

POSITION DESCRIPTION — DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (DRE) July 2012

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan (UUFM) views a thriving Religious Education (RE) program as important aspect of its goals of providing for its members and serving the wider community. UUFM has a high quality RE program but desires that the RE program increase in quality, scope, and people served. “People served” includes not just the children involved, but parents, other members, and the wider community, (served, e.g., by social action activities). Having a thriving RE program is an integral part of UUFM’s plan for growth.

A thriving RE program will be

Truly intergenerational and participatory: Participation with the wider fellowship in a variety of settings will mean that our children come to know and trust adults in the fellowship of all ages. Intergenerational interactions will be meaningful and truly interactive.

Open, visible, and informative: People will feel welcomed and encouraged to participate in the RE program. People both in and out of the fellowship will know about the program and its activities (e.g., simply what the children are learning).

Multi-faceted: there will be a range of RE programs that allow children and parents to interact with each other and with their teachers and the rest of the fellowship in a variety of settings, some directed towards general UUFM goals (e.g., social justice).

VISION FOR A DRE:

We desire a charismatic leader to be the face of RE who will understand the needs of the fellowship and the vision of the RE committee, will help contribute to that vision and will work toward carrying it out, will motivate people to participate in RE, and will openly communicate with children, parents, other members of the fellowship, and the community at large.

POSITION OVERVIEW

The DRE will be a self-motivated professional who will focus his or her time on the following areas:

- 1) Communications and outreach. The DRE is the face of the RE program.** He or she should be one of the first people parents new to fellowship meet, and he or she should follow up with those parents to try to ensure their needs are being met, to keep in contact with them, and to warmly encourage them to participate. The DRE is also the face of the RE program within the fellowship. The DRE should be the person people turn to with questions about UUFM children and youth. The DRE should create clear lines of communication, should make the RE program visible within the fellowship and outside its doors, and should articulate a clear vision to others of the services the RE program provides.
- 2) Fellowship participation, teacher recruitment, etc:** A key role of the DRE will be to develop a thriving program by increasing interactions between the RE children and the fellowship in general. Some of the function of the DRE will be to support the teachers and the other people who interact with the children of the RE program, as this is the foundation for other successful interaction. However, the DRE need not be the one to lay that foundation. Rather, the DRE should have responsibility for ensuring the structure is in place for volunteers to contribute to and support RE programs through their ideas, time, and presence. The DRE will find and motivate a wide range of people to work within that structure, and to do so in a wide range of roles (i.e., not just “teachers”).
- 3) Program development:** The DRE should both develop new programs to increase the diversity and educational and enjoyment value of RE activities and work to ensure that new and existing programs are successful. The RE committee and others have many ideas about possible programs. The DRE will work with the RE committee to determine what ones are feasible (and how to make others feasible), and will, with the RE committee, develop plans to start and grow those programs. The DRE will implement those plans with the help of fellowship volunteers (whom the DRE will organize).

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor’s degree in education or related field OR at least twelve months of professional experience working with children/youth including selection and delivery of curriculum

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DESIRED EXPERIENCES AND SKILLS

- communication or outreach skills and experiences
- ability to motivate and build participation in educational and mixed-generational activities
- ability to develop, organize, and implement professional-quality educational programs
- knowledge of child and adolescent development
- knowledge of some RE-relevant content (e.g. world religions, ethical principles, human psychology, Christian traditions) and ability and willingness to learn more
- understanding of educational principles and practices
- appreciation of and support for Unitarian Universalist principles and traditions
- experience providing leadership in a collegial setting

RESPONSIBILITIES

The DRE will have primary responsibility to ...

- regularly communicate with UUFM parents, committees, members, staff, and minister
- meet new parent visitors, introduce them to the RE program and UUFM in general, and help them have a good visit to UUFM
- follow up with parent visitors and those who have irregularly participated, and in general ensure parent and child satisfaction with the program
- assess what is working in RE programs and what it not
- develop opportunities for outreach and increased visibility of UUFM RE
- recruit volunteers to participate in RE activities (e.g., teachers)
- develop and implement occasional intergenerational Sunday services, and create other connections between RE activities and Sunday services

Together with the RE Committee, the DRE will ...

- coordinate RE programs for children from birth to age 18
- evaluate, recommend, and implement available curricula
- make recommendations for and (where necessary, with approval of board) implement new RE programs
- coordinate training and support for RE volunteers
- coordinate age-appropriate activities for children
- develop and manage the RE budget
- ensure the safety of children in the program

As a member of the UUFM staff the DRE will...

- actively participate in professional development, including membership in LREDA and attendance at regional RE conferences
- be present at three-quarters of the Sundays during the calendar year
- attend monthly meetings of the UUFM Executive Board, of which the DRE is a nonvoting member
- attend regular meetings of the RE Committee

ACCOUNTABILITY

The DRE will report directly to the board. The board may direct a board member or sub-committee to be primary contact(s) between DRE and the board.

In the first year, the board will assess the DRE's accomplishments quarterly. The DRE will be assessed at how well he or she demonstrates significant progress in reaching the below goals. Quantitative measures intended to measure progress towards those goals will be used only with the consideration of qualitative factors.

GOALS

We expect continued growth in the following areas in 2012-2013 year

- communication with parents (both current and prospective RE participants),
- visibility of the RE program within the fellowship and the community,
- participation of the fellowship in RE,
- intergenerational interactions between RE children and the fellowship,
- diversity and quality of RE activities
- general confidence in the development of the RE program by members of the fellowship.