

# Unity Spiritual Center of Woodstock

## Youth Ministry Report for Fiscal Year 2015/2016

### Marie Wendt

**(Opening Slide; Slide 1: Youth Ministry Report for 2015/2016)** Good morning, I'm Marie Wendt the Youth Ministry Director. And as I reflected on this year, my 11th year as the Youth Ministry Director, I have at least 11 good reasons why I am still the YM Director.

**(Slide 2: Reason #1 Our CommUnity)** We are not only surviving, but thriving !!

**(Slide 3: Reason #2 Our Center)** What a Blessing it is, to have this beautiful space to work and worship in:)

**(Slide 4: Reason #3 Our YM Coordinators & Asst. Coordinator)** Our 3 Coordinators, and our 1 Asst. Coordinator are a big part of the reason the program works so well.

Holly Yee, our 4th and 5th grade Unitee coordinator, Karen Leparski, our 6th thru 8th grade Uniteen Coordinator, and Sophie Gaziano, our 9th thru 12th grade Y.O.U. coordinator, are the engines of our program.

Also, Mary Perrin, our Asst. Coordinator of the Unitees, helps the TEE program in So many ways. Jan Yee is no longer the Tikes Coordinator, even though she still serves on the Tikes team. And this last year, Darlene Preikschat, our long time Kids Coordinator has been spending more time in Tennessee, and losing her has been a major loss for me personally, and for our program. She not only did things for the Kids class, but also for the entire program, such as making all of the Easter Baskets in previous years, decorating Order for the summer program, special decorations and handouts for the congregation at Christmas time, etc. I wish Miss Darlene well in her new adventure, and am SO GRATEFUL, for all she did for all of us !

**(Slide 5: Reason #4 Our Teachers and Assistants)** They Are our Angels in the Classroom, and I would like to honor all of our Teachers and Assistants; and their commitment to our ministry. They serve a minimum of one Sunday a month and attend 8 team meetings per year. The reason we are able to have the program we do, is because of their commitment. Currently we have 35 of them! Our teachers and assistants are:

Jan Yee, Tiffanie Jacobson, Joni Long, Melissa Nielsen, Tom Hannan, Jodi Pope-Hannan, and Nancy Nott.

Amanda Santarelli, Mike Tinling, Cara Beu, Tabitha Cokinis, Debra Gelscheit, Jeri

Gradecki, Vivian Hubbard, Carol Hubner, Amber Johnson, Valerie McLeer and Mary Schweder.

Holly Yee, Mary Perrin, Steve Rauchenecker, Debbie Walsh, Vilia Jakaitis and Kimberly Petersen.

Karen Leparski, Kassi Burgos, Rosemary Morris, Stan Perrin, Steve Williams, Sophie Gaziano, Steve Jacobson, Yolanda Salazar, Jim Graff, and Mathea Jacobson.

Please join me in giving all of our teachers and assistants a Big round of applause.

**(Slide 6: Reason #5 YM Greeting Team)** And our Youth Ministry has its own Greeting team. Our greeters welcome new families, register new youth, and then connect them to their classrooms.

Our Greeting team members are:

Eileen Brannigan, Barbara Hackel, Deb Hanneman, Tiffanie Jacobson, Nancy Nott, Karen Peterson, and Jan Yee. Help me in appreciating these wonderful volunteers (applause).

**(Slide 7: Reason #6 YM Leadership Council)** Youth Ministry has a team that helps guide it and also does fundraising to help support it. The Youth Ministry Leadership Council meets about 5 times a year, and the members are: Barbara Hackel, Tiffanie Jacobson, Nancy Nott, Jan Yee and myself. Please join me in a big thank you!

**(Slide 8: Reason #7 YM Director Assistant)** YM is housed in **11 areas** (5 classrooms, our Will room (which houses some of our inventory) our Family room In Life, the Kids Korner in Fellowship, our Recycle Center, the sanctuary basement and my home office). It has been, and is, a huge project to keep it all going. Maria Pizzuto-Wubs works 7 hours a week, as a paid assistant, creating and maintaining a system for all of our inventory, and helping me with special projects. Maria was unable to be here today, but her contribution, is Absolutely Invaluable to me.

**(Slide 9: Reason #8 Our Board, Staff and all the volunteers behind the scenes)**

I continue to receive tremendous support from the Board, and I am truly grateful for their being so supportive of our Youth Ministry. I am also grateful for all of the help given by Tricia Alexander, Deb Gelscheit & all of our Admin volunteers, Jacob Cichy our website angel, Barb Lehman Cichy, insert angel, our Prayer Chaplains, our Musicians, our Building Management team, our Shopping Angel team, our Hospitality team, especially Pat Novy, Nancy Freeman, & Jim Graff, our Gardening & Landscaping team, and all of the other folks who give of themselves to keep our church humming along.

