Working with JBTR allowed me to talk with visitors on an informal basis, answering questions of those I ran into while combing the trail for terrapins. Jamaica Bay is also close to some less affluent school districts in Queens, so the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, where JBTR operates, is a field trip for schools in the area. As a member of JBTR, I was able to teach people of all socioeconomic levels about terrapins, wetlands, and why it mattered. For this reason, working with JBTR was the favorite thing I have done all summer, and I hope to do it again next summer. I know I helped further JBTR's goals. I took notes on terrapins, on their nests, and assisted everyone working to try to save them and the environment in which they lived. It was an incredibly fulfilling experience.

Health and Welfare Council of Long Island (HWCLI)

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook

My summer spent at the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island has been, in short, extremely fulfilling. I've been able to see many connections to my spiritual life as well as gain a more in-depth understanding of the social problems that occur here on the island. The principals that have been reasserted the most in my time here have been, to quote, "The inherent worth and dignity of every person"; "Justice, equity and compassion in human relations"; "The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all"; and "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." These were asserted for me because I felt like I could see a genuine commitment to these principles in the work carried out by this agency's employees.

The agency is an umbrella agency for a host of nonprofits working on Long Island in the health and human services field. Through the experiences afforded to me, I was able to learn about varied social issues from hunger and the government benefits programs designed to alleviate the issue; to public housing and efforts to decrease homelessness. One particular group of projects I worked on involved updating and creating resource guides for new arrivals (primarily immigrants) and for affordable housing. Working on these taught me very important things. One, it reaffirmed, for me, was the importance of this organization's mission to coordinate and bring resources together to ultimately serve all of Long Island. These resource guides contained relevant, current information that simply didn't exist or was not easily accessible to people who would need them. These were set to be published on their website with the updates that I made to them.

In comparison to past agencies I've worked with via SAF, I feel like this agency has been one where I've been able to most clearly see how the work that I contributed was being used to actually make a difference in someone's life. For example, I helped translate one of the resource guides into Spanish and another time, I compiled a list of around 200 businesses in the tri-state area to solicit for donations for a Halloween ball that the organization is hosting. This list was given out to all the relevant employees so they could see for themselves as well as think of other organizations that they had existing personal relationships with and could ask for more donations. The work itself was rewarding in spite of many tedious hours filled with spreadsheets and word documents, but it was a firm introduction into working in an office and I truly value the experience that I've gained here working in that type of setting.

Samuel Field YM & YWHA Beacon Program UU Congregation at Shelter Rock

For the summer of 2018, I took on the opportunity to volunteer at a nonprofit organization through SAF. I had known about the agency I'd end up working for prior to the internship. The Beacon program held at MS 158 runs through the school year and the summer. I was a student at the middle school, and attended the program after school hours. Already being familiar with my workplace, I would be taking on a new role as someone to help entertain and watch the kids, rather than be one of them.

I was placed with the smallest kids in the program, the first and second graders. Having been my first time working with children, I didn't know I would learn so much from them. Children have a very different perspective on the life and the world. One of the things I enjoyed about this job was hearing what they had to say and making sense of their words. Their thoughts, opinions, and expressions are truly something to be appreciated and accepted. This ties in with principles one, three and seven for me. Not only did this enhance my understanding of the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and acceptance of one another, but it strengthened my value of respect for all existence.

In the three weeks that I worked, there have been many memorable experiences I had with the children. But something that really struck me was a moment I had with a counselor. It was my third week and I was clocking for the day. I ran into one of the official counselors for Beacon. She pulled me aside and told me I was “really good with the kids. Do you want to be a teacher?”. I never thought about the occupation of a teacher seriously. In fact, I didn’t think I had what it took to become one. Everyone wants to know that their doing their job well. The fact that another set of eyes can see potential in me with children, was eye-opening. I learned that being with and giving to children is more natural than I thought it’d be.

I feel I made a great contribution towards the agency through SAF. Being looked back on as a positive memory is a great accomplishment, especially in the eyes of a child. Since they’re still growing, everything they experience is helping to mold them. I am now part of the mold that’s helping shape them. I am someone for them to look back on, and it’s so fulfilling. Big and small, I’ve contributed to the lives of a younger generation and that’s reward enough.

