

Education

Summer Workshop in International Living

by Elaine Miller

1960s at UUCB (then FUCB) During the summer the kids would have—I forget what it was called [*Summer Workshop in International Living*] but it was something like a day camp—based on a country. I think we did Russia one year, and maybe Greece another year. Maybe they were called Russia Workshop, or Greek Workshop. I remember sitting in folding chairs in the social hall and singing songs from the country, and in the Fireside Room doing crafts: making a plaque out of clay, or sewing a Greek shoulder bag (did we weave the fabric?). We got to choose a Greek name for ourselves if I remember correctly. I don't remember what I chose but I think Kath chose Ismene. I had a great time being with a group of kids and learning about other countries. I also remember going out behind the south end of church below the choir room and sliding down the hillside on cardboard. During the summer the hill was covered with tall, dry grass that would bend over and lie down flat, becoming slippery and easy to slide on. I seem to remember someone getting stuck with a big sticker.

Summer Workshop in International Living

by Fern Labuhn

I believe this program was the best learning experience a child could have other than flying off to different countries and learning about the people there. I was only about nine years old and I believe it was in 1955 or 1956. My family had recently come to the church, and there were a number of young children who participated—I was one of them. The idea was to introduce children to people of different cultures as a way to educate the younger generation as well as the parents to help to encourage love and understanding among all people of the world. I don't remember if it was open to the public, but it probably was.

The summer programs I remember were up at the “Church on the Hill.” The programs consisted of many Sundays where some parents volunteered their time to help out. The parents made clothing of the country for the children, which we wore each Sunday. Frances McDaniels was in charge of the various foods of the country, and there were artwork and religion; and we studied some of the language and writing and learned the dancing. It was quite an undertaking.

One country was Japan. Erda, my mother, made me a Japanese kimono. It had a pink background with little delicate colored flowers on it. In the middle around my waist was a wide piece of blue material with a square piece in back like a bow. This is called an obi. I don't remember having the geta shoes or tabi socks.

All the children and “teachers” set up long tables on the stage in the Social Hall, and we worked on learning to write our names in Japanese and to say 1 through 10. Ichi, Ni, San, Shi, Go, Roku, Shichi, Hachi, Kyuu, Juu. Somewhere I still have my Japanese letters spelling my name. I

remember we used brushes and black paint to make them. We learned about Shinto shrines and Buddha and Bodhisattvas; and we drank jasmine tea and ate rice, fish, bean curd soup, and little candies with a second paper on it that you could actually eat.

Another country was Iran. Mother made me a Persian brown-velvet, long-sleeve jacket with gold buttons down the front and on the bottom of the sleeves. I had a long skirt and soft slipper-like shoes and a pillbox-type brown-velvet hat with gold rickrack. On top of the hat was a long yellow net veil that went down the back and fluffed out over my shoulders. She had painstakingly glued on multicolored sequins. So elaborate. I learned about rose water, which was put into one of the dishes and it smelled so wonderful! To this day I have several bottles of rose water on my kitchen shelf.

At the end of these workshops several members of these cultures from the Bay Area and also the press were invited to come and share with us their language, religion, culture; and see what we had learned through the summer. I have newspaper articles with pictures of myself in costume, which reminds me what an incredible adventure this was. It is interesting to me today to look back on these summers and realize that the first place in the world that I wanted to, and did, visit was Japan. Years later my husband Bill and I donated a Japanese dinner to the church auction and served an entire homemade Japanese dinner in full costume, including the tabi and geta and full Japanese wigs. What a ball we had.

More on the Summer Workshop

by Grace Ulp

The Summer Workshop in International Living was run by three Berkeley churches: the Berkeley Fellowship, the First Unitarian Church of Berkeley (its name then) and the South Berkeley Church. Women from the three churches would choose a country to study during the winter: food, music, stories, dances, history; and get in touch with the local authorities from that country for whatever help they would give. The next summer they would hold a two-week summer program teaching all this to the children of the three churches. I believe there were six or seven countries studied: Japan, Iran and Brazil; and perhaps France, Italy and Mexico.

My favorite memory was teaching weaving on little looms. One of the small boys wove a striped scarf for his mother's Christmas present. He carefully folded it into a shoebox and said he'd keep it under his bed. "Won't she find it?" "Nah. I'm going to punch air holes in the cover—she wouldn't open it."



Memories from a Former Religious Education Director: August 1980 to June 1988 (I think!)

by Anne Greenwood

When I first was hired, the position was quarter time, and there were also paid youth group leaders for the junior and senior high groups. When I left, we had moved the position to half time, with the support of many volunteers, many of whom left an indelible imprint on me.

Margaret Hunting, author of the Judy Bolton mystery series, and Elizabeth deVelbiss worked with the youngest ones; Jean and Bob Moore started Family Focus, a wonderful family activity that included trips to Dell Valle Park, snow trips, game nights, overnights and more; Judy Rishel and Karen Campbell taught many classes, served on the RE committee, were major supporters; Lucile Miles and Lynne Cahoon are still teaching and mentoring; Orel Wolters left a lasting dedicated gift; Joan Smith Peterkin and her late husband Walt took over the committee when I left; Vern Muhr and Sheila Tarbet brought their kids; Ira Nelken, Mac Lingo, Doug Pryne and John Tucker flipped pancakes for many an Easter breakfast; Erda Labuhn, daughter Fern and granddaughter Adre all helped.

One summer I remember hiring Luisa Teish, the amazing African American woman writer/artist/performer, to work with the kids to write and perform their own play about hunger. And there was the performance of a play about ending war that we produced for one August Sunday Service; I can't recall the name or the troupe now.

There were car washes in the parking lot during the service, lunches cooked and served. There was my son and his buddy, Kevin Campbell, riding their skateboards under the pews while they waited for their mothers to finally get done and go home. There was Michael Moreskine demonstrating the organ in the sanctuary as part of the entertainment during a Halloween overnight, with Dick (Rev. Boeke) telling ghost stories and taking the kids on a tour of all the rooms downstairs, along with pumpkin carving and the largest zucchini I have ever seen, donated by Grace Ulp. We all slept on the floor of the Fireside Room in our sleeping bags. When I returned from Japan in the summer of 1984 we had a class where Karen Campbell and Judy Rishel helped all the kids make kimonos and learn about Children's Day and customs.

There was curriculum writing, starting my courtship by Dr. John Tucker with a unit on Ecology. Another theme was "A Peaceful Self Creates a Peaceful World" where we taught cooperative games and self esteem. and brought in "World without War" people and materials.

I got a great education and an abiding love for the role that Religious Education can play in the lives of young and old in the congregation.



RE Progression

by Paul Hudson

Generally, the progression for Religious Education to Adulthood is as follows.

- Religious Education (RE) classes: grades K–6
- Coming of Age: grades 7–8
- Young Religious Unitarian Universalists: grades 9–12, generally 14–18 years old. UUCB's group is called the Chrysalis Group.

- Campus Ministries, for college students and people 18–21.
- Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Network: ages 21–35. This group included the Numinous Circle, which was our young adult group in the 1990s. The group effectively does not exist now. It has been replaced by the UUYAN group coordinated by Josh and Emily Clarke.