



Summer/Fall 2013

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Rights Now

The newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee



A Boston protest, joined by participants in the UU College of Social Justice's Youth Justice Training, following George Zimmerman's acquittal in the killing of Trayvon Martin.

From Individual to Collective Action

By Kara Smith

UUSC envisions a world free from injustice. It works with grassroots partners every day to make that vision a reality. Throughout the world, UUSC joins with others to organize empowered communities, dismantle regressive policies, and advance human rights and social justice. As a UUSC member, you play a vital role in that work.

Support from UUSC members not only makes it financially possible to do this work, but it also helps create an amenable environment for policy change. UUSC members are powerful legislative advocates, consumers, shareholders, community liaisons, and leaders for social justice.

When you raise awareness, speak up, and take action, you make sure the

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The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies.

Rights Now

Summer/Fall 2013

Editor

Jessica L. Atcheson

Design and Production

Reid Haithcock

UUSC bargaining unit employees are represented by Human Rights Workers Local 2661, **UNITE HERE!**

We Welcome Letters

Rights Now is grateful to readers for their interest and support. We invite you to share your questions and comments by submitting a letter to the editor: rightsnow@uusc.org

Rights Now Editor, UUSC
689 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

UUSC is supported by individual members, Unitarian Universalist congregations, and foundations that share our commitment to building a more just world.

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uusc.org
info@uusc.org
617-868-6600
617-868-7102/fax

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A message from UUSC's president

UUSC brings many resources to our struggle for human rights — a proud history, enormous credibility, a devoted staff, and innovative partners in 21 countries, including the United States. But one of the most important resources we bring is you.

Most social change organizations would give their proverbial eye teeth to have a natural constituency made up of something like 160,000 people spread across the country — many of them experienced activists, most of them organized into groups called “congregations.” It’s a dream come true for doing the work of justice.

But the truth is that UUSC has not always done well at making it easy for our constituents to figure out how they can help. It’s simple enough to give money of course, and we can’t do without that! But many of you would like to do more, to help us with direct action of one kind or another.

That’s what much of this issue of *Rights Now* is all about. One way you can do justice work with us is through a service-learning trip with the UU College of Social Justice (uucsj.org). Another is through online activism (uuscs.org/action). And there are many more.

Martin Luther King Jr. was once asked how the civil rights movement had managed to prevail against so much power aligned against it, and he replied, “We never let them rest.” That’s UUSC’s informal motto too. These pages illustrate some of the many ways you can help disturb the sleep of the mighty.



Bill Schulz

Merchandise that Makes a Difference

Two years ago, UUSC put out the call for its members to use their purchasing power to make a difference for workers' rights and environmental justice. You responded overwhelmingly by pledging to choose compassionate consumption, and UUSC has redesigned its online store to feature hundreds of ethically sourced and eco-friendly products. All proceeds from **shop.uusc.org** support UUSC's human rights work. And now there are two new opportunities for you to get involved!



Prosperity Candle

Consignment Program

Sell UUSC goods at your congregation's annual holiday fair or through its bookstore and earn 5–10 percent commission on all sales! New consigners can sign up by calling 800-766-5236, ext. 342, or e-mailing orders@uusc.org.

Affiliate Program

Raise funds for UUSC and your congregation through online sales made through your website, e-mail, social media, and other networks. Affiliates are approved to promote UUSC's store and products by being given a unique URL, and they receive commission on sales made via that link. Get started by visiting uusc.org/affiliate.

voices of UUSC partners are heard by policy makers. You create pressure for corporate and legislative policy changes that will have an effect on people's daily lives. As individuals, you speak up when you eat out, teach others about what a just recovery in Haiti looks like, promote the human right to water, and advocate for asylum seekers.

And you also come together to take action collectively — with your families, your friends, your communities, your congregations. This commitment to collective action for social justice is critical for social change. In the words of Aesop, “In union there is strength.” When you engage others, incite their excitement,

entice them to take action, and empower their leadership, you are actively making positive change and bringing the world closer to a shared vision of justice.

UUSC aims to provide you with the information, resources, and support to do this work and to engage others in your community — to be the change agent you want to be.

