

UUCB Congregational Meeting May 15, 2016
Social Justice Council Sponsored Project Application Renewal

One year ago the Social Justice Council's application for our **Confronting Racism Project** was approved by the Congregation. At that time we hoped to engage 125 UUCB members, friends and youth in conversations, actions and workshops, as we all learn more about confronting racism. Since then we have engaged more than 700 individuals!

In June we launched the project with an interactive workshop on racism, white privilege, and implicit bias led by the Reverends Donnell Jones and Ben McBride, of CCISCO and PICO, respectively. 100 people attended. At Reverend McBride's urging, the SJC held a six session discussion group on Dr. King's *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, which 12 UUCB members and friends attended. SJC members formed the LFDC (Literature, Film and Drama Contingent) which has met monthly to deepen our understanding of institutional racism and implicit bias. We value when we speak of our own moments of awareness of unconscious bias (MAUBs) as "individual ignorance sustains institutional racism" (from the Black Lives Matter movement). LFDC members collaborated in a powerful UUCB worship service on racism in January, commemorating the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Along with CCISCO, SJC members joined the Contra Costa County Racial Justice Coalition (CCCRJC) last summer to defeat a county jail expansion as part of the movement to end mass incarceration. The SJC then hosted the CCCRJC's first Summit in February that addressed the future of racial justice within the county. 100 county residents and representatives from numerous organizations participated in this daylong workshop at UUCB, which is now a model for other town halls throughout the county. Subsequently, the coalition's work led the County Board of Supervisors to establish a task force to analyze racial disparity in arrests, convictions and other aspects of the criminal justice system.

In March, UUCB hosted a live concert by **HeartBeat**, a musical group composed of Palestinian and Israeli youth. More than 135 guests attended, most of them nonmembers. Afterwards, conversations ensued that expressed feelings. In April, more than 300 people attended **Ghost Town to Havana**, a baseball documentary filled with storytelling while it evidences structured racism still permeating daily life in Oakland. A Q & A with the director and coach of the Oakland Royals team and one of the players enhanced the event's caliber. Beth Jerde did an incredible job on reaching out to many.

Each Friday night at least six members of the SJC are part of Ceasefire Walks in the "Iron Triangle" of Richmond, a high crime area. We march, carrying signs to end gun violence and honking horns for peace, while building a sense of community with other walkers. At the site of a homicide, a prayer vigil is held, often with the family present.

We now have Black Lives Matter (BLM) banners in the atrium and at the church entrance that demonstrate our support of the movement. The SJC recommends that the congregation votes to extend the Confronting Racism project for this upcoming year and officially supports the Black Lives Matter Movement, as recommended by UUA President Peter Morales (handout). At this time we also ask the congregation to approve UUCB displaying our BLM banner in public marches and demonstrations, such as in the June 26th San Francisco Pride Parade that has **Black Lives Matter** as this year's theme.

We kick off **Confronting Racism-2** with **HipHop4Change** on June 26th in Summer Forum. We plan to examine Islam/Islamophobia; a potential film series that investigates varied facets of racism; possibly funding coaches for Little League in Oakland/Richmond; more involvement with Ceasefire.