AIM Task Force Meeting Minutes

2/28/2016

* Bill LaPorte-Bryan welcomed members and reviewed agenda. Also mentioned other pertinent items:
  + There will be one survey of the congregation that will cover all disabilities.
  + We will work closely with relevant established organizations in the church on our projects and workshops ... e.g., B&G, members of the staff, Caring Network, SGM, etc.
  + The subgroups are now encouraged to start their work in whatever way they want to, keeping you and me informed for coordination purposes.
  + The entire 16 member task force will meet infrequently and be kept informed with emails.  No date is set for the next meeting.
  + Some projects and workshops that can be done and funded relatively easily and quickly can take place even before we submit our overall plan and get it approved by the UUA.
* Brief introductions by all present
* Katharine Ann Buck-Anderson reviewed UUA AIM process and USH progress
  + In late January, the UUA Review Team approved our work so far, which means we can move to phase 2 in conducting a needs assessment. We will use the results of this assessment to come up with specific plans to make our church more accessible and inclusive to all.
  + Workshop we will be offering at the conference called, Cluster Connections, which is a gathering of UU congregations across CT for strengthening and supporting each other as fellow UU communities. Set for Saturday, **April 9, in Hamden, CT. It is $30 for any interested in attending**
  + Disabilities themed workshop scheduled for April 17th, but after discussing the MS walk, there may be a need to work on rescheduling this service.
* Brianna Bittel reviewed completed accessibility checklist
  + Some of the key items mentioned were: public transportation (it’s not great and those with disabilities may need to rely on it); need for hearing loop and improved lighting; accessible phone buttons and TTY services; bathroom accessibility; kitchen accessibility in Fellowship Hall; emergency system (e.g., in case of fire), outdoors (memorial garden; accessible playground)
  + It was recommended that the Task Force determines what the minimum requirements are to be met regarding the checklist items in order to become certified by UUA.
  + Funding was discussed. Funding will come from a variety of sources – the stewardship campaign budget, individual donations, possibly the endowment, possibly outside sources (e.g., UUA)
* Subgroups individually discussed ideas for potential workshops and projects
* Subgroups shared with entire group their ideas:
  + Learning and Intellectual Disabilities subgroup:
    - Protocols in place for reading for individuals with cognitive and visual impairments (e.g., avoiding center-justified and italics; instead use 1 font and bold for emphasis; Helvetica & Arial are effective)
    - Religious Education (RE) – develop a protocol for identifying and supporting children with mental health or cognitive impairment needs; record keeping for teachers to facilitate movement from one class to the next seamlessly; activities protocol designed to be inclusive
      * Professional development for instructors to implement protocols to support children
  + Mental and Psychological Health subgroup:
    - Mental Health First Aid training
    - Free at Last Players performance and discussion workshop
    - Small group ministry specifically related to individuals coping with mental illness
  + Chronic Pain & Chronic Illness subgroup:
    - Zines/packets containing information on interacting appropriately/respectfully with those who have chronic pain and illness (e.g., what to say, what not to say)
    - Small group ministry group specifically related to chronic pain and chronic illness
    - Workshop focused on methods for dealing with pain
    - USH team for MS walk 2K or the 5K length on 4/17/2016
  + Mobility sub-group:
    - Accessible playground (noted that this will also help with USH publicity)
  + Perceptual sub-group:
    - Lighting in entrance and sanctuary need improvement
    - Sound-system needs improvement (e.g., hearing loop)
    - A professional assessment may be needed to determine the upgraded design changes that are necessary
    - Consider interpreters for those with hearing impairments. It was suggested that this may be more appropriate than captioning, as captioning requires a certain level of literacy and context can often be lost.
  + Chemical and Food Sensitivity
    - Workshop on Chemical and Food Sensitivities - by reps from the State of Connecticut and local hospitals or private medical personnel; also personal coping strategies from persons who cope with these disabilities, and information from folks who provide relevant services (i.e., gluten free bakery in Glastonbury, etc.).
* Individuals within each subgroup have been updated according to those who are no longer serving on AIM. The updated list is below. There are some names listed of those who were not able to attend the meeting today. If you would like to step down from a sub-group, or change groups, etc., please inform Katharine Ann Anderson, Bill LaPorte-Bryan and your sub-group chair so we can update the list and move forward accordingly:
  + - 1. Mobility – Chair –Paula Bleck
      * Brianna Bittel
    - 2. Perceptual (e.g., hearing, sight, sensory) – Chair- Dennis
      * Bill LaPorte-Bryan
      * Peter Magistry
      * Debbie Gosselin
      * Brianna Bittel
    - 3. Chronic Pain and Chronic Illness (\*note: chronic illness was added to the subgroup title today)– Chair – Brianna Bittel
      * Paula Bleck
    - 4. Mental & Psychological Health – Chair – Bill LaPorte-Bryan
      * Katharine Ann Buck-Anderson
      * Gloria Francesca Mengual
      * Valerie Klokow
      * Brianna Bittel
      * Tom?
    - 5. Learning & Intellectual Disabilities – Chair - Owen McKenzie
      * Valier Klokow
      * Helen K.
    - 6. Chemical & Food Sensitivity – Chairs – Edith Savage
      * Larry Lunden

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Ann