Check out UUSC's new action calendar, previewed on the following pages and available online at uuscs.org/calendar.

Kara Smith is UUSC's associate for grassroots mobilization.



A group of UU participants traveled to Tanzania and Burundi with the UU College of Social Justice. They returned to their communities ready to engage in action for the human right to water.

UUSC Action Calendar

You are critical to social change! So how can you make a difference? Start planning how to integrate UUSC's social justice work into your congregational and community activities using this calendar.

August

- Start planning for Guest at Your Table — details at uusc.org/planguest
- Check out the upcoming year of service-learning trips with the UU College of Social Justice at uucsj.org

September

- Speak up for a fair minimum wage on Labor Day (September 2) — better wages, better world!
- Include the human right to water in your Water Communion service
- Schedule a *Behind the Kitchen Door* book group

October

- Order UUSC holiday cards
- Publicize your Guest at Your Table program

November

- Launch Guest at Your Table with a worship service on Sunday, November 24
- If you have an alternative gift fair, consign ethically sourced goods from UUSC

December

- Celebrate International Human Rights Day on December 10
- Choose compassionate consumption for your holiday shopping at shop.uusc.org
- Sign up for 2014 UUCSJ service-learning trips

January

- Commemorate the 2010 earthquake in Haiti by promoting relief models that work
- Reflect on workers' rights on Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Start planning for Justice Sunday at uusc.org/justicesunday



This year's major projects

Choose Compassionate Consumption

Haiti Just Recovery

The Human Right to Water

February

- Join others nationwide for live discussion with noted author (to be announced) during UUSC's annual Get-Together
- Celebrate the World Day of Social Justice on February 20
- Explore ethical eating and workers' rights by signing up for UUCSJ's Food for Thought service-learning trip to Chicago

March

- Bid for justice — check out UUSC's online auction at uusc.org/auction
- Celebrate women leaders on International Women's Day (March 8)
- Learn about discrimination in water access in the United States on World Water Day (March 22)
- Order Coming of Age jewelry gifts for youth in your congregation

April

- Conclude your Justice Sunday program with a worship service on April 6
- Help UUSC ensure that Congress is supporting a just recovery in Haiti; visit uusc.org/action
- Celebrate Earth Day with products for sustainable living at shop.uusc.org

May

- Celebrate your mom by supporting working mothers
- Nominate someone you know for a UUSC social justice award

June

- Visit UUSC at the UUA General Assembly in Providence, R.I.
- Honor International Day in Support of Survivors and Victims of Torture (June 26)

July

- Celebrate what a great year it has been putting your values into action with UUSC!

Note: This calendar offers highlights of activities that UUSC is asking you to engage in. All activities are subject to change.

Ending Food Insecurity, One Urban Tire Garden at a Time

By Jessica L. Atcheson



Rural tire gardens created by the Papaye Peasant Movement, a UUSC partner.

If it's not impossible, we will be able to do it." That was the response of four youths to Chavannes Jean-Baptiste, founder and leader of Haiti's Papaye Peasant Movement (MPP), when he told them that it would be difficult to bring tire gardens from the countryside into Port-au-Prince. They were right that they could do

it. They formed the Bright Educators of Delmas (known by its Haitian acronym, GEAD), and with UUSC support, the four young leaders embarked on an urban agriculture pilot project that has had great success — and is poised for its next phase of growth.

Tire gardens: the what and the why

Tire gardens, which GEAD discovered at MPP headquarters during a community organizing training, use old tires recycled into efficient home garden planters. The tires are turned inside out; fitted with a solid base; filled with a mixture of dirt, compost, and sand; and raised up on stilts to keep them out of reach of animals (and to allow greater light exposure in the city).

People grow tomatoes, cabbage, bell peppers, carrots, onions, eggplant, and more; they harvest seeds for future planting and rotate crops among the tire planters to ensure greater soil productivity. The process uses organic farming methods, avoiding the expense, potential dangers, and environmental toll of fertilizers and pesticides. And just five tire gardens can feed a family of four for a year.