**(Slide 10: Reason #9 Our Children and Teens)** What awesome children and teens we have attending our Center ! It is a joy to get to know them, and see them reveal their Christ light. And I have heard many adults over the years say, they wish they had something like our YM when they were a kid. We are changing the world right now, and also preparing the way for a magnificent future.

**(Slide 11: Reason #10: Rev. Tom)** Even though Rev. Tom has retired from our Center, he continues to support me behind the scenes. Quite honestly, I wondered how it would be for me, without him here, but we have all made the adjustment, and he is doing well and so are we:)

**(Slide 12: Reason #11 New Initiatives: What's New What's Next)**

**What's New:**

**This last year, Youth Ministry started some new initiatives:) We began a N.G.U. (Next Generation Unity). Last June we had 8 seniors graduate, and this last year we have given them, along with previous Y.O.U.'s, an opportunity to stay connected to each other and our Center. From August to March, we had an attendance of 37 N.G.U.'s attend our Center for various events. There are very few churches in the Unity movement that have this, and I especially want to give a big shout out to Sophie Gaziano for really making this possible.**

**Also, last summer our "During Our Part with Heart; 9 Steps 2 Stop Global Warming" our Youth Ministry expanded our Centers recycling program, and we now accept, and recycle, VHS tapes, Cassette tapes, CD's, DVD's and Crayons.**

**Also, our Uniteens and Y.O.U. during their Peace and World Religions curriculum, visited the Bahai Temple in Wilmette, and the McHenry County Jewish Congregation. Our teens also did an I of the Storm curriculum, as the adult congregation was exploring this book as well.**

**Our own Alec Wagner, was elected as one of two 8 State Regionals for Y.O.U. It is a great honor to be elected to this position, and a first for our Center.**

**And our own Holly Yee, our TEE Coordinator, was nominated as Kane County Educator of the Year !! And how fortunate for us, that we have her here, at Unity Spiritual Center of Woodstock.**

**Some of our youth partipated in the outstanding Christmas Eve Service and the Good Friday service, complete with a plethora of great costumes:)**

**What's Next:** In our continued effort to provide Sacred Safety with Best Practice Policies, we will be initiating a Unaccompanied Child Policy, to insure that all of the children in the Center are safe.

We have another wonderful summer program planned "The Whole World in God's Hands" and this fall, our Kids group (grades 1st thru 3rd) and our Uniteens/Y.O.U. will all be doing a 12 Powers curriculum.

(Slide 13: **The Numbers Tell the Tale**) My theory has always been, that the more help we have, the more youth we serve, and once again it seems the numbers tell the tale.

Year	Weekly average YM attendance	# of Adults on YM teams	# of Coord. & Asst. Co.
2005	7	13	1
2007	15	27	4
2010	22	39	5 & 2
2014	25	42	5 & 1
2015	21	38	3 & 1

**And this last year, we had 8 Seniors graduate, and 5 youth moved out of state, so in one month, we lost 13 regularly attending children and teens. However, recently, we have added some wonderful new families:)**

(Slide 14: **Building the Program**) It truly does take a Village to continue this mighty work, and I need your help. (Point clicker at Computer) use right > to bring up next part

**The first thing of course is Prayer.** Please hold our Center, our Youth Ministry, our team, and our youth in your prayers.

**Second, we are seeking more Youth Ministry Assistants.** We need a deep bench to continue to do our work. And as you could see on the chart, when we have more folks on the team, we experience growth. If you are not serving in Youth Ministry, please go within, and ask yourself if this might be a wonderful way for you to serve your church family. It works, because many hands make light work, and if you join, you will be glad you did.

**Third, we are in need of 2 people to serve as Coordinators;** for the Tikes class and the Kids class; very, very important roles in the life of our Youth Ministry.

**And fourth, we need your financial support.** Please continue to support our Spiritual

Center with your tithes and offerings, so we can continue to offer this outstanding program, that will change the world far into the future.

**(Slide 15: Thank You)**

I want to thank, our Youth: They are such blessings to all of us; not only to those of us that serve in Youth Ministry, but to the entire congregation. I hear that over and over again from folks who have no youth in our program.

I also want to thank:

Our Parents & Grandparents: Who bring their children and grandchildren, and are committed to their spiritual growth.

Our Recycling Angels: Alan Hall, Dave Wehrheim, Vic Morris, Nancy Nott and Holly Yee who have been amazing recycling angels !!

Our Uniteens and Y.O.U. : The crown jewel of our Youth Ministry. The head of the 8 State GLURC region, has only great things to say about our teens, and she is continually blown away by the quality of the teens we have.

And last, but certainly not least, a big thank you to all of you: Thank you for your continued support with your prayers, sharing your time, talent and treasure, and supporting us in so many ways.

I look forward to a great 12th year, and I am holding thoughts of all of you, receiving many blessings, as you give, and receive in the great flow of life. Thank you.

**(Slide 16: Your Turn Questions, Comments, Concerns)**

Thank you !!