***Family Service League
UU Fellowship of Huntington***

This year in July I was granted the opportunity to work for an agency of my choice through Student Activity Fund. I decided to work for Family Service League on Long Island. Family Service League is a non-profit organization which addresses social economic issues across long island granting programs and opportunities to families and children in need such as dance classes, backpack drives, parent/child gatherings and activities. I decided to assist in the backpack drive for students in need. Students ranged from kindergarten ages to Seniors in High School. In the end we packed and organized 300 and more backpacks for this year’s students. I believe that quality education with the right tools is a gift in the world we live in. This can make a student or family in need feel better in the communities they live in and the schools they will attend. Another job I decided to help out with was moving classroom supplies from one classroom to another. This helped new and old teachers and students find a new or better classroom for upcoming years, classes and curriculum. This job consisted of lifting boxes and furniture and bringing it downstairs or next door. The last thing I assisted with was painting cabinets and closets. This was a fulfilling experience and I recommend this job for anybody.

These jobs relate to Unitarian Universalism by treating people in the community with dignity and respect. They also included justice, equity and compassion for all by giving every one the opportunity to resources if they are in need.

***Pilgrim Psychiatric Center (PPC)
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington***

My internship at Pilgrim Psychiatric Center (PPC) was an incredibly enriching experience. The values of PPC align with nearly every single Unitarian Universalist value, but specifically reflect the first and second principles. PPC strongly promotes the inherent worth and dignity of each and every patient by creating an environment that separates individuals from their illnesses. A patient may have schizophrenia, but that does not make them a schizophrenic. Rather, they are a unique individual with many qualities and strengths and intricacies, with schizophrenia just being one aspect of the person – it by no means defines them. The patients at PPC are also treated with the utmost dignity and respect from nurses, psychologists, and all staff members. They are cared for intensely – each staff member works incredibly hard to provide top quality care to ensure that the patients recover to the best of their ability. IN terms of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, PPC is extremely conscientious when it comes to creating equal opportunity and providing mental health care to individuals from all walks of life.

I learned an incredible amount this summer at PPC. As a psychology major, I had some semblance of understanding of what ‘abnormal’ psychology meant. However, it became increasingly clear to me that reading a textbook and listening to a lecture can only communicate so much information about any given disorder. To witness severe mental illnesses first-hand and fully experience the range of functioning was a completely different learning experience. It made

me even more sensitive to the harsh realities of dealing and living with mental illness. It truly instilled in me just how difficult it is to work in this profession, as well as the degree of kindness and compassion that should be employed when working and interacting with those suffering with mental illnesses. Being able to develop relationships with patients also grounded me in the values of both Unitarian Universalism and PPC – these values being the inherent worth and dignity of all people, and the respect and kindness with which they should be treated. This sort of equitable and compassionate treatment is of utmost importance in this setting especially, because often people in this position believe that they do not have worth and do not deserve kindness or respect. Therefore, ensuring compassionate care is in and of itself part of the intervention provided by professionals, because negative self-evaluation is often a huge impediment to recovery.

One of my favorite experiences at PPC was during one of my performances in the ‘Sunset Café’ in the Rehabilitation Center. A patient had requested I sing a song for him (Wichita Lineman). He expressed how much this song meant to him, so I went home and learned it, and performed it the next week. He approached me afterward and expressed the most genuine thanks I have ever received following a musical performance. It was so incredibly meaningful to him, which made it all the more special to me. This moment reflected how similar the two of us were in terms of passion and love for music, as well as demonstrated the restorative and uplifting qualities of music.

I feel I was able to provide an extra set of hands to the staff when needed, as well as an additional source with whom patients could talk and connect. A large part of my internship was just being present and available to patients during their weekly activities. Staff at PPC frequently commented on how grateful they were for all the volunteers that came, regardless of their duties, because extra help is always needed – especially in an environment that is often challenging.

I am so grateful for the experiences I had at PPC this summer. It exposed me to many interesting things that I know I will carry with me while I pursue my education and career in this field. I would highly recommend volunteering at PPC to anyone who is interested in a job in mental health, or to anyone wishing to help create better lives for those struggling with severe mental illnesses.

Smile In A Bag
Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock

Looking back on my experience with Smile In A Bag, I can’t help but feel disappointed that my time working alongside my bosses, Nan and Ron, is over. Both Nan and Ron are some of the most impressive, impassioned, and remarkable people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing and they have truly taught me that “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations” is the most exceptional trait a person can have. Despite the fact that Nan and Ron are not Unitarian Universalists, they truly live their lives by the 7 principles and strive every day to make the world a more compassionate place. I am thankful that I was able to work for an organization that actively strived to reduce the discomfort and adversity that children in hospitals are going through every day.