The concept of personal home gardens — in the city and in the countryside — carries great significance in a country where food security is hard to find. According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 6.7 of the 10 million people in Haiti don't have enough to eat or have access to adequate nutrition. It's in this context that MPP developed the tire garden model to enable its members to successfully cultivate vegetables for their own consumption and to sell at market.

Success in the city

GEAD was determined to introduce the concept in Port-au-Prince. After MPP trained them in garden construction and growing methods, GEAD worked with UUSC to bring the gardens to 48 families in the Delmas neighborhood of Port-au-Prince. They offered more than just the raw materials, though. As Danielle Neus, GEAD spokesperson, says, "It's not about just making the gardens, it's about training [the families] to understand how to feed themselves."

GEAD worked with the families to plant the first vegetables of the pilot project in August 2012. Wendy Flick, manager of UUSC's Haiti Program, reports, "They have had unbelievable success so far." Families are growing vegetables with enthusiasm, enjoying ready access to healthy food, and spreading the word to their neighbors, who are eager to join the movement.

This fits right into GEAD's vision, as explained by Coordinator Emmanuel Exuma: "GEAD's dream is to see the majority of people in Port-au-Prince have the possibility of not buying vegetables in the market anymore. They could just go pick the vegetables in their garden."

Urban training center in development

That vision means the first 48 families are just the beginning — and it also means that GEAD needs space to grow. On the horizon: construction of a tire-garden training center in the city. Neus breaks it down: "The next step for GEAD is to have its own

center so that we can train young people — not just train them so that they can go out and earn a living, but put the ideas deep inside of them so that they understand that they have their part to play and that it's important."

GEAD is currently identifying a suitable piece of land for the center. The site will include a training facility, model garden, storage for tools and materials, and an area for manufacturing their own compost, which is currently being imported from rural Papaye. One of the groups GEAD plans to train once the center opens is another UUSC partner, Zanmi Timoun, which works with survivors of child slavery and trafficking to reintegrate them into society.

Into the future

The connections that people form may be one of the greatest products of this process — aside from the much-needed food. This is not lost on GEAD; in fact, it's key to their approach. GEAD Secretary Guerna Salomon says, "Unity is everything. With union, we can go further." And they are already on their way.

Neus reflects on the future: "The dream is becoming a reality, but we have much to do. We'll need the support of a lot of people. Not just to help us realize the center or even to help us realize other tire gardens. We need the support of all the youth — worldwide — because this is something that concerns not just us but everyone in the world."

Jessica L. Atcheson is UUSC's writer and editor.



The Bright Educators of Delmas introduced tire gardens in the Delmas neighborhood of Port-au-Prince.

In Their Own Words: Feeling the Energy of Support

An interview with Kenel Antoine

Conducted by Jessica L. Atcheson

Kenel Antoine is a member of the May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society in Syracuse, N.Y. He took part in a February congregational service-learning trip to Haiti with the UU College of Social Justice (UUCSJ) and advocated for policy change in Washington, D.C., during UUSC's Haiti Lobby Day in April. UUSC conducted this interview in June.

What motivated you to take part in a UUCSJ service-learning trip to Haiti?

I have always been interested in Haiti, since I grew up there. I left Haiti just after I turned 20 to go to college.

My parents already lived outside of the country. My family had suffered under the Duvalier dictatorship. One of my uncles, who was a senator, was arrested and disappeared. My goal always was to go back to Haiti and work, but I went to Mexico to study and then transferred to the United States. I landed in Syracuse, which is where I've been living for a long time. But I've always been interested in progress in Haiti and helping.

What were the benefits of embarking on the trip with fellow congregation members?

It was a wonderful thing. Members of my congregation showed so much interest and enthusiasm. It's amazing

what we did as a group, and we have to give credit to a lot of folks for making the trip possible. We had several car washes, a bake sale, a fundraising luncheon featuring Haitian dishes. . . . Someone at the church came up with a concept of doing a sort of "stock buy-in option" for the trip to Haiti: people put money in, and after the trip to Haiti, we hosted a dinner for the donors so we could bring the experience back to them. First UU in Syracuse and May Memorial combined our forces, and members from both churches went on that trip.

