

Organizations Supported by the Social Action Council
2009

Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church has a long history of being a responsible member of our community, our denomination and the world. We currently support these organizations. For more information on how you can get involved, please contact

SEARCH Homeless Services www.searchproject.org

Who they are: SEARCH provides services to all segments of Houston's homeless including housing, employment, and healthcare programs. It operates the House of Tiny Treasures, a licensed day care facility for homeless children.

How we help: Two groups of Emersonians make and deliver approximately 200 sack lunches monthly for SEARCH's mobile outreach program. During 2008, Emersonians contributed about \$400 for lunch-making supplies. In addition, the RE department donated mittens, hats, scarves and towels from their 2008 holiday Mitten Tree to SEARCH.

What you can do: Make sack lunches – watch the Emersonian and eblast for dates and times. Donate money or sack lunch ingredients such as bread, peanut butter, jelly, juice boxes, baggies, napkins. Organize an in-kind drive, collecting hygiene items, clothing, bottled water and/or insect repellent. Host a party at the House of Tiny Treasures

Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston www.imgh.org

Who they are: Interfaith Ministries enables persons and congregations to provide services and advocate for those in need and to coordinate activities that promote shared religious values. They operate Meals on Wheels, Food for Seniors, The Amazing Faiths Project, refugee services and other initiatives.

How we help: Through our monthly Food Sunday Special Collections, in 2008 we donated \$17,000 to Meals on Wheels – enough to feed 14 homebound seniors for one year. The Social Action Council sponsors an additional senior.

What you can do: Continue to give generously. Become a Meals on Wheels volunteer driver. Deliver Food for Seniors groceries. Make placemats, holiday and birthday cards, lap quilts or gift bags. Assemble “Welcome” baskets for refugees.

Houston Food Bank www.houstonfoodbank.org

Who they are: The Houston Food Bank feeds about a half a million different people each year through 400 area hunger relief agencies. It also provides nutrition education, outreach and job training.

How we help: We collect non-perishable food items monthly on Food Sunday and participate annually in the Souper Bowl of Caring. In 2008, we donated about 1700 pounds of food and \$1873.

What you can do: Continue to give generously. Participate in our Food Sunday food drives every second Sunday of the month. Requested food items include:

Canned water-packed tuna or chicken; canned soups, stews and pasta with meat;

peanut butter; canned fruits in light syrup, canned vegetables, tomatoes, tomato sauce; 100% juice in cans or boxes (no glass, please); cereals and cereal bars; packaged pasta, spaghetti, macaroni, noodles and dry beans.

NO open packages, baby food, homemade food items, perishable foods, or items with expired dates.

The Gathering Place www.gplace.org

Who they are: The Gathering Place provides a supportive environment for adults with severe and persistent mental illness, facilitating life choices and more independent living.

How we help: Our annual Special Collection helps fund holiday gifts for members. Last year we donated about \$1100. In addition, in 2008 some of our RE youth made greeting cards that were distributed at The Gathering Place's holiday party.

What you can do: Continue to give generously. Host a holiday greeting card-making event in our RE department or another youth organization. Volunteer to teach a class at The Gathering Place – piano, art, cooking, foreign language, auto maintenance, etc. Participate in their informal “Adventures in Life” lecture series, sharing photos, souvenirs and anecdotes of your life and travels. Provide transportation for members to The Gathering Place and to outside community activities.

Hospitality Apartments

Who they are: The Hospitality Apartments provide free housing for up to three months for patients of the Texas Medical Center and their families.

How we help: Our annual Special Collection is an unrestricted gift. In recent years, our contribution was used to build a new facility. In 2008, we donated \$1924.

What you can do: Continue to give generously. Host a monthly dinner for Hospitality Apartments guests.

Rebuilding Together Houston www.rebuildingtogetherhouston.org

Who they are: Rebuilding Together Houston preserves affordable housing by bringing volunteers and communities together to rehabilitate the homes of low-income, senior, and disabled homeowners.

How we help: Emerson volunteers have been involved with Rebuilding Together Houston and its predecessor, PSI, for 19 years. Our work crews typically include 30 volunteers total per two-Saturday project. Crew members range in age from 10 to 75. Our congregation has won three “Golden Hammer” awards for work “above and beyond.” In 2008, our Special Collection of \$949 was used to buy building supplies.

What you can do: Join a work crew. Volunteers are needed two weekends each in April and October. Make curtains, quilts or other items for homeowners.

Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth www.uuministryforearth.org

Who they are: An affiliate organization of the Unitarian Universalist Association, UUMFE facilitates and supports the work of Unitarian Universalists by affirming and promoting the Seventh Principle of the UUA, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." The organization develops and solicits resources and materials for study and reflection, and encourages individual and collective action for responding to the call to heal the Earth.

How we help: Our annual Special Collection furthers the organization's work. In 2008, we donated \$1365.

What you can do: Become a supporting member for as little as \$20. Participate in the Low Carbon Initiative. Implement the 10-Tree Challenge. Information about all programs is available at the Web site. Continue to support our congregational efforts.

Children at Risk www.childrenatrisk.org

Who they are: CHILDREN AT RISK improves the quality of life of Greater Houston's children through strategic research, public policy analysis, education, collaboration and advocacy.