While working for Smile In A Bag, I had a multitude of jobs since I was the only individual volunteering at this time. I had the pleasure of packing individualized goody bags for children in hospitals, going on dollar store shopping runs in order to purchase the necessary materials to put into bags, create individualized handmade cards for the children, and do Smile In A Bag’s first-ever inventories. Throughout my internship, I actively felt like I was making a difference in people’s lives-- with every goody bag I created, I knew that was one child who was going to receive a bag full of toys to keep them entertained. At the end of my internship, I had made 1,000 bags that would be delivered over the course of a year to two children’s hospitals.

Overall, the general skills I've learned from my experience at Smile In A Bag will be extremely helpful in my future job endeavors but cannot begin to compare to the emotional reward I gained from working there. I feel that the contributions I've made to this NGO really will make a difference in the lives of the children who will receive the bags but also the lives of Nan and Ron since shopping, inventory, and packing bags takes up a considerable amount of time.

The Mary Brennan INN
SNUUC

The mission of the Mary Brennan INN is closely intertwined with some of our UU principles. As UU's, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person; similarly, the Mary Brennan INN believes in treating everyone who walks through the doors with dignity and respect. One of the things that drew me to intern at this organization was its unconditional respect for the guests that it serves. Interning at the INN has clarified and strengthened my UU principles by showing how they can benefit people in the real world. Human compassion and understanding are core beliefs of the Mary Brennan INN and are part of the reason why I chose to work with them for as long as I have.

This was the first year at the Mary Brennan INN that I was exclusively working in the Center for Transformative Change (CTC). The CTC is a resource center located next door to the Mary Brennan INN that helps guests change their life circumstances and gain more independence. My experience here was so much different than what I'd been doing at the Mary Brennan and I really loved it. At the CTC I was given the opportunity to sit down with guests and talk to them one-on-one about their lives and figure out ways to help them. It was a wonderful experience and I've become acquainted with so many amazing people.

There are many guests who made lasting impressions on me, but there was one in particular who I'm so immensely proud of. When this guest first came in she needed help with finding housing and filling out her DSS (department of social services) forms. I sat down with her to help with the forms and also to get some background on how she ended up homeless. She told me that she recently divorced her abusive ex-husband and lost everything in the divorce. Her mental health steadily declined over the years of abuse and her job asked her to take a 3 month leave until she was better. She had been living out of her car for a couple weeks until she decided to come to the resource center for support. For the next few weeks I saw her almost every day, we'd sit together and talk about her plans for the future and the best way for her to achieve those goals. I helped her digitize her cover letter and resume, an apply to jobs, along with helping her search for housing. By the end of the summer she found a room in a house to live and she gained back so much of her confidence. One of the last things I helped her with was her Welcome Home Grant, which supplied her with brand new furniture for the room she was renting. My experience with her over those three months taught me so much about human resilience and drive. She worked so hard to get her life back on track and I admire her so much for her hard work and dedication.

Besides helping individual guests, I also worked on special projects for the resource center that I'm very proud of. One of my biggest contributions this summer was creating a resource sheet with local organizations, soup kitchens and food pantries. The front side of the resource sheet has a weekly schedule of all the local food pantries and soup kitchens, their addresses, contact information, and hours of operation. This allows guests to find free meals every day that are all within walking distance or reachable by bus. The other side of the resource sheet has 6 categories: Children's Programs and Services, Mental Health Services and Crisis Hotlines, Medical Services, Domestic Violence Services and Sexual Abuse, Housing Services, and Social Services. Almost all of

these resources are local (minus a couple hotlines), and all of them are free. Our goal with this resource sheet was to give guests a comprehensive list of all the local services available to them, and it's been a huge success.

Another contribution I made to the INN this summer was being part of a media campaign to get more donations in the summer months. As someone who has been at the INN exclusively during the summer and winter, I've noticed a pattern in the donations. During the winter months there are so many donations it's difficult to walk through our storage areas. However, during the summer the shelves are bare, and there's a struggle to give guests what they need. One of the issues with these dwindling summer donations is that the children are out of school. Most families at the INN rely on free school breakfasts and lunches, without that they're forced to bring their children to the INN for free food. With dwindling donations and an influx of families with children, I was asked to help with a donation video. In this video I explained to donors why the summer was so difficult for families and why we were asking for donations. It ended up being a huge success and by early August we exceeded the amount of donations asked for. It was a really fun experience and it felt good to help out.