What did you learn on the ground that you took back with you?

Many, many things. . . . *This interview continues online at uusc.org/kenel.*

For more on UUCSJ congregational service-learning trips, see page 10 and visit uucsj.org/congregations. For more on UUSC's work in Haiti, visit uusc.org/haiti.

Jessica L. Atcheson is UUSC's writer and editor.

Deepening the Journey

Congregational service learning with UUCSJ

By Kathleen McTigue

Service-learning journeys offered by the UU College of Social Justice (UUCSJ) are transformative experiences, designed to help you deepen your social justice work, no matter where you live. But why not consider bringing a whole group from your congregation along with you? If a UUCSJ journey can transform an individual, imagine what it can do for a congregation!

When a group travels together from a single congregation, members have the benefit of returning home with others who have all shared in the same powerful experience. The process deepens learning, spiritual reflection,

and solidarity with partners. The collective experience also makes it easier to share the journey with the rest of the congregation and creates a strong foundation for discerning the next steps for engagement.

A congregational grounding also encourages a wider circle of people to join the journey by engaging with the preparation materials, holding the travelers in prayer or mindful attention during the journey, and receiving them back into the community on their return. This process can help the entire congregation gain clarity on new directions for social justice work.

Upcoming Journeys

BorderLinks Immigration Justice in Mexico

Chiapas: December 4–11, 2013 (register by September 22, 2013)

Seminarian Program: March 22–29, 2014 (register by January 5, 2014)

Sustainable Futures: May 24–30, 2014 (register by March 16, 2014)

Haiti Just Recovery

January 25–February 1, 2014 (register by November 17, 2013)

March 15–22, 2014 (register by January 5, 2014)

May 10–17, 2014 (register by March 2, 2014)

Register today at uucsj.org.

Beginning this fall, all UUCSJ service-learning trips will be grounded in the new *UUCSJ Curriculum for Cross-Cultural Engagement*. This curriculum helps participants understand the powerful, firsthand experience of their journey within the broader context of racial and economic justice. It is designed for use not only by those traveling with UUCSJ but also by learning circles within their home communities. Congregations, dedicated as they are to living the values of UU faith in the work of justice, are an ideal setting for these circles.

If your congregation is already engaged in issues like immigration rights, economic justice, and compassionate consumption, taking a journey together will bring you new insights and commitment to this work. Likewise, if you are seeking new

directions for your congregation's social justice program, joining a UUCSJ journey as a congregational delegation can provide exactly the guidance and inspiration you're looking for.

To encourage congregational groups to take part, UUCSJ offers a five percent discount for all participants when three or more people from one congregation travel together on a journey. UUCSJ strongly encourages congregations to support those traveling on their behalf by holding fundraisers, donating the Sunday plate offering, and inviting members to sponsor a traveler.

Kathleen McTigue is the director of the UU College of Social Justice. For more information on UUCSJ congregational journeys, visit uucsj.org/congregations.



Order Up: Living Wages

Time to raise the minimum wage

By Ariel Jacobson



The U.S. wage gap has turned into off-the-chart inequality — literally. A recent report by the U.N. International Labor Organization noted that U.S. income inequality is so high that it could not fit on the same chart as 25 other industrialized nations. While the U.S. federal minimum wage has stagnated at \$7.25 per hour, the average chief executive at one of the 500 biggest companies makes \$28,767 *per day*.

As the Let Justice Roll (LJR) living wage coalition, of which UUSC is a part, puts it, “A job should keep you out of poverty, not keep you in it.” Yet, a full-time worker making minimum wage earns an annual salary that’s just \$15,080 — \$3,000 lower than the poverty level for a family of three. And don’t forget that the current federal minimum wage for tipped employees — 71 percent of them women — has been stuck at just \$2.13 per hour since

1991. Bottom line: it’s time to raise the minimum wage; it’s a moral imperative.

Origins of minimum wage

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts established the first minimum wage law 101 years ago as more women and children entered the workforce. The 1912 report of the Massachusetts Commission on Minimum Wage Boards stated that it was “parasitic” to compensate workers at a level less than the cost of living. This law set the stage for additional state minimum wage laws.

