

Spiritual Institute Meeting Minutes
09.01.2010

Spiritual Institute Mission: to create safe opportunities for LGBT youth to do their spiritual work

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, September 29, 6:00 PM, UCC, 474 Broad Street, Meriden

Present: Isabelle Delgado, Christine Forsyth, Darrick Jackson, Robin McHaelen, Aaron Miller,
Mike Reynolds, Laura Westby

Action Tasks: Laura- call Wisdom, call United Jewish Center (Danbury) & Temple Shearith Israel (Ridgefield)
Christine- find out of Christian Scientists in area, call Gishrei Shalom Jewish Congregation (Southington) & Temple Israel (Westport)
Mike- call B'nai Israel (Southbury) & Temple Sinai (Stamford)
Robin- call Pagans in area, call Congregation Mishkan Israel (Hamden) & Temple Shalom (Norwalk)
Aaron- call Temple Beth Tikvah (Madison) & Temple Emanuel (Orange)
Isabelle- find event location in Bridgeport and call Congregation B'Nai Israel (Bridgeport)

1. Meeting roles and responsibilities for next meeting
 - a. Agenda (**Darrick**)
 - b. Facilitation (**Christine**)
 - c. Note-taking and Minutes (**Isabelle**)
 - d. Follow-up Action Steps (**Mike**)
2. Action Tasks update from July meeting- were not completed
3. Spiritual Speed Dating Event
 - a. Where, When, potential Agenda
 - i. Where: looking at potential locations in Bridgeport (Isabelle), space to accommodate about 200 people for carnival- type activities
 - ii. When: Fall 2010
 - iii. Potential Agenda
 1. Themes

- a. Puzzle Pieces: leaving puzzle pieces around state to advertise, link chains or puzzle pieces together, “Got Piece?”, “Puzzled By Faith?”, etc.
- b. Pirate: each person is a treasure, life is a journey to get somewhere and sometimes the waters get choppy but we all have shipmates as supports, etc.
- c. Carnival: needs to be fleshed out
- d. Taste test/ Buffet: match a (bite size) food with each tradition, sample each thing to figure out which one you like best, etc.
- e. Explorers in an unknown world: compasses, journey, trying to navigate the rough terrain ahead, etc.
- f. Link to National Adoption Month?
- g. Other ideas?

2. Activities

- a. Games: Each church/ temple/ etc. run a booth, participants win prizes, be entered into a drawing, etc.
- b. Interactive play: short skits playing out common scenarios faced by LGBTQ youth, have attendees be participants/ actors
- c. Stage: One main speaker, each church/ temple/ etc. takes a turn, skits, etc.
- d. Other ideas?

b. Outreach planning (letter and follow-up)

- i. Engage churches/ temples/ etc. in participating in event

- 1. segue way into involvement with other SI projects/ initiatives

- ii. See Action Tasks

c. Ideas/ blurbs about what this event is and is about

- i. Bringing together a diverse group of young adults, to learn about and encounter a wide variety of spiritual traditions in an atmosphere that is welcoming, all-inclusive, fun, and informative; features games, young people from all around the area, information from many faith traditions and activities that integrate and build connections among one another. Faith is fun!

- ii. Sponsored by True Colors and the Spiritual Institute, an event designed to provide an interfaith experience by LGBTQIA youth that is fun and enlightening. Come sample the different faith traditions and explore the openness of each in a safe space that's guaranteed to be fun. Seek & celebrate your spirituality.
- iii. Puzzled by faith? Come work toward putting all the pieces together. PLAY: Play games, win prizes, role play, and just have a great time being yourself! LEARN: Learn about faiths that are open and accepting of you- just the way you are. TEACH: Teach others about what it's like reconciling your faith or spirituality with your gender orientation or sexual orientation. Teach us what we can do to better serve and understand you.
- iv. Safe place to learn about faith, offering youth a chance to *explore*.
- v. A guided opportunity for youth to experience and celebrate a radical, extravagant welcome to a variety of faith traditions and celebrate our inclusive spirit through music, games, activities, etc.

4. Conference planning

- a. UU Grant
- b. Potential Workshops
 - i. Historical perspectives of LGBTQ people, Biblical perspectives, personal experiences (?), UU's nonviolent approach, LGBTQ spirituality, no specific religion, sex and the scriptures, labels given to us by society and religious institutions (participants will make buttons= own labels), spiritual journeys (starting and ending points, obstacles and supports)
- c. Outreach for presenters
 - i. Peterson Toscano has said he would do a show free of charge
 - ii. Other ideas? (post meeting note, Laura sent in some ideas for workshops including: **Sex and the scriptures:** What do the holy books of our faiths say about gender, sexuality and the proper use of our bodies? Are there some common threads that can help us develop an ethic of intimacy? (For example, proper care of our bodies, the blessings and responsibilities of intimacy, mutuality, etc); **Labels: A look at the labels we are given and the ones we claim for ourselves.** How do these labels help and how do they harm? Do we need them at all? How has religion labeled us and are these labels true? (I have an idea about having a button-maker there so the kids can make their own "label"); **Journeys:** We're all on the road from somewhere and to somewhere. The idea of journey or pilgrimage is central to many faiths. Where are we on our

journey? Who are our companions? What are the obstacles and where are the oases?

- d. Workshops separate from conference
 - i. we do not have the option to emphasize or promote specific faiths, at the conference due to funding/ legal issues
- 5. Meeting evaluation, next steps and close
 - a. What worked: having an agenda, food, having opportunity to sit quietly and think individually and write ideas down
 - b. See Action Tasks, Mike follow up with people to ensure they were done