The final project I helped with was a program run by Nassau Coliseum that they "adopted" the INN for. We were contacted by someone from the Coliseum, who told us that they needed people to work the US Open and that they would love to hire some of our guests. Some of the biggest things that hold people back from seeking jobs are a criminal history and/or the inability to read or write. This program specifically didn't conduct background checks because it was made to give people a second chance to prove who they are now, regardless of their past. Additionally, volunteers worked with every guest who applied to make sure that literacy wasn't something that would stand in their way. By the end of the application process 16 people were hired to work at the US Open! The INN also received grants that allowed them to transport all of the employees to and from work. It was so great to see everyone so excited about the opportunity to work, I'm really happy that I was part of that process.

Working at the INN has been one of the best experiences in my life. Over the last few years I've seen myself grow so much as a person both mentally and spiritually. I'm so lucky that I've been able to grow up in this organization and do something that I love. As a psychology major, being able to intern with social workers and get real world experience has been fantastic. Becoming familiar with local organizations and the services available to assist those in need has been a great learning experience. The Mary Brennan INN is such a wonderful organization and I'm very lucky to have been a part of it for so many years through the Student Activity Fund. I attribute so much of who I am now to what I've learned at this organization.

***Samuel Field YM & YWHA Beacon Program
Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock***

Over the past couple of weeks, I was given the honor of working at the Samuel Field YM & YWHA Beacon Program. At first, I was skeptical in working with children of different backgrounds and age groups, and how it relates to me being a Unitarian Universalist. However, my experience has strengthened my UU values, as I put forth some of them into action.

In my experience with this non-profit organization, I supervised students which ranged from 1st to 2nd grade, and sometimes 3rd and 4th grade. Following, I always made sure to give emotional support for all participants as needed. I also assisted different teachers and counselors with whatever jobs that deemed too much for one person. Given these points I believe that my duties relate to the values of Unitarian Universalism.

For example, one of the principles of being UU is justice, equality, and compassion in human relations. Before I came to this agency, my patience, my compassion, and ability to pay it forward for others wasn't where it should have been. But, coming to this camp showed me that all these traits of humanity need to be used more in not just my workplace, but in society as a whole.

During my time at this agency, my involvement had changed my views about one of the UU principles which states, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part". In the past, I did not think that everyone deserves respect. For example, if one wrongs you, or acts of incivility towards you or another person, they deserve the same regards. However, I found this to be severely false. In participating at this agency, I learned that respect goes both ways. And in giving that person that same consideration, it will go back to you, and hopefully someone else that crosses paths with them.

One day at work, the first and second graders were playing with their Lego's and different little toys. I observed there were groups of threes, fours, maybe fives. As I scanned the classroom, I saw one kid playing by himself with a different set of toys. No one seemed to pay him any attention, and he was screaming and clanging the toys together. I guess I was staring and making a weird facial expression, because the teacher called me over and explained something to me. She told me that this particular kid was special education, and needed to be separate from the rest of the class, and needed a different kind of attention than the other kids. I felt embarrassed, but she told me it was okay, because she felt the exact same way. The lessons to my story are not to judge, talk about, or look at anyone different without knowing them first. Or look at them with the mindset of thinking that they hold a lower standard than you, because their background and upbringing may be different from your own. This goes into the principle, "The inherent worth and dignity of every person", and acceptance of one another.

Overall, from my involvement at this agency, I learned many valuable lessons, things that cannot fully be understood without having the experiences to truly put it into action. I learned to have more compassion, patience, and respect for others. I learned the cliché lesson of not judging a book by its cover, and to accept others for who they are. Not only did I gain this insight from the generation below me, but also from the ones above me.

I feel that in the end, I have contributed a lot to this agency. I helped kids have a great time in camp, while participating in team events, such as our camp's color wars. In color wars, each grade was assigned a color and we competed in different activities, for example, musical chairs, relay race, and tug of war. This also helped build a community within this program. In addition, most kids enrolled in the summer program cannot afford the most expensive summer camps that the middle and upper class income can afford. Therefore, I helped create an experience that was immeasurable in price.