Two years later, Henry Ford more than doubled the pay of autoworkers in his factories. The increase to five dollars per day gave them the highest wages in the industry. While other industrialists scoffed at Ford for raising his production costs, he

believed that his policy would reduce turnover and associated costs. When it did just that, other companies followed suit.

Ultimately, it took the efforts of Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins to institute a federal minimum wage as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938. All of this began the solidification of a strong middle class. Worker productivity increased, and families could not only afford the basics but also realize the American dream of home ownership and a good education. That sadly hasn't lasted.

Declining purchasing power

As far back as 1956, the minimum wage had more buying power than it has today. Its peak value in 1968 would be worth \$10.69 in today's dollars. As Holly Sklar, LJR director, notes, "If the value of the minimum wage had not fallen since 1968, Walmart's wages, for example, would be closer to Costco, which pays starting wages of \$11 and has the lowest employee turnover in retail, doesn't need to spend money on advertising, and outperforms Walmart."

In 1968, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. told sanitation workers in Memphis, "It is criminal to have people working on a full-time basis and a full-time job getting part-time income." He said, "We are tired of working our hands off and laboring every day and not even making a wage adequate with daily basic necessities of life." The real value of the minimum wage is less now than it was when King spoke those prophetic words.

Raising the wage in hard economic times

One of the most common objections to increasing the minimum wage is that it will cause unemployment. Rigorous empirical studies of actual minimum wage increases show they do not cause job losses, whether during periods of economic growth or recession.

Opponents of the minimum wage also cite small businesses as the potential victims of an increase. However, a poll by the Small Business Majority found that 67 percent of small business owners support increasing the federal minimum wage and adjusting it yearly to keep up with the cost of living. Moreover, the majority of America's lowest-paid workers are employed by large corporations with more than 100 employees, not small businesses.

Consider, too, that 70 percent of the economy is made up of consumer spending. Low-wage workers recycle their dollars back into the local economy. As Sklar points out, "When the minimum wage is too low, it not only impoverishes workers, it undermines the consumer purchasing power needed for a vibrant economy."

Making a difference for families

Each dollar increase per hour means about \$2,000 more a year for workers struggling to support themselves and their families. The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2013 would generate a raise for more than 30 million workers — plus more than \$32 billion in new economic activity by 2015.

Poverty and wage inequality are the moral economic issues of our time. A Pew Research Center opinion poll found that 71 percent of Americans support an increase in the minimum wage — but this won't happen unless we raise our voices.

Ariel Jacobson is manager of UUSC's Economic Justice Program. This article is dedicated to the late Dick Campbell, former UUSC senior associate for media and public affairs, who was a champion for economic justice and the minimum wage.



Take a Stand on Minimum Wage

“It is time to insist that everyone share in corporate success, not just a handful of executives. As people of faith, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and raising the minimum wage is vital in ensuring that dignity.”

Read the full statement by UUSC President Bill Schulz and UUA President Peter Morales — and add your signature — at uusc.org/minwage.

Stewardship Circle Celebrates Growth at Annual Retreat

By Maxine Neil

UUSC's Stewardship Circle (SC) is relatively young — just four years old — but is growing by leaps and bounds. This was evident in the attendance of 70 people at this year's retreat, held in San Francisco in May — up from six at the retreat three years ago.

SC members, who make annual contributions of \$5,000 or more, joined together with UUSC staff to connect with one another, engage with our partners, and provide feedback and guidance on UUSC initiatives.

Participants discussed UUSC branding with Communications Director Paul Twitchell and constituent engagement plans

with Rev. Brock Leach, UUSC's vice president of mission, strategy, and innovation. They also heard from partners Ana Aguayo of Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center, Simon Sangale Ole Nasieku of the Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders, and representatives of the Community Water Center of California.

Maxine Neil is UUSC's director of institutional advancement. To learn more about the Stewardship Circle, please contact her at 617-301-4313 or mneil@uusc.org.



Stewardship Circle members meet in the Bay Area.