What we do: We will hold our first Special Collection to support the work of CHILDREN AT RISK on May 17, 2009.

How you can help: For information about volunteer opportunities, contact Shilpa Rao at srao@childrenatrisk.org. Buy logo merchandise at their Web site. Sign up for legislative updates affecting children in Houston and Texas.

Emerson contact: Barb Adams

Department of Family and Protective Services www.dfps.state.tx.us

Who they are: The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) protects children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by involving clients, families and communities. The agency's services are provided through its [Adult Protective Services](#), [Child Protective Services](#), [Child Care Licensing](#), and [Prevention and Early Intervention](#) divisions.

What we do: We are just beginning our relationship with DFPS. The agency has launched a faith-based initiative to increase the number of foster and adoptive homes for children in custodial care in Houston.

How you can help: Learn more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent. Volunteer to help children (Child Protective Services, or CPS), aged or disabled adults (Adult Protective Services, or APS), or in support of quality child care in Texas (Child Care Licensing, or CCL).

Harris County Drug Court Foundation www.drugcourtsupport.org

Who they are: The Drug Court Foundation is an interdenominational foundation that supports Harris County Drug Court's Success Through Addiction Recovery (STAR) program, which treats non-violent, non-trafficking drug dependent offenders. The Drug Court Foundation provides financial support and enlists volunteers to assist clients in learning how to function in the mainstream daily life.

How we help: Three congregation members comprise the Foundation's initial directors. Members of the congregation also provided the initial funding to launch the Foundation.

What you can do: Learn more about the Drug Court Foundation and Harris County Drug Court's STAR program. Make a tax-deductible donation. Support Drug Court-trained elected judges. Volunteer to help clients with daily living skills.

CROP Hunger Walk www.churchworldservice.org

Who they are: Under the auspices of Church World Service, CROP Hunger Walks raise awareness and funds for local hunger-fighting and international relief and development.

How we help: We sponsor a team of walkers who obtain donations from their friends, family, co-workers and neighbors. Our 2008 team of 65 walkers was the largest in Houston.

What you can do: Join our team. The next walk is in November.

College Scholarships

Who they are: A grass-roots initiative begun by an Emerson member to provide community college scholarships to qualified students who would be the first in their family to attend college.

How we help: Our annual Special Collection supports this work. In addition, our members provide individual funding. In 2008, we donated \$6334.

What you can do: Contribute generously any time of the year.

UUPCC Paths to Partnership Student Sponsorship www.uupcc.org/studentponsors.html

Who they are: A program of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, the Paths to Partnership Student Sponsorship helps young people in the Philippines, Transylvania and India break the cycle of extreme poverty through education. Sponsors are matched with a student whose education costs they will pay for six years of elementary school, four to six years of high school, or four to five years for college and seminary. Costs range from \$126 per year for a high school student in India to \$3520 per year for a college student in the Philippines.

How we help: Our first Special Collection will be July 16.

What you can do: Give generously. Sponsor a student as a family, or a work, youth or neighborhood group. Help organize sponsorship in our RE department.

Loaves and Fishes www.magnificathouse.org

Who they are: Loaves and Fishes is a soup kitchen in downtown Houston that provides both spiritual and material comfort to homeless men, women and children.

How we help: Twice a week, a small team of Emersonians picks up between 300 and 400 pounds of donuts donated by a local shop and delivers them to Loaves and Fishes.

What you can do: Join the early-morning delivery service. Learn about other volunteer opportunities.

GHASP/Mothers for Clean Air www.ghasp.org www.mothersforcleanair.org

Who they are: The Galveston-Houston Association for Smog Prevention and Mothers for Clean Air work to protect public health through education, research and advocacy about air quality in our area.

How we help: Our annual Special Collection helps fund programming. In 2008, we donated \$427.

What you can do: Give generously. Learn more about air pollution and its health effects on children, adults and the elderly. Become an advocate.

M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Blood Bank www.mdanderson.org/departments/bloodbank/

Who they are: M. D. Anderson cancer patients require approximately 100 units of red blood cells and 400 units of platelets every day. As new treatments are developed, and new technologies discovered, the need for blood donations has never been greater. Giving blood provides hope for cancer patients who depend on the support of their family and friends, and on the generosity of strangers just like you.

How we help: Emerson hosts a quarterly blood drive on campus. Watch the Emersonian and eblast for dates.

What you can do: Donate! It's quick, easy and relatively painless.

Maud Gordon Elementary School www.houstonisd.org

Who they are: A Title I school in Bellaire.

How we help: Our annual Special Collection raises funds for supplies for students and teachers.

What you can do: Donate money or materials, including backpacks, notebooks, crayons, pens and pencils, rulers, looseleaf paper. Organize a supply drive in our RE department, your neighborhood or youth group.

NAMI Metropolitan Houston www.nami.org

Who they are: NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Metropolitan Houston is a non-profit organization established in 1988 to address the increasing need for families and persons affected by mental illness to have a powerful voice in the mental health community.

How we help: Emerson provides meeting space for NAMI classes.

What you can do: Join a team or sponsor a walker in NAMI Walks to Stamp Out the Stigma of Mental Illness. Learn more about mental illness and advocacy efforts.

Internationally, we also provide support to UNICEF, our Partner Church – St. Nicholas in Transylvania, and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.