***Mary Brennan INN
UU Congregation of Shelter Rock***

The Mary Brennan Inn located in the center of Hempstead serves to provide food and shelter to the homeless of Hempstead and the surrounding area. It has been a blessing being able to work with such a caring and loving organization. I can't imagine another place when so much good can be done with such limited resources. The Inn upholds the 7 UU principles greater than many other organizations I've taken part in. The first principle is obvious, "the inherent worth and dignity of every person" Fulfilling this principle while at the Inn was natural. In orientation, we are told to drop all biases, prejudices and just to help. It didn't matter what the person looked like, said, or even how they acted. As long as the guest was acting in a safe and appropriate manner they had the right to be served to our best ability. The second principle is in line is also in line with this teaching. Every guest at the Inn was given our full attention and compassion, they were treated like a guest in someone's own home. The third principle was less enforced, as a staff

I was not permitted to share my own spiritual beliefs, or could I ask it of any of our guests. If a guest asked where to find faith, we would recommend them to a list of churches, temples, mosques, and other religious organizations in the area. At the Inn we accepted the spiritual growth of all individuals, but we were not allowed to encourage this growth due to guidelines. Another principle held at the Inn was the sixth, "The goal of a world community for peace, liberty and justice for all". At the Inn it was our responsibility to keep all individuals, staff, and guest alike in a safe welcoming environment. If there were any problems between guests or staff, a supervisor would handle it, giving everyone the benefit of doubt and serving justice to the best of their ability. Working at the Inn taught me the value of hard work, but more so the value of meaningful work. Seeing the look on people's faces when you give them something as small as a stick of deodorant, is indescribable. The joy and pride I gained from working at the Mary Brennan Inn would reflect in me a great deal of time. Just experiencing this type of social work has taught me so much. I heard stories from the guests about their lives, and how much the Inn means to them. The contributions I made at the Inn were personal, being able to help even a single person brought me a sense of accomplishment, because I knew I was helping make a change. I am so grateful I was able to have this experience and will most likely do it again someday soon.

Eager to Serve, Inc., Country Club Day Camp
UUCSR

This past summer I volunteered at a camp in a neighboring community for children from less fortunate families. My internship at Country Club Day Camp helped me grow in so many ways, even though there were only eight campers enrolled. The children taught me that no matter your situation, you always have the option to be happy and have fun with others. A lot of the campers have hard home lives, yet this never stopped them from coming to camp with a smile on their face, ready to play the day away. Seeing this reminded me of the UU Principle that dictates the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. All of these children deserve a place where they can be blissfully ignorant to the world's problems and just focus on having fun, and camp provided them with such a place. Part of my role at my internship was teaching the kids how to get along with each other, how to be respectful, and how to be a good friend. Teaching them these lessons reminded me of the UU principle that states the acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation. I felt as though I was teaching the campers how to accept one another for who they are and that I was encouraging them to grow as human beings and become a better version of themselves. Often times, children will argue with each other in front of the counselors and then, when asked what happened, will change their story so as to not get in trouble. My value of free and responsible search for truth and meaning was strengthened when I had to ask every single camper what they heard and saw to investigate the story of what happened so as to allow me to teach the campers the correct lesson regarding how to better handle such a situation in the future. Every camper has a different situation at home, making them accustomed to different social situations. I had the opportunity to practice the principle of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations very often so I could give every camper the chance to explain their social situation at home, in order to give me a better understanding of why they act the way they do. Allowing campers to explain themselves and asking other campers to report on the issues that arise during camp taught me about the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large because I didn't abuse my power over them to make the executive decision on what happened, because I recognized that I may not have known the entire situation. Instead I gave the campers the chance to enlighten me before deciding how to go about handling the situation at large. The respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part was demonstrated not only through the connections I formed with the campers, but through our trips to the Bronx Zoo and the Jones Beach Nature Center. It was on these trips that I witnessed how connected all living

beings are and that those connections don't just form from human to human. Rather, they form from human to human, animal to animal, human to animal and vice versa. Watching the campers find their voices, grow as individuals, become a family, and enjoy their time at camp strengthened my value for the inherent worth and dignity of every person. They not only listened to me as an authority figure and a mentor, they allowed me to be a part of their lives and I respect them greatly for that. Not every camper would share their life with me, but I found that all of the campers at Country Club Day Camp did so, and I am forever grateful for this experience. I believe that this internship gave me so much practice with my UU principles and strengthened my values immensely.

All in all, I learned that every child goes through different life experiences and every child needs to be dealt with in a different way. For instance, some children need a hug when they're upset, while others need to talk it out with a counselor, while others just need to be alone for a little bit. Every human being deals with things in a different way and it takes patience, compassion, and good listening skills to be able to give each camper what they need in order to process different events in life. I dealt with campers from the ages of four to twelve and I found that a four year old may have the ability and life skills to handle some situations better than a twelve year old has been equipped with. Most importantly, I learned that every child under my watch looked up to me and mirrored my behaviors in a way, which made me much more aware of my actions and encouraged me to make better decisions and deal with situations better than I ever have before. I feel as though the children taught me more life lessons than I did for them.