Human Rights at Home and in Your Congregation

By Lauralyn Smith

Have you met George Friday, Malya Villard-Appolon, Danielle Neus, and Nelson Escobar? Get ready to welcome these UUSC partners — through their personal stories of hope — into your homes, congregations, and hearts this fall as part of Guest at Your Table.

An important annual tradition in many UU congregations, Guest at Your Table is an intergenerational program to raise awareness of and support for UUSC's human rights work. In addition to its perennial focus on how UUSC and its members empower UUSC partners to achieve their goals, this year's Guest at Your Table program offers some exciting new features.

Starting in September, Guest at Your Table will offer dynamic new tools for you to engage with the program online and help raise essential funds to advance human rights with UUSC. You'll have access to a personalized web page for your congregation's program where members and families can pledge, track team pages, and watch the program unfold together.

Organized by UUSC local representatives and volunteer coordinators, Guest at Your Table provides a rich opportunity for families and congregations to integrate deeper discussions about social justice into congregational life. Each year, Guest at Your Table

Mark Your Calendars



Suggested date for Guest at Your Table opening service:

November 24

empowers participants, connects shared principles to action and education, and helps people join hands with UUSC partners to challenge injustice throughout the world. To support the program, UUSC provides a host of resources — including free posters and *Stories of Hope* booklets — for worship, religious education, and related congregational activities.

Guest at Your Table has been an important part of UUSC and UU culture since 1975. And this year, leading up to the 40th anniversary of Guest at Your Table in 2015, UUSC is conducting a special contest. You won't want to miss it — the winning congregation will receive a sermon written and delivered in person by Rev. Bill Schulz, UUSC's president and CEO! Watch uusc.org/guest for more information about this exciting commemorative event.

Not sure if your congregation is taking part in Guest at Your Table? Contact your UUSC local rep to find out, and learn how you can participate and support the program. Local reps — there are more than 600 of them throughout the country — are part of the UUSC National Volunteer Network, and they serve as congregational liaisons with UUSC. Consider getting involved and helping coordinate Guest at Your Table at your congregation this year!

Lauralyn Smith is UUSC's senior associate for member development. For more on Guest at Your Table, visit uusc.org/guest, e-mail volunteerservices@uusc.org, or call 617-301-4366.



Guests at your table (clockwise from upper left): Danielle Neus, Bright Educators of Delmas; George Friday, Bill of Rights Defense Committee; Nelson Escobar, Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center; Malya Villard-Apollon, Commission of Women Victims for Victims

Announcing the Vivienn Fosman Fund for the Fulfillment of Girls

By Rita Butterfield



A frequent visitor to the UU congregation in Marin, Calif., Vivienn Fosman was Jewish but was inspired by Unitarian Universalism, especially UUs' social activism. When she passed away, her daughter Barbara Meislin — known affectionately as the Purple Lady of Tiburon — was looking for a way to honor her. Meislin's philanthropy, activism, love of life, and commitment to peace and justice were shaped by her much beloved mother, so she chose a named fund at UUSC as the perfect way to honor Fosman's memory.

The Vivienn Fosman Fund for the Fulfillment of Girls will support UUSC's work against human trafficking. For example, UUSC partners with Rock Women Group (RWG), a coalition of teachers that works to stop child labor and human trafficking in disadvantaged neighborhoods of Nairobi, Kenya. RWG addresses the underlying causes of these problems by providing skills training for women and at-risk youth

so they can secure jobs or establish their own businesses. Additionally, RWG organizes community discussions, promotes life skills, provides legal training, and advocates for policy change.

The Vivienn Fosman Fund for the Fulfillment of Girls will help RWG and other UUSC partners continue and expand this work to keep girls safe so that they can fulfill their potential and live their lives with dignity. The Purple Lady invites others to join this work by making a contribution to the fund.

Creating a named fund to support the work of UUSC is a unique way for friends and family to honor the contributions and lives of loved ones who have passed away. To learn more, please contact Maxine Neil, UUSC's director of institutional advancement, at 617-301-4313 or mneil@uusc.org.