I believe I have contributed a lot to my participating agency. I provided them with an extra set of hands that were willing to do anything they needed help with. I added extra hours to my weekly schedule in order to help them further. I taught the campers personally choreographed dances, art history, how to make arts and crafts projects, how to be a good friend, how to deal with many different situations, and how to lead a safe, happy, and healthy life. In addition, I provided my participating agency with multiple facilities to take the campers on a trip when the weather wasn't permitting us to stay in the outdoors, where the camp was run. I also provided them with an article for their website teaching the readers about the benefits of children playing outdoors and with an abundance of pictures of the campers for their parents to enjoy. I feel as though the agency benefited greatly from my assistance, and I was more than happy to provide them with an extra set of hands at their camp.

JDRF
UUCSR

Over the course of this summer I volunteered at the JDRF Long Island Chapter Office one to two days a week. I have volunteered here previously during the school years for the past five years. I have Type One Diabetes so I found this internship to be particularly close to my heart considering JDRF is the leading global organization that funds research for a cure to Type One Diabetes. I was tasked with finding endocrinologists throughout Long Island. The purpose of this was to strengthen the communication between JDRF and endocrinologists to keep each organization in the know about technological advancements and breakthroughs in the research for a cure to Type One Diabetes and improving Type One Diabetics quality of life. Volunteering here has deeply strengthened my UU principles, deepening my understanding and showing me real-world applications of each of the seven principles.

Finding the correct contact information for these endocrinologists taught me more about the inherent worth and dignity of every person because by creating a new line of communication it created another

opportunity for a Type One Diabetic to retrieve the proper information regarding the research happening. Creating these connections deepened my understanding of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations and the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all because I opened the doorway to providing every endocrinologist the opportunity to receive and share updates on research that can benefit every patient of theirs and every Type One Diabetic that is given this information. In addition, it taught me more about acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation by acknowledging the equal right of every endocrine practice to be in the loop about the advancements in the world of medicine. These connections allow for the free and responsible search for truth and meaning by allowing everyone in the intertwined web of Type One Diabetes to have access to the knowledge that endocrinologists and JDRF has. Certain endocrinology practices have the right to decline giving and receiving information in relation to JDRF and this strengthened my understanding of the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large. Being given the opportunity to work at this organization gave me an extremely deep understanding of the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part when I was able to meet countless amounts of other diabetics, help the organization that was funding research to free me, and the world, of Type One Diabetes, and make personal and professional relationships with many others. I learned about the connection that all Type One Diabetics have with each other, whether it is recognized or not, and it showed me how each and every living being on this Earth have at least one thing in common with each other.

One example of making these important connections was calling the endocrinologists office whose mail was returned and ensuring I had the correct information. I spoke to many endocrinologists and learned about their interest in sending and receiving information regarding the advancements in the research field of Type One Diabetes.

Overall, I believe I have learned an immense amount from this internship. I have learned a lot about how to make professional connections, how to make professional phone calls, and how to do paperwork in an office setting. This internship has strengthened my knowledge and beliefs in the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism.

Hobbs Community Farm, and Sweetbriar Nature Center UUFSB

Over the course of this summer break I had the wonderful opportunity to work at two local organizations on Long Island, Hobbs Community Farm, and Sweetbriar Nature Center. through the Student Activity Fund. The organizations were both very much in touch with my Unitarian Universalist values and principle, and relates most heavily to the seventh principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are all a part of". Through my tasks at both Sweetbriar and Hobbs Farm, I was able to connect more to my Unitarian values

Sweetbriar Nature Center is an organization run out of Smithtown, and their main goal and purpose that they serve to the community is to function as a nature discovery center. Much of their work involves wildlife rehabilitation, in which the organization rescues local wildlife, and eventually releasing these animals back into the wild. The organization also has a summer discovery camp program, which is a program dedicated to both nature and wildlife education and enrichment.

Hobbs Community Farm is a local farm located in Centereach, where crops are grown in both open fields and gardens, and then this produce is donated to several local organizations, such as churches, homeless shelters, and soup kitchens. Hobbs Community Farm has a very important educational garden, which is set up in a way where children can learn about the importance of growing and eating organic food, and a section of this garden is fully wheelchair accessible so that all can participate. Many separate groups, such as schools and scout programs, come to the farm to participate in these educational programs.