Rita Butterfield is UUSC's senior associate for major gifts on the West Coast.

Democracy vs. Drones

By Martha Thompson



Drones are used for many things — military strikes, disaster response, measurement of crop growth, poacher tracking. But many Americans don't know that drones are increasingly being used in domestic surveillance. The Bill of Rights Defense Committee (BORDC), a UUSC partner, is bringing that to light, though, and giving activists the tools to protect their communities.

The use of drones in domestic surveillance is still so new and rapidly growing that regulation and protection lag far behind. According to Shahid Buttar, BORDC's executive director, "Because the legal landscape governing drones is essentially barren, law enforcement agencies around the country are currently making policy to suit their interests."

Drones are set up in such a way that limited surveillance is impossible — all information registered from takeoff to touchdown is recorded, and there are no restrictions on how that information might be used in court. Currently law enforcement can use information obtained from drones without a warrant.

BORDC has created tools, including two model pieces of local legislation, for activists to limit the use of drones in domestic surveillance of their communities. One model ordinance creates a drone-free zone, and the other lays out rigorous requirements that limit their use by law enforcement agencies.

Buttar emphasizes the importance of grassroots involvement on this issue: "We live in a constitutional republic, meaning that 'We the People' hold the opportunity — and responsibility — to petition our local representatives for legal protections. BORDC's new legislation is the first of its kind, and it offers people a unique chance to use grassroots democracy to uphold civil rights."

Martha Thompson is manager of UUSC's Rights in Humanitarian Crises Program. For more information on UUSC's work with BORDC, visit uusuc.org/bordc.

Blue Lining and the Human Right to Water

By Jessica L. Atcheson



Patricia Jones (right), UUSC's expert on the human right to water.

You've probably heard of redlining: discrimination in housing, financial services, and insurance that historically excluded people of color from certain neighborhoods. But have you heard of "blue lining"? As Patricia Jones, manager of UUSC's Environmental Justice Program, explains: similar discrimination, different basic need. This time it's the human right to water that people are being denied based on their class background or the color of their skin. And it's happening in the United States.

While this has been true for years, the problem received international attention in 2011 when Catarina de Albuquerque, the U.N. independent expert on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, delivered a report to the U.N. Human

Rights Council. Her findings: despite widespread access to water and sanitation in the United States, discrimination in services leaves too many marginalized communities without. As the report states, "The people with whom the independent expert met and who are facing obstacles in their enjoyment of the rights to water and sanitation were disproportionately Black, Latino, American Indian, homeless, or otherwise disadvantaged."

The independent expert's report cites a study done by Massachusetts Global Action (MGA), with support from UUSC, that revealed the discriminatory impact of Boston water shutoff policies. In *The Color of Water: Getting Boston to Recognize the Human Right to Water*, MGA found that "there is considerable inequality

across neighborhoods that reflects long running patterns based on color and income.” For every one percent increase in the population of people of color in a ward, there is a fourfold increase in threatened water shutoffs.

This is not an isolated occurrence. Related examples can be found throughout the country in a variety of settings — inner cities, rural areas, agricultural hubs, Native American reservations. In Zanesville, Ohio, public and private utilities excluded low-income communities of color from water services for more than 50 years. In California’s Tulare County, the Community Water Center, a UUSC partner, will tell you that Seville residents devote approximately 20 percent of their income (in a place where median household income is \$14,000 a year) to water and sanitation. Why? Because their water is contaminated with nitrates — so they pay not only for the unsafe water that comes out of their taps, but also for the bottled water they must buy for clean drinking water and cooking.

UUSC is getting ready to dig deeper into this issue by embarking on an ambitious research project. As Jones states, “The research will provide an important exposé into historic discrimination in the sector at a time when decisions can potentially address this injustice.” The Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute report *Tapped Out: Threats to the Human Right to Water in the Urban United States* puts it well: “Every person deserves access to water regardless of income, location, or race. With a little effort, this right is realizable in the United States.”

For more on UUSC’s work on the human right to water, visit uusuc.org/righttowater.

Jessica L. Acheson is UUSC’s writer and editor.



Water rights activists in California

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