These two organizations helped me to connect to the Unitarian Universalist values in several ways that connect to many principles. In connection to the seventh principle especially though, I found that being able to work with children and educate them on the importance and value of the natural world to be incredibly rewarding. At both Sweetbriar Nature Center and Hobbs Community Farm, I was given opportunities to share my knowledge with these children, in areas such as recycling, treating animals with kindness and respect, and the importance of eating organic fruits and vegetables, which all connect to the seventh principle! These two organizations have always been a joy to work at.

***Friends for Garvies Point Museum
Shelter Rock Congregation***

At Garvies Point Museum, I met some extraordinary children with whom I had the opportunity to cultivate an appreciation of the environment, the geology of Long Island as well as the history of First Society people. This was done through the children's workshop, a program run through the Museum. It is a conglomeration of different children from various economic levels who come together to enjoy each other as well as learn about minerals, rocks, plants, the beach, Native American peoples, and glacial history. The latter included the opportunity to touch large glacially deposited boulders which have striations left by the glacier. There was a great deal of opportunity to learn, touch, create and celebrate all of this through exploration.

Principle #5

I met a second grader named Vienna who reinforced my fundamental UU being. She said to me one day "What I want in the world is love". That's what the world is all about. I want to spread love and I want to get love" Vienna reinforced my core values: spread love, not hate. It was real, true, simple, and extraordinarily impactful. It was also very Unitarian. The need for respect and love transcends all of our differences and it is the underlying bedrock behind the seven UU principles. All of us really need to express ourselves through love and all of us thrive when we get love, respect and appreciation for who we are. And even second grade children know and feel this. Principle #3

I think I left the children of this local area, regardless of who they were, with an appreciation of the environment, the earth's history and a sense of who the peoples were before "Contact". In addition, I had the opportunity to help process a large donation of books that came in and this will be a part of the Museum library for future researchers interested in indigenous peoples. It is important that the history and worth of other peoples be preserved (Principle #1). We helped the children learn that history and the indigenous people who made (and still make) our history are extremely important and have extreme worth in our society. This is connected to our first principle because it allows the children to realize that every person has importance, inherent worth and dignity regardless of their ethnic origin and skin color.

Through the Friends of Garvies Point, I have furthered children's' understanding of the environment which is critical to our future. Respect for the web of all of our existences is the key to our survival and quality of life for all humans on this planet. It is by education that we will hopefully accomplish this before climate change impacts the survivability of all peoples. (Principle #7)

The understanding of past or indigenous peoples and the preservation of their material culture is an important part of the respect we show not only to their culture but also it honors the history of all peoples. It is important to honor all peoples and preserve their memory as best as we can. All peoples are worthy of a recorded history and the preservation of their culture's past as seen through the lens of artifacts, documents and photographs. I assisted in processing a donation of books from a local archaeologist, Dr. Gaynell Stone. This

will be made available to researchers as they try to piece together the history and prehistory of Long Island. Each culture needs to be respected and honored. Principles # 2, 4 and 6

The education of children on the culture of other peoples, as well as respect and understanding of the planet will hopefully create a better world where different people are accepted and treasured. We can only change the world a little bit at a time and I think I have provided an education and appreciation of our environment and different peoples through the lens of Native Americans.

This experience has not only greatly benefited the children and the Friends of Garvies Point, but also my wellbeing by allowing me to help out an organization. Teaching the children about the history and geology of our land helped further both their and my understanding of the world we live in and the extreme worth of all people.

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” George Santayana (1863-1952)

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington

During the summer of 2018 I worked as an intern in the Long Island office at the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Previously having no knowledge of what Cystic Fibrosis is, I quickly came to learn about its affects and the impact it has on people’s lives and how great of an organization CFF is to help cure CF. As an intern I worked with whatever needed to be done which included procuring companies to donate items for one of our silent auction fundraisers, making care packages for 3 of our care centers on Long Island, and working with the other interns to create a plan to boost the young professional program. I also had a great opportunity to go into Manhattan to tour one of the care centers and learn about their benefits and more about CF in general. This experience has opened my eyes to a disease I had no idea existed beforehand to seeing how much work and effort so many people put into the foundation in order to cure this genetic mutation these people have.

Working alongside professionals in this non-profit who are dedicated to planning events and raising money and doing everything in their power to make CF a condition of the past helped me to relate to the first UU principal unintentionally. Dedicating my summer to help those with this rare genetic condition reminded me “the inherent worth and dignity of every person.” There’s so many people with rare genetic mutations that go through dozens of pills each day, weeks in the hospital at a time and low life expectancy that most of the population don’t realize these people have to go through. It reminded me that people are going through challenges and hardships and that even though you may not have a personal connection, they still need help and support from others.

Each day working at CFF reminded me that an entire foundation with hundreds of employees are hard at work to make sure a cure is found. Without people working every day, and working together as team and having a mission, CF wouldn’t be where it is today. For such a small percent of the population that has CF, there is a huge force behind them trying to make their lives better. I never realized how much dedication there had to be to make a foundation so successful for something so rare. Everyday I came into the office and my coworkers would already be there and by the time I left they were still hard at work, day in and day out. They don’t know if or when a cure will be found but regardless they still put on events and fundraise and are hard at work everyday trying to improve these people’s lives.

Being able to go to Beth Israel in Manhattan to visit a CF care center was one of the best experiences I had here at CFF. Before this I had no idea how extensive the treatments are and how much goes into caring for a person with CF. It made me appreciate the doctors, researchers, foundation workers and everyone who has a part in helping to alleviate some of the misfortunes of having CF. It made me much more aware that there's so many people who dedicate their lives to fields and rare diseases/mutations that aren't as well known to the greater population. That experience made me wonder about all the other development going on in the world that has such a great and drastic impact on people's lives that I and many others are unaware of.

Even though I bet little has changed in the development for curing CF from the time I arrived, I do feel as though I have created a strong connection to CF and the foundation. The work that I accomplished as an intern may be minuscule in the grand scheme of curing this genetic mutation but I believe that my involvement with creating an action plan for our young professionals program will be of great use in the future and hopefully be an avenue to engage more donors and knowledge about CF. Picking up the work my coworkers didn't have time to do made me feel like I wasn't only just making their lives easier, but I knew that the work that needed to be done would also benefit those with CF in some way. No matter how big the job was that I completed I knew that the work I was doing was helping someone somewhere who would benefit from it in one shape or form.

Learning and working at the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation taught me more than just what CF is. It taught me that even though you're working for this mission that you may not see come to light in your lifetime, that your hard work will pay off in the future even if you don't see it today. Just because a small percent of the population may have some type of mutation they still deserve the same hard work and dedication than those from a greater population.

***Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington***

This past summer, I volunteered at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Oyster Bay. While there, I learned how to feed turtles and snacks, help with trail maintenance, do work around the office, and also help out the counselors during nature camp. While volunteering there, the 7th and final UU principal really connected with me and since I was outdoors almost all day and got to re-appreciate nature and the world around us. Learning more about animals, wildlife and the environment actually made me reconsider my minor in college to being an "environmental economics and policy" minor to try and use my knowledge about business and economics to better the world and environment. I never spent as much time outside alongside nature as much as I did with at the Sanctuary and it was a very peaceful and grounding experience for me as I found a new love for the environment and maintaining the beauty of it.

While I volunteered at the Sanctuary, I learned that it takes very passionate and dedicated people to continue to keep our environment beautiful and growing and without conservation and protection it could all be taken away. Land and nature need support of the people to make sure it's conserved. Without the knowledge and dedication and love for teaching and conservation these workers have, the area around us could be drastically different. It was evident to see at the day camp that teaching children at a young age about the necessity about conservation and to appreciate nature had an impact on how they interact with wildlife and the grounds while playing. The children's knowledge and love for nature shined through and made you excited and eager to work beside them and learn more together.

One particular experience that stood out to me was during camp one day. While all the other children were running around, a few of the others stayed near the benches to play and examine some slugs that they have

found. These kids are only about 7 years old and it amazed me with how much knowledge they knew about not only the slugs themselves but the different types, and their behaviors and just general facts that I had no knowledge about. So many of the kids knew so much about a variety of different subjects and I was taken aback by how much they knew at such a young age. I was learning so much from the children and it reminded me that there's a lot to learn from listening and talking to people who aren't your direct peer. It made me appreciate working with children more and helping to foster that curiosity that they all acquire.

Each time I came to the Sanctuary, I felt as though the work I was doing was really appreciated by the workers. With having such a small staff, every little bit helps and I could see that whenever I came it was a slight sense of relief for them to have someone take a little load off of their hands. I feel as though helping at the office, at the camp and the trails made it so the staff could concentrate on the larger aspects of their jobs and that I was able to take some of their workload off. It felt good to know that I was not only helping the staff, but also it was going to impact the Sanctuary and the environment in some form.